

# *The First Presbyterian Church* *in the City of New York*

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THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST/GRADUATION SUNDAY

*Service for the Lord's Day*

June 13, 2021 | 11:00 a.m.

*The Session and members of First Church extend a sincere welcome to all persons regardless of race, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation. This includes an open invitation to membership, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, marriage, funerals, memorial services, and service as an officer of the church.*

## GATHERING

*The peace candle represents our prayers for peace in a broken world. The congregation is asked to offer prayers of intercession for one another and for those who lead in these times of remote worship.*

PRELUDE

“Soliloquy”

David Conte

PEALING OF THE CARILLON

INTROIT

*Nederlandsch Gedenckclanck; harm. Bernard Huijbers*

What is this place, where we are meeting? Only a house, the earth its floor. Walls and a roof, sheltering people, windows for light, an open door. Yet it becomes a body that lives when we are gathered here, and know our God is near.

Words from afar, stars that are falling. Sparks that are sown in us like seed: names for our God, dreams, signs, and wonders sent from the past are what we need. We in this place remember and speak again what we have heard: God's free redeeming word.

—Huub Oosterhuis; trans. David Smith

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

*Please stand in body or spirit.*

Come, let us sing to God.

**Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.**

Let us come into the divine presence with thanksgiving;

**Let us make a joyful noise to God with songs of praise!**

It is good to give you thanks, O God;

**To sing praises to your name, O Most High;**

to declare your steadfast love in the morning,

**and your faithfulness by night,**

to the music of the lute and harp,

**to the melody of the lyre.**

For you, O God, have made us glad by your work;

**At the works of your hands we sing for joy. Let us worship God!**

HYMN 645

“Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above”

MIT FREUDEN ZART

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Mighty God, to you belong the mysteries of the universe.**

**You transform shepherds into kings,  
the smallest seeds into magnificent trees,  
and hardened hearts into loving ones.**

**We confess our hearts have remained hardened to the needs of this world.**

**We know our faith continues to be smaller than even a mustard seed.**

**We know we fall short of your glory.**

**Have mercy on us.**

**Bless us with your life-giving Spirit,  
re-create us in your image,  
and shape us to your purposes,  
through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

## SILENT CONFESSION

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

## RESPONSE

OLD HUNDREDTH



*Traditional* Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise Him, all crea - tures  
*Inclusive* Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise Christ, all peo - ple



here be - low; praise Him a - bove, ye heaven - ly host;  
here be - low; praise Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er - more;



praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men.  
praise Tri - une God, whom we a - dore.

## SHARING SIGNS OF PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you!

**And also with you!**

## SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

## BLESSING OF GRADUATES AND 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,**

**the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## ANTHEM

God be in my head, and in my understanding; God be in mine eyes, and in my looking; God be in my mouth, and in my speaking; God be in mine heart, and in my thinking; God be at mine end, and in my departing.

John Rutter  
-Sarum Primer

## HEARING THE WORD

### SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Ezekiel 17:22-24

Thus says the Lord God:  
I myself will take a sprig  
from the lofty top of a cedar;  
I will set it out.  
I will break off a tender one  
from the topmost of its young twigs;  
I myself will plant it  
on a high and lofty mountain.  
On the mountain height of Israel  
I will plant it,  
in order that it may produce boughs  
and bear fruit,

and become a noble cedar.  
Under it every kind of bird will live;  
in the shade of its branches will nest  
winged creatures of every kind.  
All the trees of the field shall know  
that I am the Lord.  
I bring low the high tree,  
I make high the low tree;  
I dry up the green tree  
and make the dry tree flourish.  
I the Lord have spoken;  
I will accomplish it.

Mark 4:26-34

He also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

### SERMON

"Agricultural Grace"

Dr. Rev. Greg Stovell

## RESPONDING TO THE WORD

### AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

from The Belhar Confession

*Please stand in body or spirit.*

**We believe that God has entrusted the church  
with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ;  
that the church is called to be the salt of the earth  
and the light of the world,  
that the church is called blessed because it is a peace-maker,  
that the church is witness both by word  
and by deed to the new heaven and the  
new earth in which righteousness dwells.  
This we believe!**

## OFFERTORY

Martin Shaw

With a voice of singing declare ye this, and let it be heard, Alleluia!  
Utter it even unto the ends of the earth. The Lord hath delivered His people, Alleluia!  
O be joyful in God, all ye lands. O sing praises to the honor of His name, make His  
praise to be glorious. -Isaiah 48:20; Psalm 66:1, 7, 8, 18

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

### SENDING

#### HYMN 702

“Christ Be Beside Me”

BUNESSAN

*Please stand in body or spirit.*

#### BLESSING

#### POSTLUDE

“Processional”

Grayston Ives

*The congregation is invited to continue worshipping through the postlude,  
which is offered as a thanksgiving to God.*

Receiving the Sacrament of Baptism this morning is Herman Nolan Sanders,  
son of Katherine Elizabeth McKenzie and Herman Scott Sanders.

### LEADING THIS MORNING

Hannah Faye Allred, M.Div., *Staff Associate for Congregational Care*

Rev. Dr. Barbara Davis, *Executive Minister*

Rev. Dr. Greg Stovell, *Pastor/Head of Staff*

Audrey Webber, M.Div., *Associate for Hospitality and Visual Arts*

The First Church Choir

Michael Shake, *Director of Music*

**MUSIC NOTES** David Conte (b. 1955) is Chair of the Composition Department and Professor of Composition at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Early in his career he was an assistant to Aaron Copland, and studied with the celebrated French teacher and composer Nadia Boulanger as a Fulbright Fellow. Conte’s output of over 150 works includes 7 operas, works for chorus, solo voice, orchestra, band, and chamber music. “Soliloquy” has an earnest simplicity, with a rising, introspective theme that builds to a climax, then subsides. It premiered at a 1996 celebration for American organbuilder Walter Holtkamp, Jr. • Grayston Ives (b. 1948) is a former member of The King’s Singers, and former *Informator Choristarum* (an ancient title for choir directors) of Magdalen College, Oxford. Though much of his work is choral-oriented, he has a small collection of music for organ, including “Processional.” Following a series of assertive gestures to open, the piece transitions into a sprightly march before returning to the opening theme. Though written in the key of C major, the addition of a rather “wrong” sounding F-sharp throughout the piece gives it heightened intensity.

-Michael Shake

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