

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT



“ . . . the seed falling on the good soil represents those who hear God’s word, hold it fast, and bear fruit with faithful persistence.” —Luke 8:15

THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD’S DAY

February 21, 2021
10:45 a.m.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Cares Chorus

Kelly Willard; arr. Harlan Rogers

WELCOME

Chapter 8 of Luke’s Gospel reports that Jesus told a parable, saying that God’s Word is like seed scattered by a farmer.

“The seed that falls on good soil and sprouts and grows is like people who, upon hearing God’s Word, hold the Word steadfastly, and they persist in ways that yield good fruit.”

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 may hear the grateful song my voice unwearied raises. Be joyful in the Lord, my heart; both soul and body, take your part:
to God all praise and glory!**

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

PRAYERS OF PRAISE AND CONFESSION

Expressing praise and confession to God, let us pray . . . **O Creator and Giver of every good gift: Sunbeams and raindrops, icicles and snowflakes all belong to you. In birth and in death, in strength and in illness, all people belong to you. Yet in our decisions, affections, and loyalties, we have turned from you, been inattentive to your pleadings, and lived as we feel so inclined. In these moments of silence, hear our confessions to you . . .**  
*(pausing in silence for prayer)*

Forgive us all our sin. Restore us to a repaired and empowered life, for faithfully and steadfastly serving you 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                                      Job 2:1-4; 27:1-6; Luke 8:15  
This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL PROCLAMATION                                      Verbs Revealing Jesus as a Jobian Character: Persist

HYMN NO. 379 (st. 1,2,4,5)                                      We Shall Overcome                                      WE SHALL OVERCOME  
**We shall overcome; we shall overcome; we shall overcome someday.**  
REFRAIN      **O, deep in my heart I do believe we shall overcome someday!**  
**We'll walk hand in hand; we'll walk hand in hand; we'll walk hand in hand someday.** REFRAIN  
**We are not afraid; we are not afraid; we are not afraid today.** REFRAIN  
**God will see us through; God will see us through; God will see us through today.** REFRAIN

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

Receive these prayers from our flawed, vulnerable, yet gifted lives, O God, that from your purposes, we may continually be thankful for your love surrounding and leading us, and thankful that our eyes, ears, attitudes and relationships are touched, influenced, and healed by your grace.

Make us, we pray, keepers of the light-house light to assist safe passage for all on life's journey, during night and day, whether by sea, land, or air, or hardly traveling at all.

Make us sharers of love with each other, from the dignity of which you are eternally the Source.

Make us ambassadors of respect for honoring each person, as prophets have advocated consistent with your holy yearnings for your people.

Make us detectives of injustice where inequities stifle, where self-interests multiply, where power suppresses and dominates.

Make us conduits of courage to overcome corrosive threats and evolved challenges. And make us repairers of the breach, where aggression, apathy, and cowardice weaken defenses of the Good which you proclaimed at the beginning of the cosmos.

As well, may the prayer Jesus taught be ours again this morning as we turn to you, saying together:

**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.**

**Standing on the promises of Christ my king, through eternal ages let his praises ring;  
glory in the highest, I will shout and sing, standing on the promises of God.**

REFRAIN **Standing (standing on the promises), standing (standing on the promises),  
Standing on the promises of God my Savior;  
Standing (standing on the promises), standing (standing on the promises),  
I'm standing on the promises of God.**

**Standing on the promises that cannot fail, when the howling storms of doubt and fear assail,  
By the living Word of God I shall prevail, standing on the promises of God.** REFRAIN

**Standing on the promises I cannot fall, listening every moment to the Spirit's call,  
Resting in my Savior as my all in all, standing on the promises of God.** REFRAIN

## DISMISSAL AND BLESSING

## POSTLUDE

He Is Exalted

Twila Paris

arr. Tom Gerou, Victor Labenske

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**ASSISTED LISTENING DEVICES** are available in the narthex. Please help yourself or ask an usher for assistance.

**NEW MEMBERS** may be received any Sunday by profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith, or transfer of membership. If you feel led to inquire about becoming a church member or deepening your commitment as a disciple of Jesus Christ, please indicate your desire on the fellowship folder. You may also call the church (979.823.8073) or email Pastor Ted Foote ([tfoote@fpcbryan.org](mailto:tfoote@fpcbryan.org)) or Associate Pastor Emily Béghin ([ebeghin@fpcbryan.org](mailto:ebeghin@fpcbryan.org)). They will be glad to arrange a mutually convenient Sunday when you can be received by the Elders and introduced to the congregation.

By vote of Session on December 30, First Presbyterian moved to **an altered Sunday morning format for an indefinite time (hopefully not long), that began January 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Due to the COVID-19 infection, active case, and hospitalization rates, FPC – to assist the efforts of health providers and public officials – is suspending Sunday morning “full worship” in the sanctuary. **The sanctuary will be open in this calendar period each Sunday, from 10:40 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (regular time) for “come-and-go” contemplation, prayer, and receiving the Lord’s Supper. All who choose to participate in this opportunity are encouraged to wear a mask and observe physical distancing.**

**Visit us on the web!** [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org) for the newsletter, announcements, worship bulletins, updates, etc.

**Facebook** [www.facebook.com/FPCBryan](http://www.facebook.com/FPCBryan)

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

**BE THE FIRST TO KNOW** when **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**

**Share prayer needs and church group news with fellow FPC participants on 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.”

Contact Karen in the church office, 979.823.8073 or [office@fpcbryan.org](mailto:office@fpcbryan.org) to set up your account.

Then, login at <https://fpcbtx.churchupdates.org/login> to create your password-protected account.



## A WARM WELCOME!

*We are delighted that you chose to worship with us today.*



### WORSHIP NOTES

#### PREACHER

Rev. Ted Foote

#### LITURGISTS

Rev. Emily K. Béghin

Rev. Dr. George E. Klett

#### MUSICIANS

Michelle Lassiter, *piano and organ*

David Kipp,

*Director of Music Ministries*

#### CHANCEL FLOWERS

In loving memory of

Alissa and Bill Hickerson

by

Alice & Dick Hickerson & family

#### AUDIO-VISUAL | SOUND

Nicole McKinley

Jerry Norris

#### COVER ART

"The Parable of the Sower"

<https://www.freebibleimages.org>

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### THIS WEEK AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

#### FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT, FEBRUARY 21, 2021

9:00am Loose Leaf Church School Class-via Zoom

9:20am Seekers Church School Class-via Zoom

**10:40am Sanctuary** \* open for prayer, meditation, and Lord's Supper;

WORSHIP pre-recorded, viewable via [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org), with

click on homepage "sentence about worship" or small red

YouTube box in far top right of homepage screen

#### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2021

12:30pm Circle I-via Zoom

5:30pm Cub Scout Pack 350-FH

7:00pm Boy Scout Troop 976-FH

#### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2021

#### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2021

11:00am Staff Meeting-L

#### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2021

6:00pm Cub Scout Pack 350-304

#### FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2021

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2021

#### SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT, FEBRUARY 28, 2021

9:00am Loose Leaf Church School Class-via Zoom

9:20am Seekers Church School Class-via Zoom

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

The deadline for the next issue of the newsletter is Noon, today.

It will be distributed on Wednesday, February 24, 2021.

This newsletter will cover news from March 4-17.

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



## PUZZLE SWAP

**Tired of working on the same old puzzles?** Then box them up and participate in FPC’s Puzzle Swap organized by Congregational Care Committee. The puzzles are available in the Indoor Patio thru **Friday, March 12**. Bring in one puzzle, take one. Bring in two puzzles, take two.

**Just want to clean out old puzzles? We’ll take them!** BRING IN COMPLETE PUZZLE SETS (No missing pieces, please). Remember, children like to work puzzles, too. (NOTE: Donated puzzles will not be returned.)

## REACHING OUT TO OUR NEIGHBORS

With the recent winter snowstorm resulting in power and water outages, you are invited to extend your love and generosity through the gift of non-perishable foods, personal hygiene product, and nutritious single- serving and/or pop-top food and beverages for Brazos Church Pantry. Your donated goods may be brought to the church any weekday during church office hours (9:00am to 3:00pm) or when you attend “come and go” meditation on Sunday mornings. Monetary donations are also welcome. (NOTE: Brazos Church Pantry).



**Friends, your donations are very much appreciated by our neighbors in need.**

### 2021 LENTEN AND EASTER THEME

*In Life and in Death We Belong to God:*  
Ten Verbs Revealing Jesus as a Jobian Character

Find the schedule of weekly topics and related scriptures  
on our website at [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org)

### **Visit us on social media!**

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## Verbs Revealing Jesus as a Jobian Character: Persist

Job 2:1-4; 27:1-6; Luke 8:15; 21:19; James 5:11; II Corinthians 1:6; Hebrews 12:1

February 21, 2021

Ted V. Foote, Jr.

First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas

This nine-week series began last week with an exploration of the verb “love” in relation to Job’s life and to Jesus’ life and teachings. This Sunday our verb to explore is “persist,” but I want to begin with a story about family love, as we mentioned last week, noting how Job was a parent who loved his children.

On October 1, 1991, Joanie’s and my son Payton was born. On Monday, October 21, Joanie was still on parental leave from her faculty responsibilities at Henderson High School in east Texas. She and babe-in-arms Payton joined me for lunch at a local restaurant, because First Presbyterian Church in Henderson was hosting a guest preacher for the previous Sunday morning and evening, and he would also preach Monday night. His name was James Wharton. Jim had been born in The Congo in 1927 where his parents were Presbyterian mission workers. He was a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, of Austin Presbyterian Seminary, of the University of Basel (Switzerland), and in his professional career had served as Professor of Old Testament at Austin Seminary, as pastor of Memorial Drive Presbyterian in Houston, and was, at that time, serving as Professor of Preaching at Perkins Theological Seminary (SMU) in Dallas. Jim was gracious to drive to Henderson and worship and preach with the congregation that Sunday and Monday – the third weekend in October. We were waiting after we placed our order. He asked us where our 4 year old son, Kendall, was. We said, “At his usual pre-school center.” He then looked at Payton and asked Joanie, “May I hold Payton?” She said, “Absolutely,” rose from her chair, walked over to his chair and handled the seven pound bundle to him. He and Payton stared at each other for 20 or 30 seconds, and Jim said: “I appreciate this so much. My spouse Charlotte is in Peru with one of our sons and daughters-in-law, because they are the parents of our recently born youngest grandchild. I’m glad to be in Henderson and at SMU, because I still have work to do in Texas, but holding Payton is helping me connect with my new grandchild whom I’ve yet to hold.” Payton’s 30<sup>th</sup> birthday will be this year, as will be the 30<sup>th</sup> birthday of Jim and Charlotte’s grandchild, also born in 1991.

A day came in the life of God’s servant Job and his wife, however, when their seven young adult sons and three young adult daughters died at once in the collapse of the building where they were spending a day together, and a tornado ripped through the neighborhood.

There are three ways to read and hear the Book of Job. (1) One way is to oppose and argue with Job, as his wife does, as his three friends do, and as a know-it-all passerby does. Anyone can read the Book of Job to argue with Job that he is incorrect and wrong insisting, as he does, that no sin in his life deserves such affliction and grief. (2) A second way to read and hear the Book of Job is to blame God for doing nothing to spare Job and his wife’s ten young adult sons and daughters from the tornado and building collapse which took their lives; and/or to blame God for this ridiculously cruel wager with Hasatan (The Satan) – a bet that Job will fold under the unimaginable and spirit-breaking grief which he has experienced from such incomprehensible loss and trauma. (3) A third way to read and hear Job is “to listen to learn”/ “to study and explore for pondering” how this story might shape your own and my own life and faith.

When I visit with couples before they go to the courthouse to procure a marriage license, I often ask each of the two to write down three positive characteristics they have observed in the marriages or close relationships of family or friends, and to write down three negative characteristics they have observed in the marriages or close relationships of family or friends. The purpose of that exercise is for them to think, on “the positive side,” of the type of behavior and quality of character they hope to build and experience in their long-term relationship, and, on “the negative side,” what type of behavior and quality of character they hope to avoid and “steer clear of” in their long-term relationship. Watching others, they have already sub-consciously observed best and worse qualities in others’ intimate relationships, whether they’ve consciously spoken of those observations with each other, or not. So we talk about this.

Reading and considering the Book of Job is similar to considering other folks’ behavior, negative and positive. How others develop their lives and relationships can influence you or me in our relationships. We see that Job “persists in his integrity and holds fast to his righteousness” (2:3,9; 27:5-6). Job leans upon the premise that God has made humans with dignity, integrity, and value, and that such dignity,

integrity, and value constitute the relationship between God and people all the time. Job receives opposition from his spouse, from three so-called friends, and from a know-it-all-passerby who argue against his premise. They believe, if life goes rotten, that the cause must be God's punishment for some sin or relationship-breaking deed. Job must have done something to irritate God or to ignite God's wrath. Job says, "No. This is something God and I have to work out. It's soul-agonizing, but I shall not relent until God meets me for a dialog."

Job does not want to be put on trial by his wife, his friends, or by the know-it-all-passerby, nor does Job want God to be put on trial in the abstract, you know, someone saying, "If you are not at fault, then God must be at fault. If God is all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-present, God must get a failing grade because God did not spare you this incomparable grief." Job persists in this argument with his spouse, his friends, and the know-it-all-passerby. He persists: that he has been created with integrity, dignity, and value; that he will not let go of that conviction; and that God may not owe him (or anyone) a flawless or painless life, but that God does owe him a respect-based conversation!

Across the centuries, including the 1700s, 1800s, 1900s, and the two-thousands, much of Judaism, much of Roman Catholicism, and much of Protestantism have – theologically – argued more against Job, or argued more against God, than have folks listened to Job and God to learn and grow from their dialog. Job's argument that he "holds fast to" or "persists" in his God-given integrity is characterized also in some of Jesus' teachings and in other books of the New Testament, the most direct and well-known reference is in the Letter of James (5:11) which, in the 1611 King James English translation, refers to the "patience of Job." The English word "patience" – so translated to English in 1611 – conveys a more passive approach to a relationship. A more accurate and helpful translation today for the Greek word "hupomonay" is "tenaciousness, persistence, steadfastness," even "pushback." In our understanding, tenaciousness, persistence, steadfastness, and pushback convey a more active engagement. James' teaching, in fact, is that we are tenacious, persistent, steadfast, and pushing back in relation to any argument which judges any other person as second-class or not as worthy as every other person.

"Hupomonay" is, in the New Testament, a parallel term to the Hebrew for "persists," as in Job 2:3, 2:9, and 27:5-6. In Luke's account, Jesus teaches of growing in grace and bearing fruit or grain in God's Kingdom with "hupomonay" (persistence)" (8:15); and Jesus says to disciples, "(In the hardest times) by your 'hupomonay' (persistence) you will gain your souls/ gain your lives" (21:19). In Second Corinthians, Paul writes (1:6), "(In the hardest times) you experience encouragement when you 'hupomonay' (persist) and suffer as others." In Hebrews, chapter 12, verse 1, there's and often quoted verse: "Let us run with 'hupomonay' the race that is set before us. Let us be engaged with persistence, and even push back" when anyone says God judges anyone as undeserving or second-class. Job does not even consider the Hebrew word for "hope" ("thiqyath") to be as strong as "persistence" or "pushback" (4:6; 17:15; 19:10).

As Jim Wharton sat with Joanie and me and infant Payton in the restaurant in Henderson, Texas, in October of 1991, I did not know what Dr. Wharton had written as the introduction to a series of fourteen sermons he preached in 1972 (19 years earlier) when he was as a national radio "Protestant Hour" preacher. Like Job, Dr. Wharton encouraged a faith which reaches beyond too small an understanding of hope, writing: "We are to act here and now in such ways that what God's people hope shows through. This can be tough and costly business. It's what I call hard-headed hope – being willing to put your body and goods on the line for the sake of a hoped-for reality in the world. We see this in Jesus, and the only way to share that hope, according to the Bible, is to risk it hard-headedly, in the ordinary fabric of life here and now."

"Hard-headed hope" was Jim Wharton's term for "persistence" and "push-back" against all arguments which seek for Job or any other person ever to be considered a victim of God's whimsical or uncaring judgment. To the disbelief of his spouse, his friends, and a know-it-all-passerby, Job called to God for a dialog and conversation about the essence of life, relationships, and serving. He persisted – Job did – in his God-given integrity with hard-headed hope, against every person's argument, policy, and belief which discounts the integrity, dignity, and value God always gives, yet in vulnerability. Jesus, in his day, vulnerably lives by and teaches for hard-headed hope. So are we called for living with hard-headed, persistent hope, lifting up every person, as vulnerable as we all are. – All honor and praise be to God.