

WELCOME TO THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BIG FLATS

Sunday Morning Worship

November 17, 2024 at 10:30 AM



**God,
Good Beyond All That Is Good,
Fair Beyond All That Is Fair,
In You Is Calmness, Peace, And Concord.
Heal The Dissentions That Divide Us From One Another
And Bring Us Back To A Unity Of Love
Bearing Some Likeness To Your Divine Nature.
Through The Embrace Of Love
And The Bonds Of Godly Affection,
Make Us One In The Spirit
By Your Peace Which Makes All Things Peaceful.
We Ask This Through The Grace, Mercy, And Tenderness
Of Your Son, Jesus Christ Our Lord.**

**A PRAYER OF ST. DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA (D. 264 C.E)
FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY.**



**WELCOME TO THE
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BIG FLATS
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Joys and Concerns

Welcome and Announcements

(Facebook Live)

GATHERINGⁱ

Prelude

*** CALL TO WORSHIP**

Listen.

I have a story to tell—

A story of a God who longed for justice.

A story of a God who pushed back the waters to make dry land.

A story of a God who would not take “no” for an answer when it came to the safety of God’s own.

For God’s people were suffering.

God’s people were crying out.

God’s people were shackled and bound by oppression.

So, God said to Moses, “Speak.”

“Let my people Go.”

And Moses spoke—

Over and over again.

Moses stood up for justice,

But over and over again, Pharaoh said no.

Power said no.

*** OPENING HYMN:**

1 For the healing of the nations,
Lord, we pray with one accord;
for a just and equal sharing
of the things that earth affords;
to a life of love in action
help us rise and pledge our word.

2 Lead us forward into freedom;
from despair your world release,
that, redeemed from war and hatred,
all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness
fear will die and hope increase.

The path to justice is never easy, is it?

The path to change is never a straight line, is it?

So, like Rosa, who sat on the bus, and Martin who had a dream,

Moses kept trying.

God kept speaking.

Moses kept listening.

Hope kept breathing.

And when power tried to unravel justice,

The people kept dreaming.

God longed for justice.

God still longs for justice.

So let us worship God—

For human injustice will never be strong enough to unravel God’s dream that all might be free,

And all might know love.

Let us worship holy God.

For the Healing of the Nations

GTG #346

3 All that kills abundant living,
let it from the earth be banned:
pride of status, race, or schooling,
dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
may we hallow life's brief span.

4 You, Creator God, have written
your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness,
bring the life of Christ to mind,
that by our response and service
earth its destiny may find.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Prayer of Confession:

One: God, you have asked us to be like Moses— Standing up for your people, standing up for justice.

All: But too often we are like Pharaoh— Holding onto power, or holding onto privilege.

One: God, you ask us to be like Aaron— Who stood by his brother to unravel systems of oppression.

All: But too often we align with Pharaoh—Saying “no” to change and unraveling your vision for justice and peace.

One: Forgive us for all the ways we stand on the wrong side of history.

All: Forgive us for the harm we do to your planet, and for the harm we do to your children.

One: Help us to be like Moses.

All: Forgive us when we’re like Pharaoh. Amen.

Moment of Silence for Personal Confession

Assurance of Pardon

God promises to always execute justice, know that God’s justice includes mercy, hear the good news: In Jesus Christ you are forgiven.ⁱⁱ

Passing of the Peace * *When directed, share a word or sign of peace with those near you.*

May the peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

* All Creatures of Our God and King

*All who for love of God forgive,
all who in pain or sorrow grieve,
Alleluia! Alleluia!*

Christ bears your burdens and your fears;

*so, even in the midst of tears,
sing praises! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

GTG #15 v. 4

CHOIR ANTHEM

The Earth is the Lord's

Carl J Nygard, Jr.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Note: *As we gather in this sacred moment, we come before God, the Giver of Every Mercy, with hearts open to intercede for our neighbors and to cultivate the Beloved Community our Savior called us to create. In the spirit of the Beatitudes, we lift our prayers for those who are struggling, marginalized, and oppressed, trusting that our collective faith can bring forth healing and hope in these challenging times.*

Giver of Every Mercy,

we gather this day to intercede on behalf of our neighbors,

that we might live as the Beloved Community your Son gifted us the capacity to create.

You said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.”

Matt. 5:3

We pray for those who feel discouraged, disillusioned, and disgusted.

Gift them courage and energy

that they may continue to fight the good fight of faith.

You said, “Blessed are those who mourn.”

Matt. 5:4

We pray for those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19 and other causes.

Gift them with comfort and peace

that they may find hope for the future.

You said, “Blessed are the meek.”

Matt. 5:5

We pray for those whose gentle voices of love are drowned out by hate.

Gift us the ability to hear their message of compassion

that we may be transformed by subversive love.

You said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst.”

Matt. 5:6

We pray for those who are hungry while we spent billions on the military last year.

Gift them with food and clean water in abundance

that they may live healthy and fruitful lives.

You said, “Blessed are the merciful.”

Matt. 5:7

We pray for those who show mercy when it's not fashionable or profitable.

**Gift them the strength to continue their work
that we might learn from them and share their vision.**

You said, "Blessed are the pure in heart.

Matt. 5:8

We pray for those who show integrity in the midst of blatant assaults on truth and dignity.

**Gift them the resilience it takes to remain steadfast in these times
that they may continue to resist powers of tyranny and oppression.**

You said, "Blessed are the peacemakers."

Matt. 5:9

We pray for those who have peacefully protested these past months.

**Gift them with holy impatience and determination
that our message of justice and righteousness may ring out.**

You said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted."

Matt. 5:10

We pray for our BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color) siblings.

**Gift them with justice, freedom, and equality,
that may have their due life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.**

You said, "Blessed are you when people utter all kinds of evil against you."

Matt. 5:11

We pray for those who have endured racist, sexist, and xenophobic rhetoric and actions.

**Gift them with a sure sense of your love for them
that they may rest in the truth they they are beloved.**

We lift these prayers to you,

knowing that there is a special place in your heart for those who endure injustice and oppression.

Lead us to a place of rejoicing through these difficult times,

Matt. 5:12

and gather us together as your Beloved Community.

This we pray as you taught us to pray saying,ⁱⁱⁱ

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; forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

HYMN:

When Israel Was in Egypt's Land

GTG #52

1 When Israel was in Egypt's land,
let my people go;
oppressed so hard they could not stand,
let my people go!

Go down, Moses,
way down in Egypt's land;
tell old Pharaoh:
let my people go!

2 "Thus saith the Lord," bold Moses said,
"Let my people go!
If not, I'll smite your firstborn dead.
Let my people go!"

Go down, Moses,
way down in Egypt's land;
tell old Pharaoh:
let my people go!

3 "No more shall they in bondage toil:
let my people go!
Let them come out with Egypt's spoil:
let my people go!"

Go down, Moses,
way down in Egypt's land;
tell old Pharaoh:
let my people go!

4 O let us all from bondage flee;
let my people go!
And let us all in Christ be free:
let my people go!

Go down, Moses,
way down in Egypt's land;
tell old Pharaoh:
let my people go!

THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Let the fire of your Spirit open our hearts and minds to your word, O God. Help us to hear your voice and follow your paths all the days of our lives. Amen.^{iv}

SCRIPTURE READING

EXODUS 5:1-2; 7:8-23

Pew Bible, OT, pp. 52, 53-54

5¹ Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, so that they may celebrate a festival to me in the wilderness.' " ² But Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should heed him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and I will not let Israel go."

7⁸ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,⁹ "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Perform a wonder,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh, and it will become a snake.' " ¹⁰ So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did as the LORD had commanded; Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake. ¹¹ Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers; and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same by their secret arts. ¹² Each one threw down his staff, and they became snakes; but Aaron's staff swallowed up theirs. ¹³ Still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is hardened; he refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵ Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water; stand by at the river bank to meet him, and take in your hand the staff that was turned into a snake. ¹⁶ Say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you to say, "Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the wilderness." But until now you have not listened. ¹⁷ Thus says the LORD, "By this you shall know that I am the LORD." See, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall be turned to blood. ¹⁸ The fish in the river shall die, the river itself shall stink, and the Egyptians shall be unable to drink water from the Nile.' " ¹⁹ The LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt—over its rivers, its canals, and its ponds, and all its pools of water—so that they may become blood; and there shall be blood throughout the whole land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.' "

²⁰ Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and of his officials he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the river, and all the water in the river was turned into blood,²¹ and the fish in the river died. The river stank so that the Egyptians could not drink its water, and there was blood throughout the whole land of Egypt. ²² But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts; so Pharaoh's heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said. ²³ Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not take even this to heart.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

I believe in God, the Great Sewer—

Who weaves us together in community,

Collecting our loose ends and turning them into belonging.

I believe in the Holy Spirit—

Who hems us in before and behind,

Catching us when we fall and writing us into God's holy narrative.

And I believe in Jesus Christ—

Who loved and claimed the people society had thrown out, refusing to disregard anyone as scrap.

I believe God has woven part of God's self into the fiber of our being,

Making us inherently worthy of love and belonging.

I believe the fabric of my life is weak,

That I am prone to error and need God's handiwork to remind me of love.

I believe in the Church, and that like a quilt of different fabrics,

She is designed to be as diverse and beautiful as God's creation.

And I believe that when life unravels,

God is there to stitch my wounds together,

To hold me in the palm of God's hand, to tell me of love,

And to invite me into a new journey.

Amen.

HYMN:*God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending*

GTG #716

1 God, whose giving knows no ending,
 from your rich and endless store,
 nature's wonder, Jesus' wisdom,
 costly cross, grave's shattered door:
 gifted by you, we turn to you,
 offering up ourselves in praise;
 thankful song shall rise forever,
 gracious donor of our days.

2 Skills and time are ours for pressing
 toward the goals of Christ, your Son:
 all at peace in health and freedom,
 races joined, the church made one.
 Now direct our daily labor,
 lest we strive for self alone.
 Born with talents, make us servants
 fit to answer at your throne.

3 Treasure, too, you have entrusted,
 gain through powers your grace
 conferred:
 ours to use for home and kindred,
 and to spread the gospel word.
 Open wide our hands in sharing,
 as we heed Christ's ageless call,
 healing, teaching, and reclaiming,
 serving you by loving all.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

God has blessed us with an abundance of gifts. We are called to offer all that we are to God—our bodies, our spirits, our minds, our time, and our money. As the body of Christ, we are called to be in ministry with others. With true generosity, let us give of ourselves this morning and pray for ways to give in the coming days.^v

A Moment of Silence – Offertory**Offering Prayer**

Dear God,
 we offer you now these gifts.
 Take our money and use it
 to bring comfort to those in need.
 Take our service and use it
 to bring justice to those who are oppressed.
 Take our witness and use it

to bring good news to those who hunger
 for hope.
 Take our lives and use them
 for our very salvation.
 We pray through Jesus Christ,
 the one whom we follow
 even to the cross. Amen.^{vi}

*** All Creatures of Our God and King**

GTG #15 v. 6

*O sisters, brothers, take your part,
 and worship God with humble heart.
 Alleluia! Alleluia!
 All creatures, bless the Father, Son,
 and Holy Spirit, Three in One!
 Sing praises! Alleluia!*

*** CLOSING HYMN:***Give Thanks, O Christian People*

GTG #644, v. 1

**Give thanks, O Christian people, for workers of our day
 Who heed the call to service and make it their life's way
 To go to feed the hungry, to tend to those in need
 To work for equal justice, till all God's folk are freed.**

*** BENEDICTION**

Note: *As we conclude our time together, let us embrace the transformative power of Christ, who beckons us to rise above our challenges and walk boldly into the future. May we carry forth God's peace, energy, and love, igniting hope and purpose in our hearts as we seek to serve our neighbors and community in the days ahead.*

May the power of Christ lift us above despair.
 May the energy of Christ move through our weariness.
 May the peace of Christ settle our anxiety.
 May the challenge of Christ raise our expectations.
 May the grace of Christ assure us of forgiveness when we fall short.
 May the love of Christ, greater than we could ask or imagine, set us dancing into the future. **Amen.**^{vii}

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NOTES FOR SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

For Online Worship: Please use the comment section of Facebook to share your Joys or Concerns.
You may also email Pastor Denise at pastordenisestone@gmail.com.

COFFEE HOUR FOLLOWING THE MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE

Please join us today in Fellowship Hall for Coffee Hour.

SPECIAL CALLED CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

TODAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2024, FOLLOWING THE MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE.

Sole matter before the congregation will be the resignation of Pastor Denise Stone.
Copies of her letter and proposed Dissolution Agreement are available at the back of the Sanctuary.

PRESBYTERY MEETING

NOVEMBER 19, 2024, AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ELMIRA

Doors open at 12 p.m. for Registration for the Meeting (starts at 1 p.m.).

Worship at 1:30 p.m. for Jazz Worship with the Swing Street Sextet!

All are Invited to Attend!

UPCOMING CALENDAR

Sunday, Nov. 17	Worship	10:30 a.m.
	Special Called Business Meeting	At the conclusion of the Morning Worship Service
	Coffee Hour and Session Meeting	11:45 a.m.
Tuesday, Nov. 19	Food Pantry	10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (Serving guests from 12 to 2 p.m.)
	Presbytery Meeting and Worship at First Presbyterian Church of Elmira	Doors open at 12 p.m. for Registration/ Meeting (at 1). Worship at 1:30 p.m. Jazz Worship with the Swing Street Sextet!
	Scouts	6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 24	Worship – <i>Christ the King Sunday</i>	10:30 a.m.
	Coffee Hour	11:30 a.m.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BIG FLATS, NEW YORK

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For the Healing of the Nations

Author: Fred Kaan (1965)

Copyright: © 1968, Hope Publishing Co.

Tune Information Title: ST. THOMAS (Wade)

Composer (attributed to): John Francis Wade

Copyright: Public Domain

Go Down, Moses

Source: African-American spiritual

Tune Information Title: GO DOWN MOSES

Arranger: Melva Wilson Costen

Copyright: Public Domain

Give Thanks, O Christian People

Author: Mary Jackson Cathey (1984)

Copyright: Reprinted by permission of the publisher from *Fresh Winds of the Spirit* by Lavon Bayler, 1986, The Pilgrim Press, 1981, New York, NY.

Tune Information

Title: ES FLOG EIN KLEINS WALDVÖGELEIN

Harmonizer: George Ratcliffe Woodward

Copyright: Public Domain

All Creatures of our God and King

Author: St. Francis of Assisi (1225)

Paraphraser: William H. Draper

Tune Information Title: LASST UNS ERFREUEN

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God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending

Author: Robert L. Edwards (1961)

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Tune Information Title: BEACH SPRING

Composer (attributed to): B. F. White (1844)

Harmonizer: James H. Wood

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ⁱ Unless otherwise noted, "*Liturgy and Prayers by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org*"

ⁱⁱ Katy Stenta, www.katyandtheword.com.

ⁱⁱⁱ Rev. Stephen M. Fearing, Guilford Park Presbyterian Church, Greensboro, North Carolina. From Liturgical resources for election season. Clergy Emergency League, Rev. Stephen M. Fearing, Editor.

^{iv} <https://www.cpcrochester.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/September-13-bulletin-1-1.pdf>.

^v <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/5313/worship-elements-august-27-2023>.

^{vi} <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/5329/worship-elements-august-30-2020>.

^{vii} Rev. Dr. Rochelle A. Stackhouse, First Church of Christ, Hartford, Connecticut. From Liturgical resources for election season. Clergy Emergency League, Rev. Stephen M. Fearing, Editor.