

THE KIRKIN' O' THE TARTANS



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Gastonia, North Carolina

November 14, 2021

THE WORSHIP OF GOD
November 14, 2021
The Thirtieth Annual Kirkin' O' the Tartans
Eleven O'Clock in the Morning

WE GATHER IN GOD'S PRESENCE

CARILLON PEAL

Please enter to worship in a spirit of reverence.

†THE PLACEMENT OF THE HOLY BIBLE

Luther Blair

The kilted Beadle leads the worship procession carrying the Bible to the front of the sanctuary and the pulpit. Reminiscent of an old custom of the Church of Scotland, this tradition highlights the Bible as the Word of our Lord and the center of our faith.

PROCESSION OF THE TARTANS *(Please be seated)*

"Scotland the Brave"

A SCOTLAND NATIONAL ANTHEM

ORDER OF THE PROCESSION

Reverend Dr. Brian Blount
Reverend Daniel J. Commerford
Reverend Lauren Sease Vanacore
Sword Bearer - David Dickson
Beadle - Luther Blair
The Loch Norman Pipe Band



COMPANY OF THE TARTANS

| | | | | |
|------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Anderson | Douglas | Lauder | MacLellan | Robertson/Modern |
| Armstrong | Elliott | Leslie | MacLoud/Dress | Rose |
| Barnett | Fleming | Love | MacLoud/Harris | Ross |
| Blair | Forbes | MacArthur | MacPhail | Rotary International |
| Bruce | Forrester | MacBeth | MacPherson | Saint Andrews |
| Cameron | Galloway Hunting | MacDonald | MacQueen | Sinclair |
| Campbell | Gordon | MacDonald of Glenco | Matheson | Stewart |
| Carmichael | Graham | MacDougal | McGregor | Stewart Hunting |
| Carolina | Gunn | MacFarlane | Moffatt Modern | Sutherland |
| Clergy | Guthrie | MacKenzie | Montgomery | Wallace |
| Coloquhoun | Hume Modern | Mackintosh | Montreat | Wallace Hunting |
| Craig | Johnstone | MacLauren | Nova Scotia | Watson |
| Crawford | Keith | MacLean | Ramsey | Wilson |
| Cunningham | Keith Ancient | MacLean/Hunting | Rankin | |
| Davidson | Lamont | MacLean of Duart | Robertson | |

WELCOME AND NEWS OF THE KIRK

Rev. Daniel J. Commerford

CALL TO WORSHIP *(Responsively)*

Rev. Lauren Sease Vanacore

This day, we bend the knee to God, our great Chief,
before whom the people of every tongue and clan and nation will one day bow.
Grant to us, our Savior of Glory,
the fear of God, and the love of God,
and the will of God to do on earth at all times as the angels and saints do in heaven.
In the sight of the Father who created us; in the sight of the Son who died for us,
in the sight of the Spirit who cleansed us,
let us lift up our hearts and voices and worship God!

WE APPROACH GOD

†HYMN 366

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

HYFRYDOL

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(In Unison)*

Eternal God, merciful and everlasting, we acknowledge and confess before you that we are poor miserable sinners, conceived and brought forth in sin and corruption. We are prone to all evil. We cannot, without you, do anything that is good. And we daily and in many ways, transgress your holy commandments. Thereby we provoke your anger against us, and draw down upon ourselves by your just judgments, death and destruction. But, O Lord, we repent and are sorry from our hearts that we have displeased you. We condemn ourselves and our misdoings, and we pray that your grace may bring help to our distress and misery. Be pleased, therefore, to have mercy upon us, O most gracious God, forgive us all our sins, through your dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Forgive us our sins; and grant us now the gifts of your Holy Spirit. Increase in us from day to day; so that we, acknowledging with our whole hearts our own unrighteousness, may truly repent us of the same; that sin may be destroyed in us; and that we may bring forth the fruits of righteousness and a pure life which are well-pleasing unto you, through Jesus Christ...(silent confession)...Amen.

This Prayer of Confession was originally attributed to John Oecolampudius and Martin Bucer before being revised and utilized by John Calvin and John Knox.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

†GLORIA PATRI 581

“Glory Be to the Father”

GREATOREX

WE LISTEN TO GOD’S WORD

VOLUNTARY

“Flowers of the Forest”

SCOTTISH FOLK SONG

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

Rev. Daniel J. Commerford

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

PRESENTATION OF OUR GIFTS

On the second Sunday of the month, a special offering is collected for the Nickel-A-Meal ministry. Nickel-A-Meal provides meals for those in need through the Presbytery of Western North Carolina Hunger Program. Red buckets are scattered about and available for your donations before or after worship, and gifts can be made online at www.fpcgastonia.org/giving (select the Nickel-A-Meal fund).



ORGAN OFFERTORY

“Air on a Scottish Tune”

Matthew Corl

†DOXOLOGY 606

OLD HUNDREDTH

†PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION

God of all ages, we praise you for all your servants who have done justly, loved mercy and walked humbly with their God.

For apostles and reformers and saints of every time and place, who in life and in death have witnessed to your truth,

We praise you O, God.

Keep us forever grateful for their witness, and like them, eager to follow in the way of Christ.

Then, at the last, bring us with them to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. Through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Amen.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Rev. Dr. Brian Blount

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

Revelation 7:7-17

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“Dazzling Dress”

Rev. Dr. Brian Blount

WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD

†AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (from The Scots Confession, 1560)

We confess and acknowledge one God alone, to whom we must cleave, whom alone we must serve, whom alone we must worship, and in whom we put our trust. Who is one in substance and yet distinct in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. By whom we confess and believe all things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, to have been created, to be retained in their being, and to be ruled and guided by His inscrutable providence, for such end as His eternal wisdom, goodness, and justice have appointed, and to the manifestation of His own glory. Amen.

ANTHEM

“Highland Cathedral”

Ulrich Roever and Michael Korb

PRESENTATION OF THE TARTANS

Luther Blair

On behalf of all Scots away from Scotland, and in the name of all the Scottish clansfolk that are here represented, we present these tartans before Almighty God in appreciation of our heritage, and we ask God’s blessings upon these, God’s humble servants. On behalf of all clans represented here raise your tartans to Almighty God in gratitude for our heritage and pray God’s blessing on His servant people in all lands.

BLESSING OF THE TARTANS

Almighty God, who has promised that in all places you will meet with your servants to bless them; we rejoice in the opportunity to dedicate to you these tartans as symbols of the unwavering loyalty, steadfast faith, and great achievements of our Scottish forefathers. We praise you for their rugged individualism, their respect for law and order, their hatred for pretense and hypocrisy, their regard for human personality, and their belief in the equality of all persons before you. Grant, O God, that you too, may ever be true in the faith of our fathers which has played such a great part in the building of our beloved land. Use us and all your servants everywhere, we pray, to bring peace and goodwill, equality and justice to all throughout the world, in and through the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WE BEAR GOD'S WORD INTO THE WORLD

†HYMN 649
"Amazing Grace"

AMAZING GRACE

†CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Rev. Dr. Brian Blount

†RECESSIONAL
"Scotland the Brave"

A SCOTLAND NATION

†If you are able, please stand.

*Leading worship today are:
Rev. Dr. Brian K. Blount, Guest Preacher
Rev. Daniel J. Commerford, Senior Minister
Rev. Lauren Sease Vanacore, Associate Minister
David Jennings, Organist
The Loch Norman Pipe Band.*

*Welcome to First Presbyterian Church - where faith is alive!
Your presence here is our honor and joy.
We pray that your heart is encouraged, that the Word is clear,
and that you go from this place renewed and refreshed -
in search of an ever deeper connection with our awesome God!
If you would like more information about First Presbyterian Church,
please sign the welcome forms in your pew or stop by the welcome table.*

*Professional nursery care is offered for infants and children up to four years old.
The nursery is located on the first floor; please see an usher for directions.
Older children are invited to worship with their parents during this special service.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY SCHOOL VIDEO LESSON

Please join us online as Greg Sellers presents this week's Sunday School video lesson titled, "Praise for God's Eternal Reign." The video lesson premiered at 10:00 a.m. and is available on-demand following the initial broadcast. You can find this video, along with "Wednesday Wisdom" and other videos at www.fpcgastonia.org/videos.

NICKEL-A-MEAL OFFERING

Today we are collecting a special offering for the Nickel-A-Meal program. Nickel-A-Meal is an initiative of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina and works to provide meals for those facing food insecurity in our region and around the world. If you would like to contribute to this offering, please place your gift in one of the red buckets.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT ALIVE!

This Wednesday night, the Adult Ministries Committee invites you to join us as we continue preparing for Advent with our study series, "The Heart that Grew Three Sizes" by Matt Rawle. Gather for fellowship at 6:15 p.m. as we share in the joy of the Advent season. The program will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall and will be led each week by staff and lay leaders.

"FOOD BANKSGIVING" FOOD DRIVE

During November the children of the church will be focused on giving and will learn about how they can share their gifts as a response to God's goodness! Throughout the month, the Preschool, Kindergarten, and Elementary Sunday School classes will join in a "Food Banksgiving" food drive to support the ministry of CAMs. Be on the lookout for the donation boxes and check out the Faith Formation weekly newsletter for needed food items!

ANGEL TREE FOR BLACK MOUNTAIN HOME

Support the Angel Tree for Black Mountain Home for Children, Youth, and Families! Visit the Christmas tree outside Rev. Vanacore's office to select an ornament and dollar amount, then write a check for that amount and place it in the red gift box. Make your checks out to First Presbyterian Church and be sure to include "angel tree" in the memo line.

THANKSGIVING OFFICE HOURS

As we approach Thanksgiving, please note an adjustment to the church office hours. The staff will be available from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 24, and will be out of the office on Thursday, November 25, and Friday, November 26. The staff will return to regular office hours on Monday, November 29. We wish you a safe and happy holiday season!

ADVENT BEGINS NOVEMBER 28

We hope that you will gather with us this Advent season as we prepare for the birth of the Christ child! This year our theme is "He Shall Be Called" which draws inspiration from Isaiah 9. Each week, sermons will focus on a different description of Christ as foretold in Isaiah. In addition to this series, a corresponding booklet, with daily devotionals written by church members, will be available beginning November 21. Together, we hope these will be vital resources for you and your family as we approach the Christmas season with anticipation and joy!

The Kirkin' O' Tartans

Today we celebrate the Scottish Heritage of the Presbyterian Church. The Kirkin' in its present form was probably first held in Washington's New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in 1941. The minister was Dr. Peter Marshall, Chaplain of the U.S. Senate. He was also Chaplain of the St. Andrew's Society of Washington, whose members took part in the ceremony. Dr. Marshall was born in Scotland, graduated from Columbia Theological Seminary and had previously been the minister of a Presbyterian Church in Atlanta. His wife Catherine was an Agnes Scott College graduate.



Nasmyth, Alexander. "Highland Loch Landscape." Oil on Canvas.

Kirk is the Scottish word for church and the tartan represents specific Scottish clans, families, regions, and regiments. Perhaps no symbol is more associated with Scotland and the Scottish tradition than the colorful Highland dress.

John Knox, the Scottish Reformer, studied under John Calvin, the father of Presbyterianism, in Geneva, Switzerland, in the 1500s. Upon returning to Scotland, he wrote the first Book of Church Order and established the first Presbyterian churches. The church spread to Ireland, and it was immigrants from Scotland and Ireland who brought the Presbyterian Church to America. The Scots Confession was the first Reformed confession in the English language. It has been called the charter of the Church of Scotland and of world Presbyterianism.

The Scottish Parliament, at the conclusion of a civil war, invited John Knox and five colleagues to prepare a confession of faith for the church and the nation. During the Middle Ages and through the Reformation, Bibles were rare among common people. The Bible of the Kirk (church) was a treasured possession. The value of the sacred scriptures and the danger of theft led to the establishment of a special lay office within the Kirk known as "the Beadle." The Beadle begins the worship service by carrying the Bible ceremoniously into the sanctuary. The Beadle removes the Bible from the Kirk for safekeeping following the service.

The bagpipe is a musical instrument now regarded as the national instrument of Scotland. Each clan had its own bagpiper and its fame was based to some extent on the bagpiper's ability. Crimond, the bagpiper of the clan McLeod, wrote a tune to the Twenty-Third Psalm still used today.

We Welcome Brian K. Blount to Our Pulpit Today

Brian K. Blount is President and Professor of New Testament at Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond, VA and Charlotte, NC. He was called to this position in 2007, after serving for 15 years as the Richard J. Dearborn Professor of New Testament Interpretation at Princeton Theological Seminary.

An M.Div. graduate of Princeton Seminary in 1981, he obtained his B.A. from the College of William and Mary in 1978. After graduating from Princeton Seminary, he went on to become the pastor of the Carver Memorial Presbyterian Church in Newport News, Virginia from 1982-1988. William and Mary's first African-American to receive membership in the Alpha Chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society received his Ph.D. in New Testament Studies from Emory University in 1992. He returned to teach at Princeton Seminary the same year. He served as the president of the Society of Biblical Literature from 2017-2018. He served as the president of the Association of Theological Schools from 2018-2020.

Professor Blount's primary work has been in the Gospel of Mark, the Book of Revelation and in the area of cultural studies and hermeneutics. He is the sole author of six books:

- Cultural Interpretation: Reorienting New Testament Criticism (Fortress, 1995)
- Go Preach! Mark's Kingdom Message and the Black Church Today (Orbis, 1998)
- Then The Whisper Put on Flesh: New Testament Ethics in an African American Context (Abingdon 2001)
- Can I Get A Witness? Reading Revelation Through an African American Lens (Westminster John Knox Press, 2005)
- Revelation. A Commentary in the New Testament Library Series (Westminster John Knox Press, 2009)
- Invasion of the Dead. Preaching Resurrection (Westminster John Knox Press, 2014)

In 2010, his Revelation commentary was voted the 2009 top reference work by the Academy of Parish Clergy. He has also edited a volume of essays on worship with Leonora Tubbs Tisdale entitled Making Room at the Table: An Invitation to Multicultural Worship (WJK, 2000). He is also the coauthor of a book with Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann and theologian William C. Placher entitled Struggling With Scripture (WJK, 2001). He has also co-authored the book Preaching The Gospel of Mark in Two Voices (WJK, 2002) with Gary W. Charles, the pastor of Cove Presbyterian Church in Cove, VA. He is an editor of The Discipleship Study Bible, also by Westminster John Knox (2008). As a part of his work for the Bible, he has also written the introduction and notes for Mark and Matthew. He is an associate editor of the New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible for Abingdon Press. He is the General Editor for True To Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary by Fortress Press. He is also an editor for the forthcoming revised Interpretation commentary series by Westminster John Knox Press.

He lectures widely. He was the 2011 Beecher Lecturer at the Yale Divinity School, Yale University. The author of numerous articles, he also preaches and directs adult education classes in local congregations. He is married, and he and his wife, Sharon, have two children, Joshua and Kaylin.

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