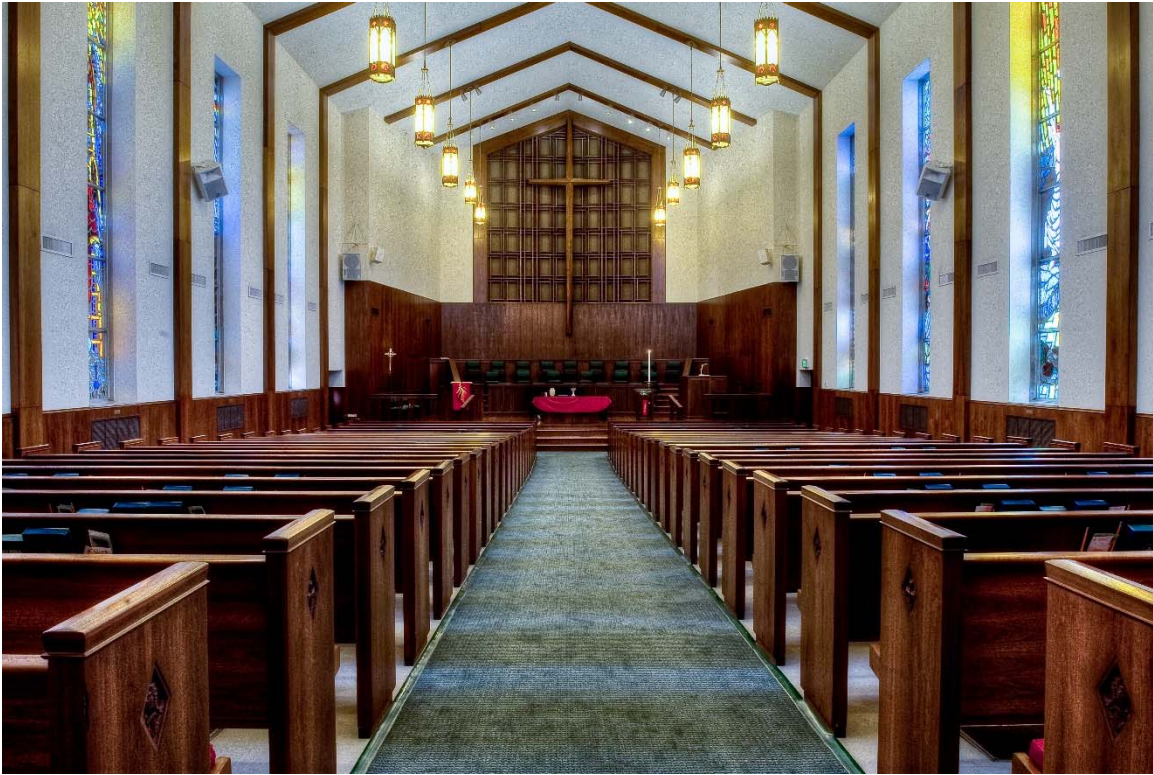


SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

June 14, 2020
10:45 a.m.

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

WELCOME

We remember the words from the Apostle Paul in the letter to the Philippians:
"Rejoice in the Lord always."

Again I will say, "Rejoice!"

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

The Heart of Worship

arr. Tom Gerou and Victor Labenske

HYMN NO. 645 (st. 1,3,4)

Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above

MIT FREUDEN ZART

**Sing praise to God who reigns above,
the God of all creation, the God of power, the God of love,
the God of our salvation. With healing balm my soul is filled,
and every faithless murmur stilled: to God all praise and glory!**

**The Lord is never far away,
but, through all grief distressing, an ever-present help and stay,
our peace and joy and blessing, as with a mother's tender hand
God gently leads the chosen band: to God all praise and glory!**

**Thus all my toilsome way along
I sing aloud thy praises, that all my hear the grateful song
Voice unwearied raises. Be joyful in the Lord, my heart;
Both soul and body, take your part: to God all praise and glory!**

PRAYERS OF PRAISE AND CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Let us pray ... All honor, glory, power, and blessing are yours, O God. Your loving-kindness never fails. Your mercies exceed our ability to measure, number, recognize, or remember. Hear us now, as we come before you in a time of confession through silence.

As our Good Shepherd always, gather and lead us to your pastures and your corrals of safety. Anoint us with your grace for newness of life, so that – day by day – we faithfully serve you among all of your people 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!

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 84:1-10

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

GOSPEL PROCLAMATION

Difficult Journeys toward Sacred Space as God Is Calling and Transforming Us

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING, INTERCESSION AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

Let us begin our prayers of thanksgiving and intercession this morning with each of us praying in silence for self and others . . .

How we thank you, Eternal One, that you have given bountifully of your love and yearned for the well-being of each one of your children. For your communing with us, for guiding our consciences, for prompting our partnerships with others as expressions of mutual support – we are grateful.

Join us, and join those for whom we pray and lift up in our several petitions: those who are distressed and anguished, those who are ill, worried, experiencing hunger and a shortage of basic necessities; who are mourning from loss, who are facing deep uncertainty. Gather up these, our prayers, and create among all your people wholeness which is evidence of your care, of your undergirding, and of your strength amid vulnerability. Now, again, we pray as Jesus taught...

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.

CLOSING HYMN NO. 418 (st. 1 & 3)

Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling

SOFTLY AND TENDERLY

**Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
calling for you and for me.**

**See, on the portals he’s waiting and watching,
watching for you and for me.**

REFRAIN

**“Come home, come home! You who are weary, come home.”
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling, calling, “O sinner, come home!”**

**O for the wonderful love he has promised,
promised for you and for me!
Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon,
pardon for you and for me. REFRAIN**

+ + + + +

PAM MUSIC & WORSHIP CONFERENCE—ONLINE (JUNE 21-26, 2020)



This VIRTUAL conference offers a full week of worship and music for musicians, clergy, laypersons, choirs, youth, children, and families. Guided by the principles of Reformed worship, conferees explore opportunities for vital worship experiences and enriching the liturgical life of the local church. With no registration deadline, the fees are as follows:

Adults and Youth: \$250 (non-PAM member); \$175 (PAM member)

Children: \$100

Attend from Anywhere!

Save money on housing, food, and even the conference registration rates!

Outstanding Conference Faculty Delivering Interactive Masterclasses

Eric Nelson, Mark Patterson, David Harris, Anne McNair, Victor Johnson... learn from the best!

Go at Your Own Pace

Attend the virtual events streamed live or watch them later.

Partial scholarships available. To learn more, contact Karen in the church office at office@fpcbryan.org.

Especially in this time, visit the church website, 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

NEW!!! on **Instagram**: www.instagram.com.

Search for and follow **fpcbryantx1867** and/or **fpcbryan_youth**

Help FPC-Bryan's YouTube channel achieve 400 subscribers to be eligible for a custom url!

On 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. Until further notice, it will not be mailed to its full distribution list. The deadline for the next issue of the newsletter is **NOON, SUNDAY, JUNE 21**, and will be distributed on **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24**. This newsletter will cover news from July 1-15.

STAY CONNECTED! with others in this community of faith at Church Updates—FPC-Bryan's online tool for church-related announcements, ways to serve, and current prayer needs. This online tool is "REAL TIME," and users receive a weekly reminder email on Thursdays to view new posts.

Login and create your password-protected account at <https://fpcbtx.churchupdates.org/login>. For more information, contact Karen in the church office, 979.823.8073 or 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. Dr. George E. Klett

MUSICIANS

Michelle Lassiter, *Pianist*

David Kipp,

Director of Music Ministries

COVER ART

Sanctuary of

First Presbyterian Church

Bryan, Texas

CHANCEL FLOWERS

In loving memory of

Margaret Holbert Harris Whiston

(June 27, 1941 – May 31, 1988)

by Mary Nan & Ervin Linnstaedter
and Family

AUDIO/VIDEO

Emily K. Béghin

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The Presbyterian Hymnal

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THIS WEEK AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, JUNE 14, 2020

ONLINE WORSHIP-

To view, visit www.fpcbryan.org or
tune in on Facebook

5:45pm Youth (GR 6-12) Sunday Fun Day-DIGITAL

(Watch your inbox for details via email!)

MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2020

TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2020

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2020

THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2020

FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 2020

SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 2020

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, JUNE 21, 2020

ONLINE WORSHIP-

To view, visit www.fpcbryan.org or
tune in on Facebook

5:45pm Youth (GR 6-12) Sunday Fun Day-DIGITAL

(Watch your inbox for details via email!)

For regularly scheduled meetings/gatherings,
please be in touch with your group's
moderator, leader, coordinator, or facilitator
to determine alternate meeting options/platforms.

Difficult Journeys toward Sacred Space As God Is Calling and Transforming Us

Psalm 84:1-10

June 14, 2020

Ted V. Foote, Jr.

First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas

It is hard to know – maybe impossible to know in several instances – the exact time or setting of certain psalms; and Psalm 84 is one of those. Here's a more-or-less consensus understanding: (1) The psalmist is experiencing anticipation of a journey and traveling. (2) The journey or traveling has been difficult or is anticipated as being difficult. It goes through the Valley of Baca, which means "the valley of tears." Possibly, the journey is a metaphor for life with difficulty and challenges. (3) The destination is associated with God meeting God's people. So the destination is "sacred-space," whether that is the Temple in Jerusalem for ancient Israelites, or any person's idea of a "home place," or a cemetery, a national historical landmark, a retreat center or campground, or a memory-associated place like the First Presbyterian sanctuary at 1100 Carter Creek Parkway or at 1101 East 31st Street in Bryan, Texas.

Tears are associated with the journey. The journey is hard. The memories are powerful; and for that reason, whether positive or negative, the power of the memories stirs emotions. Grief is an aspect of the journey and of the destination-location. If nothing of value was lost, there would be no source of grief. Tears indicate value lost, whether they are saline tears oozing from our eyes or already evaporated tears which have left a dried residue inside of us. Tears indicate a value lost. Tears indicate value remembered. Tears indicate a realization that significant value experienced in the past has transformational relevance in the new day.

"The Trip to Bountiful" premiered on the American stage in 1950, in movie theatres in 1985, and on television in 2014. In each version of Horton Foote's script, an older woman named Carrie Watts lives in metropolitan Houston in 1947 with her son and daughter-in-law. Mrs. Watts yearns for a trip to her home village of Bountiful, Texas, several miles southwest of Houston on the way to Victoria. Her son and daughter-in-law, though, are extremely busy and preoccupied. Taking her on a day trip to her place of birth is not on their priority list. One day, she slips away, buys a bus ticket, and travels to Bountiful. The old home place is run-down and deserted, but being home is exceptionally moving for her. In the 1950 original stage version, the playwright features Mrs. Watts humming and sometimes singing the Spiritual, "There's Not a Friend Like the Lowly Jesus" [Johnson Oatman, 1895]. Consider from that stage presentation a character like Mrs. Watts – on her life's journey far more enclosed than she desires, and feeling a need for the journey to extend at least one more chapter – or one more trip. So in Houston and down the road, she hums and sings: "There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus – no, not one; no, not one. None else could heal all our souls' diseases. Jesus knows all about our struggles. He will guide 'til the day is done ..." Then, for "the silver screen" in 1985, the playwright changes the theme song and writes for Mrs. Watts to hum and sing, "Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling – calling for you and for me ... Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon, pardon for you and for me. Come home. Come home. You who are weary, come home" [Will L. Thompson, 1880].

Isn't it the truth that our journeys are many and varied through a life-time? A psalmist desires to make a trip back to Jerusalem to the temple of the faith-tradition. A post-World War II woman in her advanced years desires to make a trip to her rural "old home place." Folks in religious communities desire to get back to their worship centers and sanctuaries. Those sorts of locations, however, would not be special to us – even sacred – if they were only locations. At certain locations, though, relationships positively experienced help us realize how God meets us through others who are in community with us. What's sacred is not the acreage, not the address, or the structure at the address. What's sacred is God whom we associate with the place and the people who have been and

still are part of the place. It is God whom we yearn to meet again through “the familiar,” although “the familiar” changes as the journey lengthens.

Today is June 14. It’s the date designated as Flag Day in the United States. The U.S. flag is a piece of cloth portraying colors in a particular design. It’s been and continues to be part of the journey of a nation and her citizens for 230 plus years. Perhaps no one has better described the symbolism of the flag and the journey of struggles enriching the symbolism of the flag than J.G. Braddock, Sr., of Charleston, South Carolina, in his 2010 poem, “Our Flag” ... “[Our flag’s] not a cloak of righteousness to dignify our selfish quests, nor just another piece of cloth, unworthy of our ardent troth ... Our flag is meant to dramatize the heights to which we all can rise in making dreams reality, in lifting up humanity, in reaching out with loving care, while breathing freedom’s precious air ...” Journeys with struggles enrich the symbolism of that flag.

Our journeys as individuals and as communities include many struggles – often over many years. On those journeys there are tears of sadness, disappointment, frustration, grief, new realization, positive change, and joy. Since my childhood, I can count being a part of four churches which have undergone sanctuary remodeling, another which built a new sanctuary due to growth, another which rebuilt a sanctuary after its predecessor structure burned to the ground, and one now from which faith community members have been exiled due to a public health crisis. In each of those instances, people hoped so very soon to be worshipping again in the sacred space. As the person of faith voiced in Psalm 84: “My soul longs for the courts of the Lord.” What’s sacred is God whom we associate with the place and the people who’ve been and still are part of the place. It is God we yearn to meet again through the familiar, although “the familiar” changes as any journey lengthens.

After the Pleasant Springs Presbyterian Church building in rural Rusk County burned to the ground on a July night in 1985, their East Texas Associate General Presbyter, Ben McAnally, said to the church leaders: “If y’all only remember one thing I tell you, please remember that the church did not burn. The church building burned, but the church is right here where you are with me, and where God-in-Christ is with all of us.” Not long after that, the Pleasant Springs Presbyterians received an invitation to meet for worship early on Sunday mornings in the building of the African-American congregation about five miles away. The Pleasant Springs folk had already decided to meet in the living rooms of two or three different members’ homes, so they declined that invitation. When the new building was built 18 months later, though, the Session sent an invitation to the dedication service to the African-American congregation. At the dedication service, as the pianist was playing the prelude, the doors opened at the back and in strode the pastor and three elders from that church. I walked toward them, welcomed them, and led them to their pew. When I returned to my seat, one of the Pleasant Springs elders (Boyd Patrick) leaned over to me and said, “In the 35 years of our other building, I don’t think anyone except white-skinned people ever came under the roof. That’s changed now at the first special service of the new building.” I said, “Boyd, when it’s God’s house and God’s people, we can never tell how God is going to surprise or change us.” He said, “Preacher, ain’t it so?”

Mr. Braddock’s poem about the United States’ flag tells us that the struggles of a nation’s peoples for the sacred values of the nation enrich the symbolism of the flag. The writer of Psalm 84 tells us that communities of faith “long for the courts of the Lord,” largely due to the people God brings together on their journeys, with their pain and their yearnings. So every day holds the possibility that significant value experienced in the past will be the planted garden from which God’s power of transformation once more yields grace. As Boyd Patrick said, “Ain’t it so?” – All honor and praise be to God.