

Welcome to
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

September 14, 2025

THE CONVERSION OF
SAUL TO PAUL

UNRAVELED
SEEKING GOD WHEN OUR PLANS FALL APART



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

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

Rev. Darren Utley—Church Pastor
pastordarren@firstpresracine.org

TODAY'S SERVICE

PASTOR—Rev. Darren Utley

LITURGIST—Evelyn Alumbros

MUSICIANS—Alejandro Alumbros, Mark Paffrath, Pat Badger, Chancel Choir

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.

UNRAVELLED

SEEKING GOD WHEN OUR PLANS FALL APART

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Evelyn Alumbrosos
Welcome! May you find God's love, peace, grace, and joy as we worship today.

PRELUDE

Prelude on ELLACOMBE | *arr. Daniel Carter*
Alejandro Alumbrosos

CALL TO WORSHIP

God of mystery,
You called Ananias by name, and he responded,
"Here I am."
You called Paul to the work of your Church, and he responded
By giving his life to your Word.
Similarly, you call us into community and faith,
So we respond with love and time, energy and hope.
We respond with worship.
Let us worship the God of transformation and grace.
Amen.

*OPENING HYMN

Praise God for This Holy Ground
[GtG Hymn #405]

Mark Paffrath, Pat Badger, Alejandro Alumbrosos

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/THE LORD'S PRAYER

[GtG p. 35]

*ACT OF PRAISE

Arise, Your Light Is Come!
[GtG Hymn #744, v. 1]

***Arise, your light is come!
The Spirit's call obey;
Show forth the glory of your God
Which shines on you today.***

*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.

CHORAL ANTHEM

Here I Am, Lord | *D. L. Schutte, arr. J. Leavitt*
Chancel Choir, directed by Alejandro Alumbrosos

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

SCRIPTURE

Acts 9:1-20
[NT 127-128]

SERMON

The Conversion of Saul to Paul
Rev. Darren Utley

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

Dreams of Reflection, No. 1 | *James Michael Stevens*

*SONG OF RESPONSE

Spirit of the Living God
[GtG Hymn #288]

*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

Comptine d'un autre été - l'après-midi | Yann Tiersen

*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

Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing
[GtG Hymn #546]

*BENEDICTION

*SUNG BLESSING

God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me
[GtG Hymn #543, v. 5]
***Christ in the eyes of all who see me,
Christ in the ears who hear my voice,
Christ in the hearts of all who know me:
O Christ, surround me;
O Christ, surround me.***

POSTLUDE

Postlude | Julius André

Prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org



Restored | *Lisle Gwyn Garrity*



UNRAVELED

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL TO PAUL

Discovering a New Path

READ // ACTS 9:1-20

FROM THE ARTIST // LISLE GWYNN GARRITY

Saul doesn't just persecute Jesus' followers, he breathes threats and murder. His hatred fumes out of him like fire, perhaps a fire tended by fear—fear that his Jewish tradition will become impure or distorted, fear that the walls he's built around who's in and out will crumble, fear that his own hard-earned piety will diminish. He's a force of terror, sculpted by self-sufficiency and self-righteousness. He's a religious extremist not so unlike the ones we know of today.

Until God smacks him down, pulling his sight and self-reliance out from under him like a rug. God softens Saul's steely heart by forcing him to confront those whom he harms, and by making him utterly dependent on relationship and others to survive. Perhaps Saul's conversion is ultimately a radical healing—God soothes his fear and hatred with empathy and intimacy.

But this isn't just a story about Saul's transformation. His companions on the road to Damascus are changed too, as they hear the voice of the risen Christ and escort a stumbling Saul to the city. Ananias' conversion is the most courageous of them all. He risks everything, including his own life, to come close to one with the power to have him stoned. Only in the moments when Ananias' fingers touch Saul's eyes, does Saul see, for the first time, the image of the divine in one who is not his enemy, but his brother.

In this image, a halo hovers around the hand of Ananias, nodding to the sacred courage required to melt the hatred of his oppressor with intimacy and connection. Scales pour out of Saul's eyes, purging him, cleansing him, igniting him with a new and particular mission: to pour out God's grace wherever humans try to limit it.



RESPOND

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL TO PAUL

Discovering a New Path



LOOK

Take a few moments to gaze upon the artwork. Breathe deeply in quiet meditation as you observe the visual qualities of what you see: color, line, texture, movement, shape, form.

Now take a deeper look. What parts of the image are your eyes most drawn to? What parts of the image did you overlook?

Now engage your imagination. What story do you imagine for the figure?



REFLECT

- What has unraveled and/or is unraveling in this story?
- In this story, what events and elements fulfil Paul's conversion?
- Throughout your life, what identities, beliefs, or practices have you shed? How has unraveling from former patterns and identities helped you to grow or become more whole?



PRAY

Unravel my assumptions and animosities so that I might become a vessel of your radical grace. Amen.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Sunday, September 14th

9:30^{AM}—Sunday Worship

10:40^{AM}—Fellowship

Monday, September 15th

9:00^{AM}—Staff Meeting via Zoom

Wednesday, September 17th

4:00^{PM}—Food Pantry

7:00^{PM}—Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, September 21st

9:30^{AM}—Sunday Worship

10:40^{AM}—Fellowship

PRAYERS ARE POWERFUL

Heartfelt thoughts & prayers for Ko Kryger & family for the recent passing of Myrna, and 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 Ed Lehmann, Carter Nitz, Sandra Hopkins, Kay Mahl, Peggy Taylor, Kathy Wortley, Ellen Easley, Mac & Marilyn MacCaughey, Mary Johnson, Barb Stevenson, Evelyn Vanderheyden, Louise Shapley, Leah Fisher.

As they deal with physical, emotional and/or spiritual issues, please pray for the family of Ruby Seeton; Robyn—friend of Lisa Campbell; Autumn Eifert's paternal grandmother; Carol—sister of Ginny Holle; Bob—friend of Sharon Campbell; 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; John—son of Mac & Marilyn MacCaughey; Laurel - niece of the Vollmans; 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!

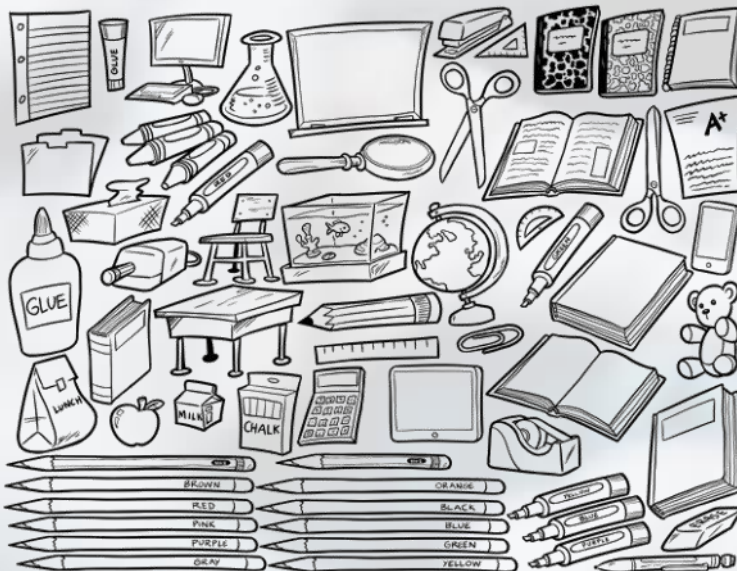
MISSION INITIATIVE'S SCHOOL SUPPLY LIST FOR JULIAN THOMAS ELEMENTARY

We will be collecting school supplies through Sunday, September 21st.
Following is a generic list of items that the children from Julian Thomas:

- 3-prong, 2-pocket folders (blue, yellow, red, green, etc.)
- Wide-ruled spiral notebooks (blue, yellow, red, green, etc.)
- Supply boxes
- Facial tissue
- Disinfecting wipes (tubs)
- Boxes of plastic storage bags (gallon, quart and sandwich size)

If you would prefer to make a monetary donation, checks can be sent to the church. Please denote **School Supplies** on the memo line. Or, online payments can be made by visiting <https://firstpresracine.org/donate>, then click on *Secure Giving thru PayPal*.

As always, thank you for your continued support!



Choral ARTS Society

Gospel Fusion

Saturday, October 18, 2025 • 7:00 PM

First Presbyterian Church

716 College Avenue, Racine, WI 53403

Pre-Concert Event Included with Admission:

5:45-6:30PM "Harmonious Reunion" with *Gospel Fusion* Guest Artists



Greater Mount Eagle Praise Ensemble



D'AYCH & The Next Level Band

TICKET PRICES

Adult \$25 · Senior \$25 · Student \$15



Advance tickets available at:

Personal Touch by Julie Florist in Racine – 5445 Spring Street – with cash or check,
online at www.choralartsonline.org, or by calling (262) 634-3250.

This season is supported in part by a grant from the Racine Community Foundation, a grant from the Racine Arts Council's ArtSeed Grant Program funded by the Racine Arts Council and the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin, and a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.





Save the dates for more
Music & More!

A CANDLELIGHT CONCERT

The Choral Arts Society and Music & More Collaboration

Saturday, December 6, 2025 at 7:00^{PM}

Tickets \$20 (adult) - \$10 (youth) purchase from CAS

2026 Dates for Season 33

SPRING SAMPLER

Saturday, May 9, 2026 at 7:00^{PM}

Early Bird Tickets are \$15; \$20 after May 2, 2026

NOONTIME CONCERTS

June 4, 2026 thru August 6, 2026

Thursdays—Noon to 1:00^{PM}

Ten FREE Noontime Concerts

SEASON FINALE

Friday, August 14, 2026 at 7:00^{PM}

Early Bird Tickets are \$15; \$20 after August 7, 2026