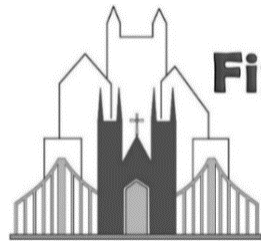


August 14, 2022



**First Presbyterian  
Church**  
of Pittsburgh

## **Torn to pieces**

When you draw up a contract to buy a house, you put down “earnest money” as proof to the seller that you’re serious. The money goes into an escrow account, and if you back out of the deal without good reason, you lose it.

In the ancient world, you had to do a bit more to prove that you were serious.

In one of the foundational stories of the Bible, God promised Abram, later called Abraham, he would build a great nation out of Abram’s descendants. But after many years, Abram was still childless. Abram wanted proof that God was still serious.

God told Abram to bring a heifer, a goat, and a ram, as well as a dove and a pigeon.

Abram obeyed. And then, without being asked, he cut the animals in two and arranged the halves opposite each other.

As strange as all that sounds to us, it made sense to Abram. Everyone knew that Abram was preparing a contract ratification ceremony. When a great king made a contract with a lesser king, the lesser king would sacrifice animals and then pass between the pieces. He was saying that if I fail to keep the contract, you can tear me to pieces like these animals.

But God didn’t command Abram to pass between the pieces. A smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces.

God, the greatest king of all, had passed through. Why?

Why God and not Abraham? It took centuries before we learned the answer.

God indeed made Israel into a great nation, but Abraham’s descendants disobeyed God. They failed to live up to their end of the contract. But instead of tearing them to pieces as they deserved, God sent his Son.

We backed out of the deal, but he paid the price.

He was torn to pieces so we could remain whole.

*Jon*

Tom’s Blog



# WORSHIP SERVICE – 10:45 am

---

## ***We Gather Around the Word***

**Prelude:** “*Prelude and Fugue in C Major*”  
J.S. Bach

Ryan Croyle, *Organ*

**Time of Welcome**

Rev. Tom Hall  
*Senior Pastor*

**\*Responsive Call to Worship**

Leader: Our God is a God who makes promises.

**People: He has promised to never forsake us.**

Leader: God holds true to his promises.

**People: He has promised to make us whole one day.**

Leader: Let us worship the God who promised to love us forever.

**People: Let us sing to the God we can trust.**

**\*Hymn #10:** “*We Sing the Mighty Power of God*” (*located in this bulletin*)

**Unison Prayer of Confession**

Rev. Dan Turis  
*Associate Pastor*

**D**ear Lord, we do not add anything to our salvation. It is all you. You are the one who promises to save and restore us. Yet, we think that if we do the right things, we will be made right. We have cast our hope on things other than you. Lord, please forgive how we have broken our promises to trust you as our God. Restore us to live according to the covenant you made with us. *Amen.*

**Silent Confession**

**Assurance of Pardon**

## ***We Listen for the Word***

**Children’s Message**

Jana Hall

**Special Music:** “*My Worth is Not in What I Own*”  
Graham Kendrick

Emma Brown Baker, *Soprano*  
Ruth Ann Reamer, *Piano*

*My worth is not in what I own  
Not in the strength of flesh and bone  
But in the costly wounds of love  
At the cross*

*As summer flow'rs we fade and die  
Fame, youth and beauty hurry by  
But life eternal calls to us  
At the cross*

*My worth is not in skill or name  
In win or lose, in pride or shame  
But in the blood of Christ that flowed  
At the cross*

*I will not boast in wealth or might  
Or human wisdom's fleeting light  
But I will boast in knowing Christ  
At the cross (Chorus)*

**Chorus:** *I rejoice in my Redeemer  
Greatest Treasure,  
Wellspring of my soul  
I will trust in Him, no other.  
My soul is satisfied in Him alone.*

*Two wonders here that I confess  
My worth and my unworthiness  
My value fixed - my ransom paid  
At the cross (Chorus)*

## Scripture Reading: Genesis 15:1-21

After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision:

“Do not be afraid, Abram.

I am your shield,  
your very great reward.”

<sup>2</sup> But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” <sup>3</sup> And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”

<sup>4</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” <sup>5</sup> He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

<sup>6</sup> Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness. <sup>7</sup> He also said to him, “I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it.”

<sup>8</sup> But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?”

<sup>9</sup> So the LORD said to him, “Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.” <sup>10</sup> Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. <sup>11</sup> Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away.

<sup>12</sup> As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. <sup>13</sup> Then the LORD said to him, “Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. <sup>14</sup> But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. <sup>15</sup> You, however, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. <sup>16</sup> In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.”

<sup>17</sup> When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. <sup>18</sup> On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates— <sup>19</sup> the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, <sup>20</sup> Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, <sup>21</sup> Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.”

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God!**

**Sermon - “The Blazing Torch”**

Rev. Tom Hall

## ***We Respond to the Word***

### **Pastoral Prayer and The Lord’s Prayer**

**O**ur 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 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.*

**\*Affirmation of Faith – The Apostles’ Creed**

Rev. Dan Turis

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 Spirit, 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 sits on the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

**Call for the Offering**

Rev. Dan Turis



Online giving available through Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement

**Anthem: “Living God”**

Red Rocks Worship

Äanna Bencivenga, *Alto*  
Alex Policicchio, *Bass*

*I breathe in the presence of the living God.  
I take in the goodness of your love.  
I lean in closer to my Father's heart.  
I trust in who you say you are.*

*I hold to the joy that's found in you alone.  
I cling to the peace that won't let go.  
Oh Jesus, you're the only one that satisfies.  
I'll run to the fountain of your hope. (Chorus)*

*Chorus: You are alive, living and breathing.  
Here in this place, speaking and healing.  
Your fullness and glory is right here before me.  
You're the living God, the living God.*

*Death was never gonna hold you.  
So it's never gonna hold me.  
'Cause you're the only thing holding onto me.  
(Chorus)*

**\*Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below. Alleluia, alleluia!  
Praise him above, ye heav'nly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

Rev. Dan Turis

***We Follow the Word into the World***

**\*Hymn #575:** “Praise to the Lord the Almighty” (located in this bulletin)

**\*Invitation and Charge**

Rev. Tom Hall

**\*Benediction**

**Postlude:** “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”  
arr. Lani Smith

Ryan Croyle, *Organ*  
Drew Fennell, *Trumpet*

*\*Please stand as you are able*

## We Sing the Mighty Power of God

Em D G D G Am Dsus D

1 We sing the might - y power of God that made the moun-tains rise,  
 2 We 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,

Bm7 Em D G D G A Em

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;

Bm Em7 Am7 D7 Gmaj7 Cmaj7 Dsus D

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

Bm7 C D/C G D G Am Em

the moon shines full at his com-mand, and all the stars o - bey.  
 if we sur - vey the ground we tread or gaze up - on the skies.  
 and ev - ery-where that we can be, you, God, are pre - sent there.

## Descant

4 Praise to the Lord! Oh, let all that is in me a - dore  
 F Am B<sup>b</sup> C7

1 Praise to the Lord, the Al - might - y, the King of cre - a -  
 2 Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things is won - drous - ly reign -  
 3 Praise to the Lord, who will pros - per your work and de - fend  
 4 Praise to the Lord! Oh, let all that is in me a - dore

him! All that has life and breath, come now with prais - es be -  
 F Am B<sup>b</sup>

tion! O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and sal -  
 ing, shel - tering you un - der his wings, oh, so gent - ly sus -  
 you; sure - ly his good - ness and mer - cy shall dai - ly at -  
 him! All that has life and breath, come now with prais - es be -

fore him! Let the a - men sound from his  
 C7 F B<sup>b</sup> F

va - tion! Come, all who hear; broth - ers and  
 tain - ing. Have you not seen all that is  
 tend you. Pon - der a - new what the Al -  
 fore him! Let the a - men sound from his

peo - ple a - gain. Glad - ly for - ev - er a - dore him!  
 C F Dm Gm C F

sis - ters, draw near, join me in glad ad - o - ra - tion!  
 need - ful has been sent by his gra - cious or - dain - ing?  
 might - y can do as with his love he be - friends you.  
 peo - ple a - gain. Glad - ly for - ev - er a - dore him!

## Ongoing/Upcoming Opportunities . . .

### Hospitality Hour

Join us after worship this morning for a time of refreshments and fellowship in the chapel. If you're visiting with us, we would especially like to get to know you!

### Pittsburgh Region International Student Ministries (P.R.I.S.M.)

#### Annual Garage Giveaway - August 20

Come show the love of Christ to international students by donating **household items** for our annual *Garage Giveaway*. This event, which will take place August 20, is coordinated by First Church's mission partner **P.R.I.S.M.** Students will be given the opportunity to choose what they need from among the donated items. They are collecting gently used donations of small furniture, kitchen wares, small appliances, and other household items the week of August 16-18.

They need both Donations **and** Volunteers to make this event a success! *Will you help out?* Visit [www.pghcommission.org/garage-giveaway](http://www.pghcommission.org/garage-giveaway) for a list of items they are looking for and for Volunteer Sign Ups. Setup volunteers needed August 16-18 and many Extra Hands are needed on **Garage Giveaway Day**, Saturday, August 20. Contact Bernadette with any questions: [bernadette@prismphg.org](mailto:bernadette@prismphg.org). Thank you in advance for your generosity!

### Our Walk-In Ministry Needs You!

Our next Walk-In Ministry days are **Monday-Thursday, August 22-25** and **Monday-Tuesday August 29-30 from 11 am-1 pm**. We need volunteers to help with setup (which would take place around 9:30am), preparing and serving a simple lunch, registering guests, packing groceries, and simply being a friendly face to our clients, many of whom are hurting. If you are interested in joining the Walk-In Ministry Team, please contact Cheryl Swartz at 412-471-3436 x220 or [cswartz@fpcp.org](mailto:cswartz@fpcp.org).

### Ligonier Camp and Conference Center - Joshua House Dedication – September 18

The dedication of this beautiful new facility will be held **Sunday, September 18, 2022** with an **Open House** that begins at **2 pm**. A meal will be served from 5:00 to 6:30 pm. Dress is casual; please wear comfortable shoes.

If you would like to attend the dedication but are concerned about getting to LCCC and back, *bus transportation will be organized if there is enough interest*. In order to determine the viability of that option, as well as the size of vehicle needed, it will be necessary to notify the church office with the names and number of persons in your group by *Sunday, August 28*. If interested, please contact Hannah Durant at 412-471-3436 or [hdurant@fpcp.org](mailto:hdurant@fpcp.org).

### Join Us for Outreached Arms!

Outreached Arms continues serving many meals *each Tuesday* in our cafeteria! Please consider volunteering your time (6:00-8:30 pm) as we build relationships and open our hearts to those in need of food and comfort. There are various places to share your gifts and talents. Contact Rob Rudy at (412) 501-4673 or [rob@outreachedarms.org](mailto:rob@outreachedarms.org) if interested!

## First Church Staff

Church Office: 412-471-3436  
320 Sixth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
www.fpcp.org – info@fpcp.org

### SENIOR PASTOR

Tom Hall  
thall@fpcp.org  
ext. 222

### DIRECTOR OF FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Jana Hall  
jhall@fpcp.org

### WEDDING COORDINATOR

Megan McFarland  
mmcfarland@fpcp.org

### PIPER IN RESIDENCE

George Balderose  
george@bagpiping.org

### OUTREACH PASTOR

Dan Turis  
dturis@fpcp.org  
ext. 213

### OFFICE MANAGER

Cheryl Swartz  
cswartz@fpcp.org  
ext. 220

### MINISTERIAL ASSISTANT

Hannah Durant  
hdurant@fpcp.org  
ext. 210

### ACCOUNTANT

Kate Williams  
kwilliams@fpcp.org  
ext.230

### MINISTER OF MUSIC

Ryan Croyle  
rcroyle@fpcp.org

### MAINTENANCE STAFF

Bill Branning, *supervisor*  
bbranning@fpcp.org

Robert DeVere

Louis D. Pack

### VOLUNTEER SOUND/ VIDEO TECHNICIANS

Victor Ndinyah  
Doug Williams  
Dan Conner  
Ava Conner  
Keith and Amy Burris  
David Charlton

Church Office hours are Monday – Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, 412-471-3436, www.fpcp.org.

## Visiting Us Today?



**Scan Code to Connect with Us!**

### Need Validated Parking?

Sundays only, get your parking ticket stamped at the FPCP Welcome Center in the Narthex (front lobby). See the person in the payment booth at Mellon Square, Oliver Avenue or Smithfield Street garage to pay \$1 for parking.

Music at First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh is reprinted and broadcast by permission through CCLI License #3071786, OneLicense #A-731880, and CCS License #11486.