

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

October 11, 2020
10:45 a.m.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Jesus, Lord, We Look to Thee

arr. Cindy Berry

WELCOME

We welcome you to worship today.

Let us read responsively the words of Psalm 146:

Blessed are those whose help is in the One who called and claimed Jacob.

Whose help is in the One who sets prisoners free!

Who opens the eyes of the blind!

Who lifts up those who are bowed down!

This One will reign forever.

Praise the Lord!

HYMN NO. 465

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

CONVERSE

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!

**O what peace we often forfeit; O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!**

**Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer!**

**Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge; take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In his arms he'll take and shield thee; thou wilt find a solace there.**

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

PRAYERS OF PRAISE AND CONFESSION

Let us pray together . . . **O God of all that is: The skies, whether blue above or cloudy-gray with moisture, serve as the canopy under which we are the people of your earth; and yours is a sovereignty above and around us. We praise you! We also realize in our creatureliness and humanness that we are sinners in thought, word, and deed beyond your direction and goals for us. In your mercy, forgive us all our failings, wanderings, and turning from integrity and faithfulness . . .** *(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. 581

Glory Be to The Father

GLORIA PATRI

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Ghost;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen, amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING

Proverbs 29:18a; John 8:31-32, 14:6, 18:37-38

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

GOSPEL PROCLAMATION

God's Long-view Vision and Practicing Following Jesus:  
God's Way/Truth/Life

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

Let us pray . . . Holy God, how we give you thanks for your seeing down the corridors of history and across the vistas of time. Grant us vision with clarity as your Spirit aids our seeing all the time. How we give you thanks for granting eyes of faith to behold our unending love embodied as the way of truth in life, as we hear of and experience Jesus Christ among your people.

Bring your healing and empowerment to one and all. Repair brokenness. Bridge estrangement. Build us up through the truth and blessing of your steadfast love.

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.**

HYMN NO. 354

Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory

BATTLE HYMN

**Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord; he is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored; he has loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword. God's truth is marching on.**

REFRAIN **Glory, glory hallelujah! Glory, glory hallelujah! Glory, glory hallelujah! God's truth is marching on.**

**God has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat and is sifting out all human hearts before the judgment seat; O be swift, my soul, to answer; O be jubilant my feet! Our God is marching on.** REFRAIN

**In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea, with a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me; as he died to make us holy, let us live to make all free, while God is marching on.** REFRAIN

“Have Faith in God, My Heart” with  
“O, for a Faith that Will Not Shrink”

arr. Melody Bober

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## MISSION OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

### PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS OFFERING



The Peace & Global Witness Offering is being received today. Offering envelopes are included in your bulletin. As we bring our gifts, we strengthen Christ’s work for peace through our church: 25% of funds received will be

used in our local community, 25% at the regional level. and 50% at the national and international levels. Thank you for your generosity. Please take a moment to read the insert in today’s bulletin.

**Peace at all TIMES in all ways.**

—2 Thessalonians 3:16

### TWIN CITY MISSION COAT & BLANKET DRIVE



twincitymission.org  
**GIVEAWAY EVENT**  
**November 19<sup>th</sup>**  
**9am - 4pm**  
at 2505 S. College,  
Bryan, Texas

# COAT & BLANKET DRIVE



New & used coats, hats, scarves, gloves, blankets, etc. are needed for those in need in the Brazos Valley.



**IF YOU DONT WEAR IT, SHARE IT!**

Especially in this time, visit the church website, [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org), for the newsletter, announcements, worship bulletins, devotionals for children and adults, updates, etc.

Like us on **Facebook** at: [www.facebook.com/FPCBryan](http://www.facebook.com/FPCBryan)

**NEW!!!** on **Instagram**: [www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com). Search for and follow **fpcbryantx1867** and/or **fpcbryan\_youth**

**Want to be notified when new WORSHIP and ACTIVITY videos are uploaded to our YouTube channel?**

Go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), search for First Presbyterian Church of Bryan, Texas, then click **SUBSCRIBE**

Our newsletter, **The Chimes**, continues to be available online, emailed to FPC-Bryan friends, and mailed to local FPC-Bryan members with the printed bulletin and sermon to those without technology.

The deadline for the next issue of the newsletter is Noon, October 18, and will be distributed on Wednesday, October 21. This newsletter will cover news from October 29 thru November 11.

**Have a prayer need? Have news about a church group to share with FPC members and friends?**

Church Updates is FPC-Bryan’s online tool for YOU to post church-related announcements, ways to serve, and your current prayer needs. While users receive a weekly reminder email on Thursdays to view new posts, This online tool is “**REAL TIME.**” Login at <https://fpcbtx.churchupdates.org/login> to create your password-protected account. Need help setting up your account? Contact Karen in the church office, 979.823.8073 or [office@fpcbryan.org](mailto:office@fpcbryan.org).



# A WARM WELCOME!

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

## WORSHIP NOTES

### PREACHER

Rev. Ted Foote

### LITURGISTS

Rev. Emily K. Béghin

Rev. George E. George E. Klett

### USHERS | GREETERS

Yunior Torres Camargo;

Dave Haverland; Nicole McKinley;

Roger Reese; AJ Renold; Debe Shafer

### MUSICIANS

Michelle Lassiter, *Pianist*

David Kipp,

*Director of Music Ministries*

### FLOWERS

In loving memory of  
my husband, Eugene,  
and my son, Scott,  
by Jane Voelkel

### AUDIO-VISUAL | SOUND

David Kipp; Jerry Norris

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Hymns from *Glory to God:*

*The Presbyterian Hymnal*

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## THIS WEEK AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, OCTOBER 11, 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 (live-streamed)-Sanctuary \***

**5:45pm NEW TIME!** (GR 6-12) Fellowship-Meet in Fellowship Hall

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2020**

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2020**

10:15am Staff Meeting-L

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2020**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2020**

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2020**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2020**

**TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, OCTOBER 18, 2020**

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

**10:45am WORSHIP (live-streamed)-Sanctuary \***

**5:45pm NEW TIME!** Youth (GR 6-12) Fellowship-Meet in Fellowship Hall

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



**First Presbyterian Church | 1100 Carter Creek Parkway | Bryan, Texas 77802**

PH. 979.823.8073 | FAX. 979.822.7063 | Website: [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org) | Email: [office@fpcbryan.org](mailto:office@fpcbryan.org)

Find "First Presbyterian Church of Bryan, Texas" on FACEBOOK

# God's Long-view Vision and Practicing Following Jesus: God's Way/Truth/Life

Proverbs 29:18a; John 8:31-32; 14:6; 18:37-38

October 11, 2020

Ted V. Foote, Jr.

First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas

Today we explore the fourth of the six "Great Ends of the Church," originating from a statement of the United Presbyterian Church of North America in 1910. It's "the preservation of the truth." I don't know how much a matter of debate this was in 1910 among Presbyterians in eastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania where this goal-statement of the church originated, but "the preservation of the truth" has truly been a matter of debate during the past thirty years among Presbyterians and others. Having different perspectives, angles, or understandings is not debilitating or fatal to faith, however, unless that is the interpretation and reaction we choose. In other words, none of us three weeks from a National Election or any other time, need to say, speaking to Brother Smith or Sister Jones, "You have a different opinion from me on 'preservation of the truth' so, in my opinion, one of us – you or I – has to leave." That interpretation is always unfortunate, because I don't think it is what the Gospel of God in Jesus Christ intends. "The preservation of the truth" ...

While the word "truth" does not appear at Proverbs 29:18, let's begin there before moving to John's Gospel account's specific use of the word. In the King James Version translation from Hebrew to English in 1611, Proverbs 29:18, reads: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." In 2020, we might understand the proverb better to translate it: "Where there is no prophetic long-view discerning **God's** vision, the people live without order," or "live characterized by chaos." We are told by numerous experts in political intelligence that certain people and agencies both nationally and internationally prefer chaos and divisive partisanship – they prefer those to respectful compromise for the shared or common good. "Where there is no prophetic long-view discerning God's vision, the people live without order." They live characterized by chaos. This is not limited to buildings burning from arson, or demonstrators in the streets being tear-gassed. Proverbs recognizes that without a norm of God's long-view for a Kingdom and Commonwealth of equitable, respectful relating and governance for all – without that being the norm – there is chaos both in wider and in closer community relationships.

In our current time period, one side or the other in political contests can raise the description of "fake news" against what opponents say; and their opponents reply, "No, our reporting is accurate, and your claims are 'the real' or 'the actual' fake-news!" Anyone theoretically can make up deceptive reporting about an opponent/ about someone whom the "fake news" perpetrator desires to smear or discredit. The potential for deceptive reporting or untruth is a potential everyone has. You can be a Democrat or a Republican and make up inaccuracies to your advantage. You can be a constitutionalist or an anarchist. You can be a liberal, a conservative, or an autocrat. Everyone faces that temptation: from national politics to religious-community relationships; from professional associations, to scholarly consortiums; from fantasy football groups to domino/"42" groups, from residents of "gated communities" to residents of government subsidized housing.. Each is tempted to distort, exaggerate, stereotype, prevaricate, and deceive in relation to all we hope to "bring down a notch."

If we yearn for a reality more than exchanged accusations of "fake news" and who is "throwing fake news out there," and who is discrediting another in order to feel personally or group-wise "a notch up," – if we yearn for a healthier reality than that sort of chaotic environment – then we may desire to know something about truth. What is it? How would we know truth in order to preserve it if our eyes beheld it, and it came into view?

In the Christian religious tradition, Jesus is understood as the embodiment of God's love. In his teachings, manner, and spirit of ministry in relation to all of God's people, Jesus is the embodiment of a kingdom or commonwealth founded on the vision of love among God's people. Remember Proverbs 29:18 ... Where there is no prophetic long-view vision from God, people are unnecessarily subject to chaotic lives and relationships.

Consider with me three points where John's Gospel account of Jesus' identity mentions truth. First, in chapter 8, at verses 31-32, "Continuing in my word, you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free" – free from distortion, deception, misdirection, manipulation, etc. "Continuing in my word, you shall know the truth based on God's long-view vision of respect-filled relationships and equity in communities – and the truth shall make you free." Second, in chapter 14, at verse 6, in response to disciple Thomas' question about direction, Jesus replies: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father/God except by me." You know as well as I do that many people across the years, maybe any of us at some point in life, have interpreted this quote as justifying the exclusion of anyone not a professing Christian. Thomas' question, though, is about a direction. Jesus' reply is about the journey and the destination. Jesus' reply is never about what a person says he/she believes about theology, faith, science, or politics. Jesus' reply is based on how we journey together with a long-view toward God's vision for a community and kingdom based on caring, respect-filled, equitable relationships.

Roman Catholic theologian Hans Kung has written: “Jesus is the way of the truth of life, which is to be done ... The truth of Christianity is not to be theorized in what we reason but to be done in what we practice. It is a truth not just to be sought and found but to be done and practiced, to be followed. It is a truth focused on practice, which calls people to a way which gives new life and which makes new life possible” (“Christianity: Essence, History, and Future” [1999], p.46). In John, chapter 18, when Jesus is questioned about his identity and his life after charges have been brought against him by Empire and religious authorities, he tells Roman Governor Pilate: “I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice” (vv.37-38).

Fred Rogers told one of his biographers that, during his early years in television, when, at the same time he began taking classes at Pittsburgh Presbyterian Seminary, he signed up for every course Dr. William Orr taught. Describing Dr. Orr, Mr. Rogers said: “You know how when you find somebody who you know is in touch with the truth, how you want to be in the presence of that person?” Mr. Rogers felt that way about his professor at the time. Others would come to appreciate “truth” through the presence and witness and relationships of Fred Rogers (Amy Hollingsworth’s “The Simple Faith of Mister Rogers: Spiritual Insights from the World’s Most Beloved Neighbor” [2005], pgs.79-80). To illustrate how God’s truth is shared through a person’s journey in God’s way, truth, and life as embodied in Jesus, another writer tells of an afternoon in New York City when Fred Rogers boarded a subway with a friend. Elementary and Jr. High students were riding home from their school classes. Not one of them approached Mister Rogers. Instead, they cut their eyes at one another, pointed subtly, and began singing with growing confidence and volume as an underground choir: “It’s a beautiful day in the neighborhood ... Since we’re together, we might as well say, ‘Won’t you be my neighbor? ... Please, won’t you be my neighbor?’” (written by Tom Junod in Esquire magazine article; quoted with permission by Tim Madigan in his book, “I’m Proud of You: Life Lessons from My Friend Fred Rogers” [2006], pgs.89-90). When you find somebody who you know is in touch with the truth, you want to be in the presence of that person.

In 1963, Dr. Dean Colvard had been President of Mississippi State University in Starkville for three years. The MSU men’s basketball team was invited to the NCAA Tournament to play, but this would require their team of all white-skinned players to be on the court with opposing players whose skin was much darker. In previous years when MSU had this opportunity, they declined the NCAA invitation to compete in the tournament. This year, however, the coach, the athletic director, and the players sincerely hoped to play. Dr. Colvard was a member of Starkville’s First Presbyterian Church. His pastor at the time was Bob Walkup. In a Sports Illustrated article forty years later, Dr. Colvard is quoted as saying: “In all of the threats by people who felt Mississippi’s Southern heritage would be violated in this change of tradition, I was strengthened to move forward through the words my pastor had the courage to speak. He preached one Sunday saying: ‘All this talk about the state of Mississippi being sovereign is foolishness! There is only one type of sovereignty that is absolute sovereignty, and that belongs to God!’” So, in 1963, with the words of his pastor echoing in his conscience – that God alone is sovereign – Dr. Colvard proceeded against intimidating opposition from many, yet with much appreciated support from perhaps an equal number. He decided against Mississippi’s cultural tradition and in favor of a long-vision for a new chapter, trusting the sovereignty of God. MSU’s basketball team flew to Lansing, Michigan, to play Loyola of New Orleans, a team which started four Black players. The contest was intensely played, yet with sportsmanship by both teams. MSU lost the game versus Loyola, but won the Regional consolation game versus Bowling Green, before returning to Starkville, welcomed home at the local airport by 700 MSU. (Sports Illustrated, 03,10,2003, by Alexander Wolff, “Ghosts of Mississippi 40 Years Ago: A Courageous College President Defied a Court Order Barring Mississippi State from Integrated Competition and Sent His Team to Face Black Players in the NCAA Tournament”).

If you and I sense that the road/ the “way” we are traveling is earthshaking because that road is perhaps not God’s preferred way, another way exists. The other way never spares us uncertainty, worry, adversity, or error. The other way is the way of God’s love, of which the Apostle Paul was writing at 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:31: “I will show you a still more excellent way.” That other way, even with winding turns and steep inclines, offers a truth for living with all of God’s people which moves us beyond distortions, deceptions, and demonizing others to practice respect and equity based on love from God. Practicing that journey – as Hans Kung, Fred Rogers, Dr. Dean Colvard, and Pastor Bob Walkup described and experienced in their lives and challenges – following the teachings, manner, and ministry of Jesus will help us live with the long-view vision which moves us through chaos toward God’s kingdom and commonwealth with communities of human beings respectful of and equitably caring for one another. This practicing of God’s on-going, sovereign truth in your life and mine changes us, whatever our tribe or tradition. This is how Jesus is the way of the truth of life for something we do: discipleship daily practiced from God’s love. “The preservation of truth” – from God embodied in Jesus Christ – surely intends “preservation” as “still evolving,” neither exactly the same as yesteryear, nor easy, yet always more excellent. – All honor and praise be to God.