

June 29, 2025 + 10:30 A.M.
Fourth Sunday of Pentecost

We Join in Worship

*If you need extra space for a wheelchair or walker, or if you have young children with you, please feel free to make use of our
Prayground, the extra space across the aisle from the sound booth.*

Liturgist: Karen Lounsbury

PRELUDE *More Love to Thee/My Jesus, I Love Thee*

arr. Melody Bober

WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

*** CALL TO WORSHIP** (Adapted from *Psalm 16*)

Leader: Protect us, O God, for in you we take refuge.

ALL: We say to the LORD, "You are our LORD; we have no good apart from you."

Leader: We bless the LORD who gives us counsel; in the night also our hearts instruct us.

ALL: We say to the LORD, "You are our LORD; we have no good apart from you."

Leader: We keep the LORD always before us; because the LORD is at our right hand, we shall not be moved.

ALL: We say to the LORD, "You are our LORD; we have no good apart from you."

Leader: Therefore our hearts are glad, and our souls rejoice; our bodies also rest secure. For you do not give us up to Sheol, or let your faithful ones see the Pit.

ALL: We say to the LORD, "You are our LORD; we have no good apart from you."

Leader: You show us the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

ALL: We say to the LORD, "You are our LORD; we have no good apart from you." Let us worship the LORD!

***OPENING HYMN:** "Arise, Your Light Is Come!" (411)

INVITATION TO CONFESSION:

Leader: In his letter to the Galatians, Paul writes, "Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh." Together let us confess how we have fallen short in living by the Spirit.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

God of grace and mercy, we join together as a community in shared confession. We confess that we have been living according to the desires of a society that has done its best to flee from your Spirit. We have chosen individualism over community. We have chosen nationality over shared humanity. We have chosen separation over connection. We have chosen hatred over love. Forgive us. Fill us once more with your Spirit. In the name of your Son Jesus Christ our liberator we pray. Amen.

KYRIE: Glory to God, No. 579 (unison)
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Hear the good news! We are led by God's Spirit, and God's Spirit sets us free!
ALL: Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!

GLORIA PATRI (unison, 577)

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

STATEMENT OF FAITH (From the *Confession of 1967*)

God the Holy Spirit fulfills the work of reconciliation in humanity. The Holy Spirit creates and renews the church as the community in which people are reconciled to God and to one another. God the Holy Spirit enables them to receive forgiveness as they forgive one another and to enjoy the peace of God as they make peace among themselves. In spite of their sin, God gives them power to become representatives of Jesus Christ and his gospel of reconciliation to all humanity.

We Hear God's Word

EMBODIED WORD FOR DISCIPLES OF ALL AGES

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of power and grace, fill us with the wisdom of your word and the understanding of your Spirit so that we may be your church: a people with dreams and visions at work in all the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HEBREW BIBLE LESSON: 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14

EPISTLE LESSON: Galatians 5:14-18

LESSON FROM ACTS: Acts 2:43-47

SERMON: The Beautiful Community

MUSICAL MEDITATION: *Gigue from Sonata in D Minor* F. M. Veracini
Soloist: Tristan Casiano on violin

We Respond in Faith

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

OFFERING INVITATION

The Spirit-filled community in *Acts* shared everything in common, giving from what they had and receiving according to what they needed. Let us share our resources in this same beautiful way. If you have not already done so, please place your offering in the plate as it is passed. If you are worshiping from home, please mail in your checks or use our online giving option on the website. Let us reflect on stewardship as we listen to today's offertory.

OFFERTORY *Jesus Loves Even Me*

Philip P. Bliss, arr. Melody Bober

* DOXOLOGY:

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures high and low;

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God, in Jesus fully known;

Creator, Word, and Spirit one;

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (Unison)

Triune God, we dedicate these gifts to you and to your beautiful community. As we do so, we commit to continuing to build that community. In the name of Jesus Christ our liberator we pray. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN "We Are One in the Spirit" (Glory to God 300)

We Go Into the World

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *It's Just Like His Great Love* Edna R. Worrell/Clarence B. Strouse, arr. Melody Bober

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* So that we can properly greet people who come to the building during Sunday morning worship, Door A will be the only unlocked external door during the worship service.

Life of the Church

PEEK AT THE WEEK:

SUNDAY 6/29:	Worship In Person & Online – 10:30 AM Fellowship Hosts: Mission
MONDAY 6/30:	GA – 6:30 PM Al-Anon – 7:00 PM
TUESDAY 7/1:	Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) Deacons – 6:30 PM AA – 7:30 PM
WEDNESDAY 7/2:	Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) GA – 7:00 PM Mission Parking Lot Fundraiser
THURSDAY 7/3:	Mission Parking Lot Fundraiser
FRIDAY 7/4:	INDEPENDENCE DAY Mission Parking Lot Fundraiser
SATURDAY 7/5:	Mission Parking Lot Fundraiser
SUNDAY 7/6:	Mission Parking Lot Fundraiser

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **PARKING LOT FUNDRAISER** Mission's annual 4th of July Parking Lot Fundraiser begins on Wednesday, July 2nd, and runs through Sunday, July 6th. This is a major fundraiser for Mission, and without the support of the congregation this event would not be possible. Sign up early and often!
- **"SCRIPTURE IN THE PARK"** is going to be a 6-week informal Bible study group that will meet from 6:30-7:30 pm on Thursday evenings from July 10 to August 14. Our first meeting will be at Redar Park in Schererville (217 Gregory St, Schererville, IN), at the picnic shelter. "Scripture in the Park" will be a combined group of folks from our church and Immanuel Presbyterian Church. Bring a Bible and a water bottle, and join us for great discussion and wonderful friends new and old! If you have any questions, please contact Heather Casiano.
- **SIGN UP TO HOST FELLOWSHIP WITH LIGHT REFRESHMENTS IN JULY AND AUGUST:** Our ministries and committees have been doing a fantastic job of hosting fellowship over the past many months. Let's give them a break in July and August! The sign up board is in the Fellowship Hall. Snacks do not have to be elaborate!
- **BUILDING USE FORMS** Just a quick reminder that for the safety and security of everyone using our building, we need to have building use request forms filled out by both members and non-members whenever they use any area of the building outside of regular church activity functions.
- **FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!** If you don't already follow us on Facebook and Instagram, please start doing so @firstpchighland on both Facebook and Instagram.
- **INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF FPCH?** You are always welcome here, whether a member or not! If you are interested in joining as a member, though, we would love to have you! Please talk to Pastor Tyler if you would like to learn more.

Opportunities to serve as the HEART, HANDS, and FEET of Jesus Christ:

- **BLESSING BOX** Please continue to place items in the Blessing Box and take items if you are a person in need! Items most commonly donated: Canned goods with pull tabs, socks, toilet paper, non-perishable foods, small snacks, toiletries, baby wipes and diapers. Please check expiration dates!
- **HELP STOCK OUR PANTRY!** Please pick up a beautifully decorated grocery bag in the narthex and fill it to help the church's food pantry.
- **GOT SNEAKERS?** We are still participating in the Got Sneakers Fundraiser where there is nothing to buy or sell; all we need is your support and your gently worn, used, or new sneakers! Blue bins are located in the narthex, and inside and outside DOOR D by the office. Every pair counts!

Prayer List

Anthony
Brady Vanes
George Griner
Guy Hendricks
Bill and Anettia Holmes
David Markley
Pat and David Kingen
Diana and Ray Mendoza
Janet Orem
Cindy Waltz and Sister
Yvonne Suroviak
Georgette Sknerski
Jakob Holden
Denise Matthys
Jan Oprea
Florance Cody
Kathy & Chuck Pumnea
Laura Buono Domsic
The Windstrups
Rick Parker
Gary Everhart
Caroline Studer
Darlene O'Brien
Doug & Sue Matthews
Janet Terpstra
Glen Nahler
Tom
David Hamblin
Jana Tolley
Larry & Bonnie Perryman
Delta Rose
Winnie Owen

Breeanne
Mom Bechtler
Victor
Marian Clayton
Ella P
Edie Delgano
Melissa J.
Rita Stronczek
Keren, Zuriel, and Gedeon
OGB
Edna Cruz
Katie
Charlie
Jerry & Rena Martinez
George
Dustin
Noreen
Kim
Jessica
Nicole
Greg
Pastor Jane
Mary Ellen Edeus
Jane and David
Lodean
Suzanne
Jalen
Flora R.
Tyler Gall
Dustin
Phil

2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14

2 Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. 2 Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.

6 Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. 7 Fifty men of the company of prophets also went and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. 8 Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and the two of them crossed on dry ground.

9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I may do for you before I am taken from you." Elisha said, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit." 10 He responded, "You have asked a hard thing, yet if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not." 11 As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. 12 Elisha kept watching and crying out, "Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

13 He picked up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. 14 He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him and struck the water. He said, "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah? Where is he?" He struck the water again, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha crossed over.

Galatians 5:14-18

14 For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. 16 Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law.

Acts 2:43-47

43 Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 All who believed were together and had all things in common; 45 they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

The Beautiful Community

2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14; Galatians 5:14-18; Acts 2:43-47

Last week we joyfully explored the beautiful mystery of our Triune God, somehow multiple and somehow one. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were there before time began along with their sister Sophia, Wisdom. They were with each other as a *unity*. They were with each other as a *community*, loving each other before there was anything else in existence. And wow, must it have been beautiful! And then they chose to love the universe and everything and everyone in it into existence. Our Triune God kept creating more and more, and existence kept becoming more and more beautiful! Remember from the story of Creation in Genesis, God made one thing and it was good and then the next and it was even better and on and on until God made us humans and said that all was VERY good. And so the beautiful community of Triunity became a beautiful community of everything in existence.

And our Triune God gave us humans the blessed task of being the stewards of Creation, the stewards of this beautiful community. And we humans, of course, got right to work messing things up. We created shame and violence and hierarchies of power and control. We started harming each other for the sake of being the most powerful. We started harming the rest of Creation for the sake of maintaining that power. We built systems of inequity based on who was willing to exploit the earth the most and then entrenched those systems in ways that would lead to centuries of generational resource poverty for the vast majority of people while wealth and power were concentrated into the hands of only a few. We created arbitrary categories of difference to police belonging and to make these systems immutable. We normalized these systems as natural and blessed them with religious language. All of this, of course, was as unnatural as could be. All of this was a direct contradiction to that beautiful community that existed before time and to that beautiful community that was created at the beginning of time.

As a result, there was war, slavery, and genocide. There was violent conquest and mass displacement of peoples. There were pandemics worsened by poverty. And yet there were always those who dared to resist these human-made systems and to embrace that divine system of beautiful community. Prophets like Elijah dared to stand up to those who had accumulated the most power and dared to share their own power in communities of people. We see this company of prophets traveling around with Elijah and Elisha. We see the mantle of prophecy being passed on so that the power of communities of resistance could also be generational. It was a mantle that Naomi and Ruth had carried long before. It was a mantle that Jesus and his disciples would pick up long after. The Holy Spirit was clearly always moving with this mantle, breathing life into the communities of prophets, into those beautiful communities of resistance. We even hear Elisha using the language of Spirit, asking Elijah for a double share.

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, he promised that that same mantle would be passed on to the community of his followers. He promised that the Holy Spirit would come in a way never before experienced. And lo and behold, the day of Pentecost arrived! People who had been separated by those unnatural hierarchies of power and division were brought together. People were gifted with the ability to understand each other. Fruit like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control began to grow in the fertile soil of open hearts and open minds. There was at once wild diversity and profound unity. Thousands more people saw this and immediately joined this new community that was forming, this new community that was filled with the Spirit of Creation, the Spirit of resistance to those unnatural systems of power and division, the Spirit of the Triune God, the Spirit of love.

And once again there was a beautiful community, made in the image and likeness of a God who was somehow three in one, a God who had embodied beautiful community before time even existed. Let us hear how this new Spirit-filled community was described in the book of *Acts* once more:

Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and

having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

There, at the heart of this community was a commitment to dismantling barriers to belonging. They held all things in common, and so there was no disparity of resources and thus now inequality of power. When joining the community, people committed to selling their personal possessions and distributing the proceeds to those around them who were most in need. Without hierarchies of power, those arbitrary categories of difference no longer held sway. People from across that wild diversity that had gathered on the day of Pentecost made the temple into a community center, feasted together, and praised God. Others saw the Spirit of the living God at work in this community and started joining. Oh how beautiful it was!

That was the beginning of the Church! The dismantling of barriers to belonging. The destruction of hierarchies of wealth and power. The deconstruction of those arbitrary categories of difference for the sake of division. The conversion of spaces into places that would foster togetherness. The construction of tables where all would be welcome. The creation of a beautiful community in which all would have their needs met and in which all could share in God's abundant joy. *Those* are our roots! And what strong roots they are! For, these roots are rooted in the very Spirit of the Triune God!

Sadly, much of the Church's history has been the story of trying to cut itself off from these roots, operating under the delusion that somehow the trunk and branches can flourish without them. Indeed, we can see it even soon after in the book of *Acts*. People's egos took over, and there were struggles for power. People reinscribed those arbitrary categories of distance and started claiming chosenness based upon nationality and ethnicity. People became violent in the name of God, blasphemously claiming that the God of Love would somehow condone such a thing. Churches created hierarchies based on who had the most resources. Churches joined with kings and emperors to colonize and enslave and perpetrate genocide. Churches built new barriers to belonging, blasphemously daring to claim God-gifted identities as sinful. In short, churches fell into the same patterns as those who were entrusted with stewardship after the first Creation.

AND...yes there is an AND! That is not the whole story. There is also a long history of beautiful communities who have stayed true to their roots. There have been churches that have stood up to kings and emperors, picking up the mantle of Elijah and Elisha and the company of prophets. There have been churches that have accompanied people on journeys of migration following unjust displacement, picking up the mantle of Naomi and Ruth. There have been churches that have committed themselves to ministries of healing and feeding and radical love, picking up the mantle of Jesus and his disciples. There have been churches that have chosen to give away all of their material resources to the poor, to dismantle barriers to belonging, and to build up spaces of equity, picking up the mantle of the Spirit-filled Pentecost community.

We have certainly had times when we have separated a bit from our roots here at First Presbyterian Church of Highland, for we are by no means perfect. There have been times when we have been tempted to conform to the patterns of the world. But those have been the blips on the map of history rather than the arc of our journey. For we are indeed rooted in the Spirit of the Triune God, in the Spirit of the Beautiful Community. We have sought to pick up those mantles of prophetic resistance, accompaniment, healing, feeding, radical love, resource sharing, barrier busting, and equity building. What a beautiful journey this has been! And I have good news! This journey is not over! We still have joyful work to do in making sure our roots go even deeper and wider into the Spirit of the living God! We can still stand up more prophetically, share more generously, and love more fiercely. We can be an even more beautiful community that even more people see and want to be part of. And they should be able to! For there should be no doubt whatsoever that all belong here! Amen.

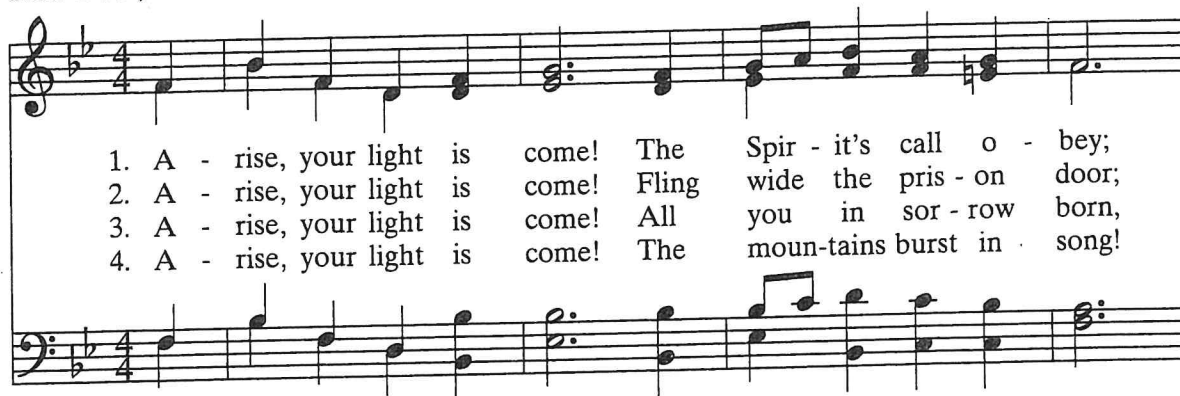
Arise, Your Light Is Come!

411

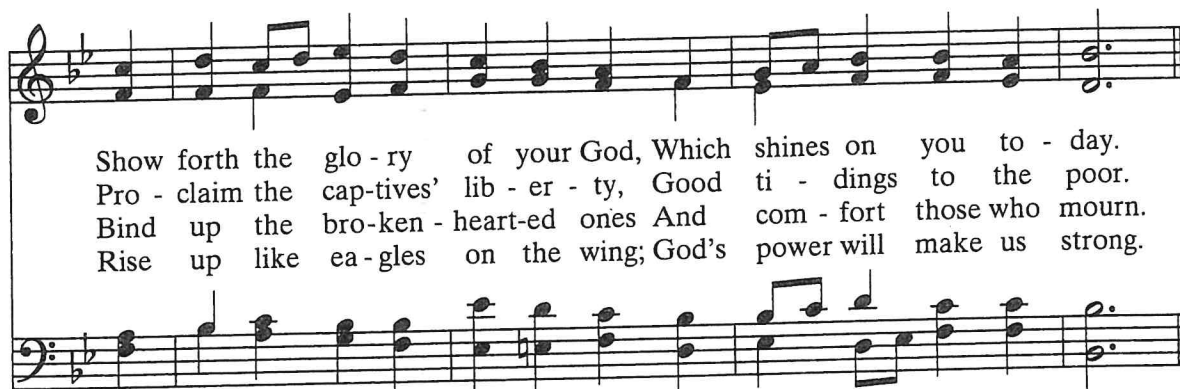
FESTAL SONG SM

Ruth Duck, 1974

William H. Walter, 1894



1. A - rise, your light is come! The Spir - it's call o - bey;
2. A - rise, your light is come! Fling wide the pris - on door;
3. A - rise, your light is come! All you in sor - row born,
4. A - rise, your light is come! The moun-tains burst in song!



Show forth the glo - ry of your God, Which shines on you to - day.
Pro - claim the cap-tives' lib - er - ty, Good ti - dings to the poor.
Bind up the bro-ken - heart-ed ones And com - fort those who mourn.
Rise up like ea - gles on the wing; God's power will make us strong.

