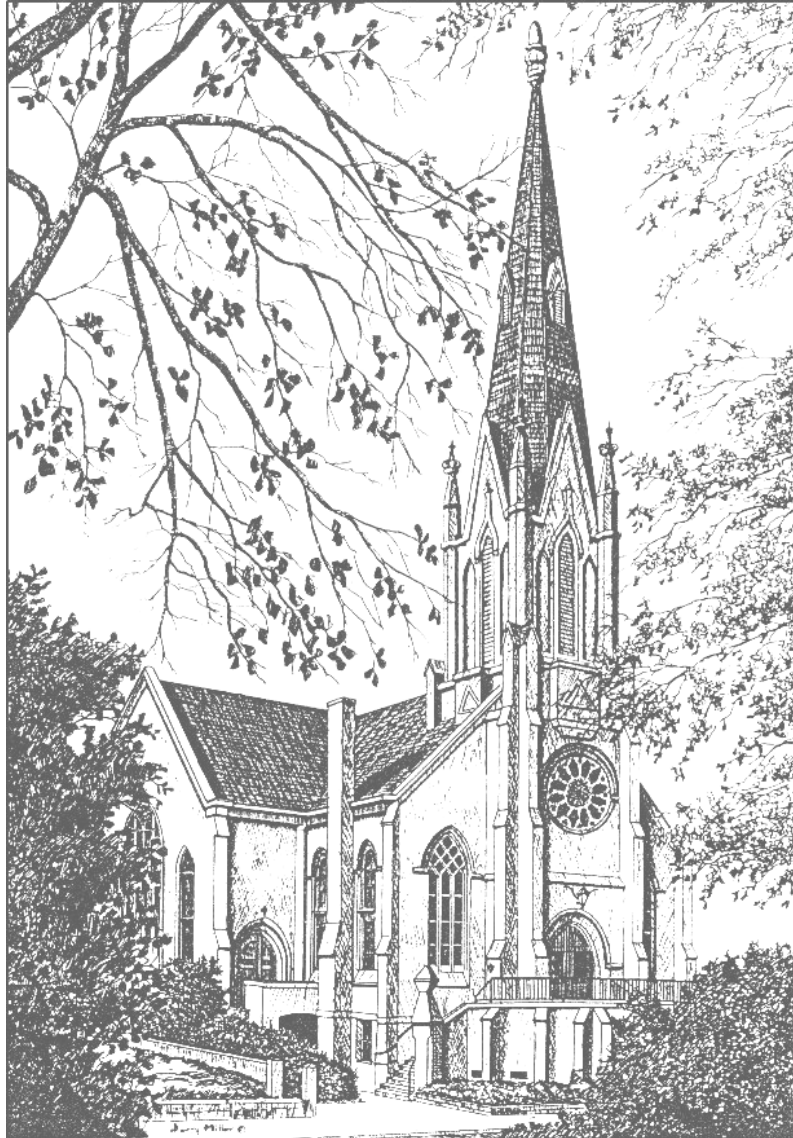


FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
RALEIGH, NC

ORGANIZED MARCH 8, 1812



September 13, 2020

THE CHURCH IN WORSHIP  
THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 13, 2020

Eleven o'clock

About our Worship: Today is the Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost, part of what is called Ordinary Time in the Christian year. It is a season to ponder our possibilities for growth as individuals and as a church. Thus, the liturgical color is green, and we wear our community stoles which were assembled by church members, using materials contributed by church members. These stoles offer a visible sign of our yearning for growth as a community of faith. We continue with readings from Exodus, Romans, and Matthew, all of which challenge us to grow in different ways, and we begin with the words of Psalm 114, which echo the mighty acts of God revealed in the Exodus story, and sing a hymn of praise to this God. All of the texts address a common concern — how communities manage significant differences and outright conflict. The human tendency is to divide the world into categories of *us* and *them*, but the biblical calling is to welcome those who are different, just as God does, and to forgive those who harm us. The sermon explores our calling to move past *us* and *them* thinking, a calling that seems particularly needful in this highly divisive time. In response to this challenge, we sing of a reality which we have not yet reached but to which we aspire, “In Christ there is no east or west — he breaks all barriers down; by Christ redeemed, by Christ possessed, in Christ we live as one.” May it be so!

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GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

The Greeting of Worshipers Trey Davis

The Prelude Paul Manz  
“Jesus, Lead Thou On”  
Sue Crocker, organ

The Trinity Chimes

*Three chimes are sounded, awakening us to the presence of God, alerting us to the voice of Christ, centering us in the embrace of the Spirit. As we gather, we present ourselves “as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our spiritual worship.”*

The Call to Worship Psalm 114

LEADER: When Israel went out from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language,

PEOPLE: **Judah became God’s sanctuary, Israel the Lord’s dominion.**

LEADER: The sea looked and fled; Jordan turned back.

PEOPLE: **The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.**

LEADER: Why is it, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back?

PEOPLE: **O mountains, that you skip like rams? O hills, like lambs?**

LEADER: Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob,

PEOPLE: **who turns the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a spring of water.**

The Invocation

Lynn Lingafelt

1. I sing the might - y power of God that made the moun - tains rise,  
 2. I sing the good - ness of the Lord that filled the earth with food;  
 3. There's not a plant or flower be - low but makes your glo - ries known;

that spread the flow - ing seas a - broad and built the loft - y skies.  
 he formed the crea - tures with his word and then pro - nounced them good.  
 and clouds a - rise and tem - pests blow by or - der from your throne;

I sing the wis - dom that or - dained the sun to rule by day;  
 Lord, how your won - ders are dis - played wher - e'er I turn my eye,  
 while all that bor - rows life from you is ev - er in your care,

the moon shines full at his com - mand and all the stars o - bey.  
 if I sur - vey the ground I tread or gaze up - on the sky!  
 and ev - ery - where that I may be, you, God, are pres - ent there.

## LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD

The Hebrew Bible

Exodus 14:19–31

Michael Hood

<sup>19</sup>The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. <sup>20</sup>It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

<sup>21</sup>Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. <sup>22</sup>The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. <sup>23</sup>The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. <sup>24</sup>At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. <sup>25</sup>He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt." <sup>26</sup>Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." <sup>27</sup>So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. <sup>28</sup>The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. <sup>29</sup>But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. <sup>30</sup>Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. <sup>31</sup>Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

LEADER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God.**

The Christian Testament

Romans 14:1–12

<sup>1</sup>Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. <sup>2</sup>Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. <sup>3</sup>Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. <sup>4</sup>Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand. <sup>5</sup>Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. <sup>6</sup>Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God. <sup>7</sup>We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. <sup>8</sup>If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. <sup>9</sup>For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. <sup>10</sup>Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. <sup>11</sup>For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." <sup>12</sup>So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

LEADER: This is the Word of the Lord.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God**

## 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 trespasses,  
 as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
 Lead us not into temptation  
 but deliver us from evil.  
 For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
 and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## The Gospel

Matthew 18:21–35

<sup>21</sup>Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. <sup>23</sup>“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup>When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; <sup>25</sup>and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup>So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ <sup>27</sup>And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ <sup>29</sup>Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ <sup>30</sup>But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup>Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ <sup>34</sup>And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup>So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

LEADER: This is the Gospel of Christ.

PEOPLE: **Praise be to you, O Christ.**

## The Sermon

“Moving Past *Us* and *Them* Thinking”

Christopher Chapman

**In Christ there is no east or west,  
in him no pride of birth,  
the chosen family God has blessed  
now spans the whole wide earth.**

**For God in Christ has made us one  
from every land and race;  
has reconciled us through his Son  
and met us with his grace.**

**It is by grace we are assured  
that we belong to him:  
the love we share in Christ our Lord,  
the Spirit's works within.**

**So, brothers, sisters, praise his name  
who died to set us free  
from sin, division, hate, and shame,  
from spite and enmity!**

**In Christ there is no east or west--  
he breaks all barriers down;  
by Christ redeemed, by Christ possessed,  
in Christ we live as one.**

DEPARTING TO SERVE

The Benediction

The Chimes

*Three chimes are sounded, sending us into the world with the love of God, the Good News of Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit. As you go, remember, “you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people.”*

The Postlude

“Come, Thou Fount of Many Blessings”  
Sue Crocker, organ

David Cherwien

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Our acolytes today are Asher and Jess Helms.

We welcome to worship leadership today Michael B. Hood. A recent graduate of the Wake Forest University School of Divinity, Michael is being presented to the church this weekend with much enthusiasm by the Youth/College Minister Search Committee in a view of a call to serve as our new Minister of Youth and College. The church will consider the committee’s recommendation at a called church conference to be held via Zoom this evening, Sunday, September 13, at 5:30 p.m. A churchwide communication sent out on September 10 includes more information and a link to the conference.

Sympathy to **Shirley Hobson** on the September 4 death of her mother, **Polly Garrard**, and to **Charles Parker** on the September 10 death of his sister, Velma LeClaire Trimmer.

The Heck-Jones offering provides a way for our congregation to connect to great mission work with ties to our church. Details may be found in the *Rose Window Weekly*. As of August 31, we have received \$7,333 toward our goal of \$10,000.