

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

August 16, 2020
10:45 a.m.

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

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Great Is The Lord

arr. James Koerts

WELCOME

We welcome you to worship today.

In Psalm 29, we find these words:

“The voice of the Lord is powerful;
the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

May the Lord give strength to his people!

May the Lord bless his people with peace!”

HYMN NO. 482

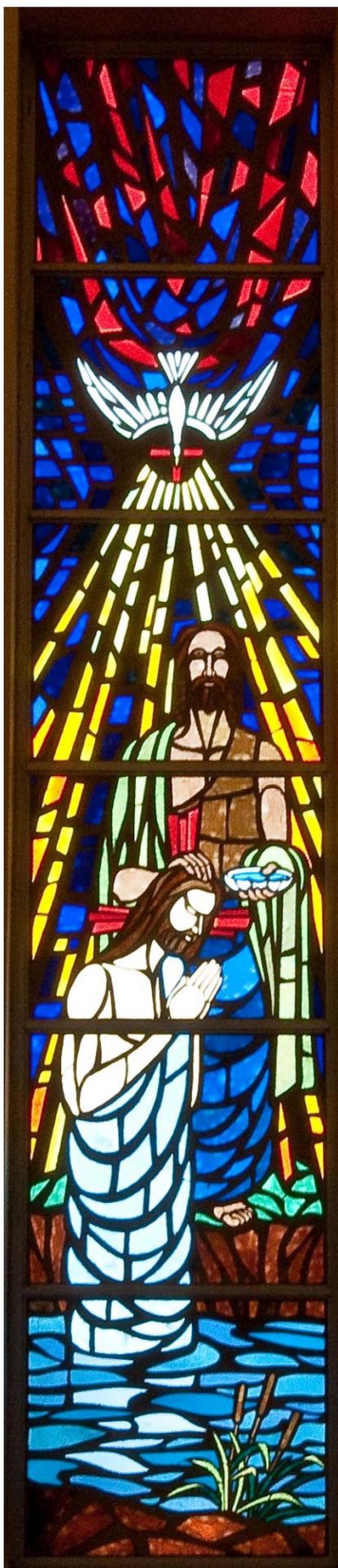
Baptized in Water

BUNESSAN

**Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
cleansed by the blood of Christ our King;
heirs of salvation, trusting the promise,
faithfully now God's praises we sing.**

**Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
dead in the tomb with Christ our King;
one with his rising, freed and forgiven,
thankfully now God's praises we sing.**

**Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
marked with the sign of Christ our King;
born of the Spirit, we are God's children,
joyfully now God's praises we sing.**



**O for a thousand tongues to sing my dear Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King, the triumphs of God's grace!**

**The name of Jesus charms our fears, and bids our sorrows cease,
sings music in the sinner's ears, brings life, and health, and peace.**

**Christ speaks, and listening to his voice new life the dead receive;
the mournful waken to rejoice; the poor in heart believe.**

**My gracious Master and my God, assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad the honors of thy name.**

**to God all glory, praise, and love be now and ever given
by saints below and saints above, the church in earth and heaven.**

DISMISSAL AND BLESSING

POSTLUDE

Majesty

music by Jack Heyford

+ + + + +

arr. Eugene Thomas

It's School Time! We're reaching out to our adopted school **ANSON JONES ELEMENTARY**. On their list of student needs are: composition books (wide-ruled), No. 2 pencils, crayons (24-ct), markers (Crayola, 8-ct), Pink Pearl erasers, and jumbo glue sticks. Due to COVID-19, Anson Jones is also requesting the following: 2-gallon zipper bags, case 12-oz. bottled water (as drinking fountains are not being used), and disinfecting wipes. Place your donations on the marked table in the Patio or send monetary donations to FPC-Bryan [through Wednesday, September 30.](#)

Children's Books & DVD Drive. First Presbyterian is creating a Young Families Library. We are looking for donations of classic children's books and DVDs in new or good condition for children ages 3-10. Place donated books and DVDs on the credenza near the New Member bulletin board located in the hallway (Carter Creek Pkwy side between Director of Christian Education Office (11) and Elementary Classroom (13)). We are grateful for your donations to help FPC families get excited about learning!

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 350 more 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, TODAY**, and will be distributed on Wednesday, August 19. This newsletter will cover news from August 27 thru September 16.

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.

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A WARM WELCOME!

We are delighted to have you worship with us today.

WORSHIP NOTES

PREACHER

Rev. Emily K. Béghin

LITURGISTS

Rev. Ted Foote

Rev. Dr. George E. Klett

MUSICIANS

Michelle Lassiter, *Pianist*

David Kipp,

Director of Music Ministries

COVER ART

“The New Covenant
is Consecrated”

One of 11 faceted windows
in sanctuary of

First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas

AUDIO/VIDEO

Emily K. Béghin

CHANCEL FLOWERS

In loving memory of
my parents

by

Ranney McDonald

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Select hymns from

Glory to God:

The Presbyterian Hymnal

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THIS WEEK AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, AUGUST 16, 2020

ONLINE WORSHIP-

To view, visit www.fpcbryan.org

7:00pm Youth (GR 6-12) Sunday Fun Day-on the FPC Basketball Court

(Watch your inbox for details via email!)

MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2020

TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2020

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2020

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2020

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 2020

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22, 2020

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, AUGUST 23, 2020

ONLINE WORSHIP-

To view, visit www.fpcbryan.org

7:00pm Youth (GR 6-12) Sunday Fun Day-on the FPC Basketball Court

(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.



The Covenant Windows

Designed from Biblical stories by the Smith Glass Co. of Ft. Worth in 1966, eleven windows gird the nave, proclaiming the theme of God's covenant with God's people. The five windows at the congregation's left, moving toward the entrance, portray the covenants of the Old Testament. In counterbalance, the five to the right of the chancel depict the covenants of the New Testament. The window above the main entrance behind the balcony is an expansive Nativity scene.

A covenant is a solemn and binding agreement made by two or more individuals or groups, to do or to keep from doing, a specified action with understood accountability. God's compact with human beings is a commitment, a promise—absolute and certain.

The history of the people of Israel commences with the covenant of God with Israel. Abraham, at the direction of God, left Ur of the Chaldees and journeyed to a land where God promised to make his descendants a great people. The origin of Israel's religion is the covenant given to Moses at Mount Sinai and is referred to as the "old covenant."

The "new covenant" is God's gift of His Son in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. So it was that, in the beginning of the Third century, Tertullian began to refer to the two collections of scripture as the Old and New Testaments—by literal definition, the old and new covenants.

The New Covenant is Consecrated

"But among you stands one whom you do not know, even He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie . . . He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." These words of John the Baptist are portrayed in dazzling color as the Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove upon Christ at this moment before the beginning of His ministry. John is baptizing Christ with water from a scallop shell, which is traditionally associated with this event. The bulrushes represent the multitude of the faithful led to Christ through baptism.

Scallop Shell Moments

Rev. Emily K. Béghin
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

August 16, 2020
First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas

Last year, in January, I visited the Jordan River in Israel with a friend of mine. A new section of the river had opened for visitation only a week or so prior. On our way to the river site, we drove through the desert with fences lining both sides of the road, identical on each side and appearing to be government issued. It was explained to me that this dirt road we were on had been very recently cleared of bombs left over from the six-day war of 1967. The signs on the fences stated that no one could enter the area beyond them. It was a stark reminder of the violence and darkness of the world we find ourselves in though we look to the hope of Christ in the waters ahead of us.

As we approached the river we could hear singing. A Korean group and an African group were each singing in their own languages. The African group was playing in the waters, splashing and smiling with unbridled bliss. I placed my hand into the waters. The river was cold to the touch. I sat there for a time enjoying the groups frolicking in the waters near me. This seemed to be a place where we were not anything other than children of God. It was beautiful, like a place set aside from the world; a bubble universe. I guess that is what holy ground feels like.

Across the river I saw soldiers with heavy gear and guns in hand. I asked my friend who they were. He told me they were the army of Jordan and we were at the border. I asked him what would happen if I swam across. He told me they probably wouldn't waste their bullets on me, but I'd get a good escort back over to Israel. We chuckled a little and he went on to tell me that the structure they were guarding was actually a Christian church. In 24 hours time, the reformed church in Jerusalem and the church across the river would line the banks of the water and sing hymns together for the first time in history. Jordanians and Israelites would lift their voices in praise of Jesus Christ together and unite in their love of God around this spot where 2000 years earlier Christ and John the Baptist may have stood in prayer, blessing, and praise together.

There is something about Israel and Jordan that reminds you of how alive you are, how mortal we all are, and how love is a choice and a calling we are compelled to follow. Making our way past minefields to a place of great joy that exists in the presence of armed military men, and to hear singing in so many languages... It was surreal and beautiful.

Life is a dark and perilous journey, but there is a place of light within it. There is a place where brother and sister meet across borders and manmade barriers. There is a hope in all of us that yearns for our messiah and rallies around His love and light.

Jesus was no stranger to the darkness of the journey as Pastor Ted reminded us in the birth narrative last week. Born while being hunted, raised a refugee in Egypt, working in his father's shop through poverty, and learning the faith, and now his feet lead him here to this moment to be baptized as was Jewish custom. The people were hopeful that a leader would emerge, a living hope would lead them into the light beyond the minefield of life. They gathered, filled with expectation. Who could unite them in God's ways?

We do that for church, don't we? We gather, filled with expectation or anticipation of our savior to come and show us the way. Do we not wait for Him now? Each week that we journey through this life we know there are minefields around us, but we do not know where those bombs lie in the twists and turns of the paths we make, and so we come and we seek something to hold onto; a greater hope... a shepherd of God.

Jesus too, came to this river, drawn in by the living water and the customs of his people. John washes the waters over Jesus and Jesus prays. He prays to God and the Holy Spirit comes down upon him. In Luke's telling, it is only after prayer that God speaks to Jesus, and God speaks only to Jesus.

As I gazed upon the window a few weeks ago, one symbol was prominent to me. This thing belongs, but also doesn't belong. This symbol was conceptualized

by humankind, but given to us in God, and it stands oddly out of time and place, yet as a solid symbol of baptism, and that would be the scallop shell found in John's left hand.

In the scripture no scallop is mentioned. Truthfully, they are not found where Jesus was baptized, so why do we see it here?

The scallop shell was first given to us as a symbol of penance and pilgrimage in the middle ages. Today we recognize it as a symbol of the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage in Spain. The scallop shells are found along the shores of northern Spain; an area called Galicia, where this well-known pilgrimage to the tomb of St. John exists.

Every year millions of travelers beginning at various points in Europe make the pilgrimage every summer. In the middle ages, this pilgrimage was made as a penance for sin and those who were tasked to walk it had to bring back a local souvenir for proof of completion. The shells became very popular for this purpose. Not only were they great tools for drinking water and eating food with, but they were light and found along the journey in abundance.

Over time the shell became a symbol of pilgrimage, a religious journey towards heaven or God as cited in Hebrews chapter 11 verse 13 which reads, "We are pilgrims and strangers on earth."

In a way we are all on a pilgrimage as we journey through this life to make it to God. Those who I know that have had the privilege to walk the Camino pilgrimage have all come back changed. They speak of how transformative the experience is. A pilgrimage is not just a hike from point A to point B. It is a spiritual and religious experience. The Catholic Church in their Catechism numbered 2691 beautifully states, "Pilgrimages evoke our earthly journey toward heaven and are traditionally very special occasions for renewal in prayer. For pilgrims seeking living water, shrines are special places for living forms of Christian prayer." The journey must be accompanied with prayer, and devotion, and is naturally filled with much time for personal reflection and self-growth. And along the pilgrimage we meet others who walk alongside us for a time; paesanos-- friends in the spirit who come and go.

If you journey the Camino de Santiago today, you will be guided by scallop shell markers, now the symbol of pilgrimage. Often travelers will also receive a shell at the beginning of their journey to hold or pin onto their clothing.

So, why is it here in this baptism window? Many scholars believe that it was at Jesus' baptism that he realized the fullness of the nature of his calling as the Son of God. In Luke's passage it is important to note that the holy spirit coming down was not a public show of grandeur, but a private moment upon which Jesus was praying after being baptized by John. This is a day marked as the official beginning of Jesus' ministry and mission. Like a commissioning or an affirmation of the call, an ordaining of sorts, this day marks the beginning of Jesus' journey as the Christ.

In two weeks, we will see the symbol of Jesus' completion of his earthly pilgrimage in the flag of Galicia, the flag found along the path of the famous pilgrimage, the Camino de Santiago in Spain, but today we celebrate Jesus' first steps as a new man in this divine calling to lead God's people in the ways of the light.

We come today filled with expectation. In times of darkness, a pandemic, an election, an economic storm, isolation, grief, separation from loved ones, and so much more, we, like the generations before us, come together with expectation. We wait for the messiah to take our hands and lead us home into the place of joy, peace, song, and light away from the minefields along our pilgrim life journeys.

Jesus was created, called, baptized, and blessed to show us the path of goodness in God. In his humanity he knew the darkness, and in his holiness, he knew the ways of light. As we make our way on our pilgrim journey, we must also examine the moments in which that journey must have begun. When did your path to God on this earth truly reveal itself to you? Was it Christ who let you know that you too are beloved?

We live in times that make our bones shake and our heads spin. Each breath we take is no longer taken for granted, and joy is not so easily passed by. We seek unity in a better way of life with peace between peoples and beauty restored in our eyes. As the

faithful, we seek someone to take us by the hand and lead us home to that place.

And truly, I tell you, the path to God, the pilgrimage of righteousness, is not found in the promises of any earthly man, but in the signs of God through the holy spirit who guides us step by step through the minefields of this crazy life. There is only one Christ, only one messiah and only in His way will we discover God's truth, grace, light, and radical love.

As I went down to the Jordan river to pray, never did I see such glory in so many shades of faith. We walk this earth as pilgrims and the path before us is unknown. The warning signs and hidden mines serve not to guide us when darkness covers their nature. We need God. We need to remember God. God is the one who can take us home and God lives in Christ and only in Christ, Jesus whose pilgrimage on earth paves the way for our footsteps to follow.

It would be nice if the ways of God were marked with scallop shells, as the Camino de Santiago, but we'll have to make do with the markers of living prayer that we discover along the way. It was in prayer that Jesus heard the affirmation of God's calling on his life. It is in prayer where we too may listen and know the things God has in store for us. It is with eyes that see through faith that we will finally see the way forward

together as one people not bound by any nation or separated by any walls. It is in Christ, in God, in the living waters that we will know love for all of God's own in every color, every gender, every make and model of God's kingdom.

Pray, pray and remember your baptism; the scallop shell moment of your journey on this earth, that your pilgrimage may continue in the path of light that Jesus has marked for you. That is where the holy spirit is found, where the word of God is made clear... in devotion, prayer, and openness of heart filled with anticipation of God in our midst.

Pilgrim people, there is a way forward and I do not know the intricacies of its direction, but let us use all we have and all that we are to prayerfully find it, that we too may come together in a place of joy, unity, and love among the minefields and the pitfalls of this pilgrim way we follow. The leader we need and have always needed is the one and only Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of Man, Baptized, called, crucified and risen for you and for me that we too may know the way of light. Come with expectation and anticipation and let us praise God that there is a way forward in times such as these, a way of grace and unifying love for all.

Amen.