

October 18, 2026 + 10:30 A.M.
Twenty-Second Sunday of Pentecost

We Join in Worship

Liturgist: Karen Lounsbury

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.

PRELUDE *Be Thou My Vision* Traditional Irish Melody, arr. Carol Tornquist

WELCOME

CHORAL INTROIT

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*THE PEACE OF CHRIST

*CALL TO WORSHIP: (Adapted from *Psalms* 96)

Leader: Let us sing to the LORD, let us bless the LORD's name; let us tell of the LORD's salvation from day to day.

ALL: **O sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth!**

Leader: Let us ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Let us worship the LORD in holy splendor; let all the earth tremble before the LORD.

ALL: **O sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth!**

Leader: Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it. Let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the LORD.

ALL: **O sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth!**

Leader: The LORD is coming in the flesh, to be one of us! Our messiah is coming with righteousness and truth!

ALL: **O sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth!**

*OPENING HYMN: "Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine!" (Glory to God, 839)

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

Leader: In one of his letters to the church in Corinth, Paul writes that the Lord will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Let us confess the hidden things before our good and righteous judge.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God our Provider, we confess our sins trusting in your grace. We confess that we have allowed worry and fear to consume too much of our lives. We live as though the forces we fear are more powerful than you, the Creator of all things. We forget that your Holy Spirit is always with us, no matter how hard life gets. We make the decision not to trust you, who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field. Forgive us for having fear over faith. Fill us with your blessed assurance again. In the name of Jesus Christ, our risen Lord, 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: Friends, hear the good news! It is the Lord alone who judges us, and the Lord bore the weight of all our transgressions.

ALL: Through Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!

GLORIA PATRI (577)

Glory be to the Father, and the Son, and the 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 Second Helvetic Confession*)

We believe that all things in heaven and on earth, and in all creatures, are preserved and governed by the providence of this wise, eternal and almighty God. For he who is the truth says that the birds of the air are fed by him and the lilies of the field are clothed by him; he also says that the hairs of our head are numbered. Amen.

We Hear God's Word

EMBODIED WORD FOR DISCIPLES OF ALL AGES

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Guide us, O God, by your Word and Spirit, that in your light we may see light, in your truth find wisdom, and in your will discover your peace. In the name of Jesus Christ our risen Lord we pray. Amen.

HEBREW BIBLE LESSON: *Song of Songs 2:10-15*

EPISTLE LESSON: *1 Corinthians 4:1-7*

GOSPEL LESSON: *Matthew 6:25-34*

SERMON: For the Birds

MUSICAL MEDITATION: *Blest Are They* David Haas

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:

Leader: God provides for and cares about each and every creature in Creation, as shown by the feeding of the birds. We are called to make sure that God's abundance reaches all in need. Let us give our tithes and offerings in response to that call. If you are here in person, please place your offering in the plate as it is passed. If you are worshipping from home, please mail in your checks or use our online giving option on the website. Now let us practice stewardship as we listen to today's offertory.

OFFERTORY *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing* Traditional American Melody, arr. Carol Tornquist

***DOXOLOGY (592)**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Amen.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (Unison)**

God our Provider, we give these gifts with the trust that you will continue to provide what we need. Help us to stop holding onto things because of our worries about scarcity. Guide us to be ever more generous with the resources that you have provided in abundance. In the name of Jesus Christ, our risen Lord, we pray. Amen.

We Go into the World

***CLOSING HYMN:** "Seek Ye First" (Glory to God, 175)

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* Martin Luther, arr. Carol Tornquist

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PEEK AT THE WEEK:

SUNDAY 10/18:	Adult Study – 9:00 AM Worship in Person & Online – 10:30 AM Faith Development – After Worship
MONDAY 10/19:	GA – 6:30 PM Al-Anon – 7:00 PM
TUESDAY 10/20:	Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) Session – 6:30 PM AA – 7:30 PM
WEDNESDAY 10/21:	Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) "Bring Your Own Bible" Bible Study 7-8 PM (Zoom) GA – 7:00 PM
THURSDAY 10/22:	Choir – 7:00 PM
SATURDAY 10/24:	AA – 6:30 PM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **WORLD COMMUNION OFFERING** We will be collecting this special offering of the PC(USA) throughout October. You can find envelopes in the narthex.
- **"BYOB"** (Bring Your Own Bible) discussion group meets on Wednesday evenings from 7-8 pm online using Zoom. Each week this group takes a look at the scriptures from our Sunday worship services, asking questions, bringing up different perspectives, and hopefully encountering the Holy Spirit in a fresh way. The link for the Zoom meetings is emailed out weekly. If you're not familiar with how to use Zoom, or to get on our e-mail list, please contact Pastor Tyler or Heather Casiano. All belong! You can join even if you have never done so before!

- **“THE BIBLE IN TODAY’S WORLD”** study class meets on Sunday mornings from 9-10 am at the church. We are excited to be using the study guide *United through Christ, Bound to Each Other: Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians*. If you have any questions, contact Heather Casiano. All are welcome! You can join even if you have never done so before!
- **FELLOWSHIP HOSTING IN THE FALL** We are asking folks to sign up to host fellowship time in the Fall. Hosting entails bringing a simple snack to share, setting it out, and cleaning up afterwards. On Sundays with no sign-ups, we will still have coffee and tea to enjoy.
- **CHOIR PRACTICE IS THURSDAYS AT 7PM** We need singers of all sorts and welcome singers of all skill levels! We have a great time, and singing is a great way to give glory to God!
- **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 bring non-perishable foods to help the church's food pantry.
- **GOT SNEAKERS?** The sneakers that we all collect will help raise money to support our church’s general fund AND will help our environment by keeping sneakers out of landfills. Bring the sneakers (athletic shoes only) to the church and put them in one of the blue bins by Door D or in the narthex.

Prayer List

Anthony
 Brady Vanes
 George Griner
 Guy Hendricks
 David Markley
 David Kingen
 Diana and Ray Mendoza
 Janet Orem
 Cindy Waltz and Sister
 Yvonne Suroviak
 Georgette and Garry Sknerski
 Jakob Holden
 Denise Matthys
 Florance Cody
 Kathy & Chuck Pumnea
 The Windstrups
 Rick Parker
 Gary Everhart
 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
 Marian Clayton
 Ella P
 Rita Stronczek
 Keren, Zuriel, and Gedeon
 Edna Cruz
 Charlie
 Jerry & Rena Martinez
 Tyler Gall
 Luana Sulkowski
 Sonny Buono
 Tammy
 Mike Kelly
 Sue Heth
 Oscar Ochoa
 Jean and Clara
 Dave Shelborne
 Kali Rosalia
 Wendy
 Jessica S
 Shirley McKnight
 Renee Williams
 Kay Johnson

Song of Songs 2:10-15

¹⁰ My beloved speaks and says to me: “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away,

¹¹ for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.

¹² The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.

¹³ The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

¹⁴ O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the cliff, let me see your face;

let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.

¹⁵ Catch us the foxes, the little foxes, that ruin the vineyards—

for our vineyards are in blossom.”

1 Corinthians 4:1-7

4 Think of us in this way: as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries. ² Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. ³ But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. ⁴ I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. ⁵ Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God.

⁶ I have applied all this to Apollos and myself for your benefit, brothers and sisters, so that you may learn through us what “Not beyond what is written” means, so that none of you will be puffed up in favor of one against another. ⁷ For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive?

Matthew 6:25-34

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁸ And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ ³² For it is the gentiles who seek all these things, and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

³⁴ “So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

For the Birds

Song of Songs 2:10-15; 1 Corinthians 4:1-7; Matthew 6:25-34

Last week we took wing and started flying with the Holy Spirit dove as God cut the first covenant with Noah and all creation and then as God gifted all creation with the new covenant...the new dovenant...in the person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Today we are going to continue flying with the birds, those wild and free beings that so beautifully embody the spirit of the Spirit! It is for good reason that our scriptures are full of them! Birds are considered as offerings unto God in the Torah, as symbols of love in the *Song of Songs*, as imagery to help us understand God in the Psalms, and even as the direct incarnation of God in the story of Jesus' baptism. It makes sense. Birds draw our attention upwards and outwards, calling us to expand our vision. They inspire us with the possibility of flight, of defying gravity. They fill us with peace and serenity when we watch them rest in our backyards and soar upon the heights alike.

It is for good reason that birdwatching is so common to so many of us! And it is by no means a new phenomenon. People have been gazing at the birds since the beginning of time. It is a pastime available in all contexts across the globe. It has no technological requirements. And if birdwatching is not available due to visual impairment, birdsong carries just as much power. Oh yes, the birds are accessible to everyone. And so it is for good reason that Jesus used the birds to teach one of the most important lessons we human beings could ever learn.

"Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?"

Jesus spoke these words from the mountaintop very early on in his ministry. As he moved about the countryside after calling his first disciples, large crowds began following him. They were an occupied people. The Roman empire had laid claim to their land. Roman soldiers policed their streets. Roman leaders forced them into labor and commandeered their crops. In short, they were experiencing collective violent trauma. On top of that, those who formed large crowds around Jesus tended to be the poor, the sick, the stranger, and the outcast. There were people who had every reason to be stressed out. These were people who had every reason to worry. They would have been in constant survival mode and thus in constant nervous system overload.

And it was into this context and unto this group of people that he spoke these words from the mountaintop, as part of perhaps the most empowering address ever given, the same address in which he said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are those who mourn, blessed are the meek, blessed are the persecuted, for theirs is the kingdom, for they will be comforted, for they will inherit the earth, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It was in the midst of this speech, begun with these revolutionary words of power, spoken to the most traumatized, that Jesus said, "Do not worry...look at the birds of the air!"

Now Jesus focuses on one particular reason for looking at the birds as a way to calm worry—God has created the conditions for them to eat even though they do not have the ability to grow their own food, harvest their own food, or store their own food. Through the marvels of nature, the birds do not go hungry. And so Jesus starts with survival, meeting these stressed-out people right where they were. If God provides food for the birds, how much more so does God provide food for the humans! Of course, we know that Jesus would then embody that in his life. He would feed thousands upon thousands of hungry people throughout his life. He would call his followers to do the same—to share what they had, to break bread together, to feed the hungry for to do so would be to feed the Lord himself. Survival. It is amazing how much healing there can be when somebody comes to know deep in their bones and in their soul that there will be food, that there will be water, that there will be air, that there will be shelter, that there will be life tomorrow. And if we are among the privileged few in this world who always have food, water, air, and shelter, may the birds be a reminder that we have the basics of life, and so may the other things we worry about shrink way down to size!

But let us not limit Jesus' teaching to survival alone, though! Jesus always wanted everyone to experience life to the fullest, to truly live the exquisite joy that God created us for. Jesus asked, "Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" Jesus understood that looking upon the birds of the air would call the mind and spirit beyond mere survival into freedom. Limited perspective cannot contain the birds that rise up high and can see with that aptly named birds-eye view. Gravity cannot contain the birds that ride upon the

winds. Borders cannot contain the birds that migrate across great distances and witness the wonders of a diverse world. Oh yes, in calling his followers to look at the birds of the sky, Jesus was indeed adding freedom and joy to survival. “Do not worry...look at the birds of the air!” Look upward and outward! Imagine what life could be if we stopped getting stuck on worrying about the trivial things! Imagine what life could be if we stopped caring so much about things that mean so little! Imagine what life could be if we allowed our spirits to soar, if we allowed our perspectives to expand, if we allowed our wonder to break free! Yes, Jesus wants us to live *that* exquisite joy!

And here’s the thing, the less time and energy we spend worrying, the more time and energy we have to spend on truly living into God’s call upon our lives—a call that takes us into the realm of exquisite joy. For God calls us to the work of co-creating a world today in which all people have what they need to survive, in which nobody needs to worry about whether they will have enough to survive until tomorrow. God calls us to the work of co-creating a world today in which all people’s spirits can soar, perspectives expand, and sense of wonder break free. I know that all of you have engaged in this work, and I am certain that some of the most joyful moments in your lives have been those moments when you have been part of someone else’s liberation.

We use the saying, “For the birds,” as a way to diminish something, to say that it is worthless, meaningless, unworthy of our time. With that definition, we could definitely say that worrying is for the birds. It does us no good. It wastes the precious time we have in this life. We can also transform that saying, “For the birds,” into something entirely more apt to God’s perspective. For God provides for the birds all that the birds need to survive, to fly, and to be free. In God’s eyes, what is “for the birds?” Food, water, air, shelter, freedom, perspective, wonder, and exquisite joy. After all, the birds were part of God’s first covenant long ago when the rainbow appeared in the sky! And if God provides for the birds, how much more so does God provide for us?!

So when we find ourselves sinking into the quicksand of worry, let us use the birds to ground us in God’s reality—hmm, is it too creative to coin the concept of grounding in the sky? It would mean to take our minds out of the realm of anxiety and into the realm of the truest reality. It would mean to look outside at the birds, or to use our mind’s eye to imagine the birds, and to remember all that God does for the birds and so to understand all that God does for us. And if God’s got us, what is there to worry about?

Surely drawing inspiration from that sermon upon the mountainside, that greatest sermon ever preached, Bob Marley created one of the greatest songs ever sung—putting the message to music in a way that can help us to ground ourselves in the sky. I close with his words.

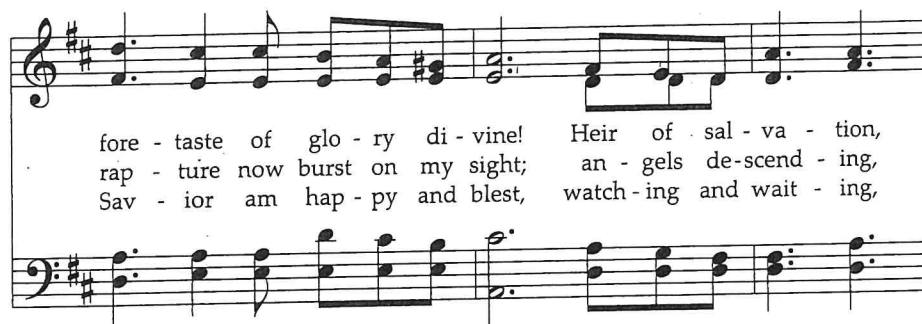
*Rise up this morning,
Smile with the rising sun,
Three little birds pitch by my doorstep
Singin’ sweet songs
Of melodies pure and true,
Singin’, ‘This is my message to you.’*

*Singin’ don’t worry
About a thing
’Cos ev’ry little thing
’Sgonna be alright.
Amen!*

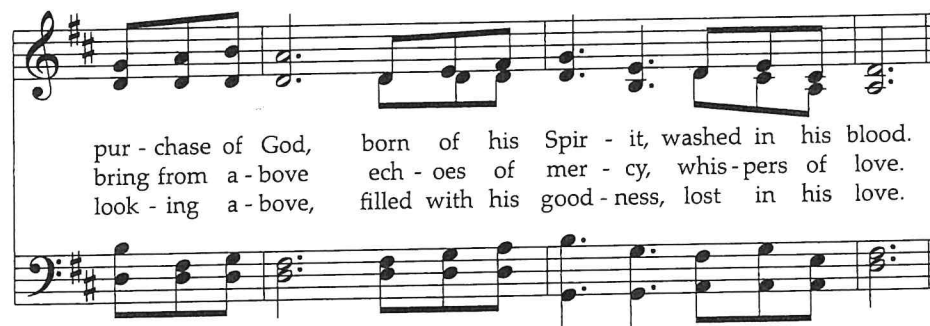
839 Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine!



1 Bless - ed as - sur - ance, Je - sus is mine! O what a
 2 Per - fect sub - mis - sion, per - fect de - light, vi - sions of
 3 Per - fect sub - mis - sion, all is at rest; I in my



fore - taste of glo - ry di - vine! Heir of sal - va - tion,
 rap - ture now burst on my sight; an - gels de - scend - ing,
 Sav - ior am hap - py and blest, watch - ing and wait - ing,



pur - chase of God, born of his Spir - it, washed in his blood.
 bring from a - bove ech - oes of mer - cy, whis - pers of love.
 look - ing a - bove, filled with his good - ness, lost in his love.

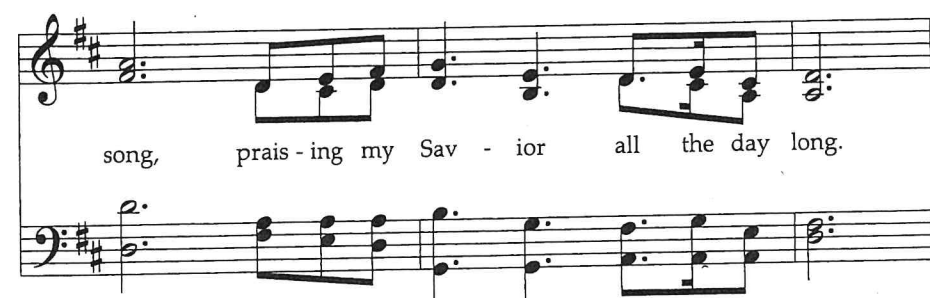
Refrain



This is my sto - ry; this is my song, prais - ing my Sav - ior



all the day long; this is my sto - ry; this is my



song, prais - ing my Sav - ior all the day long.

Descant

Al - le - lu - ia,

1 Seek ye first the king - dom of God
2 Ask, and it shall be giv - en un - to you;
3 You shall not live by bread a - lone,

al - le - lu - ia,

and its righ - teous - ness,
seek, and you shall find;
but by ev - ery word

al - le - lu - ia,

and all these things shall be add - ed un - to you.
knock, and the door shall be o - pened un - to you.
that pro - ceeds from the mouth of God.

The first system of the musical score is written in D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a whole note 'al', followed by a half note 'le', a half note 'lu', and a whole note 'ia,'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand. The lyrics are: 'al - le - lu - ia,' followed by a three-line verse: 'and all these things shall be add - ed un - to you. / knock, and the door shall be o - pened un - to you. / that pro - ceeds from the mouth of God.'

al - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu, al - le - lu - ia!

The second system continues the musical piece. The vocal line has a whole note 'al', a half note 'le', a half note 'lu', and a whole note 'ia!'. The piano accompaniment continues with similar rhythmic patterns. The lyrics are: 'al - le - lu - ia!' followed by 'Al - le - lu, al - le - lu - ia!'. The system concludes with a double bar line.