

HOME COMING 2026

Three small birds, possibly sparrows, are depicted in flight. One is positioned on the left side of the word 'HOME', another is on the right side of 'HOME', and a third is on the right side of the word 'COMING'. They are all facing right, suggesting a journey or arrival.

The God of
Small Things
Sept. 13

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

WELCOME TO THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

In 1923, hymn writer Thomas Chisholm penned what has become one of our favorite hymns. He wrote, "Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see." How true that is. I know this is true for you. It is true for me as well. And the curious thing is that God's daily morning mercies are rarely spotlight seekers. The mercies I see are simply not big.

They are not the parting of the Hudson or a burning bush in the middle of Central Park. They are the little things which renew my faith and my heart.

Church is like that. It's rarely about the big and the headline-seeking. Church is rarely a feeding of the 5,000. More often, it is two strangers sitting in the same pew sharing a morsel of bread and a sip of grape juice while uttering timeless words.

We do not regularly experience a banquet feast for the prodigal son, but we do gather around a table with God's children having chicken sliders on Homecoming Sunday simply sharing life. It is not normally the defense of a doctoral dissertation on systematic theology, but a small group of friends with Bibles in front of them, reflecting on the intersection of God's Word and the world around them. Not a timeless and expertly crafted psalm recited before a crowd of thousands, but a humble prayer uttered by a church member asking for God's blessing at the beginning of a meeting.

It's watering trees. It's serving food on a Saturday. It's sorting goods for a yard sale. It's telling the youngest of our members a biblical story heard for the first time. It's the beauty of small things.

This booklet will give you but a brief glimpse into this year's ministry program. There are a few events planned full of gold, glitter, and glory, but for the most part you will find faithful people doing small things, growing closer to a faithful God.

My prayer is that in these pages you will find a place that feeds your spirit, builds your faith, blesses your life, and draws you closer to the God of great and small things.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Stovell". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Greg Stovell
Pastor

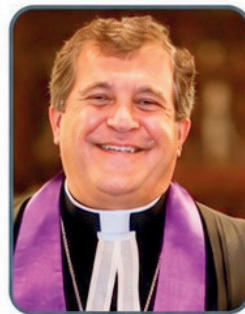
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YEAR AT A GLANCE

For the most up-to-date details, check out *First Matters*, our weekly newsletter, and fpcnyc.org/calendar

SEPTEMBER

- 13 Homecoming Sunday: *The God of Small Things*
- 19 Annual Yard Sale
- 27 The Voices Project Screening
- 27 Art at First Opening Reception: *Tell Me a Story*

OCTOBER

- 5 Inquirers Class on Zoom

NOVEMBER

- 1 All Saints' Day: Requiem
- 29 First Sunday of Advent

DECEMBER

- 4–6 Tartan Christmas Fair
- 6 Vespers Festival: *Welcome All Wonders*
- 12 Family Christmas Celebration & Nativity
- 20 Advent Candlelight Carols
- 24 Christmas Eve Worship

FEBRUARY

- 9 Beer, Beverages & Hymns
- 10 Ash Wednesday

MARCH

- 21 Palm Sunday
- 24 Reading of the Gospel of Mark
- 25 Maundy Thursday Worship
- 26 Good Friday Worship
- 27 Family Easter Celebration and Egg Hunt
- 28 Easter Sunday

APRIL

- 25 Vespers Festival: *Rejoice in the Lamb*

JUNE

- 13 Graduation Sunday
- 27 Pride Sunday

COMING THIS FALL 2026



The Gospel According to the Beatles Starting Thursday, September 17 | 6:00 p.m.

Join Rev. Dr. Greg Stovell on Thursday nights beginning September 17 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.



Coffee with the Pastor Tuesdays beginning September 15 | 11:30 a.m. Travelers Poets & Friends

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.



Inquirers Classes | In Person & Online

Interested in learning more about First Church or becoming a member? Our next in-person Inquirers Class will be Saturday, September 26 at 10:00 a.m.

In addition to our scheduled in-person class, we are offering an online Inquirers Class on Zoom on Monday, October 5 at 6:30 p.m. This online gathering is open to anyone who cannot attend a Saturday class, including those who live outside New York City or overseas and would like to be part of our community of faith.

Contact Aileen Caba at acaba@fpcnyc.org to register.

ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

The Bible, Theology, and *The New Yorker*

This past spring, *The New Yorker* published two fascinating theological articles that will guide our conversation and study this fall.

"How Did American Theology End Up Like This?"

An exploration of American theology, how it developed, the forces that have shaped it, and what its history can tell us about faith and religious life today.

"World on a String: What Prepared St. Paul to Transform Human History"

A look at the life and world of the Apostle Paul, considering the religious, cultural, and historical influences that prepared him to become one of the most consequential figures in Christian history.

Coffee and Theology

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. | Hybrid

Gather for conversation and theological reflection as we engage the ideas and questions raised by these articles.

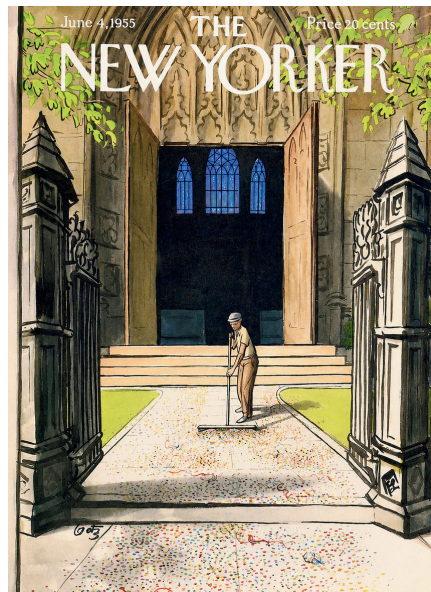
Bible Study

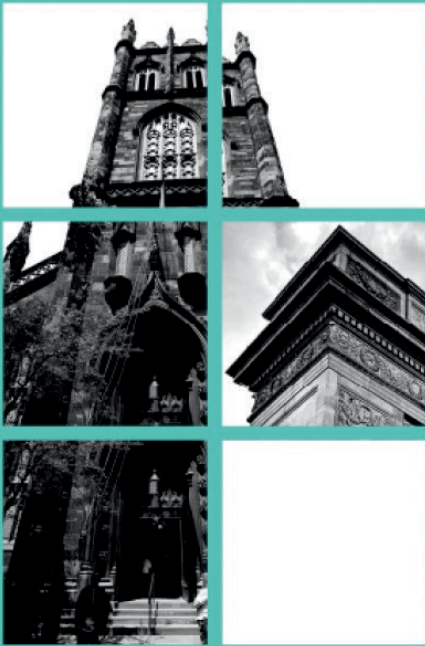
Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. | Hybrid

Take a deeper look at the articles alongside scripture, exploring their theological themes and what they might mean for our understanding of faith today.

You can find the Zoom links on *First Matters* or by emailing frontdesk@fpcnyc.org.

The image may look familiar! The June 4, 1955 cover of *The New Yorker*, illustrated by Arthur Getz, depicts our own First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York. Getz was one of the magazine's most prolific cover artists, creating more than 200 covers during his career.





2026–27 MUSIC AT FIRST CHURCH

MUSIC MINISTRY

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.

November 1, 2026 | 11:00 a.m.
All Saints' Day: Requiem

December 6, 2026 | 4:00 p.m.
Vespers Festival: *Welcome All Wonders*

December 20, 2026 | 4:00 p.m.
Candlelight Carols

February 9, 2027 | 7:00 p.m.
Beer, Beverages & Hymns

February 10–March 17, 2027 | 12:00 p.m.
Wednesday Lenten Music Meditations

March 26, 2027
Good Friday Seven Last Words of Christ

April 25, 2027 | 4:00 p.m.
Vespers Festival: Rejoice in the Lamb

May 16, 2027 | 11:00 a.m.
Music Ministry Celebration



THE FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

The First Church Choir is an integral part of the spiritual life of First Church.

This choral community of more than 25 volunteer and staff musicians represents a diversity of faith traditions, ages, and musical experiences.

From anthems in worship to larger choral works for Vespers Festivals and the beloved Advent Candlelight Carols service, the Choir lifts its voices together in songs of praise and prayer.

Rehearsals

Sundays, 9:30–10:30 a.m. and 12:15–1:15 p.m.

The Choir also provides musical leadership during Sunday worship at 11:00 a.m.

Interested in Joining?

Singers are invited to become part of this vibrant musical community. For more information, contact Michael Shake at mshake@fpcnyc.org.

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRIES

At First Church, children and young people are an important part of the church today. From infants to high school students, we offer opportunities to grow in faith, build meaningful friendships, ask big questions, and experience God's love through wonder, service, music, and shared experiences.

Whether you're a longtime member or visiting for the first time, you are welcome here. To learn more, contact Jenny Bennett, Director of Youth and Family Ministries, at jbennett@fpcnyc.org, or Rachel Barker-Asto, Family Music Coordinator, at rbarkerasto@fpcnyc.org.

Church School | Ages 3–Grade 5
Sundays, 11:15 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Club 345 | Grades 3–5
Last Sunday of the month, 10:00–10:30 a.m.

Student Choristers | Grades 1–6
Sundays, 12:20–12:50 p.m.

Worship Circle with Babies and Toddlers
Ages 0–3 and their caregivers
*First and third Sundays of each month,
September–July, 9:30–10:15 a.m.*

Youth Leadership Council | Grades 6–12
Seasonal weeknight dinners throughout the year



NEW ADDITIONS!

Bibles & Bagels | Middle & High School
Twice a month during worship

The Chimes Project | Middle & High School
Schedule to be announced

HOW TO CONNECT

There are so many ways for people of all ages to connect and learn and serve with First Church. Here are a few!

Art at First Action Group

Art at First embraces the creative spark in all of God's children by encouraging and hosting art exhibitions and performances by members of our congregation and community. They bring into being shows that move and enlighten participants in intersections of art, faith, peace, and justice. Artists, performers, and enthusiasts welcome!
Contact: artatfirst@fpcnyc.org.

Current Events

This virtual chat takes place Mondays at 7:00 p.m. year-round.
Contact: frontdesk@fpcnyc.org

Deacons

Our Deacons offer compassionate care and support to members of our church community. To connect with a Deacon, request pastoral care, or be added to the prayer list, please email Rev. Dr. Barbara Davis at bdavis@fpcnyc.org

Earth Care Action Group

This active group provides myriad educational programs and seminars, gardening and tree-watering, conservation advocacy, art-making, and leads the annual Earth Care Congregation certification and Earth Month activities.
Contact: earthcare@fpcnyc.org

Elder Care Action Group

Hosts monthly luncheons with speakers, and group members also provide outreach to people who are ill or in need.
Contact: frontdesk@fpcnyc.org

Facing Racism Action Group

Using programs, book studies, trips, and monthly meetings, Facing Racism aims to educate, listen, raise awareness, and advocate, as it works against racism to build a beloved community. In educational events, worship and lunch, the group regularly joins our Brooklyn sister congregation, the Church of Gethsemane, whose primary mission is with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals.
Contact: sdhmecs@yahoo.com

HOW TO CONNECT

LGBTQIA+ Action Group

Committed to building community, support, outreach, faith, and fun, the group has brunches, Bible & book studies, advocacy and service opportunities, and is involved in the NYC AIDS Walk and Pride events. The group invites all to participate and everyone is welcome!

Contact: LGBTQ.FPCNYC@gmail.com

Literary Group

This group meets in person and online monthly on Sundays at 1:30 p.m.

Contact: frontdesk@fpcnyc.org

Membership Committee

This group fosters opportunities for fellowship and spiritual growth among longtime members and newcomers of all ages.

Contact: ssakamoto@gmail.com

Global Mission Action Group

Enthusiastically engaged with our partner church in Taguasco, Cuba, Global Mission is involved with the purified water system installation, senior feeding project, "Partnership of Partners" (with three other PC(USA) churches), Clean Water for Taguasco, education programs, collaboration, support and fellowship with our Cuban siblings.

Contact: saalburger@gmail.com

Presbyterian Women Action Group

For women of all ages, the group has monthly in-person and online meetings for Bible study and discussion, along with regular fellowship and service events. The group welcomes participation from friends outside of the First Church community and from those who have moved away from the city and join online.

Contact: sooyoun@mac.com

Qigong

This meditative practice takes place virtually on Monday evenings at 5:30 p.m. from September through June.

Contact: harpermeg718@gmail.com

HOW TO CONNECT

Refugees and Immigration Action Group

Refugees and Immigration partners with and supports the First Spanish Presbyterian Church in its work with migrant communities in Brooklyn. It also works with Church World Service and the Refugee Immigration Fund (RIF) to provide support for newcomers, including advising, financial assistance, and the annual coat drive.
Contact: walkercme@mac.com

Eradicating Poverty Action Group

St. Joe's Soup Kitchen at First Church

Housed at First Church, St. Joe's serves 300-plus meals each Saturday to homeless and hungry people. Volunteers needed to help cook and serve.

Contact: volunteer@sjsk.nyc or sjsknyc.org.

Compass House Women's Employment Shelter

First Church supports and connects with the residents of the new shelter on 11th Street which serves women currently employed or seeking employment.

Contact: mission@fpcnyc.org

Tartan Fair and Yard Sale

Donations and volunteers are needed before and during the church's biggest community events: the Yard Sale (September 19) and Tartan Christmas Fair (December 4–6).

Contact: tartanfair@fpcnyc.org or tartanfair.org

Village Campus Ministry

College students gather on Tuesdays (6:15–7:30 p.m.) during the academic year at First Church for a free meal, conversation, and prayer in community.

Contact: Becca at pastor@thevinenyc.org

Young Adults

Activities include opportunities for 20- and 30-year-olds to gather for conversation and community.

Contact: emilydawson1992@gmail.com

MISSION & SOCIAL JUSTICE GRANT PROGRAM

This year, First Church awarded nearly \$200,000 in grants to Presbyterian agencies and nonprofit organizations whose work reflects our commitment to service, justice, compassion, and care.

2026 Grant Recipients

Asylum Support Clinic
Blanton-Peale Institute
Broadway Community
Church of Gethsemane
Church World Service
Covenant Network of Presbyterians
First Spanish Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn
GMHC
Holmes Camp & Retreat Center
Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy
Kaleidoscope Ministries
Presbyterian Historical Society
Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
Presbytery of New York City's Justice Ministries
Rainbow Railroad
RIF Asylum Support
Sister Church in Taguasco, Cuba's Senior Feeding Program
St. James Presbyterian Church in Harlem
St. Joe's Soup Kitchen
The Voices Project
Treatment Action Group
Village Campus Ministry
West 11th Street Block Association

There's still time to apply!
Applications are due on September 30, 2026.
Scan the QR code to learn more.



LIFE AT FIRST CHURCH



FIRST MATTERS

Our weekly email is the best way to know what's happening at First Church, from worship and upcoming events to opportunities to learn, serve, and gather.



LIVESTREAM WORSHIP

Can't join us in person? Worship with us from wherever you are. Our Sunday services are livestreamed each week at 11:00 a.m. on YouTube.



COMING SOON! THE CHURCH CENTER APP

Keep a look out for information coming soon regarding the Church Center app. This will be a way for us to connect and keep in touch with the life of the church.



GIVE

For more than three centuries, First Church has been a place of faith, community, and hope. Your support helps this ministry continue.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow @fpcnyc on Instagram and Facebook for updates and glimpses into the life of First Church.



The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York



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