

About the Choir’s Hymns Today:

The introit, “From the Rising of the Sun,” is based on Psalm 113:3, the first in the group of Psalms called the Egyptian *Hallel* (113-118) sung at all major Jewish festivals. Many scholars believe one of these Psalms was likely sung by Jesus and the disciples at the conclusion of the Last Supper. Although the writer of this hymn remains anonymous, it has been translated into Spanish and Polish. Lyrics can be read at #670 in the hymnal.

The anthem today is an extremely familiar and beloved hymn, “O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go.” The writer, Dr. George Matheson (1842-1906), was originally from Glasgow, Scotland; he went blind as a boy yet excelled academically. He completed his master’s degree at twenty years old and became a minister at twenty-four. When asked about his most popular hymn, Dr. Matheson replied, “[It] was written in the Manse of my former parish (Innellan, Argyleshire) one summer evening in 1882. It was composed with extreme rapidity; it seemed to me that its construction occupied only a few minutes, and I felt myself rather in the position of one who was being dictated to than of an original artist. I was suffering from extreme mental distress, and the hymn was the fruit of pain.” – John Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology, Appendix, Part II* (1907).

British composer Dr. Albert Lister Peace (1844-1912) wrote the music for Matheson’s poetic masterpiece. Peace was the son of a warehouseman and a woolstapler; he was extremely gifted as a musician and taught himself to play the organ. He became a church organist at nine years old at Holmfirth Parish Church. Later he married Margaret Martin Steel Gilchrist and had three children. He and his family moved to Glasgow, Scotland where he served as organist at Trinity Congregational Church. Albert Peace obtained his doctorate from Oxford in 1875 and became the organist at Glasgow Cathedral in 1879. His final post was at St. George’s Hall in Liverpool. Dr. Peace composed many pieces including orchestrations, sonatas, cantatas, anthems both secular and sacred, as well as twenty-six hymn tunes. He was also an arranger, editor, and author. While our hymnal states that Albert named this tune, ST. MARGARET, after the 11th -century patroness of Scotland – he also honored his wife Margaret who shared the same first name. This full hymn can be viewed at #833 in the hymnal. The four of us developed this a cappella rendition together during rehearsals.

“God Be with You,” today’s choral benediction, is a very popular and well-known sending hymn. Jeremiah Eames Rankin (1828-1904), a Congregational minister and abolitionist, wrote the first verse of this text as an expansion on the meaning of the word ‘goodbye’ – God be [with] ye/you. He sent a copy of the first stanza to two composers, one famous and one yet unknown. Dr. Rankin liked the second unknown person, William G. Tomer’s, tune far better and used it for the hymn’s first publication. William Tomer (1833-1896) was a schoolteacher, church music director, and a U.S. Army veteran. Though he wrote eleven hymns and composed at least thirty, this is by far his most famous composition. “God Be with You” has been included in over 1,200 hymnals. The version we are singing today comes from the 1956 *Baptist Hymnal* because that hymnal includes the refrain.

<u>ANNOUNCEMENTS</u>	
Today	Please greet your neighbors and pass the Fellowship Pad
Mission Committee meets this morning at 9:00am	
Monday September 22	CE Committee 4:30pm
Tuesday September 23	Handbells 5:00pm
	Ladies Dinner 6:00pm
Wednesday September 24	Youth 6:00pm
Thursday September 25	Bible Study 10:30am
	Choir 4:30pm
Saturday September 27	Sat. Lunch Ministry 11:30am

CROP WALK – OCTOBER 5 – WON’T YOU HELP THE HUNGRY?

The CROP Hunger Walk is an initiative supported by our church through donations only; no funds are allocated from the Missions Committee budget. Due to anticipated reductions in federal funding and increasing food costs, a growing number of people in Danville, across the country, and globally face food insecurity. Donations made at this time will contribute to these efforts. Thirty percent of local contributions will be directed to God’s Storehouse, while the remainder will support Church World Service in providing food aid to the most impoverished nations and assisting with the development of sustainable food and water resources. Checks should be made payable to First Presbyterian Church with CROP Walk noted in the memo line. Donations can be placed in the offering plate or given directly to Vickie or Jackie Rochford. Members of FPC have consistently been significant contributors in Danville. Please continue to open your hearts to our brothers and sisters most in need.

SERVING TODAY	
Minister of Discipleship	Jackson Weller
Music Director	Ashley Stanley-Robey
Sound	Ray Beale
Video	Alex Walthall
Liturgist	Bernadine Hayes
Greeter	Joan Reynolds
Side door/Offering	C. B. Strange

List of Session members

Class of 2025: David Clark, Sam Meadema, Eddie Blount, Jackie Rochford
Class of 2026: Barry Cutright, Gail Jones, Kim Wimer, Ava Barrett
Class of 2027: Barbara Wilkins, Joan Reynolds, Pat Pinckney, Kent Shelton
Trustees: Bob Newnam(27), Ray Beale(26), Gary Wimer(25)

BUDGET UPDATE		
	August 1-31	FY 2025
Contributions	\$20,849.32	\$278,044.35
Expenditures	\$25,505.81	\$278,094.64
Difference	(-\$ 4,656.49)	(-\$ 50.29)

If you enter the hospital, your church will have no way of knowing unless you notify us. Please let us know of your hospital stay so that we may respond with pastoral care.

A Warm Welcome

We would love to have you join our church family. If you are moved to do so by the Lord, please talk to one of the elders or our pastor.

*THE COLUMNS
OF THE*

First Presbyterian Church

Danville, Virginia

September 21, 2025

15th Sunday after Pentecost



Welcome

**This church opens wide its doors and offers welcome
in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Celebrating 198 Years of Knowing Christ
and Making Him Known*

First Presbyterian Church
937 Main Street, Danville, VA 24541-1809—434-792-7822
E-Mail: admin@fpcdanville.com
Website: <http://www.fpcdanville.com>

A Service for the Worship of God

GATHER TO GLORIFY GOD

Please greet your neighbors and pass the Fellowship Pad to them.

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTROIT **“From the Rising of the Sun”**
(Psalm 113), Anonymous

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Turn us, O God,
People: away from the world’s temptations and distractions
Leader: Return us, O God,
People: to the quiet calm of your presence
Leader: Restore us, O God,
People: to the path you call us to follow
Leader: Orient us, O God,
People: to the hope of all that is possible through you

INVOCATION

Loving and Gracious God, to all who call upon you with repentant and believing hearts: bless us, we pray, with your presence this day. Teach us who have gathered to learn your ways, inspire those who seek your wisdom, energize those who are exhausted, comfort those who grieve, and strengthen those who are weak. Indeed, O God, fill all of our hearts with your praise and lead us in holiness and righteousness in this hour and in the hours to come. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

***HYMN# 738** **“O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee”**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God, our refuge, you lift up the lowly and hold out hope to the hopeless. Yet we who receive your grace so freely do not follow your example. We are quick to judge, eager to criticize, slow to show mercy. We gather and keep for ourselves what was meant to be shared. We diminish and dehumanize those around us. God of us all, hear this confession. Receive it. We ask for your forgiveness. Amen.

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (Isaiah 43:1)
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Amen.

SIGNS OF RECONCILIATION

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**
Leader: Let us the children of God, having confessed our sins and been reconciled to God, having been assured of God's graciousness and mercy, stand and offer that same peace and reconciliation to our brothers and sisters in Christ, forgiving each other and offering grace and peace.
Please remain standing for the “Gloria Patri.”

***RESPONSE** *“Gloria Patri”*
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.

CALL FOR THE OFFERING

God’s abundance cannot be matched. Still, we are inspired to be generous by a generous God. We are inspired to give by the greatest of givers. In gratitude to God, let us present our tithes and offerings.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Generous God, what we place before you is but a fraction of all you have entrusted to us. Receive these gifts, we ask, and multiply them for your purpose. Let our offerings become a source of blessing for the most vulnerable, for those in greatest need. May the act of giving, rooted in generosity, loosen our grip on what we possess, and kindle in us a deeper desire to share. Amen.

OFFERTORY **"Glory and Grace"** Helen H. Lemmel/
Virginia Harmony, arr. Ruth Elaine Schram

***DOXOLOGY**
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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

ANTHEM **"O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go"**
George Matheson/Albert Lister Peace | Ray Hayes, bass, Mack Williams, tenor, Greg Robey, alto, Ashley Stanley-Robey, soprano

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on us. Open us to your life-giving Word. Quiet the voices within us that do not align with your will. Focus our minds on the message you intend for us, so we may faithfully discern your way. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: **(541/571)** **Jeremiah 8:18-9:1**
 (651/687) **Amos 8:4-7**
 (740/779) **Luke 16:1-13**

SERMON **“The Shrewdness of the Saints ”**
 Jackson Weller

***HYMN#620** **“Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven”**

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** The Apostles’ Creed
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, Was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

CHORAL BENEDICTION **"God Be with You"**
 Jeremiah F. Rankin/William G. Tomer

***BENEDICTION**

***Please stand if able.**