

The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER/ASCENSION SUNDAY

Service for the Lord's Day | May 17, 2026 | 11:00 a.m.



Hilma af Klint, *Group IV, The ten largest, no 3, youth, 1907*

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.

We are an open and inclusive community, gathered by God's grace and shaped by many cultures, identities, and experiences.

Together, we are a tapestry of God's children, seeking to respond to God's call in our lives and to witness to God's love, grace, and justice in the world.

Wherever you are in your journey of faith, we pray today's service will be a blessing to you. If this is your first time here, a member of the pastoral staff would be glad to greet you and answer any questions 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 or on the North Lawn, weather permitting, 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 on the south side. Additional restrooms are located in the lobby on the north side.

GET INVOLVED

STAY CONNECTED



Scan to receive our weekly newsletter, *First Matters*.

INTERESTED IN MEMBERSHIP?



Learn more about becoming part of our community.

GIVE



Support the life and ministries of the church.

If you are in need of care, such as prayer, a call from a pastor, or a ride to the church, 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.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

“Prelude, Aria, and Chanson, from *Suite Antique*”

John Rutter

PEALING OF THE CARILLON

WELCOME

INTROIT

Let us come rejoicing, praising the Lord! Hallelujah! Oh, we sing “hallelujah!” Let us come rejoicing! Praise ye the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

Beth P. McCoy

—Beth P. McCoy

HYMN 268

“Crown Him with Many Crowns”

DIADEMATA

Please stand in body or spirit.

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy One,

we long to be faithful stewards of your abundant grace.

To serve each other in love and humility.

To serve your world with wisdom and energy.

Forgive us when we stumble over pride,

when our words and actions are not guided by love.

Turn our hearts when we act in folly.

Gracious God, our efforts often fail,

but your abundant grace is strong and eternal,

and forgiveness is ours through Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God.

Hear our prayers...

SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

RESPONSE

MFURAHINI, HALELUYA

Christ has a - ris - en to set us free.
Je - sus is liv - ing! Let us all sing;

Al - le - lu - ia, to him prais - es be.
he reigns tri - um - phant, heav - en - ly King.

Let us sing praise to him with end - less joy. Death's fear - ful
sting he has come to de - stroy. Our sin for - giv - ing,
al - le - lu - ia! Je - sus is liv - ing, al - le - lu - ia!

LIGHTING OF THE PEACE CANDLE AND SHARING SIGNS OF PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

ANTHEM

Come, teach us, Spirit of our God, the language of your way, the lessons that we need to live, the faith for every day. Excite our minds to follow you, to trace new truths in store, new flight paths for our spirit space, new marvels to explore. Engage our wits to dance with you, to leap from logic's base, to capture insight on the wing, to sense your cosmic grace. Inspire our spark to light from you, to catch creation's flair, new artistry to celebrate, new harmonies to dare. Delight our hearts to worship you, to learn compassion's code, to live in context of your love, great teacher who is God!

—Shirley Erena Murray

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Children are welcome to come forward for the prayers. Afterward, children ages 3–6th grade are invited to Church School; families may pick them up at the end of the 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.**

HEARING THE WORD

SCRIPTURE LESSON

1 Peter 4:12–14; 5:6–11

pew Bible, New Testament page 235/large print, New Testament page 285

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“God Doesn’t Ask Much”

Rev. Dr. Greg Stovell

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

PRESENTATION OF THE CONFIRMATION CLASS

WELCOME

Kabir, Trevor, Owen, Arun, Henry, Harrison, and Cameron by professing their faith among us today, they have expressed their intention to continue in the covenant with God made with them in their baptism. Today, we present them with Bibles to guide and offer strength for their continued journey of faith. Let us welcome them as they join with us in the worship and mission of the church.

With joy and thanksgiving we welcome you to share with us in the ministry of Christ, for we are all one in Christ.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Please stand in body or spirit.

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.**

OFFERING INVITATION

OFFERTORY

Sidney Campbell
Sing we merrily unto God our strength, make a cheerful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take the psalm, bring hither the tabret, the merry harp with the lute. Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, even in the time appointed, and upon our solemn feast day. For this was made a statute for Israel and a law of the God of Jacob. Alleluya. —Psalm 81:1-4

DOXOLOGY WITH ALLELUIAS

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Please stand in body or spirit.

Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow. Praise God all crea - tures
high and low. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Praise
God, in Je - sus ful - ly known: Cre - a - tor, Word, and Spir - it
one. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Al - le -
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

SENDING

HYMN 546

“Lord, Dismiss Us With Your Blessing”

SICILIAN MARINERS

Please stand in body or spirit.

BLESSING

POSTLUDE

“Allegro assai, from *Sonata in E Major*, BWV 1035”

J.S. Bach

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

RECEIVING THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Rose Julianne Miller

Daughter of Natalie Miller & Alexander Miller

THE CONFIRMATION CLASS OF 2026

Kabir Appea-Khan, Trevor Arcella, Owen Asker, Arun Gadkari

Henry Hale, Harrison Lee, and Cameron Sudol

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

The Music Makers
The Student Choristers
Quincy and Ellington Calder, *Soloists*
Rachel Barker-Asto, *Family Music Coordinator*

The First Church Choir
Reva Youngstein, *Flautist*
Michael Shake, *Organist and Director of Music*

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

**Today,
May 17**

- 9:30 a.m. Coffee & Theologians
- 9:30 a.m. Worship Circle with Babies & Toddlers
- 11:00 a.m. Sunday Worship
- 11:15 a.m. Church School
- 12:00 p.m. Coffee & Fellowship
- 12:20 p.m. Student Choristers Party
- 12:30 p.m. Sacred Spaces Open House
- 2:00 p.m. Creatives Create: Performance & Reception

**Monday,
May 18**

- 5:30 p.m. Qigong (virtual)
- 6:30 p.m. Tartan Fair Meeting (virtual)
- 7:00 p.m. Current Events (virtual)

**Tuesday,
May 19**

- 6:30 p.m. Facing Racism Meeting (virtual)

**Wednesday,
May 20**

- 12:30 p.m. Bible Study (hybrid)
- 5:30 p.m. Conversational Spanish (virtual)
- 7:30 p.m. Virtual LGBTQ Bible Study

**Thursday,
May 21**

- 8:30 a.m. Prayer Writing (virtual)
- 6:00 p.m. New Member Cookout

**Saturday,
May 23**

- 10:00 a.m. Soup Kitchen

**Sunday,
May 24**

- 11:00 a.m. Sunday Worship
- 12:00 p.m. Coffee & Fellowship
- 12:30 p.m. Creatives Create: Open Gallery



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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AIDS Walk | Today, May 17

Support our AIDS WALK TEAM! The NYC AIDS Walk is today, May 17 in Central Park. It's not too late to donate online to this important cause! Go to gmhc.donordrive.com/teams/FPCNYC. If you have questions, contact jamieboswell1@gmail.com or Sally Collins at mission@fpcnyc.org.

Creatives Create: Performance & Reception | Today, May 17 | 2:00 p.m.

Join us for "Deep and Wide," a creative presentation featuring live musical and dramatic performances. Guests are also invited to enjoy an exhibition and reception celebrating the work of our artists.

Virtual LGBTQ Bible Study | Wednesday, May 20 | 7:30 p.m.

Led by Rev. Dr. Barbara Davis, this series will engage in conversations around biblical stories and the book *Queer Virtue* by the Reverend Elizabeth M. Edman. Considering stories of Mary meeting Jesus in the garden outside the tomb and the wedding at Cana, Edman's book considers the "inherent queerness of Christianity" and how reading our sacred stories from this point of view can help us energize our faith beyond the often considered binaries. Also on Wednesdays, June 3 and 17 at 7:00 p.m.

New Member Cookout | Thursday, May 21 | 6:00–8:00 p.m.

All First Church members are invited to a cookout and potluck on the North Lawn as we welcome our new (and newish) members, especially those who joined through the Inquirer's Class beginning February 2024. Burgers, buns, and condiments will be provided. Please bring a side dish to share and anything you would like to grill. To RSVP, email Mark Fontaine at mfontaine@gmail.com and include the number attending.

Summer Music and Community for All Ages | June and July

Join us this summer for music for all ages:

- **Summer Choir** (high school and up, Sundays in June; mshake@fpcnyc.org)
- **Summer Strummers** (intergenerational ukulele, select Sundays in June and July; rbarkerasto@fpcnyc.org)
- **Summer Worship Circle with Babies & Toddlers** (select Sundays in June and July; jbennett@fpcnyc.org)
- **Family Summer Music** (Fridays outdoors in June and July; rbarkerasto@fpcnyc.org)

Adult Education

This season, our hybrid adult education offerings explore hope through ancient and contemporary voices. All are welcome.

- **Coffee & Theologians | Sundays at 9:30 a.m. | May 17, 31; June 14** *The Work of Discipleship in Today's World*. Gather for thoughtful conversation as we consider what it means to live out our faith today. (Hybrid)
- **Bible Study | Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. | May 20, 27; June 10, 17** Join us as we explore the Gospel of John, engaging themes from Dorothy A. Lee's commentary. Together, we will reflect on ideas central to this late first-century community, including wisdom, glory, light, and revelation. (Hybrid)
- **Virtual Prayer Writing | Thursdays at 8:30 a.m. | May 21, 28** A quiet, reflective space to explore prayer through writing and shared practice.

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)**, 9:30–10:15 a.m. first and third Sundays
- **Church School (ages 3–6th grade)**, 11:15 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Today is the final day of Church School before summer break. Following worship, children will be picked up in the Parlor.
- **Student Choristers (grades 1–6)**, 12:20–1:00 p.m. Children are invited to stay after worship for a special end-of-year celebration on the South Lawn as we give thanks for a wonderful season together.

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

Deacons of the Month

The May deacons of the month are **Caroline Fjeldheim, Aurora Jones, and Matthew Power**. They'll be wearing name badges at coffee hour and would be happy to answer questions about the church.

Soup Kitchen Volunteers Needed

St. Joe's Soup Kitchen, now housed at First Church, has been serving meals to folks who need them for more than 40 years. Volunteers are needed each Saturday for two shifts: morning food prep (10:30–1:00 p.m.) and afternoon food service (1:00–3:30 p.m.). No experience is necessary, but please sign up in advance to volunteer. For questions or to get involved, contact sjskvolunteer@gmail.com or go to sjsk.nyc.



SUMMER MUSIC at First Church



MUSIC AND COMMUNITY
FOR ALL AGES

Summer Choir

High school and up | Sundays in June



Summer Strummers

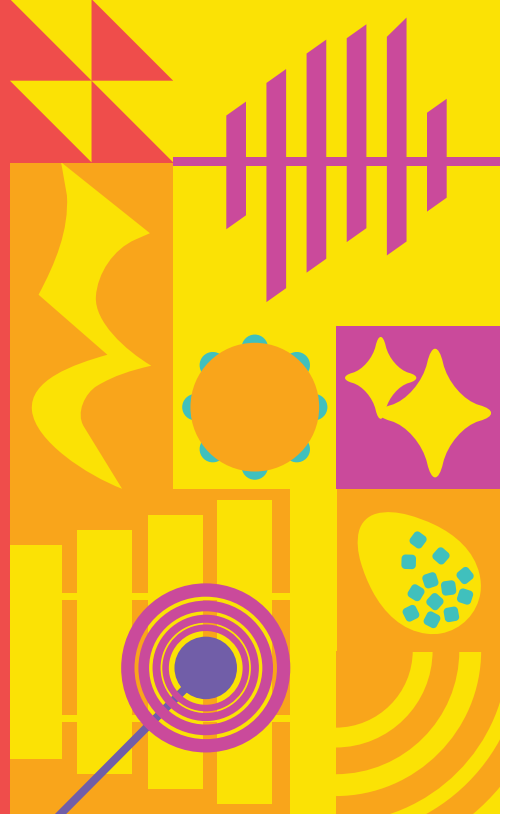
Intergenerational ukulele | Select Sundays in June & July

Summer Worship Circle with Babies & Toddlers

Select Sundays in June & July

Family Summer Music

Fridays outdoors | June & July



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