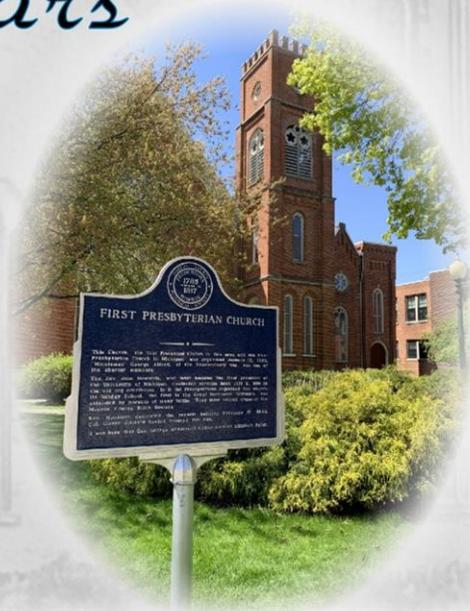




First
Presbyterian
Church of Monroe

1820 to 2020

Celebrating
200 Years
of Faith
&
Service



November 8, 2020

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The mission of the First Presbyterian Church is to be ambassadors for Jesus Christ and to proclaim his salvation in worship, education, and outreach.

23rd Sunday after Pentecost

WELCOME

OPENING WORDS

Psalm 118:24

Helyn Schroeder

One: This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

adaptation Psalm 78:1-7, CEB

Helyn Schroeder

One: Listen, my people, to my teaching; tilt your ears toward the words of my mouth.

All: We are tilting our ears and listening to your words.

One: I will open my mouth with a proverb. I'll declare riddles from days long gone—ones that we've heard and learned about, ones that our ancestors told us.

All: We are tilting our ears and listening to your words.

One: We'll tell the next generation all about the praise due to you, O Lord.

All: We will tell them of the wonderful works God has done.

One: We will tell the next generation God established a law for Jacob and set up Instruction for Israel. We will tell them God ordered our ancestors to teach these to their children.

All: We will teach God's word to our children so the next generation and children not yet born will know these things. Then they can rise up and tell their children.

One: We will teach the next generation that their hope is in God.

All: God of hope, you alone are our God, our hope is in you!

One: Let us pray: O God, instruction giver of all that is good and all that is life-giving, infuse our hearts with the love of Your word and deepen our faith. In the midst of this changing and uncertain world, let our hearts beat to the holy rhythms of hope and joy in You. Amen.

- 1 Blessed be the God of Israel who comes to set us free and raises up new hope for us: a Branch from David’s tree. So have the prophets long declared that with a mighty arm God would turn back our enemies and all who wish us harm.
- 2 With promised mercy will God still the covenant recall, the oath once sworn to Abraham, from foes to save us all, that we might worship without fear and offer lives of praise, in holiness and righteousness to serve God all our days.
- 3 My child, as prophet of the Lord you will prepare the way, to tell God’s people they are saved from sin’s eternal sway. Then shall God’s mercy from one high shine forth and never cease to drive away the gloom of death and lead us into peace.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

Joshua said to the tribes of Israel, “Choose today whom you will serve.” Whom do we serve? Lesser gods of our world? Trusting in the wideness of God’s mercy and the depth of God’s love, we confess our sins to God and before one another.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

Loving God, as we examine our impulses and actions, clearly our choices do not reflect your commandments. We fail to love you. We neglect to love our neighbors. You tell us to be ready to meet you at any moment, to stay awake to your presence and to be prepared to do your will. Yet we are easily distracted by the call of consumerism. We are mesmerized by absolute power that corrupts. Forgive us our sins. Grant us your wisdom. Place holy blinders on our eyes. So, with laser focus, our eyes are fixed on you alone. Give us holy courage to live faithful and faith-filled lives; so, your kin-dom comes and your will is done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

There is nothing beyond the reach of God’s mercy and love. Friends, believe the good news through Jesus Christ, you are forgiven! Be at peace.

All: Thanks be to God!

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

SONG OF AFFIRMATION #2167 STF "More Like You"

More like you, Jesus more like you. Fill my heart with your desire to make me more like you. More like you, Jesus more like you. Touch my lips with holy fire and make me more like you. Lord, you are my mercy. Lord, you are my grace. All my deepest sins have forever been erased. Draw me in your presence. Lead me in your ways. I long to bring you glory in righteousness and praise.

TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Helyn Schroeder

Still our hearts O God of all that distracts us. Teach us the words of life so we may be your Word in the world. Amen.

FIRST READING

Joshua 24:1-3a; 14-25

Helyn Schroeder

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

Matthew 25:1-13

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH A Brief Statement of Faithⁱ

Helyn Schroeder

In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve. We trust in the God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the renewer of life. In a broken and fearful world, the Spirit give us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of people long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom and peace.

- HYMN #175 “Seek Ye First” vss. 1-3
- 1 Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Allelu, alleluia!
 - 2 Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and the door shall be opened unto you. Allelu, alleluia!
 - 3 You shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Allelu, alleluia!

CALL TO OFFERING

Helyn Schroeder

One: In our desire to serve God alone and to follow Jesus Christ, we give back to God a portion of what God freely gives us. Remember the many blessings of God in your life and how you may extend God’s love and vision for the world through generously giving.

DOXOLOGY

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Helyn Schroeder

Bless our offerings so the lamps of those without oil may be filled. May our gifts be quiet messengers of love to those in need of your good presence. In the name of the Holy One we pray. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

(Hold in your heart those who are sick; those who are on ventilators; those who are suffering; those who are dying. Pray for all health care workers and essential workers, who risk their lives in service of God and neighbor. Pray for scientists and researchers in their efforts to develop a COVID-19 vaccine. Pray for our FPC Monroe beloved community—those who enter through our virtual front door and those who enter through our wooden front door. Pray for our nation...for local, state, and national leaders and for world leaders that they will govern justly and show empathy, compassion, and mercy. Pray for our Earth and all creation.)

LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

HYMN #771

“What is the World Like”

vss. 1-5

- 1 What is the world like when God’s will is done? Mustard seeds grow more than we can conceive: roots thread the soil, branches reach for the sun. This is how God moves us each to believe.
- 2 What is the world like when God’s will is done? Witness that wandering child coming home; watch as the parent breaks into a run. This is how God longs for us when we roam.
- 3 What is the world like when God’s will is done? No more is neighbor just ally or friend; peace thrives in places where once there was none. This is how God works when rivalries end.
- 4 What is the world like when God’s will is done? Ready for feasting, we watch through the night, tending our lamps till the new day’s begun. This is how God readies us for the light.
- 5 These are the stories that Jesus imparts, filled with the Spirit who joins us as one. Born through our voices, our hands, and our hearts, this is a new world where God’s will is done.

CHARGE AND BLESSING

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

POSTLUDE

ⁱ Book of Confessions. Brief Statement of Faith. Office of the General Assembly. Louisville. 1999. p. 268.

Some phrases or words from a liturgy written by Jill Duffield, Editor *Presbyterian Outlook* are used/adapted in the Prayer of Confession.

Ushers: George Kostoff and Kim Hooper