

The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Service for the Lord's Day | September 20, 2026 | 11:00 a.m.



Rembrandt, *St. Paul in Prison*, 1627

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 our Coffee & Fellowship in the Lobby and 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.

MISSION REVIEW SURVEY



Scan to complete the Congregational Survey.

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 in Eb Major, Opus 41 no. 1”
“Elevation in Ab Major, Opus 25”

ALEXANDER GUILMANT

PEALING OF THE CARILLON

WELCOME

INTROIT

Please stand in body or spirit.

O come, ye servants of the Lord, and praise thy holy name. From early morn to setting sun, God's might on earth
proclaim. Thy laws are just, and glad the heart: God makes their mercies known. Ye princes come, ye people too, and bow
before thy throne.
—paraphrase of Psalm 113:1, 3

HYMN 664

“Morning Has Broken”

BUNESSAN

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy and merciful God,
in your presence we confess
our failure to be what you created us to be.
You alone know how often we have sinned
in wandering from your ways,
in wasting your gifts, in forgetting your love.
By your loving mercy,
help us to live in your light and abide in your ways,
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior.
In your mercy, hear our prayer...

SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

RESPONSE

CORVEDALE



For the love of God is broad - er than the mea - sures of the mind;
and the heart of the E - ter - nal is most won - der - ful - ly kind.
Make our love, O God, more faith - ful; let us take you at your word,
and our lives will be thanks - giv - ing for the good - ness of the Lord.

LIGHTING OF THE PEACE CANDLE AND SHARING SIGNS OF PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD’S PRAYER
Children are welcome to come forward for the prayers. Afterward, children ages 3–5th 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

FIRST LESSON

Psalms 103:1–13

pew Bible, Old Testament page 554/large print, Old Testament page 681

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

ANTHEM

GIVE ME JESUS, ARR. L.L. FLEMING

O when I am alone, give me Jesus. You may have all the rest, give me Jesus.
O, when I die, give me Jesus.
And when I want to sing, give me Jesus.

—Traditional African-American Spiritual

SECOND LESSON

Philippians 1:21–30

pew Bible, New Testament page 196/large print, New Testament page 240

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

SERMON

“Polite Conversation”

Rev. Dr. Greg Stovell

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

HYMN 725

“O Jesus I Have Promised”

NYLAND

Please stand in body or spirit.

RECOGNITION OF FAITHFUL SERVICE: KEITH BLACKNALL

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

from Brief Statement of Faith, PC(USA), 1983

**In a broken and fearful world
the Spirit gives us courage
to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.
In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God’s new heaven and new earth,
praying, “Come, Lord Jesus!”**

OFFERING INVITATION

OFFERTORY

W.A. MOZART

Ave verum corpus, natum de Maria Virgine,
vere passum, immolatum in cruce pro homine.
Cujus latus perforatum fluxit aqua et sanguine;
esto nobis praegustatum in mortis examine.

English translation:
Hail, true Body, born of the Virgin Mary,
having truly suffered, sacrificed on the cross for mankind,
from whose pierced side water and blood flowed:
Be for us a sweet foretaste in the trial of death!

— Anonymous, 13th C.

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.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

SENDING

HYMN 634

Please stand in body or spirit.

“To God Be the Glory”

TO GOD BE THE GLORY

BLESSING

POSTLUDE

“Allegro non troppo, from Brandenburg Concerto no. 1, Opus 1046 ”

J.S. BACH

*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.”

RECEIVING THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM
 Penelope Matic Garner
 Ophelia Matic Garner
 Daughters of Katarina Matic Garner & Shelby Harris Garner

Evelyn Dianne Kirby
 Daughter of Helen Kirby & Morgan Kirby

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

The First Church Choir
 Colin Fowler, *Visiting Musician*

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

**Today,
September 20**

9:30 a.m. Child Care
9:30 a.m. Coffee & Theology (hybrid)
9:30 a.m. Mission Review Listening Session
9:30 a.m. Worship Circle with Babies & Toddlers
11:00 a.m. Worship
11:15 a.m. Church School
12:00 p.m. Coffee & Fellowship
12:20 p.m. Student Choristers
12:30 p.m. Church School Training
12:30 p.m. LGBTQ Brunch (offsite)
1:30 p.m. Literary Group (hybrid)

**Monday,
September 21**

5:30 p.m. Qigong (virtual)
6:30 p.m. Earth Care (virtual)
7:00 p.m. Current Events (virtual)

**Tuesday,
September 22**

11:30 a.m. Coffee with the Pastor
5:30 p.m. Village Campus Ministry

**Wednesday,
September 23**

12:30 p.m. Bible Study (hybrid)

**Thursday,
September 24**

6:00 p.m. Gospel According to The Beatles

**Saturday,
September 26**

10:00 a.m. Inquirers Class
10:00 a.m. Soup Kitchen

**Sunday,
September 27**

9:30 a.m. Child Care
9:30 a.m. Coffee & Theology (hybrid)
10:00 a.m. Family & Music Ministries Parent Breakfast
11:00 a.m. Worship
11:15 a.m. Bibles & Bagels
11:15 a.m. Church School
12:00 p.m. Coffee & Fellowship
12:20 p.m. Student Choristers
12:20 p.m. Voices Project Film Screening
12:30 p.m. Revisiting the Old First & Slavery Report
2:00 p.m. Art Show Opening: Tell Me A Story



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

The Voices Project
A City Church



Sunday, September 27 | 12:20 p.m.
Cinema Village
22 East 12th Street

Join us for the final screening of this 80-minute oral history of First Church
created by the Elder Care Committee and directed by Steve Umberger.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Inquirers Class | September 26 | 10:00 a.m.

Interested in joining First Church? Join us for an Inquirers Class to learn more about our congregation, what we believe, and how you can become more involved in the life of the church. To reserve your spot, please email acaba@fpcnyc.org.

Add Your Voice to the Mission Review

The Mission Review is a foundational step before the Church may recruit candidates for an Associate Pastor. The congregational engagement portion of the Mission Review has begun. Survey data is being collected via SurveyMonkey. The survey is anonymous and will close October 14. You can access the survey by scanning the QR code on the inside page of your bulletin.

Please also join us for one of two remaining Listening Sessions:

- Sunday, October 4, 12:30–1:30 p.m., in the rooftop lounge
- Saturday, October 10, 4:00–5:00 p.m., via Zoom

Coffee with the Pastor | Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m.

Drop by for coffee and conversation with Rev. Dr. Greg Stovell about life, church, faith, current events, or simply to get to know one another. All are welcome, and no RSVP is required. Join us Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m.

The Story & Faith Behind VeggieTales | Tuesday, September 29 | 12:30 p.m.

Join us for a special lunchtime conversation with Leslie Ferrell, Senior Vice President of Big Idea Content Group at NBCUniversal, who has helped shape VeggieTales for more than 25 years. Leslie will share about her faith journey, the story behind *VeggieTales*, and the role of Christian storytelling in the faith formation of children and families.

The Bible, Theology, and *The New Yorker*

This fall, our adult education programs will explore the Bible, theology, and *The New Yorker* through two recent articles examining American theology and the life and influence of the Apostle Paul.

- Sundays at 9:30 a.m. Coffee & Theology gathers for hybrid conversation and theological reflection on “How Did American Theology End Up Like This?”
- Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. Bible Study meets in a hybrid format for a deeper exploration of the articles alongside scripture, considering their theological themes and what they mean for our understanding of faith today.

For Zoom links, see *First Matters* or contact the front desk at frontdesk@fpcnyc.org.

The Gospel According to The Beatles

Join Rev. Dr. Greg Stovell Thursday nights at 6:00 p.m. for a six-week journey through the music of The Beatles and the enduring themes of faith, love, hope, loneliness, memory, and resurrection. Through song, scripture, and conversation, we'll explore how some of the most beloved music of the twentieth century continues to speak to the deepest questions of our lives.

Youth & Family Ministries

This year, our Youth & Family Ministries programs offer children and young people opportunities to grow in faith, build friendships, ask big questions, and experience God's love through worship, learning, music, and fellowship.

- Worship Circle with Babies and Toddlers (ages 0–3 and their caregivers), 9:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. first and third Sundays of each month, September through July
- Church School (ages 3–grade 5), Sundays, 11:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- Student Choristers (grades 1–6), Sundays, 12:20 p.m. to 12:50 p.m.
- Club 345 (grades 3–5), last Sunday of the month, 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
- Youth Leadership Council (grades 6–12), seasonal weeknight dinners throughout the year
- Bibles & Bagels (middle and high school), twice a month during worship

Music at First Church: 2026–27 Season

At the intersection of the Village and the City, our musicians invite you to encounter the beauty of holiness, to live in wonder, and resonate in rhythm. Join us for another inspiring season of music at First Church. The 2026–27 season brings back cherished traditions while introducing exciting new musical offerings throughout the year. Whether you've attended these events for years or are joining us for the first time, we hope you'll be part of this season of worship, beauty, and community. Stay tuned for more details about each event in the months ahead.

2026 Mission & Social Justice Grants Due September 30

First Church is now accepting applications for the 2026 Grant Program. Grants support PC(USA)-related agencies and New York City nonprofit organizations working in areas such as environmental stewardship, food insecurity, immigration & refugee support, interfaith dialogue, LGBTQ advocacy, poverty relief, racial equity, and special needs populations. Know an organization that could benefit? Applications are open through September 30, 2026. You can find the application on our website at fpcnyc.org/serve/grants. Questions? Contact mission@fpcnyc.org.



Inquirers Class

Saturday, September 26 | 10:00 a.m.

Email acaba@fpcnyc.org to RSVP.

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