



First Presbyterian Church

of Raleigh, North Carolina

Serving Christ from the Heart of the City to the Ends of the Earth with Love, Faith and Action.

July 12, 2026

7th Sunday after Pentecost

We Gather in God's Presence

Gathering Music

Chiming of the Trinity

Welcome and Announcements

The Rev. Dr. Tara W. Bulger

Introit

Der dichter spricht from *Kinderszenen*

R. Schumann

Felix Szymanowski, piano

Call to Worship

We gather this day in joy and Christian fellowship,

for we are the church of Jesus Christ!

We pray for the Holy Spirit to be among us,

opening our hearts and minds to the worship of God!

*Hymn 667

When Morning Gilds the Skies

LAUDES DOMINI

Prayer of Confession

The Rev. Laurie Taylor Weicher

Caring God, we have resisted your love, preferring to go our own way, wandering from truth, hoping for the quick success, a triumph that lasts. We find it hard to admit our need, confess our faults, and return home. Pride gets in the way. Remind us again that you long to gather us together and forgive us, bless us, and encourage us. Let us be humble enough to come home to you again this day.

(Let us continue our confession in silence)

Assurance of Pardon

Response to Pardon

Friends in Christ, in response to this gift of God's grace, how then shall we live?

With gratitude, following after the Lord Jesus Christ, who calls us to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves.

This is the way of Jesus, in whom we find life!

Welcome to Worship!

Some notes about the service:

*An asterisk denotes standing, in body or spirit.

Words in bold are read aloud by the congregation.

Worship is, first and foremost, a people's meeting with the God who has taken the initiative to gather that people. It is a gathering intended for no other purpose but to offer our praise, our thanksgiving, and our lament, while trusting the Spirit to bring us into the presence of the risen Christ.

We are grateful to Michael Clinkscales and Felix Szymanowski for helping to lead worship from the organ and piano respectively today.

The Lord is God, the Lord alone! Give honor, thanks, and praise to God, the maker of all things and giver of our days.

We Listen and Respond to God's Word

Children's Moment

Beth Thaxton

Hymn 399 *God Welcomes All*

**God welcomes all, strangers and friends;
God's love is strong and it never ends.**

After the Children's Moment, children ages 4 - 2nd gr. are invited to the Library for Children's Church and will return following the sermon.

Prayer for Illumination

Zoe Reams

Scripture Reading

James 5:13-20

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Anthem

Most glorious Lord of life

William H. Harris

Scripture Reading

Esther 7:1-10; 9:20-22

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Esther

The Rev. Dr. Tara W. Bulger

Silent Reflection

*Hymn 307

God of Grace and God of Glory

CWM RHONDDA

*Affirmation of Faith:

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

A Prayer for Illumination may be offered before the reading and proclaiming of scripture. this prayer seeks the illumination of the Holy Spirit and calls upon God to make us receptive to the life-giving Word, which comes to us through scripture.

Our sermon series, *Tell Me a Story: Children's Stories of the Bible*, continues today with the story of Esther.

Next to the Nicene Creed, the Apostles' Creed is the most universally accepted doctrinal statement in Christendom. It grew from a baptismal formula and it now often incorporated into modern worship.

Joys and Concerns of the Church Family

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession 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 debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Response to Prayer | Hymn 601

DANISH AMEN



Moment for Mission

Mexico Mission Trip

Ryann Bulger

An Invitation to Give An Offering

Offertory

Inventions in d minor and F major
Felix Szymanowski, piano

J.S. Bach

*Doxology | Hymn 609

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures high and low;
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise God in Jesus fully known:
Creator, Word, and Spirit one.
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

*Prayer of Dedication

We Carry God's Word into the World

*Hymn 804

Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart!

MARION

*Charge and Benediction

*Benediction Response | Hymn 543 stanza 1

**God, be the love to search and guide me;
God, be the prayer to move my voice;
God, be the strength to now uphold me:
O Christ, surround me; O Christ surround me.**

Chiming of the Trinity

Postlude

"To clasp hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world."---Theologian Karl Barth

Scripture tells us we are to love ourselves and love others, because we have first been loved by God. So, too, we give of ourselves and our resources out of gratitude to God for what God has already graciously give to us. We give because God has first given to us.

Scan here to give an offering online:



Anthem

Most glorious Lord of life, that on this day
Didst make triumph over death and sin,
And having harrowed hell, didst bring away
Captivity thence captive, us to win.

This joudous day, dear Lord, with joy begin,
And grant that we for whom Thou didest die,
Being with Thy dear blood clean washed from sin,
May live forever in felicity:

And that Thy love we weighing worthily,
May likewise love Thee for the same again;
And for Thy sake, that all like dear didst buy,
With love may one another entertain.

So let us love, dear Love, like as we ought;
Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.

The Chancel flowers are dedicated to the glory of God and are given in honor of Jerry and Brenda Johnson on the occasions of their 61st wedding anniversary and Jerry's 89th birthday by Kathy, Jay, Blake, Worth and Campbell Johnson.

Staff Directory | 919-821-5750

The Rev. Dr. Tara W. Bulger	Senior Pastor (Ext. 2206)
The Rev. Laurie Taylor Weicher	Associate Pastor (Ext. 2208)
The Rev. Dr. Ernie Thompson	Parish Associate
The Rev. Judy Pidcock	Parish Associate
Beth Thaxton	Director of Family Ministries & Christian Education
Betsy Williams	Director of Youth Ministries
Kathy Johnson	Director of Community Outreach
Rita Harris	Outreach Assistant
Mark Woodcock	Director of Music
Lindsay Anne McCall	Director of Children & Youth Music
Dr. Karl Zinsmeister	Organist
Gail Barrett	Church Administrator
Jean Suber	Director of Communications
Melani Harrison	Finance Assistant/Office Manager
Russell Clark	Facilities Manager
Brooke Barrett	Sexton
Tyler Elrod	Audio Visual Lead Tech
Valerie Chassereau	Director of Child Development Center

Scan the QR code
for ways to become
connected to our
ministries.



On the Calendar This Week, July 12 – July 18

Today– Sunday School 9:30 a.m. | Worship 10:30 a.m. | Handbells & Hotdogs 11:30 a.m.
VBS Leader Orientation & Decorating 12:00 p.m.

Monday, July 13 – VBS | Pickleball 1:00 p.m. | Staff Meeting 1:00 p.m.

Tuesday, July 14 – VBS | Enough for Today Podcast 8:00 a.m.

Wednesday, July 15 – VBS | Pickleball 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, July 16 – VBS | Shower Ministry 11:00 a.m.

Friday, July 17 – VBS

Saturday, July 18 – No events or activities scheduled for the day.

Announcements and Upcoming Events

Vacation Bible School Starts Tomorrow | Snowball Mountain Challenge

We're excited to host over 80 children, including 3 classes from the Child Development Center, for Vacation Bible School! As part of our mission project, we'll be collecting gently used coats. Bring one by the Edge Lobby if you can!

FPC Summer Read

Join the CE committee as we read *Miracles and Other Reasonable Things* by Sarah Bessey together. This book explores the presence of miracles, the changing shape of faith, and different ways to think about prayer. You can check it out from the public library or get it at your local bookstore. Begin reading now and then join us after worship on Sunday, August 2 for a book discussion.

Ring Them Bells: Introduction to Handbells

Today, following worship, join the FPC Handbell Choir for a fun opportunity to ring handbells together. With help from our Handbell Choir, we will ring through some music in the Lisa Ham Gathering Space. No musical experience needed!

Hot Dog Sunday

Come get a hot dog in Memorial Hall today after the worship service. All are welcome!

Red Cross Blood Drive

Our next Blood Drive will be Wednesday, August 12 from 12-5pm in Memorial Hall. Please consider donating blood- it literally saves lives! You can sign up at fpcraleigh.org/events or on the Red Cross website.

Youth Mega Day

Join us for Youth Mega Day August 29-30! We'll spend the day participating in service projects with church mission partners before heading out for some fun adventures. Back at the church for the night, we'll play all-over games, have late-night worship, arts, crafts, and movies before spending the night in the youth rooms. We'll wrap up Sunday morning with biscuits before heading home! Cost is \$85. Registration period: Now - August 7. Sign up at fpcraleigh.org/events, on the Realm app, call the church office or sign up in the registration book at the reception desk. Questions? Please contact Betsy Williams at bwilliams@fpcraleigh.org.

FPC All-Church Retreat at Montreat Conference Center

We're headed back to Montreat! Save the date: February 12-14, 2027. All ages are welcome! Go to fpcraleigh.org/events for more information and to register. Contact Beth Thaxton with questions or for help with registration.

FPC Shares Item for July

This month's FPC Shares item is Powdered Milk | Juice! Bring this item and/or your favorite non-perishable food donations to the church. There are FPC Shares receptacles on both sides of the Edge Lobby and in two places in the Lisa Ham Gathering Space outside the sanctuary.

Mission Highlight

Montreat Conference Center

Nestled in the mountains of Western North Carolina, Montreat is a private, non-profit conference center with roots in the PC(USA). For over 100 years, Montreat has been a place set apart for those seeking a closer relationship with their Creator, and a clearer understanding of the call to a life of faith through Jesus Christ. Montreat's governing board, The Mountain Retreat Association (MRA), formed in 1905, envisioned starting a place where God's people could come for spiritual renewal. The first Christian conference was held here in July 1897 and had nearly 400 participants. The first hotel was erected in 1901 and the first Presbyterian conference occurred in 1907.

Encountering God through relationships, renewal, recreation and rest is the mission of the Center. Its core values include cultivating faith through spiritual renewal and growth, building and nurturing relationships, demonstrating intentional hospitality, caring for creation, fostering a safe place, and honoring continuing ties to the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Over 30,000 guests experience Montreat each year. Approximately 4,000 youth attend Youth Conferences each Summer. There are 2,500 acres of protected wilderness. 400 meeting, retreat, and event groups are served each year, and 40 conferences and events are attended annually.

Our youth anxiously anticipate the Montreat Youth Conference each summer at the Center and will depart this Summer for a week on July 19th. Several FPC members, staff, and youth attended this Summer's Worship and Music conference in late June. We are super delighted to restart our congregational All-Church retreat at Montreat February 12-14th in 2027. Visit [Realm](#) to register for this awesome event. The FPC Mission Budget annually supports the Montreat Conference Center.

There are many ways to experience Montreat. Whether attending a conference, planning a group retreat, hosting a meeting, taking a getaway on your own, hiking through the protected wilderness, or playing in one of the many recreation spaces. All are welcome in Montreat!