

WAYS TO WORSHIP: IN-PERSON WORSHIP



As we welcome each other back to in-person worship,
we are asking EACH and EVERY person to...

- ~ remain 6 feet apart (love one another from a distance),
- ~ to use hand sanitizer (clean your praise hands!),
- ~ to wear your mask the entire worship service (out of love for one another),
- ~ and to not shake hands/hug (spread grace, not germs).

RADIO

Church Service will continue to be on the radio.
You are encouraged to tune in to WISK radio 98.7
or on the radio website www.americusradio.com

FACEBOOK

You can join us for Sunday Worship via Facebook live
at First Presbyterian Church of Americus
Visit: for live stream at 11:00 am on the church
Facebook page- <https://www.facebook.com/fpcamericus/>

CHURCH WEBSITE

If you cannot participate in Facebook Live then after the live stream
is complete, the live stream will be on our church website
www.americuspresbyterian.org

WAY TO CONTINUE GIVING:

You can now **GIVE ONLINE** on the church website through a secure portal
hosted by Presbyterian Foundation: <http://www.americuspresbyterian.org/give/>

First Presbyterian Church Americus, Georgia



Joshua Tree National Park, California, USA
Picture taken at night by photographer Henrique Pinto on May 14, 2018
Public Domain under Creative Commons CCO

The Joshua Tree is in the Mojave Desert, the only place on Earth where you'll find the giant yucca plants called "Joshua Trees." According to legend, the Mormons named these trees when they passed through the area in the mid 19th-century. They thought the twisted, eerie looking things resembled the biblical Joshua, with his arms stretched towards the promised land.

As we near the end of this season after Pentecost, we ne ar the end of the journey of our ancestors of faith in the first selection from the Hebrew scriptures. We began with Abraham and Sarah, through their grandson Jacob and his family's journey to Egypt, to the people's journey from Egypt out of oppression into the wilderness, and lastly to the home God promised Abraham and Sarah. Joshua, having led the people since Moses' death, across the Jordan River and into the struggles with the other peoples who lived there, asked the people to make a choice. For all they had been through, would they continue to worship the gods some of their ancestors worshiped, or adopt the gods of the peoples around them? Joshua declared that his household will serve the Lord their God, the one who spoke to Moses in the burning bush, the God who called Abraham and Sarah. The people declared their promises to worship God, but Joshua warned them: they must stop worshiping the other gods of the land around them. They must put away the idols they have kept. The people insisted they would serve only God, and Joshua made a covenant with them that day.

Praying on the Nines - beginning November 15, 2020

“This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. . . . This I command you: love one another.” —John 15:12–14, 17

Loving Creator. We know that without you we can do nothing, but with you, nothing is impossible. Help us to become a community of believers who share each other’s joys and burdens as we pray for those on our weekly prayer list.

Comforting Councilor, we also come to you with our **joys, cares and concerns**.....

for our church. Thank you for our loving church family. Let us pray for each other daily and keep our pastor and our officers in our prayers as they seek your guidance in discerning what You are calling us, Your church, to be and do in the coming year.....

for our community. Thank you that our local businesses and our neighbors care enough to keep us safe by following the safety protocol recommended by the medical experts during this current and continuing threat of the Coronavirus so we can, as we are able, support the gradual reopening of our schools, businesses, churches and service organizations.....

for the future of our nation. Thank you for the opportunity to vote safely and peacefully on election day. Be with us as we vote in the **Georgia run-off election on January 5, 2021.** Thank you for the dedicated people who worked at all the voting places and for their conscientious diligence during the long hours and days it took for them to count and record every person’s vote. We pray that **automatic and/or requested re-counts** will continue to be safe and peaceful..... and that all of us will **accept and respect the final results**.....

We pray that the **transition period** will go smoothly.....

During all this, we pray that **our elected officials will work together tirelessly** to repair the damage done to our citizens physically, emotionally and financially by the Coronavirus..... the wildfires..... the hurricanes, tropical storms and flooding.....and may our governments at all levels and in all places act without prejudice or bias to eliminate oppression in all its forms so that the blessings of liberty and justice may be secured for all persons everywhere.

for our world. We thank you for the beauty and majesty of your creation, our world. We pray that all nations will work together to solve the problems of global warming, the Coronavirus and future pandemics, and other natural disasters facing us all, so that we can restore and preserve your creation.....

All Knowing God, You know what is on our hearts. Hear our prayers, said and unsaid. We lift them up to You in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ. **AMEN”**

PRAYER LIST

Please Pray For - Our Nation, Our Church; Our Pastor, Our Staff, Our Officers, Campus Ministry, Our Community and especially:

MEMBERS AND CHURCH FRIENDS AT HOME &/OR IN RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

Bob & B.J. Bryan Rev. Bill Gettys Mary Mackey Nancy Miller
Ray & Donja Tripp Gloria Johnson Pat Hill Blanche Palmer
Kathy Newkirk Anne & Malcolm Perry

MEMBERS REMEMBERED IN PRAYER WITH PRAYER GRAM ROTATION

Sharon and John Parks
Malcolm and Anne Perry

SPECIAL PRAYER FOR:

- Pat Hill’s son, Gary Faircloth, is in the hospital in West Palm Beach, FL with pneumonia
- Marilyn McClelland, the organist at First Presbyterian, Albany, is in the hospital at Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital with Covid-19
- Zymarion Hudson, a student of Cynthia Richmond's from Crisp County Middle School. He has a bone tumor in his arm and has gone to Emory Hospital for evaluation and recommendation for treatment
- Thank you for praying for Tom Collins as he and Emily went to Emory on Tuesday, October 27th to discuss medical options for Tom's trigeminal neuralgia . His next doctors appointment is on November 14th, for an MRA brain and head scan.
- Carolyn and Maurice Arbuckle, sister and brother-in-law of Sharon Parks dealing with Parkinson's and cancer treatments
- Continue to keep Debra Sams (sister of Joy Thompson), diagnosed with peritoneal carcinoma, in your prayers
- Please continue to be in prayer for Melanie's in-laws, Steve and Beth Spoon. Steve’s ALS is progressing quickly. Please pray for peace, guidance, and comfort for the family
- Shannon Kennedy (cancer; McFarlands' niece)

MISSIONARIES REMEMBERED IN PRAYER

- Ben & Esther Campbell, Push the Rock Intl.
- Tim & Lois Hunter, Spoken Worldwide
- Anne D (India) Retired Presbyterian Missionary

Please notify the church office at 924-2162 or office@americuspresbyterian.org if you would like to add someone to our prayer list and/or request a PrayerGram.

Work’s Cited

~ The Bible Study was adapted from Pulpit Fiction.com, a website created for pastors by pastors Rev. Eric Fistler and Rev. Rob McCoy, connected with Pittsburg Theological Seminary.

~ Christian Copyright Licensing International
Streaming License Number 20754605

CHURCH PRAYER PARTNER

The Presbytery of Flint River has created church prayer partners. Our congregation has been paired with Adel Presbyterian Church. Let us pray for Adel Presbyterian, and their Pastor Donalee Preston, so we can be an encouragement to one another!

Adel Presbyterian Church
401 South Hutchinson Avenue
Adel, Georgia 31620

SESSION (RULING ELDERS):

| <u>Class of 2020</u> | <u>Class of 2021</u> | <u>Class of 2022</u> | <u>Class of 2023</u> |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Sharon Parks | Russ Childers | Jim Buffaloe | Meda Krenson |
| Katie Minich | Emily Collins | Cynthia Richmond | Sharon Parks |
| Karen Gatewood | Darryl Hawkins (Clerk) | Earl Williams | Joy Thompson |

2020 Corporation Officers

President: Russ Childers - **Vice President:** Emily Collins

Secretary: Darryl Hawkins - **Treasurer:** Bill Krenson

NOVEMBER 2020 CHURCH CALENDAR

- Sunday, November 1st - **Daylight Savings Time**
- Tuesday, November 3rd - **General Election Day**
- Thursday, November 5th - 9 am - **CSM** opened its doors on Thursday, November 5th and we praise God for the successful reopening! Spread the good news! CSM will now be open every Thursday from 9am till 11:30 am.
- Wednesday, November 11th - 10 am - **Elder Training** with Pastor Sommer for the incoming elders, Sharon Parks, Meda Krenson and Joy Thompson.
- Sunday, November 15th immediately after worship - **Session Meeting** for the purpose of examining incoming elders for the class of 2023.
- Thursday, November 26th is **Thanksgiving Day** - CSM will be closed on Thanksgiving and the church office will be closed Thursday, Nov.26th & Friday, Nov.27th.

*Sunday, November 15, 2020
11:00 a.m. - Sunday Worship*

Gathering Words

Breathe in us, Holy Spirit. Breathe in us Your life. Breathe in us Your presence. Breathe in us Your hope, peace, joy—whatever it is we need. Breathe in us, breath of God, and call us into Your ways. In the chaos of the world, help us to remember to stop and breathe. To slow down and take notice of how You have been at work and are continuing to work in our world and in our lives. Breathe in us, Holy Spirit, and help us to move with each breath toward a more just, loving, and kind world. Amen.

PRELUDE

(Guitarist) Jon Smith

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Sommer Bower

CALL TO WORSHIP

**The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Blessed be the nation whose God is the Lord.
Happy are the people who serve the God of Jacob.
The Lord God has promised to be with and watch over all those who trust in and obey him.
The Mighty One of Israel is our God.
We worship and obey him.
We remember his law.
We gather to thank him for all his mercies,
to remember those who have given themselves for the sake of justice and truth,
and to pray for his blessings to be upon us and those who rule over us.
We praise and we thank the Lord our Maker.
We call upon his name and ask for his peace.**

SPECIAL MUSIC.....“Reckless Love”.....

(Guitarist) Jon Smith and (Vocalist) Rachel Lairsey

SCRIPTURE

Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25

1 Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. 2 And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors — Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor — lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. 3 Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many.

14 "Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. 15 Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." 16 Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; 17 for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; 18 and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God." 19 But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. 20 If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good." 21 And the people said to Joshua, "No, we will serve the Lord!" 22 Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses." 23 He said, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel." 24 The people said to Joshua, "The Lord our God we will serve, and him we will obey." 25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!

- Joshua puts forth a choice: "Serve the Lord" or "serve the other gods." You cannot serve both (reminiscent of Jesus' claim that no one can serve two masters)
 - Joshua: "My family is going to serve the Lord. What about you?"
 - People: "Of course we'll serve the Lord, he's awesome."
 - Joshua: "I don't think you realize what you're saying. Serving the Lord is really hard, and he'll get extra pissed if you promise to serve him, and then don't."
 - People: "No really, we will serve the Lord."
 - Joshua: "Alright. Let's mark this agreement with this big rock just in case someone forgets. And by 'someone' I mean you, because God won't forget."

THOUGHTS AND QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to "serve the Lord?"
 - Put away other gods. - What is the modern equivalent of putting away other gods?

"Inner devotion can be so vaporous, so vague and unmeasurable, that it is meaningless. Perhaps for that reason verse 14 recalls Genesis 35:2-4, in which Jacob leads a ceremony of collecting and burying idols. Joshua 24:14 may suggest a ritual removing of gods that might compete with the Lord as a sign of exclusive devotion. This can be important for contemporary people of faith who find it difficult to reject the pervasive societal and cultural influences that mitigate faith in God" (Jerome Creach, *Interpretation: Joshua*, p. 125).

 - ✦ This sort of ritual burying of false idols could have some potential for modern worship services, but could also slip into 'book burning' type of ritual that could be counter productive.
- Is a wall hanging a pleasant reminder of the covenant, or a cheapening of what is meant? It depends on the motivation, and the heart of those in the covenant.

JOSHUA 24:1-3A, 14-25

INITIAL THOUGHTS

- “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord,” makes a beautiful arts and craft project to hang in your home. Somehow, I feel like this cheapens the solemn act of covenant that happens here.

BIBLE STUDY

- Literary Context
 - Near the closing verses of Joshua. One of the last things he does alive. Before it closes, they bury the bones of Joshua in the promised land
 - Promise of Genesis: You will be a great nation in this land.
 - Genesis closes with a great nation in the wrong land
 - Exodus closes with the nation on the border of the land.
 - Joshua is the story of possessing the land. It contains some of the most disturbing parts of the Bible. They are now a great people in the land
 - ✦ Do you read Joshua as God ordaining horrendous violence OR do you read Joshua as a history of the victors justifying the violence they used to win? Is there another way to read Joshua?
- Lectionary Issues
 - The verses cut out are a retelling of the history of the people.
 - Verses 4-12 retells Exodus and Joshua.
 - Focus is on God’s work, “I sent... I plagued... I brought... I handed...”
- “I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and towns that you had not built...”
 - Not a self-made nation
 - God reminds them that their existence is dependent upon God, and Go alone.
 - NRSV and CEB translates: “Now go and revere the Lord.”
 - ✦ CEB Study Bible note: “The word revere is sometimes translated ‘fear,’ but the rendering here is most helpful. The term has to do with the reverence and honor for God seen in complete devotion.”
 - ✦ “Fear the Lord,” seems to be in direct contrast to Jesus’ call to “Fear not.” How are these things related? Does this reveal the nature of God that is changed from the Old and New Testaments? Is Jesus claim to “fear not,” go against the OT claim to “fear the Lord.” Or is it a misunderstanding of the OT’s use of the word ‘fear.’ There is no way that Jesus is saying “Respect Not,” or “Be irreverent.” Or maybe he is saying, “lighten up.”

MESSAGE.....“More than words”.....
Pastor Sommer Bower

OFFERTORY SPECIAL MUSIC.....“What a Beautiful Name”.....
(Guitarist) Jon Smith and (Vocalist) Rachel Lairsey

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*You let us choose, O God,
between you and the false gods of this world.
In the midst of the night of sin and death,
wake us from our slumber
and call us forth to greet Christ,
so that with eyes and hearts fixed on him,
we may follow to eternal light. Amen.*

SPECIAL MUSIC.....“I will Rejoice”.....
(Guitarist) Jon Smith and (Vocalist) Rachel Lairsey

*BENEDICTION

*Put aside the distractions of this world’s many gods,
stand in awe before God’s love,
prepare to worship in sincerity and faithfulness.
The Lord Jesus and his God, we will serve,
and his voice we will trust and obey.
that generations to come may know their God.*

*Stand up and celebrate the good news this day
so that others may set their hope in the living God.
We will not hide our thanks and praise,
but tell of the glorious deeds of the Lord
and all the wonders God has done for us.*

*POSTLUDE.....(Guitarist) Jon Smith

OUTSIDE FELLOWSHIP TIME FOLLOWING WORSHIP

*You are invited to greet one another in the name of Jesus Christ outside following
worship. You are also invited to share the peace of Christ by texting/calling one
another or sharing words of peace online. The peace of Christ be with you!
And also with you!*



COVENANT PRAYER

(John Wesley, 1703-1791)

I am no longer my own, but yours.

*Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will.*

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

*Let me be employed for you or laid aside for you,
exalted for you or brought low for you.*

Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

*I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.*

*And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours.*

So be it.

*And the covenant now made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.*

FAMILY DINNER TIME PRAYER

As for me and
my house. We will
serve the Lord.

- Joshua 24:15



Pray this before you eat dinner tonight!

Let us lift up our hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*It is indeed right to give you our thanks and praise, O God,
for your mysteries well up from ancient depths,
assuring us that we will be with you forever.*

*In the first of your mighty works,
you created the earth and filled it with life.*

*You rescued a people from slavery
and called them to choose between wisdom and foolishness,
between serving you and making their own gods.*

*In your child, Jesus, you have again called us to choose -
to live in readiness*

*for the promised return
of the one who died and rose again,
or to waste our opportunities
and squander what you have given us.*

*We choose to serve you,
and with hearts full of gratitude
we trust in your protection and look for the day
when at the trumpet's sound the dead will arise
and all will be embraced in the marriage of earth and heaven.*