

# First Presbyterian Church

## Wooster, Ohio

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

August 16, 2020

First Presbyterian Church is a Christian community dedicated to showing God's love through worship, study, social justice, mission outreach, and fellowship.



**More Light Church and Member of Covenant Network  
Earth Care Congregation and a Matthew 25 Church**

WELCOME

Reverend David Rice

PRELUDE

*Andante sostenuto, from 'Symphony Gothique'*

*Charles-Marie Widor*

Eric J. Gastier, organ

CALL TO WORSHIP +

One: Come let us worship God, rejoicing in God's loving care for us.

**All: We bring all our differences, and yet we worship together  
in the unity of God's Spirit.**

One: God is gracious to all. The depth of God's love for all creation is boundless.

**All: Through God, all things are made new.**

**Come, let us worship our God of Healing and Wholeness.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY +

Welcoming God, you gather everyone, especially the outsiders, to worship you, for you are protector of the helpless, parent to the poor, friend of the lonely.

Accepting Christ, there is no place you will not go to bring God's grace to others.

Embracing Spirit, your gentleness falls upon us, your truth is whispered in our ears, your peace is poured into our souls, and through your love we see our sisters and brothers in all whom we meet. **Thanks be to God! Amen**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION +

**God of strength and gentleness, we confess our weaknesses to you and to one another.**

**Forgive us our apathy when others are hurting and we could make a difference.**

**Forgive us our lack of persistence when an urgent need must be met  
and no one seems to care.**

**Give us the hope that is founded on your presence.**

**Give us the courage to let our actions speak louder than our words.**

**We pray this through Christ, who loved, healed, and cared for all God's children.**

*Here each worshiper may offer personal, silent prayer.*

Gracious God, hear our prayers. **Amen**

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS +

God's gracious forgiveness always offers a new beginning.  
Where we lurk in the shadows, God's mercy sheds the light of renewal.  
Where the chaos of disregard exists, God's love brings the way of compassion.  
God says, "It is good. You are good. Go forth and do good." **Amen**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

The Peace of Christ be with you . . . **And also with you.**

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Amy Baxstrom

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER +

**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**

MUSICAL OFFERING

*Prélude, from '24 Pièces en style libre'*

*Louis Vierne*

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:38-48

SERMON

*The Impossible Possibility of Love*

Reverend Dr. Meda Stamper

HYMN (see next page for the music)

***Though I May Speak***

*GIFT OF LOVE*

BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Fanfare*

*Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens*

+ Liturgy adapted from *Seasons of the Spirit*. Facebook Link: <https://www.facebook.com/FPCWooster/>

Meda, a seminary colleague of David's (and former member of his mother's choir!), is a minister-writer in the UK. She has developed one-woman performances of John, Mark (about which she has written the book *Embodying Mark*), Philippians, Jonah, and the birth narratives and is now offering online performances of the Sermon on the Mount in support of the Equal Justice Initiative.

**Earth Care Pledge:** Peace and justice is God's plan for all creation. The earth and all creation are God's. God calls us to be careful, humble stewards of this earth, and to protect and restore it for its own sake, and for the future use and enjoyment of the human family. As God offers all people the special gift of peace through Jesus Christ, and through Christ reconciles all to God, we are called to deal justly with one another and the earth.

**The Mission of the Covenant Network of Presbyterians** is to strengthen the church of Jesus Christ, with the help of God's grace. We are called to achieve this goal by furthering the inclusion of LGBTQ persons, and by working for the unity of the PC(USA).

**The Mission of More Light Presbyterians:** Following the risen Christ, and seeking to make the Church a true community of hospitality, the mission of More Light Presbyterians is to work for the full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people in the life, ministry and witness of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and in society.

**The Mission of the Matthew 25 Church:** Matthew 25:31–46 calls us to actively engage the world around us, so our faith comes alive and we wake up to new possibilities. We commit ourselves to congregational vitality by acting boldly and compassionately to end systemic poverty and structural racism, serving people who are oppressed, imprisoned, poor.