



Welcome to  
**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

August 24, 2025

**RIZPAH MOURNS HER SONS**



Welcome to this sanctuary.  
Welcome to this time of worship and wonder.  
Welcome to this family of faith.

We're glad you're here today and pray that your experience with us in worship is both challenging and uplifting!

*Our ushers are available to assist you as needed.*

For more information about First Presbyterian Church, we invite you to visit our website. There you will find out the ways to keep in touch, how we live our faith, our different partnerships and so much more.

Our website address is: [www.firstpresracine.org](http://www.firstpresracine.org)

If you're interested in receiving news about the church, please call 262.632.1686 or email: [shelley@firstpresracine.org](mailto:shelley@firstpresracine.org)

**Rev. Darren Utley—Church Pastor**  
[pastordarren@firstpresracine.org](mailto:pastordarren@firstpresracine.org)

## TODAY'S SERVICE

PASTOR—Rev. Darren Utley

LITURGIST—Mary Bernstein

MUSICIANS—Alejandro Alumbremos, Mark Paffrath, Pat Badger, Dave Titus

BULLETIN & GRAPHICS—Shelley Maurer

MEDIA TECH SPECIALIST—Steve Comeau

\*Please stand as you are able.

**[Bold type]** indicates text to be spoken by the congregation.

***[Bold italic type]*** indicates song to be sung by the congregation.

# UNRAVELED

SEEKING GOD WHEN OUR PLANS FALL APART

## WE GATHER TO WORSHIP

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Mary Bernstein*

PRELUDE

**Who Am I | Casting Crowns**  
*Alejandro Alumbremos*

CALL TO WORSHIP

When we come to this space, we bring all of ourselves.

**We bring joy and hope,**  
dreams and prayers,  
**grief and doubt,**  
memories and heartache.

**God meets us here.**

God hears our prayers and sees our scars.

**With open hearts and authenticity,**  
**Let us worship good and gracious God.**

\*OPENING HYMN

**Be Still, My Soul**  
[GtG Hymn #819]

*Alejandro Alumbremos, Mark Paffrath,  
Pat Badger, Dave Titus*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

\*ACT OF PRAISE

**Come and Find the Quiet the Center**  
[v. 2]

*Silence is a friend who claims us,  
cools the heat and slows the pace,  
God it is who speaks and names us,  
knows our being, touches base,  
making space within our thinking,  
lifting shades to show the sun,  
raising courage when we're shrinking,  
finding scope for faith begun.*

**\*PASSING THE PEACE**

As Christ welcomed everyone, no matter what their background or social standing;  
as Christ welcomed enemies & friends, outcasts & leaders,  
foreigners & neighbors, let us open our hearts and homes and lives.

Let us be like Christ to everyone we meet.

Peace be with you.

**And also with you.**

**PROCLAIMING THE WORD**

**SCRIPTURE**

**2 Samuel 3:7; 21:1-14**

[OT 277, 296-297]

**SERMON**

**Rizpah Mourns Her Sons**

*Rev. Darren Utley*

**RESPONDING TO THE WORD**

**MUSIC FOR REFLECTION**

**Shepherd's Pipes**

**\*SONG OF RESPONSE**

**Nothing Can Trouble**

[GtG Hymn #820]

**\*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.**

OFFERING/OFFERTORY

**Shall We Gather at the River**

\*DOXOLOGY

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host.  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen***

GOING FORTH TO MINISTER

\*CLOSING HYMN

**Precious Lord, Take My Hand**  
[GtG Hymn #834]

\*BENEDICTION

\*SUNG BLESSING

**God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me**  
[GtG Hymn #543, v. 2]

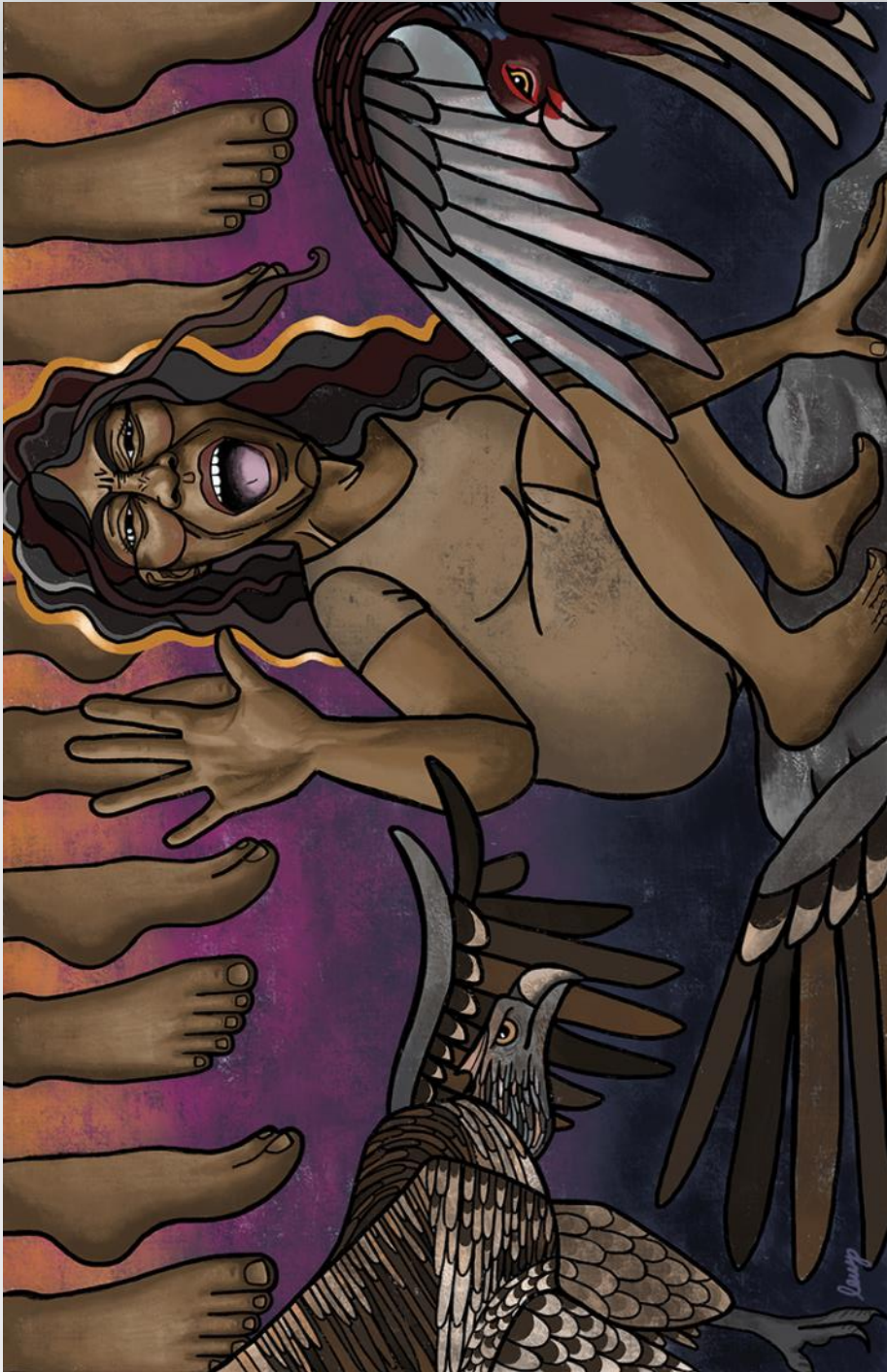
***Bind to myself the name of Holy,  
Great cloud of witnesses enfold;  
Prophets, apostles, angels witness:  
O Christ, surround me;  
O Christ, surround me.***

POSTLUDE

**Postlude on Come, Holy Ghost** | *Louis Lambillotte, arr. Kevin Frecker*

*Prayers by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](https://sanctifiedart.org)*





**Rizpah** | Lauren Wright Pittman



# UNRAVELED

RIZPAH MOURNS HER SONS

*Public Grief That Inspires Action*

READ // 2 SAMUEL 3:7; 21:1-14

FROM THE ARTIST // LAUREN WRIGHT PITTMAN

I don't know what to say. This story leaves me without adequate ways to fully process the searing pain and utter wrecking of the life of this woman, Rizpah. She is a "low status" wife of Saul.<sup>2</sup> She is raped by a man who denies his actions. Her two sons are sentenced to death as a king fumbles to rectify wrongs that cause a famine in the land.

She gathers her sackcloth and climbs the mountain of God to defend the bodies of her children and their half brothers. She spends day and night for up to six months fighting off birds of prey and animals of the night from ripping apart the bodies of her children and what shred of hope she has left.<sup>3</sup> David hears of her passionate, radical, public grief and is moved to delayed justice. He calls for the burial of Saul and Jonathan, but also sees to the proper burial of the seven sons that he carelessly offered up to appease God. Justice in this scenario looks like sheltered, buried, dry bones. Rizpah's public unraveling causes the unraveling of David's distorted version of justice. God doesn't require a human sacrifice for the end of the bloodguilt. God ends the famine when David listens to the voice of this strong, fierce, unraveling woman. I pray that we learn from Rizpah. When we see injustice may we, like Rizpah, climb the mountain of God and defend those who cannot defend themselves. When we see someone unraveling in inexplicable grief, may this sight unravel us from the ways we are entangled with injustice.

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2 Gafney, Wilda C. *Womanist Midrash: A Reintroduction to the Women of the Torah and the Throne*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017. 198.

3 Ibid, 199.

## PRAYERS ARE POWERFUL

Heartfelt thoughts & prayers for all who have recently experienced the loss of a friend or family member. May they know peace and comfort during these difficult times.

Prayers of comfort & healing for Myrna Kryger, Carter Nitz, Sandra Hopkins, Peggy Taylor, Ed Lehmann, Kathy Wortley, Ellen Easley, Mac & Marilyn MacCaughey, Mary Johnson, Barb Stevenson, Kay Mahl, Louise Shapley, Evelyn Vanderheyden, Leah Fisher.

As they deal with physical, emotional and/or spiritual issues, please pray for Autumn Eifert's paternal grandmother; Bob—friend of Sharon Campbell; Carol—sister of Ginny Holle, Dan & Joyce—parents and Jeff—husband of Shelley Maurer; Richard —brother of Steve Comeau; Elena & Ezequiel Romero—parents of Deb Utley; Masako—mother of Fumi Nakayama; John—husband of Sandy Hawley; Mary Ann—mother of Cheryl Nitz; Laurel - niece of the Vollmans; John—son of Mac & Marilyn MacCaughey; Rudy—Nancy Lechner's brother; the Moes' family and Scott Mohn—friends of the Paffrath family; Steve, Susan, Sandra, John, Liz and Gabby—friends & family of the Galles; Chuck Pehlivanian—Sue's husband; Nancy—mother of Gloria Zember; Meyer Schaal; Linda—daughter of Louise Shapley; Tim—family member of Sheila Lawrence; and friends & family of the Lehmanns.

Prayers for those in the service — Col. Jay Brooke, Evan Humphreys, Jared Smith, Jordan Smith, Nicholas Hansen.

*Thank you for your continued prayers for everyone. They are powerful!*

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Sunday, August 24 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 <sup>AM</sup> 10:40 <sup>AM</sup>	Sunday Worship Fellowship
Monday, August 25 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 <sup>AM</sup>	Staff Meeting via Zoom
Tuesday, August 26 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 <sup>AM</sup>	Delivery for Food Pantry
Wednesday, August 27 <sup>th</sup>	4:00 <sup>PM</sup>	Food Pantry
Sunday, August 31 <sup>st</sup>	9:30 <sup>AM</sup> 10:40 <sup>AM</sup>	Sunday Worship Fellowship