



First Presbyterian Church - Wooster, Ohio

Spring Celebration Service

Seventh Sunday of Easter - May 17, 2026

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**

PRELUDE *Pastorale on 'Bradbury'* Dale Wood
Eric J Gastier, Organ

WELCOME Reverend David Rice

MINISTRY FOCUS *Summer at FPC!* FPC Youth

INTROIT *Amazing Grace* arr. Robert S. Frost
Maddie Harrington & Rachel King, Clarinet

*CALL TO WORSHIP + Abby Harrington

One: We are surrounded by diversity.

All: We all come from different backgrounds.

One: We are here together to listen to God's Word.

All: We live together and are bound by God's love.

One: The Lord calls us to worship in unity.

All: In our worship, let us become one.

*PRAYER OF THE DAY + Nora Davis

Let us pray:

Holy God, open our hearts and minds to hear your Good News.

Through your Word unite us as your church so that we can more faithfully do the work
of Christ our Lord. Through Him we pray. Amen.

*HYMN 301 *Let Us Build a House* TWO OAKS

CALL TO CONFESSION + FPC Youth

As we approach this time of confession, let us remember that Jesus went to the cross to pay for our sins.
There are many sins we commit collectively that seek to pull us apart from one another. So, we begin
our time of confession naming those things that seek to break apart the body of Christ:

We sin by dividing ourselves into groups: the haves and the have-nots, the best and the worst, winners
and losers, the popular and shunned. Forgive us for division.

We sin by excluding those who are different from us: by how they look, what they wear, how they
behave, how they talk, and where they are from. Forgive us for exclusiveness.

We sin by isolating ourselves from the outside world. We ignore injustice. We pretend tragedies do
not exist, so we do not have to feel obligated to help. Forgive us for isolation.

We sin by putting up walls. We keep out the things that make us uncomfortable even if it's at the expense of others. We block out the things we don't understand without seeking to hear a different perspective from our own. Forgive us for putting up walls.

We sin through hate. We choose not to love our neighbors. We see the worst in others. We stereotype. We mock. We insult. We generalize. We do not give the benefit of the doubt. We hurt others. Forgive us for our hate.

As we reflect on the sins of the world, let us all confess our sins before God as we pray the Prayer of Confession in the bulletin. Let us pray:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION +

Holy God, so often we forget to live through you. We get distracted and our focus shifts from you to material things and wants. We get so caught up in ourselves that we fail to come together as one. We stray from our faith, getting far off track of your vision for us. Forgive us, O Lord, for putting you off. Help us to remember it takes many parts to make up one whole. Guide us to work as one people, not just single individuals. Lead us all in a direction of togetherness, so we may live faithfully as one. Through Christ we pray, Amen!

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS +

The good news of the gospel is that everything we have done wrong is forgiven by the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Through God's grace any divisions can stop and togetherness can happen.

Through God's acceptance of us, God can show us that being inclusive of all God's people—even though we differ—is the way.

Through God's friendship, we are never alone. And we are called to build community with one another.

Because Christ died for all, walls can be brought down and turned into bridges. Through the cross, Christ shows us how to turn hate into love.

Believe the Good News—in Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

PASSING OF THE PEACE +

Shonica Swank

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 66: 1-5

Keyonna Swank

ANTHEM

Shout with Joy!

Mark Patterson

Godly Play & Bible Town Classes

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Bible Town Class

RECOGNIZING OUR TEACHERS

Addy Hiner & Ellen Armour

*A Liturgy for Sunday School Teacher Appreciation
Honoring Those Who Plant Seeds of Faith and Justice*

One: Today we give thanks for the Sunday School teachers among us—those who show up with open hearts, gentle hands, and wide welcome.

All: **We thank you for nurturing the faith of our children with stories of love, courage, and inclusion.**

One: You do more than teach lessons—you shape lives, you affirm sacred worth,
you create space for wonder and belonging.

**All: You help our children know they are loved by God, just as they are—
curious, creative, and still becoming.**

One: You teach not only scripture, but kindness; not only memory verses, but justice and mercy.
You honor their questions. You make room for doubt.

**All: You show them that God is not small or angry,
but expansive, joyful, and always present in love.**

One: In a world that often overlooks children, you listen closely.
In a church that strives always welcome all, you widen the circle.

All: We bless your ministry—your patience, your presence, your prophetic care.

One: May you know the seeds you plant are sacred. May your weariness be met with support.
May your joy be full and your spirit renewed.

**All: We commit to walking with you, to resourcing your work,
and to honoring the holy task of teaching our children.**

One: With full hearts and deep gratitude, we bless our Sunday School teachers.

**All: May you continue to lead with love,
and may you always know how deeply you matter. Amen**

HYMN

Instrument of Peace

Susan Shaffer, guitar

Isaac Wardell, Liz Vico, Jessica Fox,
Orlando Palmer, Paul Zach

Transcribed by
Owen Stroud

REFRAIN

Lord, make me an in - stru - ment of peace, an in - stru - ment of peace.

Lord, make me an in - stru - ment of peace, an in - stru - ment of peace.

VERSE

Where there is ha - tred, let me sow love. Where there is dark - ness, let me sow light.
Where there is sor - row, let me sow hope. Where there is doubt, let me sow faith.

For in the gi - ving, we shall re - ceive, and in the dy - ing, we're gi - ven life.
Where there is inju - ry, Your par - don give, Your con - so - la - tion to those in pain.

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS

Reverend David Rice

John and Lee Ann Eyre, Candace Harrington, Bob and Linda Orosz, Kyle and Jenna Pagel,
Jeff and Patricia Swarts

OFFERING OF SUBSTANCE AND LIFE +

Maddie Harrington

When we all come together as one, we find that God can do so much more with us than we could ever do on our own. So let us bring our many gifts together as a symbol that we are united together in ministry to do the work of Jesus Christ here in our community and beyond.

OFFERTORY

Prelude on 'Slane'

Noel Rawsthorne

*DOXOLOGY 607

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ, all people here below;
praise Holy Spirit evermore; praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION +

Abrielle James

Let us pray:

Thank you, God, for allowing our congregation to come together and give our time and dedication to those who are in need. Please bless the gifts we have just received. Allow our youth opportunities to contribute and serve those in our community and beyond. We pray that these gifts can feed the hungry and strengthen the weak. And may we offer our whole selves for the work of God's kingdom. Through Christ, we pray. Amen

MUSICAL OFFERING

Ode to Joy

Abby Harrington, Cello

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND CANDLE LIGHTING

Aiden Hiner & Calin Baxstrom

After each prayer, we will say together: **Light for the journey. Hope for the road ahead.**

SONG

Lead Me to the Rock (Psalm 61)

Susan Shaffer, Guitar

RECOGNITION OF OUR GRADUATING SENIORS

(see bios of our graduates on the following pages)

MARTHA ROBINSON AWARD

Mimi Lewellen, for Women's Fellowship

PRAYER OF BLESSING FOR GRADUATES

see full text on the following pages)

*HYMN 547

Go, My Children, with My Blessing

AR HYDYNOS

BLESSING

Reverend David Rice

CHORAL BENEDICTION

A Benediction

Shirley W. McRae

Godly Play & Bible Town Classes

POSTLUDE

Postlude on 'Ellacombe'

J. Wayne Kerr

Eric J Gastier, Organ

* Asterisk indicates places in the service to stand.

+ Liturgy adapted from Presbyterian Youth and Triennium: Youth Sunday Resource 2016

Thanks to all FPC families and teachers who contributed to this special service.

The Chancel Flowers are given today by Shannon Foster, in memory of Tom and John Collier

FPC 2026 Graduates



Calin Baxstrom will graduate from Wooster High School. While there he played football, baseball and was on the swim team. He held office positions on Student Council, was the President of Best Buddies, was a member of the National Honor Society, a member of the General's Leadership Council, and was a part of the Student Athlete Leadership Team. After graduation, Calin will be attending THE Ohio State university, majoring in Nursing.



Gabe Bosler-Kilmer is graduating from Spire Academy, an elite sports boarding school in Geneva, Ohio. Gabe will be attending TCU, Texas Christian University, in Fort Worth, Texas and he will be swimming on their swim team. Gabe is looking forward to the next level of his journey, pursuing his academics and swimming in D1 competition.



At WHS, Aiden Hiner is currently a member of the General's Leadership Council, National Honor Society, the tennis team and Drama Club, and serves as co-editor-in-chief of the Wooster Blade. He also works at Omaha Bobs. Upon graduation, Aiden will be attending Kenyon College, majoring in sociology with a concentration in law and society.



Elli Gordon will be graduating from Wooster High School. While there, she ran cross country and track earning several varsity letters in both. She was also a member of National Honor Society, Green Club, Drama Club, and a staff writer for the Wooster Blade. She will be attending Miami University and places to study psychology. She appreciates the community and welcoming atmosphere that First Pres has provided.



Noah Bosler-Kilmer is graduating from Kenyon College with a Bachelor of Arts in Film. Club Soccer was a big part of Noah's time at Kenyon. Noah is happy to be graduating from Kenyon and will be taking some time to figure out his next steps.



Sophie Garcia graduated from the University of Cincinnati's College of Nursing. In July, she will start her new job on the Organ Transplant Floor (a critical care floor) at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center, where she completed her co-op program this year.



Ashton Dunlap will be graduating Bowdoin College in May. Then, after a few weeks of training, he will be traveling to Chugach State Park in Alaska to lead hiking trips for high schoolers. In 2027 he will be doing his student teaching, most likely back in Maine.



Maya Galindo studied Public Policy and Management and minored in Materials Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University. She will be moving to NYC in June to continue working for a Math Education company, Expii, Inc, as well as working part time remotely for a metal refinery startup (located in SF, CA)



Henry Perkins will graduate from Tufts University in Boston with a major in Biopsychology and minors in Chemistry and German. He is looking forward to post-graduate study.

Stay Connected with FPC this Summer!

Summer Worship Updates

Next Sunday, May 24 is the first week of our summer schedule where worship moves up to 10:00.

Sunday, June 14 at 10:00 will be our annual outdoor worship service at Oak Hill Park.

In case of inclement weather, this service will be moved to Bruch Hall.



The Prime-Time Picnic Lunch honoring those in our church family over 80 will be held Thursday, June 11 at 11:30 a.m. in Bruch Hall. A delicious meal and a musical program featuring Karolyn Rice are planned. Please RSVP to the church office by June 1 and leave a message for Donna if she is not available. Rides are available if transportation is needed. Invitations have been mailed, but if you inadvertently did not receive one, please know you are most welcome.

Our Sr. High Youth are traveling to Nashville June 7-12 with the organization called Service Learning Camps. We will be doing things like working in a community garden, working on tiny homes used to house a variety of community members, connecting with other urban churches and working through their projects, and more. They are also heading to Ghost Ranch again this summer June 21-26. Please keep them in your prayers as they travel!



Join us for some family fun this summer:

June 14 – Party at Paula’s from 4:00-6:00pm

July 1 – Backyard Cookout at Rachel’s at 5:30 pm

July 16 – Family Picnic and Swimming at Prairie Lane



This summer we have a monumental opportunity for our youth to grow in our leadership and fellowship with each other. We have been awarded a grant from the Institute of Youth Ministry at Princeton Theological Seminary through the Lilly Endowment. This grant will invite our youth to step fully into the life of the church- not just as participants but as partners in ministry. We will identify their spiritual gifts and leadership strengths, explore where they feel energy and excitement for church life, offer concrete ideas for shaping worship and ministries, and so much more. This retreat will take place at Camp Nuhop July 24-26.

Save the date for combined VBS with Westminster August 3-6!
More info coming soon!

