

First Presbyterian Church
Energized by Grace

A SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

Fourth Sunday of Easter

SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2026

10:00 AM

A SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

Lectionary Texts:

Acts 2:42-47; Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34:7-15; Psalm 100; 1 Peter 2:19-25; John 10:1-10

This church welcomes you no matter who you are, where you come from, or why you are here.

We are Christ's people, and this is Christ's place with its doors open wide. If you are passing through, Godspeed; if you are looking for a home, stay here; if you need instruction, learn from us as we learn from you. We invite visitors to join us, but most of all, to return often.



ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME

GATHERING — *Alleluia*

arr. Creighton Holder

SILENT PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Risen Christ, you gather your people in song and send us into the world in hope. By your Spirit, make our worship truthful, grateful, and bold, so that our praise may become compassion, our memory may become discipleship, and our joy may become justice; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

CHIMES OF THE TRINITY

WELCOME AND PARISH LIFE

PRELUDE — *V. Sanctus: Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts from Gospel Mass*

Robert Ray

Holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. Hosanna be to Thee in the highest, who gave me victory.

There was a man sittin' by the roadside, he was blind and could not see.

Then the Master of the earth and skies touched his eyes and he looked around saying, "Holy, holy..."

Another man lay by a poolside, thirty-eight years with his infirmity.

Then the Lord troubled the water, the man arose and he jumped for joy saying, "Holy, holy..."

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, we will always sing Thy praise.

Sing Hosanna in the highest!

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, let us worship the living God with joy and gratitude.

We come to praise God with heart, mind, and voice.

Let us sing as one body, gathered not as spectators but as participants in the worship of the church.

We come to pray, to proclaim, and to be formed in faith.

Let us bring before God the fullness of our lives: our joy and sorrow, our gratitude and grief, our longing and hope.

We bring our whole lives into the presence of a listening God.

In this Easter season, the risen Christ gathers every voice and calls the church into praise, truth, and justice.

We will worship with thanksgiving and serve with love.

Let us worship God!

† HYMN 611 — Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

HYMN TO JOY

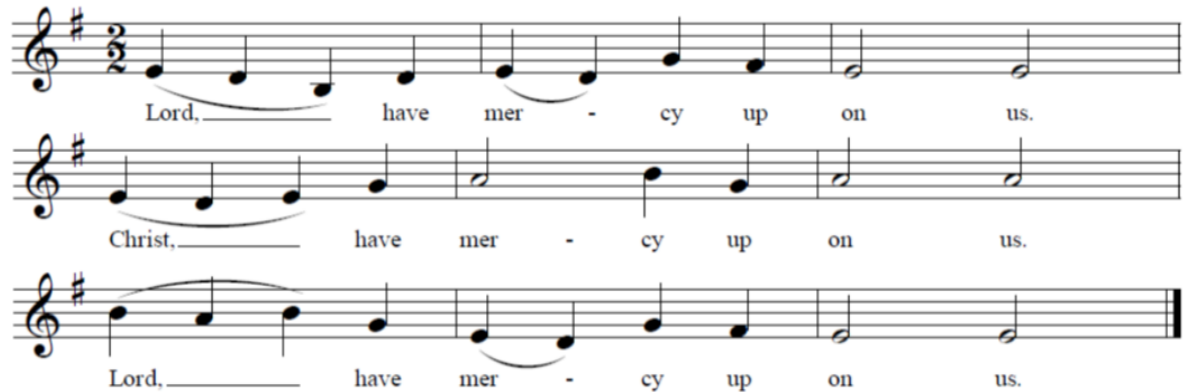
† CALL TO CONFESSION

† PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Risen Christ, you call us to sing with thankful hearts, yet we confess that our lives do not always join the song of your grace. We have treated worship as performance rather than prayer, as entertainment rather than proclamation, and as the possession of a few rather than the gift of the whole assembly. We have sung of love while withholding compassion, sung of peace while ignoring violence, and sung

of justice while refusing the cost of discipleship. Forgive us when our worship has not welcomed every voice. Forgive us when we have silenced the suffering, neglected the wisdom of the marginalized, or chosen comfort over the liberating truth of the gospel. By your Easter mercy, renew your church. Teach us to sing praise with sincerity, to pray from the depths of our lives, to remember your mighty acts, and to offer worship that bears fruit in justice, mercy, and peace; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Amen.

† KYRIE ELEISON



† DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Friends, hear and believe the good news;
In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!

† GLORIA PATRI

Hymnal, 581

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

PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Colossians 3:12-17

p. 246

The Word of the Lord!
Thanks be to God!

MEDITATION — *Cancion de Cuna*

Leo Brouwer

PSALTER READING: Psalm 104

p. 682

The Word of the Lord!
Thanks be to God!

REFLECTION

MEDITATION — *Andante* from *Sonata in E Minor*

Florence Beatrice Price

VI: *Agnus Dei: Lamb of God*

Robert Ray

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
 For you came to die for me, suffered, bled, and died on Calvary.
 In your word you showed us how, we are trying Lord, hear our prayer right now.
 Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, grant us Thy peace.
 Amen.

GIVE THANKS TO GOD

MOMENT FOR SILENT MEDITATION

MUSICAL AFFIRMATION OF FAITH — VI: *Credo: I Believe in God*

Robert Ray

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day he arose. He ascended to heaven, from death he was set free.

Now he sits at the right hand and he's waitin' for you and me. He will judge all the world, he will judge you and me.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and the Holy catholic church. I believe, Lord, in one baptism for the remission of sin and rebirth.

I believe in the resurrection and the communion of saints in this world.

I believe when my life is over I'm going home just to live with my God!

I believe in God, and in the Holy Ghost. I believe in God!

IV. *Acclamation: Hallelujah, Praise the Lord*

Hallelujah; Praise the Lord. Let us praise the Lord.

Praise him with stringed instruments, praise him with dance.

Praise him with the psaltery and harp; everything that has breath ought to praise him.

CALL TO OFFERTORY

OFFERTORY — *hymn (this world is my home)* from *Sacred Spaces*

Cecil Price Walden

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS, TITHES AND OFFERINGS

† DOXOLOGY

Hymnal, 60

**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.**

† OFFERTORY PRAYER

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.

GO AND WITNESS IN GOD'S NAME

† HYMN 641 — *When in Our Music God Is Glorified*

ENGELBERG

† CHARGE

† CHORAL RESPONSE — *He Never Failed Me Yet*

Robert Ray

I will sing of God's mercy every day, every hour, He gives me power. I will sing and give thanks to Thee
for all the dangers, toils and snares that He has brought me out. He is my God and I'll serve Him
no matter what the test. Trust and never doubt, Jesus will surely bring you out. He never failed me yet.

I know God is able to deliver in times of storm, and I know that He'll keep you safe from all earthly harm.

One day when my weary soul is at rest I'm going home to be forever blessed.

Didn't my God deliver Moses from King Pharaoh? And didn't He cool the fiery furnace
for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? When I think of what my God can do -

He delivered Daniel, I know He will deliver you!

† BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE — *Toccata Brevis*

Daniel Gawthrop

WELCOME!

First Presbyterian Church warmly invites visitors to become a member of our family of faith. You may do so in one of the following ways:

- By Profession of Faith - The act of receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and sincerely promising to live for Him. Previous baptism is accounted as valid, or the Sacrament of Baptism may be administered at the time of profession.
- By Transfer of Membership - Request our minister to contact your former church for a letter of transfer, where applicable.
- By Reaffirmation of Faith - If you have been inactive or separated from the church for some time or wish to rededicate yourself, you may be received by reaffirmation of faith.

Parents of nursery aged children please note: a nursery is provided from **8:45 am - 11:15 am** for the following ages: 6 weeks - 4 years. The nursery and pre-school rooms are located in the Education Building, first floor.

UKIRK, our college campus ministry, meets for dinner & Bible study on Wednesdays throughout the semester, and other events throughout the year. More information is available at linktr.ee/ukirkofolemiss or on our Instagram [@ukirkofolemiss](https://www.instagram.com/ukirkofolemiss). All college students are welcome!

The FPC prayer chain is ready if you or someone you know is in need. Please contact Carlisle Wood at carlislewood@gmail.com or 662-832-8606. All requests are held in strict confidence.

The church has two portable defibrillators on site if a cardiac event occurs. One is located in our office hallway by the east stairwell; the other is located in the library of the Education Building.

Office Hours are Monday through Thursday, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm and Friday 8:30 am - 12:00 pm.

Tithes and Offerings: Thank you for prayerfully supporting the missions and ministries of FPC! Every gift is greatly appreciated. Here are some ways to give:

- Completing the pledge card in the friendship register found in your pew
- Online by choosing the tab titled "Giving" at the top of the church website
(<https://fpcoxford.net/giving/>)
- Enrolling in direct deposit of withdrawal by contacting the church office.
- Scanning the QR Code provided here. Credit Card fees apply.
- Mailing gifts directly to the church office at 924 Van Buren Ave, Oxford, MS 38655

If you need assistance with any specific ways to give, please contact Frances Saralvarez at fsaralvarezfpc@gmail.com, or call the church office.



TODAY'S WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

<i>Proclaiming the Word</i>	Chancel Choir
<i>Liturgist</i>	Rev. Barrett C. Milner
<i>Organist</i>	Creighton R. Holder
<i>Pianist</i>	Cecil Price Walden
<i>Drummer</i>	Zachary Castro
<i>Guitarist</i>	Ted Rogers
<i>Ushers</i>	Anne Doty, Monte Ochs, Ben Pettis, and Hank Spragins

CALENDAR

Sunday, April 26

9:00 am Sunday School*
10:00 am Worship Service*
5:00 pm Presbyterian Youth Fellowship

Monday, April 27

6:30 pm Troop 45

Tuesday, April 28

6:00 am Men's Breakfast @ The Beacon
10:00 am Grief Support Group

Wednesday, April 29

12:00 pm Property Ministry Meeting
5:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal
6:00 pm UKIRK College Ministry

Sunday, May 3

Baccalaureate Sunday

9:00 am Sunday School*
10:00 am Worship Service*
5:00 pm Arc Benders
5:00 pm Presbyterian Youth Fellowship

**Nursery provided*

**Are you interested in learning more? Do you have ideas to share?
Your church staff, Diaconate, and ministry team leaders would love to hear from you!**

SESSION

Adult Faith Formation - Irma Buchanan (2026)
& Ashley Callery (2028)
Children & Youth Faith Formation - Brynne Quick (2026)
& Corey Mauldin (2027)
Clerk of Session - Catherine Servati (2026)
Finance - Richard DeVoe (2028)
Membership & Hospitality - Matt Nielson (2026)
& Angela Manley (2028)
Mission - Laura Montgomery (2026)
& Michael Portner (2028)
Personnel - Al Ling (2027) & Trey Byars (2028)
Property - Hank Spragins (2027) & Anne Doty (2028)

DIACONATE

Class of 2026: Stefanie Goodwiller, Marty Mauldin,
Brad Mayo, Kathy Neff, Nina Patrick

Class of 2027: Heather Harris, Caroline McIntosh,
Monte Ochs, Dee Walker (clerk)

Class of 2028: Rebecca Black, Jessica Holder,
Elizabeth Miers, Ben Pettis, Lisa Tollison (moderator)

CHURCH STAFF

The Congregation
Rev. Barrett C. Milner
Creighton R. Holder
Dave Garvey
Frances Saralvarez
Kaitlin Irby
Wade Simpson
Wendy Brady

Ministers
Pastor..... bmilnerfpc@gmail.com
Director of Music..... cholderfpc@gmail.com
Director of FF for Children & Youth..... dgarveyfpc@gmail.com
Office Administrator fsaralvarezfpc@gmail.com
Communications Director kohillfpc@gmail.com
Property Manager..... wsimpson13@yahoo.com
Nursery Director..... wendybrady@gmail.com

THINGS ARE HAPPENING IN OUR CHURCH FAMILY . . .

*The flowers in the sanctuary are given to the glory of God and in memory of John Servati
by Taylor, Catherine, Frances, Porter, and Betsy Webb.*

Vacation Bible School: Join us for Vacation Bible School July 21-24. All students PreK4 through rising 5th grade are welcome! The registration link is available on our website and in Fast Facts. We are in need of youth volunteers to help with VBS. If your child would like to help out, please shoot Dave an email!

Mission Opportunities: FPC seeks to serve "the least of these." See Fast Facts or call the church office for more details on the following outreaches as well as other opportunities.

- A 2026 signup is now available to serve as hosts for the **Doors of Hope Step 2 Dinner** held in the fellowship hall the second Tuesday of each month.
- **LovePacks** (lovepacksoxford.com) provides food assistance for over 250 children in the city and county schools. The food item for April is packs of peanut butter crackers. Drop your donation by the church office.
- **In Good Order.** Need a helping hand? FPC volunteers are available to assist members who may need a little extra help with a yard project or light home repairs. If you would like assistance or know of someone who does, call the church office at 662-234-1757.
- **Memory Makers of Oxford** (memorymakersoxford.org) is a respite day service for those with memory loss. They welcome donations of items on their wish list or volunteers to assist with programming. For more information call 662-234-3332.

Sanctuary Floral Arrangements dates are available May 3, 17, and 31. To provide flowers in honor or in memory of a loved one, contact Kate at the church office, 662-234-1757, or kohillfpc@gmail.com. Contributions to the flower fund are greatly appreciated. If you want a particular date to provide flowers on a Sunday morning, please reserve that date in advance.

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

FPC Members: The Family of Richard Atkinson; David Flautt; The Family of Chad Russell (Jeannice Russell's son); Jane Henderson; The Family of Jim Gilbert; Larry Hadenfeld; The Family of Sarah Smith; The Family of Syd Shaw; Lee Borden; The Family of Max Williams; Vaughn Grisham; William Rogers; Carey Hanson; Katie Ochs; Lilly Biedenbarn; Kay Tyler; Duke Goza; Keith Hayward; Tommy Smith; Becky Murphey; Ann Dickins; Scottye Boone; Leon McCullouch

Family and Friends: Ed Parker; Brett Hoyer and Family; Our sister Presbyterian Church in Jagüey Grande, Cuba.; Clifford Cobb; The Family of Carolyn McClinton; Ray Balach; Ray Poole; The Family of Dan West (Emily Freeny); Fel Macias; Jhon Johnson; The Family of Ariadne Welch; Amy Kennedy; The Family of Craig Hayden; The Family of Pat Howard; The Family of Lynda Grimes Ferris; Marshall Roberson; Lynessa Erler; The Family of Helen Dupree Brandon; Richard Bremer; Helen Lockett; Minor Atkinson; Melissa Cribbs; Mike Flautt; Steve Mistilis; Sigrid Long; Eileen Cheney and Family; Thomas Hines; Olivia Flautt; Dr. Gladys Memnon and Friends in Bongnotte, Haiti; Doors of Hope Families; Lafayette County Detention Center inmates; Parchman Prison inmates; Haven House residents

U. S. Military: SSgt Jason Freeland, USAF 17th Special Tactics Squadron

*Please pray, too, for those with unspecified needs.
If you wish to have a name removed or added to this list, please contact the church office.*

MUSIC NOTES

In Eastertide, the church sings because the risen Christ still gathers God's people and gives them a voice. Sacred music in worship is never merely ornamental, nor is it a private expression of devotion. It is the prayer of the whole assembly: praise offered to God, testimony shared among believers, and grace carried from one voice to another. As Ruth C. Duck reminds us, worship is the work of the whole people of God. In song, the church teaches and encourages itself even as it glorifies God. Scripture consistently presents music at the decisive thresholds of faith: Miriam sings on the far shore of deliverance, David's playing soothes Saul's troubled spirit, Mary proclaims the Magnificat in hope and holy upheaval, Paul and Silas sing in prison, and the Psalms give enduring language to both lament and praise. From liberation to longing, from sorrow to joy, sacred song accompanies the people of God through the whole journey of faith.

This theological vision frames today's music. Robert Ray's *Gospel Mass* stands at the center of that tradition of communal praise. Ray (1946–2022), a distinguished conductor, composer, and professor at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, wrote the work in 1978 as his first major composition for chorus and jazz combo. Composed while he served as a liturgy team leader for the National Office of Black Catholics, the work brings together the text of the Ordinary of the Mass in English with the sonorous vitality of gospel style and scriptural imagination. Its achievement is both musical and ecclesial: it preserves the liturgical gravity of the Mass while embracing the joy, rhythmic energy, and participatory spirit of African American worship. In this synthesis, *Gospel Mass* becomes a distinctly ecumenical offering, one that invites the whole congregation into celebration, dignity, and shared praise. The movements heard today bear witness to the truth that resurrection joy is not abstract; it is embodied, sung, and made audible in the gathered church.

That same interplay of tenderness, memory, and cultural depth animates *Canción de Cuna* (Cradle Song), the Afro-Cuban lullaby arranged for guitar by Leo Brouwer. The work unfolds with gentle lyricism and subtle harmonic richness, yet it repeatedly returns to the serene and familiar melody of *Drume Negrita*. In the context of worship, such music reminds us that sacred song is not limited to overt declaration. It may also console, cradle, and restore. Just as David's instrument ministered peace to Saul, so too this berceuse offers a musical image of divine gentleness: a return, again and again, to what is stable, tender, and beloved.

Florence Price's *Andante* from the *Sonata in E Minor* brings yet another dimension to today's worship. Price (1887–1953), an acclaimed pianist, organist, composer, and teacher, was the first African American woman to have a work performed by a major orchestra. A devout lifelong Presbyterian, she also composed a rare setting of the Presbyterian Communion service, demonstrating how deeply her faith and musicianship informed one another. Written in 1932, the same year Price won the Rodman Wanamaker competition for both her *Symphony in E Minor* and this sonata, the work reflects a broad Romantic architecture. Its second movement, a rondo, opens with a lyrical theme evocative of the spiritual; syncopated rhythms and transparent harmonies lend the music both intimacy and motion, while secondary themes recall the expressive worlds of Chopin and Schumann. In Price's hands, the spiritual is not treated as a quotation alone, but as a living source of musical thought. The result is a work that embodies memory, discipline, and hope, revealing how sacred and cultural inheritance may be transfigured into art of profound belonging.

The piano hymn from *Sacred Spaces*, subtitled *this world is my home*, extends that theology of embodiment in a strikingly contemporary way. Premiered at Carnegie Hall in 2018, *Sacred Spaces* is a suite that explores the act of "claiming ground," with each movement beginning in the middle register of the keyboard and gradually expanding outward. In the final *Hymn*, the composer deliberately responds to the older refrain "This World Is Not My Home" by offering instead an anthem of place. Drawing upon the hymns and piano literature of their youth, the movement reframes belonging not as detachment from creation, but as faithful presence within it. Heard in Eastertide, this music resonates with resurrection theology: the risen Christ does not abandon the world but redeems it, sanctifying creaturely life and gathering broken and hopeful people into one living body. Here, sacred music becomes not only remembrance, but reclamation—a confession that the world, under God's renewing grace, is a place of vocation, praise, and holy habitation.

Finally, Robert Ray's *He Never Failed Me Yet* gives the service a fitting word of testimony. This gospel anthem grows steadily in strength, uniting rhythmic vitality with heartfelt conviction until it culminates in a bold declaration of trust. Its language of resilience, gratitude, and assurance recalls the witness of believers who have learned to sing not only in victory, but also in struggle. Indeed, this is one of sacred music's deepest truths: the church sings through pain as well as joy, because no season of life lies beyond the reach of God's grace. Song teaches the faithful what to love, what to trust, and how to endure.

Taken together, today's music offers more than a sequence of performances; it traces a theological arc. These works move from liturgical celebration to intimate consolation, from spiritual memory to resurrection-grounded belonging, and finally to steadfast testimony. They remind us that sacred song belongs to the whole people of God and that every voice, polished or plain, has a place in the praise of the church. In this Easter season, we sing because Christ is risen, because the word of grace still dwells richly among us, and because through sacred music the church is formed again into a people of hope. May these offerings open our hearts to truthful praise, deepen our communion with one another, and draw us more fully into the living song of God's redeeming work.