First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown

101 Bridgeboro Road ● P.O. Box 868 ● Moorestown, NJ 08057
856.235.1688 ● fpcmoorestown.org
Rev. Stuart Spencer, Pastor/Head of Staff
Rev. Wes Allen, Associate Pastor

September 13, 2026 ~ Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost
9:00 a.m. Traditional Worship (Sanctuary) *please stand as you are able

Have you checked in *for worship today on the Church Center app? Please remember to also* ***sign*** *the Friendship pads in the pews and greet those seated near you.*

Music in Preparation for Worship — Johann Sebastian Bach

Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 645 — Sean Baker, organ

Translating to "Sleepers, Awake", this organ trio is derived from one of Bach's most well-known cantatas, referencing the German chorale based on Matthew 25. In this arrangement, Bach creates an atmosphere that depicts the joyful watchfulness of the soul awaiting Christ, weaving in the chorale's melody. As we prepare our hearts for worship, let us awaken our hearts and minds, ready to receive God's word and worship Him.

Welcome & Work of God's People — Rev. Wes Allen

* Call to Worship — Rev. Allen

Happy are we who hear the joyful call to worship,
For we walk in the light of God's presence!
Let's worship God together—
celebrating who he is and all that he has done!
For God is our strength and our protection, the One in whom we trust.
Lord God of heavenly hosts. Where is there anyone as mighty as you, O Lord? You are entirely faithful.
Come, my beloved friends, and let us worship God!

* Prayer of Adoration

* Hymn No. 77 — *Praise to the Lord the Almighty*

Call to Confession and Prayer of Confession (unison) — Elder Evan Dempster

Gracious God, We confess that we often resist the difficult paths before us. We seek comfort instead of trust, answers instead of faith, and certainty instead of dependence on You. In times of sorrow or struggle, we lose sight of Your presence and Your goodness. Too often, we try to carry our burdens alone rather than bringing them to You. Forgive us, Lord, and remind us that nothing can separate us from Your love. Meet us in our weakness, strengthen us by Your grace, and teach us to trust You even when we cannot understand Your ways, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Silence for our personal prayers of confession

Assurance of Pardon — Elder Dempster

People of God, hear the good news! Our God is compassionate and merciful, full of endless love. He does not treat us as our sins deserve, or punish us as harshly as he could.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so strong is God's love toward us.

And as far as the east is from the west, so far has God removed our sins from us.

So be at peace: you are forgiven!

Thanks be to God!

* Gloria Patri No. 805

* Apostles' Creed (inside cover of blue hymnal) — Elder Dempster

Sharing with our Young Disciples — Rev. Allen, Holly Asciutto, Lauren Fittipaldi

Commissioning our Teachers and Leaders

Anthem — Arr. Ken Jennings

Rise Up, O Men of God

FPC Moorestown Men's Choir

Prayer of Intercession and the Lord's Prayer ('debts') — Rev. Stuart Spencer

Way of the Week #1: Be Third — Rev. Spencer

1. **BE THIRD**. God is first, others are second, and you're third. Don't just think about your own interests, but be interested in others. Don't think less of yourself, just think of yourself less and others more.

The Way of the Week With Help from the Great Cloud of Witnesses (TGCW):

Encouragement from TGCW: "Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man he will be what most people call 'humble' nowadays: he will not be a sort of greasy, smarmy person, who is always telling you that, of course, he is nobody. Probably all you will think about him is that he seemed a cheerful, intelligent chap who took a real interest in what you said to him. If you do dislike him it will be because you feel a little envious of anyone who seems to enjoy life so easily. He will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all (p. 128)." - Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis

September 12: Honoring the Church's 138th Birthday — Ginny Weber, Stewardship Chair

Offertory

Rev. Spencer

Thank you for blessing FPC Moorestown with your giving as we Grow God's Kingdom. Your offerings and donations allow us to sustain our church programs year-round. Donate easily from your device via the Church Center app for your tithes, offerings and other fund contributions. If you're watching via live stream, you can give online right now as well! Mail offerings to P.O. Box 868, Moorestown, NJ 08057. ***Special envelopes for the September 12 Fund celebrating our church's 138th Birthday are available in both worship spaces. Online giving is also available.***

Offertory Music

Michael W. Smith

Agnus Dei with "How Great Thou Art" Sean Baker, piano

* Doxology No. 809

Sermon

Rev. Stuart Spencer

"Too Shallow"

Scripture: Mark 4: 3-9, 16-17 (Pew Bible NT page 38)

Sermon Series: Soil Test

* Hymn No. 60 ***Great is Thy Faithfulness***

* Benediction and Going Forth

Rev. Spencer

If you must leave, please do so with reverence and respect as congregants pray and prepare their hearts to serve.

Music in Preparation for Service

Léon Boëllmann

Toccata, Op. 25 Sean Baker, organ

This toccata is the finale of Boëllmann's iconic Suite Gothique, which was one of the last compositions written by the French composer, who passed away in 1897 at the age of 35. As we prepare our hearts to serve, let the soaring sonorities of this iconic French toccata embolden you and ground you as you go and serve.

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Worship flowers are given by Jim Clinton to the glory of God and in loving memory of his wife Jane Clinton.

9:00 a.m. Worship Ministry

Beadle: Elder Evan Dempster; **Audio Technician:** Harris Ransom; **Live Stream Technician**: Jonathan Nawrocki; **Ushers:** John Miller, Brett Couvillion, Cal Knowlton; **Flower Arrangers:** Stacy Schaffer and Joann Reynik; **Trustee Greeter:** Brett Couvillion; **Sanctuary Greeter:** Stephen Minister Sue Hill; **Welcome Center Greeter:** Deacon Rachel Long; **Bagel Pick Up:** Nancy Chumney or Susan Shaffer; **Coffee Hospitality**: Nancy Chumney and Susan Shafffer; **Nursery Care:** Ava Gandy-Callahan and Freh Budka

Happy Birthday, Church -- In honor of the church's 138th birthday on September 12, 2026, members are invited to donate to the future of our church by giving thoughtfully to the September 12 endowment fund. The fund is invested to earn income which helps to support the needs of our church. Information has been mailed from Pastor Stuart and the Stewardship Team.

Work of God's People (See *Connections*, eblast, website and Church Center app for details)

Kickoff Sunday: Sunday, September 13 -- We begin another full and active program year with a busy, joyful Kickoff Sunday featuring two worship services, Meet Your Teachers, Education Preview 2026-27, Teacher Commissioning (both services), and celebrating the 138th Birthday of the Church/September 12 Fund. **This afternoon** it's "slime time" for middle school and high school youth groups with **Crud Wars** from 1-3 PM (grades 7-12). Remember to bring a towel for the car. Mudpit alert! 😊

TONIGHT: Choir Social Sept. 13 (6:00 PM, Miller Commons) -- Returning choir members and anyone interested in any of our 6 choirs, are invited to our **Choir Social.** We're kicking off our first week of rehearsals (Sept. 13-17), with a festive Potluck Dinner. Spencer Domer will share about the concerts/special events planned for the 2026-27 season. Sign up for your dish when you register on the Church Center event page. Can't wait to see you!

Parents: Sign your child(ren) up for weekly K-12 youth groups. We're eagerly looking forward to our year together. The first events begin **Wednesday, Sept. 16**. See below.

- **Town Hall September 16** – All are invited to a Town Hall Meeting **Wednesday, Sept. 16** at 6:30 PM to learn about the FPC Fellows Program and ways members can help. Family Dinner 5:45-6:30 pm ($8.00 per person). Children's event at 6:30 pm. Middle School Youth Group (Grades 7-8) begins at 6:30 pm.

NEW: Starting Sept. 23: This six-week Wednesday evening class **"Faith, Freedom and Conscience"** explores these elements through the ideas taught by John Witherspoon, the Presbyterian minister, educator and president of the College of New Jersey - now Princeton University - who influenced generations of pastors, educators, judges, and public leaders during America's founding era. Please sign up online.

CREDO Confirmation Class -- Our Confirmation Class is open to high school students in grades 9-12 and is designed to encourage young people to explore their faith and what it means to be both a follower of Jesus Christ and an active participant in our Church. SIGN UP on our Church Center event page. Led by youth director Lauren Fittipaldi.

CONCERT: Keys x3 Concert featuring Sean Baker (Organ and Piano), Layla Joshi (Organ) and Vikram Joshi (Harpsichord). Don't miss this! **Friday, Sept. 25** at 7:00 p.m. (Sanctuary). See our event page.

NEW: Blessing of the Animals – Saturday, Oct. 3 (3:00 PM) -- Members, friends, and the community are invited to bring their furry, feathered or four-legged friends to an outdoor service celebrating God's creation including scripture, prayer, a brief message and individual blessings for the animals. This is a joint event with the Prayer and Discipleship and Membership Committees. Donations of cat or dog food or monetary gifts will be collected for the Animal Welfare Association, **Please register online.** Everyone is welcome — even if you don't have a pet!

Inquirers Class -- Are you interested in learning more about our church and possibly joining the congregation? Great! Please sign up for our two-part Inquirers Class which begins **Saturday, Oct. 17** (8:30 AM-Noon). SIGN UP online or call Pastor Wes Allen in the church office (856) 235-1688, x101.

Ways Round 17 Begins Sept. 13 -- For our next round of the Ways of the Week, we will be referencing the wisdom of great Christian thinkers and writers. Using these fitting quotes from ***The Great Cloud of Witnesses*** (see Hebrews 12: 1, 2), we hope you are encouraged to put the Way of the Week into practice. The Ways are clearly rooted in Scripture, and Christian writers seem to underscore what these culture statements urge us to do.