

The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

Service for the Lord's Day | March 8, 2026 | 11:00 a.m.



The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York, *Stained Glass Window, South Side Balcony*

WELCOME TO FIRST CHURCH

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.

Welcome to the First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York. Over 800 members call this place our spiritual home and we are grateful you are worshipping with us today. We believe First Church is a community of people called to stand on the intersection of faith and life as we witness to the love, grace and justice of God for all people.

Wherever you are in your journey of faith, I pray today's service will be a blessing for you. If this is your first time here, a member of the pastoral staff would love to greet you at the door and answer any questions you may have about the life and ministries of this church.

We are glad you are here. May you experience God's welcome in this place today!

Greg Stovell
Senior Pastor

Join us after worship for Coffee Fellowship in the Lobby to meet one another, say hello to new faces, and enjoy refreshments.

Gender-neutral restrooms are located at the back of the sanctuary as well as through the wooden doors at the front of the sanctuary on the south side. More restrooms can be found in the lobby on the north side of the sanctuary.

GET INVOLVED



GIVE



INTERESTED IN
MEMBERSHIP?



STEWARDSHIP 2026



If you are in need of care, such as prayer or a call from a pastor, a ride to the church, etc., please contact our church office at (212) 675-6150. Our staff will connect you with one of our pastors or a deacon from our caring ministry who can assist with your needs.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

“Preludes on ERHALT UNS, HERR”

J. S. Bach, BWV 1103
Dietrich Buxtehude, BuxWV 185

PEALING OF THE CARILLON

WELCOME

INTROIT

Lead me in your truth, O God, and teach me. Turn to me and have pity on me, for I am left alone and in misery. The sorrows of my heart have increased; bring me out of my troubles. —Psalm 25:15–16 (The Saint Helena Psalter)

Plainsong

HYMN 165

“The Glory of These Forty Days”

ERHALT UNS, HERR

Please stand in body or spirit.

CALL TO CONFESSION

KYRIE

Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us; Lord, have mercy upon us.

Margaret Burk
—ancient liturgical text

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**O Lord our God,
you call us to work for a world
where all will be fed and have dignity,
but we find ourselves distracted by our own desires.
You call us to seek justice and peace,
but we are satisfied with injustice and discord.
You call us to bring liberty to the oppressed,
but we do not insist on freedom for all.
Forgive us, O Lord.
Turn us to your will by the power of your Spirit,
so that all may know your justice and peace;
through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Savior...**

SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

CHORAL AMEN

LIGHTING OF THE PEACE CANDLE AND SHARING SIGNS OF PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

CHILDREN’S PRAYER AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

Children are invited to come forward to the steps for the prayers, and afterward, children age 3 – 6th grade are invited to Church School and should be picked up by their families at the end of the worship service.

**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.**

ANTHEM

Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.

George Frideric Handel

—Isaiah 53:4–5

HEARING THE WORD

LESSON

John 11:38-44

pew Bible, New Testament page 105/large print, New Testament page 128

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

SERMON

“Thin Places: At the Threshold of Death”

Rev. Dr. Greg Stovell

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

HYMN 836

“Abide With Me”

EVENTIDE

Please stand in body or spirit.

stanzas 1-3

ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God’s word to you?

Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?

Will you fulfill your ministry in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions?

Will you be governed by our church’s polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them subject to the ordering of God’s Word and Spirit?

Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?

Do you promise to further peace, unity, and purity of the church?

Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

For elders Will you be a faithful ruling elder, watching over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service? Will you share in government and discipline, serving in councils of the church, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

For deacons Will you be a faithful deacon, teaching charity, urging concern, and directing the people’s help to the friendless and those in need, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

For trustees Will you be a faithful trustee, serving this congregation, being a good steward of that which has been entrusted to us, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We believe that God is present
in the darkness before dawn;
in the waiting and uncertainty
where fear and courage join hands,
conflict and caring link arms,
and the sun rises over barbed wire.**

**We believe in a with-us God
who sits down in our midst
to share our humanity.**

**We affirm a faith
that takes us beyond the safe place
into action, into vulnerability.
and into the streets.**

**We commit ourselves to work for change,
to bear responsibility, to take risks,
live powerfully and face humiliation;
to stand with those on the edge;
to choose life and be used by the Spirit
for God's new community of hope.**

Amen.

OFFERING INVITATION

OFFERTORY

Jesus, so lowly, Child of the earth: christen me wholly, bring me new birth. Jesus, so lonely, weary and sad; teach me that only love maketh glad. Jesus, so broken, silent and pale; be this the token love will not fail. Jesus, victorious, mighty and free; teach me how glorious death is to be.

Harold Friedell

—Edith Williams

DOXOLOGY

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.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

SENDING

HYMN 463

Please stand in body or spirit.

“How Firm a Foundation”

FOUNDATION

BLESSING

POSTLUDE

“Maestoso in C-sharp minor”

Louis Vierne
arr. Alexander Schreiner

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

The cross is dedicated
“In memory of all those who died from AIDS in our church and community.”
Our cross-bearer today is Suzanne Mecs.

LEADING THIS MORNING

Rev. Dr. Greg Stovell, *Senior Pastor*
Rev. Dr. Barbara Davis, *Executive Minister*
Jenny Bennett, *Director of Youth and Family Ministries*

The First Church Choir
Robbie Cowan, *Assisting Conductor*
Michael Shake, *Organist and Director of Music*

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

**Today,
March 8**

- 9:30 a.m. Childcare
- 9:30 a.m. Coffee & Theologians (hybrid)
- 11:00 a.m. Sunday Worship
- 11:15 a.m. Church School
- 12:00 p.m. Coffee & Fellowship + Save Trees Letter Writing
- 12:00 p.m. Open Gallery: "Connecting Dot: The Art of Dorothy C. Sheppard"
- 12:20 p.m. Student Choristers
- 12:30 p.m.. Facing Racism Book Discussion Series

**Monday,
March 9**

- 5:30 p.m. Qigong (virtual)
- 7:00 p.m. Current Events (virtual)

**Wednesday,
March 11**

- 12:00 p.m. Music Meditation
- 12:45 p.m. Open Sanctuary
- 5:30 p.m. Conversational Spanish (virtual)
- 6:30 p.m. Deacons

**Thursday,
March 12**

- 8:30 a.m. Prayer Writing (virtual)
- 12:30 p.m. Elder Care Luncheon

**Saturday,
March 14**

- 10:00 a.m. Soup Kitchen

**Sunday,
March 15**

- 9:30 a.m. Childcare
- 9:30 a.m. Worship Circle with Babies & Toddlers
- 9:30 a.m. Coffee & Theologians (hybrid)
- 11:00 a.m. Sunday Worship
- 11:15 a.m. Church School
- 12:00 p.m. Coffee & Fellowship
- 12:20 p.m. Student Choristers
- 12:30 p.m. Confirmation
- 12:30 p.m. Artificial Intelligence: Ethics, Dangers, and Tools with Rev. Greg Stovell
- 1:00 p.m. Open Gallery: "Connecting Dot: The Art of Dorothy C. Sheppard"
- 1:00 p.m. LGBTQ Brunch



Stay connected with all that's happening at First Church. Scan to receive our weekly newsletter, **First Matters**.

EASTER FLOWERS | DUE BY TUESDAY, MARCH 24

Remember or honor a loved one with a contribution toward the beautiful flowers that will adorn the Chancel on Easter Sunday. Contributions of any amount are welcome. Your dedication will be printed in the Easter Sunday order of worship. Forms are available in the lobby and the Narthex. Complete and return the form with your contribution to the reception desk in the Mellin-Macnab Building. Make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church with "Easter Flowers" in the memo line. Please clearly print the names of those you wish to remember or honor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Connecting Dot: The Art of Dorothy C. Sheppard | Open now through April 19

This exhibition honors the life and work of Dorothy C. Sheppard through paintings, prints, and theatrical masks, with live mask demonstrations during the run of the show. Gallery hours are Tuesdays 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. (except April 7), Wednesdays 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., and Sundays 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. through April 15. Special Sunday events include March 22 (Sonnets), April 12 (Connecting Dot closing reception), and April 19 (Earth Day presentation).

Lent Midweek Music Meditation with Edson Scheid, *violin*; Alissa Smith, *viola*; and Nathan Whittaker, *cello* | Wednesday, March 11 | 12:00–12:45 p.m.

Edson Scheid, Alissa Smith, and Nathan Whittaker are versatile, internationally acclaimed musicians who perform on both modern and period instruments, with credits spanning Carnegie Hall, major European concert halls, and celebrated ensembles across the globe. Pause midweek in the historic Sanctuary of First Church as they offer music by Mozart, Paganini, and Beethoven. All are welcome to step away from the day and be renewed through music in this Lenten season.

Elder Care Luncheon | Thursday, March 12 | 12:30 p.m.

Join us for our Elder Care Luncheon featuring guest speaker Lyndsie Katz, a physical therapist at Bellevue Hospital, who will share a presentation on movement and healthy aging. All are welcome.

Artificial Intelligence: Ethics, Dangers, and Tools | Sunday, March 15 | 12:30 p.m.

Join Pastor Greg in the Library on Sunday, March 15 at 12:30 p.m. for a one-hour presentation exploring what AI is, how it works, its risks, and how it can be used responsibly. Drawing on his background in engineering and decades of experience with AI, Greg will share insights and live demonstrations alongside his AI assistant, “Connie.” A light lunch will be served. All are welcome, no reservation needed.

Art At First | Sunday, March 22 | 2:00 p.m.

Please join us for a reading of Shakespeare Sonnets including a demonstration, with actors using masks created by Dottie Sheppard. A wine and cheese reception will follow. More details to come.

Holy Week at First Church | Sunday, March 29–Sunday, April 5

Join us for Palm Sunday, March 29 at 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary. We will meet at 9:30 a.m. and leave at 9:45 a.m. to walk to Washington Square Park for the ecumenical procession. Continue through the week with Maundy Thursday (April 2, 7:00 p.m.), Good Friday (April 3, 12:00 p.m.), and Easter Sunday (April 5 at 8:00, 9:00, and 11:00 a.m.). Details and Lenten devotional: fpcnyc.org/lent2026.

Adult Education

This year’s hybrid adult education programs explore hope through ancient and contemporary voices.

- **Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. LGBTQ Bible Study: Queer Bodies, Boundaries, and Healing.** We invite you to join this two-part LGBTQ Bible Study as we explore themes of queer bodies, boundaries, and healing. Together we will consider inclusion, wholeness, and the sacredness of our lived experience, meets virtually on March 18.
- **Thursdays at 8:30 a.m. Prayer Writing, Encountering the Holy,** meets virtually on March 12 with themes including Fire, Water, Sky, Sea, Creatures, Humans, and Garden.
- **Thursdays at 12:30 p.m. Bible Study** Join us for Lenten Bible Study: Stories of Resistance, hybrid, March 19.
- **Sundays at 9:30 a.m. Coffee & Theologians** will gather for a hybrid book study of *An Altar in the World*, exploring chapters 5 and 6 on March 8 and 15.

For details and Zoom links, contact the front desk at frontdesk@fpcnyc.org.

Youth & Family Ministries

- **Worship Circle with Babies and Toddlers (ages 0–3),** 9:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. first and third Sundays
- **Church School (ages 3–6th grade),** children should be picked up in the Parlor after worship
- **Student Choristers (grades 1–6),** 12:20 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. Children ages 4–6 are warmly invited to join the Chorister rehearsals. Young singers will prepare alongside our Student Choristers and share in leading worship on Palm Sunday, March 29. All are welcome to come sing!
- **Confirmation (grades 7–9),** select Sundays at 12:30 p.m.; **the next meeting is after worship on Sunday, March 15.**
- **Club 345 (grades 3–5),** fourth Sundays at 10:00 a.m. **The next meeting will be Sunday, March 22.**

For more information, contact Jenny at jbennett@fpcnyc.org.

Deacons of the Month

The March deacons of the month are **Mary Virginia Ireland and Caroline Fjeldheim.** They’ll be wearing a name badge at coffee hour and would be happy to answer questions about the church.



LENT MUSIC MEDITATIONS

WEDNESDAYS, FEBRUARY 18–MARCH 25

12:00–12:45 P.M.

Pause midweek in the historic Sanctuary at First Church to reflect and decompress, with music shared by a vibrant community of artists.

Free and open to all.

FEBRUARY 18 Michael Shake, *organ*

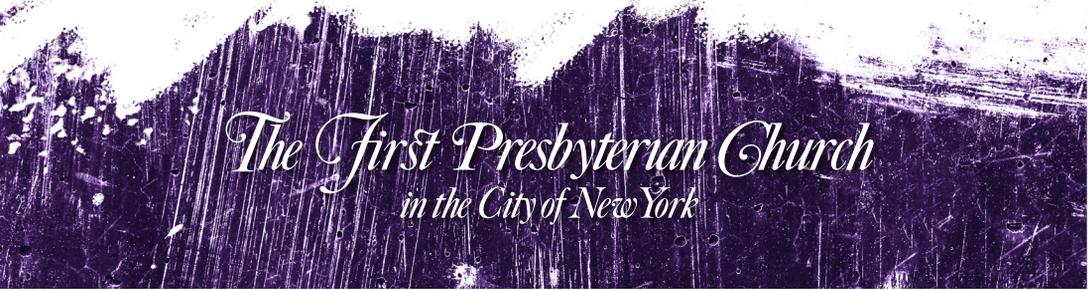
FEBRUARY 25 Kyle P. Walker, *piano*

MARCH 4 Juilliard School Organ Department Students:
Cecily Demarco, Aletheia Teague, and Alex Leonardi

MARCH 11 String Trio: Edson Scheid, *violin*; Alissa Smith, *viola*;
and Nathan Whittaker, *cello*

MARCH 18 Piano Trio: Adrienne Kim, *piano*; Jorge Avila, *violin*;
and Robert Burkhart, *cello*

MARCH 25 Riverside Brass Quintet



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in the City of New York

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