

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY



THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

October 4, 2020
10:45 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas
Link to worship videos available at: www.fpcbryan.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

There Is a Fountain

arr. Cindy Berry

WELCOME

We welcome you to worship today.

Let us read responsively the words of Psalm 117:
Praise and extol the Lord, all you nations and peoples!

For great is the Lord's steadfast love toward us!

Truly, the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.

Praise the Lord!

HYMN NO. 1

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!

NICAEA

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.

Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty! God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

**Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore thee, casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee, who wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.**

**Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide thee, though the eye of sinfulness thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee, perfect in power, in love and purity.**

**Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty! God in three persons, blessed Trinity!**

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Text in **bold face type** is to be read by all.

PRAYERS OF PRAISE AND CONFESSION

**With both our voices and every part of each one’s life, O God, we honor and glorify your holy name! We also acknowledge and realize our failings and unworthiness before you. In these moments of silence, we approach your throne of grace seeking your forgiveness where we have fallen short of your desires for our well-being . . . (pausing in silence for prayer)**

Make us whole in your love, Blessed One. Anoint us with the ointment of your unending faithfulness and sacred kindness. Bring your new life among us for serving you every day in the way and spirit of Jesus Christ . . .

Friends, let us hear and share with gladness the blessed news of the Gospel.

**In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!**

HYMN OF RESPONSE NO. 606

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

OLD HUNDREDTH

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creatures here below;  
praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 6:3,6-9; I Corinthians 4:1-2

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL PROCLAMATION

Maintaining Divine Worship and Being Stewards of the Mysteries of God

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

INVITATION

WORDS OF INSTITUTION: BREAKING AND POURING



PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION, AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

Let us pray . . . Eternal God, receive our thanksgiving for all that you have given to us and of which you have called us to be stewards. Multiply the offerings of our lives with a witness to your love through faith communities and among your people, both close by and around the globe. God of mercy, as your love and power both mend brokenness and give support in the most threatening of situations and to the most vulnerable of persons . . . Where relationships are torn by cutting remarks and stubborn pride, bring your healing. Where the distance of miles creates loneliness, bring your healing. Where war, anarchy, political and religious strife either smolder or ignite and spread rampantly, bring your healing. Where illness, and injury, and age have taken their toll, bring your healing. Spare us, O God, not ambiguities and pain in life. Grant not success, as we measure success. Yet go before us, beside us, and behind us, abiding close, that we and all others might receive your life in abundance and behold your realm and providence, even amid this world’s difficulties. Now, from this table of communion with your people everywhere, nourish us and give us drink through these elements of field and vine. Grow within us the spirit of Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected, our host and our mentor always.

Hear us also praying now, as Jesus taught the community of faith to believe and give voice:

**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.**

COMMUNION SOLO

O Love (Hymn No. 833, St. 1.)

arr. Elaine Hagenberg

*O Love that wilt not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee;  
I give thee back the life I owe, that in thine ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be.*

PRAYER OF COMMISSIONING



# A WARM WELCOME!

*We are delighted to have you worship with us today.*

## WORSHIP NOTES

### PREACHER

Rev. Ted Foote

### LITURGIST

Rev. Emily K. Béghin

### USHERS | GREETERS

Yunior Torres Camargo;  
Randy Gholson; Ruth Ann Gholson;  
Dave Haverland; Nicole McKinley

### MUSICIANS

Michelle Lassiter, *Pianist & Flautist*  
Kathrine MacNeil, *Organist*  
David Kipp,  
*Director of Music Ministries*

### FLOWERS

With thanksgiving to God  
and in celebration of the birth of  
Ella Katherine Busby,  
great niece of Karon & Glenn Mathews,  
in New Orleans, Louisiana,  
on April 24, 2020

### AUDIO-VISUAL | SOUND

David Kipp; Jerry Norris

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## THIS WEEK AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

### WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2020

**PRE-RECORDED DEVOTIONAL** (To view, visit [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org))

9:20am Seekers Church School Class-Parlor/via Zoom

9:20am The Word Church School Class-303/via Zoom

9:30am Loose Leaf Church School Class-via Zoom

**10:45am WORSHIP (livestreamed)-Sanctuary \***

12:00pm NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

5:45pm Youth participate in Blessing of the Animals-

Meet on the 31<sup>st</sup> St. Lawn near the cross

(followed by sandwiches and sides in Fellowship Hall)

6:00pm Blessing of the Animals-on the 31<sup>st</sup> St. Lawn near the cross

### MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2020

5:00pm Worship Committee-FH

### TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2020

### WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2020

10:00am Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team Meeting-P/via Zoom

### THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2020

7:00pm Circle VII-via Zoom

### FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2020

### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2020

### NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, OCTOBER 11, 2020

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9:20am The Word Church School Class-303/via Zoom

9:30am Loose Leaf Church School Class-via Zoom

**10:45am WORSHIP (livestreamed)-Sanctuary \***

5:45pm Youth (GR 6-12) Fellowship-Meet in Fellowship Hall

\* *During COVID-19, Room 108 is available for your nursery needs*

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## Maintaining Divine Worship and Being Stewards of the Mysteries of God

Isaiah 6:3,6-9 and First Corinthians 4:1-2

October 04, 2020

Ted V. Foote, Jr.

First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas

Today we explore the third of “The Great Ends of the Church,” originating from a statement of the United Presbyterian Church of North America in 1910. That third “Great End” is “the maintenance of divine worship.” The “maintenance of divine worship” means that any group of God’s people schedule, plan, and arrange for the implementation of worship: music, prayers, songs, Scripture, proclamation (or preaching), and periodic celebration of sacraments or ordinances such as The Lord’s Supper and Baptism.

There’s no single acceptable location for “divine worship.” In my own life-experience, I’ve known of worship, of preaching, of baptisms, and of The Lord’s Supper in cathedrals, small country church buildings, outdoor amphitheatres, at lakesides and riversides, in a rural setting with the neighbor’s hound-dog nuzzling open the not-quite shut door and lying down in front of the pulpit, with a blue dirt-dobber buzzing around the fluorescent light in the ceiling, with buzzards or eagles circling overhead. It’s also accurate to say that congregations can become known (or trademarked) for certain styles of worship. That’s understandable. At the Descending Dove Independent Church of the Holy Spirit you won’t find a pastor in a clerical collar and alb reading from an Episcopal Book of Common Prayer. Nor will you find a pastor in business casual or a flannel shirt and jeans preaching at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Manhattan.

If we understand that different styles of worship exist in different traditions and settings, why is “the maintenance of divine worship” one of the six goals (or “ends”) of the church? It’s because worship is the event through which God communes with God’s people collectively (or corporately) gathered. What we’ve learned during COVID-19 as First Presbyterian-Bryan, which we had not experienced pre-COVID-19, is that the church can be gathered collectively and corporately yet not be at or on the same site simultaneously. We worship as a people gathered in the unity of God’s Spirit in Christ, but we may be miles apart or worshipping at different hours of the day. When, then, God communes with us through worship, (1) God receives people, (2) God engages with people, (3) God nourishes people, and (4) God commissions people. We are received, engaged, nourished, and commissioned. (1) Received as children, youth, and adults invited and gathered around Jesus. (2) Engaged for growing spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and relationally. (3) Nourished with grace for increased strength and health for the journey through life. (4) Commissioned for service following God’s call, God’s guidance, and God’s embodied love in and through Jesus. Received. Engaged. Nourished. Commissioned. That’s why and what happens when we worship regularly. And people are a huge part of the equation.

It certainly is the case that not every worship service for every person is equally inspiring and life-changing. Some say, “That’s not my style.” “I don’t get much out of worship.” “I feel bored.” “I feel unconnected to people or to God in that setting.” I don’t argue with anyone’s personally held perspectives. I do understand that the maintenance of divine worship is a primary goal of any church or faith community. I have seen “the maintenance of divine worship” work, although I cannot claim to understand it. The Isaiah scripture indicates the richness of symbolism conveying the experience of God who becomes present in the worship setting. The verses read from First Corinthians, chapter 4, mention God’s people being “stewards of the mysteries of God.” When I was an associate pastor in San Antonio for four years from 1979 to 1983, my staff supervisor was the Reverend Tom Schmid. Tom introduced me to his fascination of many years with Paul’s reference to being “stewards of the mysteries of God.” Interpreters have at least three

definitions or meanings they deduce from that phrase. (1) It may mean “those students of Scripture and theology who are recognized as having particular faith insights.” They would be stewards of the mysteries of God. (2) It may mean “priests and pastors who administer the sacraments of the church. The sacraments are the mysteries and the clergy are certified stewards of the sacraments.” (3) Tom Schmid’s notion of the “stewards of the mystery of God,” however, was the whole body of God’s people who are received by God’s grace, engaged by God’s grace, nourished through God’s grace, and commissioned by God’s grace. God’s grace is that mystery. And you are a steward of that grace! And I am. We are SOTMOGs. Stewards Of The Mysteries Of God. Our worship together, if nothing else, embodies God’s love in different ways but with the message and a relational style or styles which convey that “grace is alive in all parts of life.” Most often unpredictability. You never know what grace God is going to grow through worship together. And people are a huge part of the equation.

Around 1981 a woman in her late 30s or early 40s came to worship at the San Antonio church where I served with Tom. She was accompanied by her son who was about 10 or 11. She was not married. Her son was adopted. She was a commercial property manager by occupation. She came looking for a community of faith who would embody God’s grace with her and her son, even though many in the community of faith sensed she did not represent every stereotype they held dear. In 1983, when Joanie and I moved six hours away to East Texas, Charlotte and Travis came up one weekend to visit with us. She told me what she had known for awhile: that she was diagnosed with an auto-immune disease with vascular complications, and that she could die sometime of a ruptured aneurysm, even in the years of middle age. That congregation in San Antonio who, in their church power structure, was often not sure what to make of Charlotte, eventually elected her chairwoman of the building committee for the new sanctuary, because she knew about buildings. A year later, when the construction phase was beginning, Tom called me to say that Charlotte had suffered a leaking brain aneurysm. Within days she died. Travis moved to live with Charlotte’s parents. Charlotte’s body was cremated. Her parents hesitantly asked if the cremains could be scattered among the rebar before the concrete to the sanctuary’s foundation was poured. That’s what was done, as close to where Tom calculated that Charlotte’s sitting location in the new sanctuary would have been. The church among whom a woman arrived one day for worship, the church that initially could not figure out how they could easily relate to her due to their sad stereotypes, before it was too late, figured out how she was a remarkable steward of the mysteries of God, and, in that sense, how her being a SOTMOG made them grow stronger as stewards of the mysteries of God than they otherwise would have predicted. Sadly and with humorous irony, of course, Charlotte took her place in that new sanctuary before any of them.

Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God Almighty! Heaven and earth are full of your glory, claiming us in love and influencing us by grace as all sorts of people to be stewards of the mysteries of God! That’s why the church is responsible for the maintenance of divine worship, where God receives, engages, nourishes, and commissions all ages and types of people. If we don’t maintain that tradition, habit, and custom – how ever worship might change somewhat through the years – we will be the losers. Yet if, like that church in San Antonio and so many others all around the world and through the centuries, if we maintain the worship of God and the relationships God graciously and even surprisingly grows among us with other persons, we also will be changed as God sees fit, as God challenges us, and as God moves among us with life-changing and community-changing love in the way and spirit of Jesus. Yes, we stewards of the mysteries of God will always be being changed as the Eternal Holy One intends! – All honor and praise be to God.