

YOUTH SUNDAY 2021

Since the youth write all their own parts and it's sometimes hard to understand, we have included all parts of today's worship service.

GATHERING IN THE NAME OF GOD

graduation blessing

O God, you are closer to us than a parent. Your steadfast love never ends and continues to guide and direct us through our years. Wrap your loving arms around each graduating senior, and around each parent, that their love for one another might be flexible enough to allow for growth, yet constant enough to be an anchor against all storms. Fill each graduate with courage in the face of challenge, integrity in the face of injustice, and discipline in the face of chaos.

Keep their minds open to new learnings and help them remember what is just and true. Keep their hearts open to lasting relationships and help them love as you have loved us all. Keep their hands open to committed service and help them serve as you have served us. Wrap your love around us now and in all the days of our lives. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

AJ Carr	Monsignor Donovan	Furman University
Ann Harper Covington	Athens Academy	Auburn University
John Ferguson	Athens Academy	University of Georgia
Lucy Ferguson	Athens Academy	Auburn University
Emily Gaskill	Clarke Central High School	University of Georgia
Henry Logan	North Oconee High School	Davidson College
Katie Sue Martin-Williams	Clarke Central High School	University of Georgia
Evelyn Moser	Clarke Central High School	gap year, Emory University
Katie Norris	North Oconee High School	University of Tennessee
Luke Osborne	Oconee County High School	Kennesaw State University
Madison Smith	Athens Academy	Georgia Southern
James Williams	Oconee County High School	College of Coastal Georgia

prelude

Meditation by Jules Massenet on violin

KATIE SUE

words of welcome and concerns of the church

To both the virtual and in-person faces, Welcome to Youth Sunday. Now if you've been with us for past Youth Sundays, you probably remember all of the youth contributing to this special day. However, due to COVID-restrictions, this year's service will be led only by our seniors. And let me tell you, every one of us is so thankful to be here. We have been working on this day for the past month and are super excited to share what we have created. So before we begin, I want to highlight some of the announcements in the bulletin.

EVELYN

First, some very good news from Session! As COVID-cases have gone down and vaccinations up, we have been able to make some changes to our COVID restrictions, most significantly, the maximum size for indoor gatherings in the church has been raised to 100 people! Please take a few minutes to read through the entire letter from our own beloved Dr. Baer for more details.

Next, an event I feel does not get enough credit for being a really cool opportunity is Tuesday's Chair Yoga. Yoga is a great way to calm the mind and spirit during stressful times. Join Mel Berzack and your fellow church members on Tuesday at 11:30am for this Zoom yoga session.

I'd also like to remind everyone of our Scottish Reformation service next Sunday. This service helps us remember our Presbyterian roots that go back to John Knox. During the Protestant Reformation, Knox fought to bring freedom to read the Bible and to govern the local church to the people of Scotland. This Sunday is also a time for our congregation to thank state, regional and local officials for their service to our community. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing pandemic, dignitaries have not been invited to join us in person this year, however, we will still have a flag processional and the bagpipe, which is, let's be honest, the coolest part.

To top it off, after our scottish reformation service, we have the Final Youth Family Game night at 5pm that Sunday. In light of the morning's service, the inspiration for this particular game night is "The Amazing Race: Highland Games". Families are invited to take part in this Scottish-themed competition where you will participate as a family and all events will be socially distanced and outside, around the church. It's not too late to sign up, just email Ms.Kim to join.

Last but of course not least, Natalie Bishop and Kim Ness will be welcoming our rising 6th graders into the First Pres. youth group today at 3:30 over Zoom. Being a senior, this event brings back special memories of when 12 year old me joined First Presbyterian's youth group. I was what you would call a walk-on. My family did not attend First Presbyterian Church, in fact, I was invited by a fellow youth group member, Eliza Downs. At first I was nervous that I would feel like an outsider, since many of the other kids already knew each other, but Ms. Kim and the church as a whole made me feel so welcome that I stayed for 6 more years. In fact, I loved the community here so much that I dragged along the rest of my family. My parents moved to Athens in 2002 and for about 12 years they searched for the right church community. Of course, it took their lovely daughter to find it for them. In 2015, my parents joined First Pres and haven't looked back. This church has made a particularly large impact on my mother. She is the most dedicated Moser church member and I believe has truly benefited from the sense of community here at First Presbyterian. During very hard times in her life, I've witnessed how she has relied on this church to lift her spirits, give her perspective and remind her of God's love. This church community, meaning all of you watching, in-person and virtual, have brought my mother great peace during times of hardship and for that I cannot thank you enough. So if you are one of the fifth graders joining the youth group, bring a friend. They will certainly thank you for it later.

You can read through the rest of the announcements in the bulletin or on our church website. I hope you enjoy the rest of the service.

call to worship

EMILY

Come, quench your thirst in the love of God.

We come, hungering for a place in which we can be gently sustained.

Be like trees planted by the streams of living water, ready to receive God's nourishment.

Oh God, strengthen us to receive your blessed peace.

Shout with loud songs of joy

For God has ascended with shouts of triumphs.

call to confession

LUCY

As many of us are about to begin a new path in our lives, we rely on God in order to guide us through this transition, praying that he may give us peace and strength during this change. In the past year, we all have experienced great losses and many changes, and our faith has certainly been tested. But even when our faith has faltered, God has stood by us and continued his selfless giving that we must be thankful for. Confident in God's grace, let us confess our sins and our fears of the future before God and one another.

Merciful God, We confess that we have sinned against you in word, thought and deed. During this difficult time, we have questioned you, and failed to thank you for the ways that you have helped guide us through our many struggles. We have looked for you in all the wrong places, and wonder why we cannot find you, while you, in fact, are everywhere: in the kindness of our neighbors, in the smiling eyes of strangers behind their masks, and in the newly blooming flowers of spring.

Forgive the frailty of our faith and open our hearts and minds to the presence of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and the things that he has done for us. In forgiving us, God of new life, you may enrich our appreciation of your grace and allow us to use your grace in service to others. This we pray in the name of Jesus, who is with us always.

Assurance of Pardon

The assurance of God's grace is declared through the name of Jesus Christ.

We accept God's forgiveness, and thank him for his continuous grace.

We thank him for his ongoing love for us, even as flawed beings.

We are reminded of his amazing power through the miracle of Easter, and his latter ascension into heaven.

Because of this, we must continue to recognize his mercy and be grateful for it but first, we must forgive one another.

prayer for illumination

KATIE

Ever-rising God,
just as you lifted the eyes of the disciples
to the rising Jesus at his ascension,
so lift our eyes to you as we hear your holy word today,
that we too might turn our eyes toward the need of the world
and follow in your way through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The first lesson is from Psalm 100. Listen for a word from God.

*Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.*

*Know that the Lord is God.
It is he that made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him, bless his name.*

*For the Lord is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.*

second lesson *Luke 24:44-53*

AJ

The second reading verse wraps up our study of the Book of Luke.

On Christmas Eve we read about the birth of Jesus.

In January, we learned about Jesus as a twelve year old in the Temple.

February included stories of baptizing, fishing, and healing.

In March, we studied the Parables.

April brought the Last Supper, betrayal, arrest, crucifixion and resurrection!

Last week, Dr. Baer told us about when Jesus first re-appeared to his disciples.

And finally today we learn about the Ascension of Jesus and his last words to the witnesses.

Listen for a word from God.

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled."

Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

meditations

JAMES

Good morning! My name is James Williams.

When I was in 6th grade Mrs. Kim took me on my first mission trip to Southern Pines North Carolina. During the week, attention was brought to something called a God sighting. Each day we had the opportunity to tell the main director where we'd seen God in our day at work. Then we would have to tell the entirety of the 400 other middle and high schoolers there. So towards the end of the week, before we started the nightly reflection I told the director my god sighting story. I felt that getting to tell this story would really break the ice for me and it was a chance to get out of my comfort zone. I have always loved challenging myself when it comes to public speaking. I also really wanted to relate to the others on the mission trip and I was just so grateful for this experience.

My God sighting was this: My group and one other group finished our work super early so we teamed up for the last three days and worked on painting a lady's house. When we got to her house the first morning I have never seen someone so grateful for something in my life. To me it was crazy that a bunch of youth

could create such an impact on one person. All throughout the day she would come outside and thank us over and over and tell us how much she appreciated our time. Our group became good friends with this lady over those three days. I definitely saw God in her. I saw God in the way she talked with us and related to us and smiled with us while we worked, and the hundreds of times she thanked us. This experience made me more open to looking and seeing God around me throughout my everyday life.

My next mission trip was to Atlanta. We served at DOOR Atlanta which is housed downtown at Central Presbyterian Church. There, the staff make food and provide many other services for the homeless in the Atlanta area. When we were there we got to help with those activities. One of the days we made a bunch of PB and J sandwiches and gathered them all into ziploc baggies. We took them on a cart and walked around the block delivering them to the homeless that were waiting outside. The thing that got my attention the most was how thankful everyone was when we gave them just a simple sandwich. It was mind blowing to me. One of my favorite memories was when I gave this elderly man a sandwich. He took it and smiled so big and thanked me. Then we just had a conversation. I don't remember about what specifically we talked about. But what I took from it was how the homeless are people too. Hearing some of his stories, I began to see God in him. This was the second time I saw God in a person and I started to realize how easy it was to see God in the People around me. One of Door's tag lines is this *DOOR Atlanta is an urban ministry program that helps youth and young adults "See the Face of God" in the city of Atlanta.* I definitely started to see the face of God in the city and the people in it.

My last mission trip was to Heifer Ranch in Arkansas. I'm gonna be honest. I never thought that I would ever be able to say that I've been to Arkansas. But man I'm glad I can. When we first arrived I immediately saw God in the environment and the vast abundance of life all around me. Who knew Arkansas was so pretty?! Heifer taught me a lot in a week. I learned how to catch chickens and milk goats but some of the most impactful things I learned was where some of our food comes from and the way we practice farming today. I learned that your lovely bright red juicy tomatoes have a lot more in them than what's advertised. The tomatoes in our grocery store have wax on the skin to make them look shiny and delicious. Also the workers who got paid to grow and harvest them do not get paid the same as the people who drove them across the country. I also learned that in order to keep the environment stable we need to practice farming in a more organic and sustainable way. Learning all of this gave a spark to me. I was already interested in the environment but now I knew how important it is to our future. Caring for our environment is a way of responding to God's first call for us to be a witness. In Genesis 2:15, the Bible says *"The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it."* We are not only called to be witnesses to Jesus' great work, but also to care for the Earth that was entrusted to us. This trip definitely confirmed that I want to do something in science and something to do with the environment.

Now if you thought I wasn't going to talk about Montreat you were very wrong. Today's scripture lesson talks about joy, being equipped with power, and the duty to spread Jesus's message. Montreat is important because I'm always overwhelmed with joy when I am there. Two years ago at the Music and Worship Conference, I managed to get into the auditioned youth choir. In this youth choir we were all ready to work and wanted to be there so it made for easy, and productive rehearsals. I really enjoyed singing in that group because of how we were able to deliver the message of Jesus and empower the audience; it was just such an amazing experience. I believe God gives everybody gifts and mine is music; and I have made it a priority to spread joy and Jesus's message through music. Over the last 6 years music has meant everything to my faith. I always felt like I understood messages better when I heard it through a piece of Music. My favorite is Psalm 23 Which we have sung many times over the last 6 years in youth choir here at First Pres.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

*He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.*

As I head off to college next year, I pray that I will continue to be a witness, spreading joy and taking the right paths in his name.

meditations

KATIE SUE

Hi, My name is Katie Sue Martin-Williams and I consider myself a doubting Thomas.

Am I proud of this? No. Is it who I am? Absolutely. When I look up pictures of the ascension, it just seems unexplainable to me. Jonah and the Whale, Jesus floating into the clouds, David being saved from a pit of lions...did all of this really happen? I struggle with believing all of this is true and would like to highlight that I say struggle in present tense. I have come to church almost every Sunday since I was a kid and as I look around the pews, I wonder, are these people more secure in their faith than me? What I have realized is that, to me, it doesn't matter. The beauty of faith and religion is that it is a mystery.

To be honest, I'm a little jealous of the disciples who had a bit of an upper hand being able to see Jesus and know that all of this was true. Yet, I think that even if they hadn't seen his ascension with their own eyes they would have believed. Because as soon as he left, they were alone again. Still, they went out and gathered communities to tell about all that Jesus had done. I always wonder how they appeased people who had not seen what they had firsthand. How did they deal with the doubting Thomases like me?

Kids are the perfect example of questioning EVERYTHING but also believing everything. They don't question authenticity, they are just curious. One of my favorite things to do is hang out with the children at Vacation Bible School. It is one of the greatest things FPC has given me. Where did my innocent faith go? I always wonder, what I can do to have faith like children do. Like the disciples did.

In my Religion Class, there is a term called *mysterium tremendum*. What this means is the inability for the human mind to comprehend the ultimate. Well, this fits perfectly with the conversations I have had with Ms. Kim since I was literally 11. I had trouble understanding all of the school shootings happening, why there was homelessness, and even how Jesus dying translated to us being saved. Of course, it is no surprise that Ms. Kim helped me through it all, she has been one of my firmest rocks at church and is one of the reasons I still attend. Church is a choice and I choose to go. When I come to church I don't necessarily come every time ready for a relationship with God. Most of the time, I am skeptical.

What I do know from the bottom of my heart is that if there is a God,
the God I believe in is one who encourages everyone to love,
the God I believe in is one who wants the best for our community,
and the God I love loves me even when I doubt and question.

I think that one of the most perfect examples of this is my confirmation mentor, Patty Whiten. We can gossip, exchange gifts, and even just eat food. To me, she is something God sent me when I needed it most for my faith. She is my friend, my family, and my church away from church. About, three years ago, I wrote in my confirmation statement of faith:

I believe the church is a community of faith. It is a place of safety and unity where we learn to live in the way of the holy trinity. I believe The Bible was meant for interpretation. It preaches love and kindness. I believe in love, I believe in following your heart, I believe.

Even then, I hesitated to write "I believe in God." I even hesitated to get confirmed feeling that if I was not always faithful, I was lying to myself and you. But one thing Patty, Ms.Kim and my parents emphasized was that the church community was and is there for me no matter what. Eventually I decided this is something I wanted to be a part of and have not regretted it since.

My adoption story is for me, the biggest example of God in my life. When I was three days old, someone left me in a public park in China to be found. I was then placed in an orphanage and eventually paired with the parents who have been there for me ever since. They tell me that in China, professors and music players are highly regarded. I think it is no coincidence that my parents were placed with this small, loud girl whose favorite toy was a cheap, plastic piano. Fate and God work in mysterious ways. Whatever brought us together, it is that that solidifies my belief in God. To be so unlucky and then be adopted into the best family I know is not something that just happens.

I love my church family and would never part from it. It has made me a greater person, provided me with a new family and friends, and of course given me a whole new source of people for me to pester with questions no one seems to have the answers to. At the end of the day, what I do know is that no matter what... I am loved, I can love, and I am wholeheartedly Christian and proud of it.

meditations

LUKE

Good morning. My name is Luke Osborne.

In June of 2016, I was lucky enough to watch one of the best NBA Finals matchups ever between the Cleveland Cavaliers and the Golden State Warriors. It was a classic matchup of LeBron James vs Steph Curry and my 13 year old self was so excited to be able to see it. It went to the final Game 7 and I'll never forget having to leave my friends house in the middle of the game cause it was late, much to my displeasure. I ended up watching the rest of the game in my living room with my sister Jordan and dad. It was one of the best endings to a basketball game that I have ever seen with the Cavs winning by only 4, and I was pretty happy Golden State lost.

But the game wasn't even the most remembered moment from that night for me. During a postgame interview of LeBron James, with tears, he said

"There's nothing that the man above is gonna put you in that you can't handle."

This past year was filled with social injustice and a pandemic that affected everyone throughout the world. If the man above truly doesn't give us more than we can handle, can we as Christians not just work our way back to normalcy, but instead be able to thrive and help improve the lives of our brothers and sisters in Christ who have been so troubled by this last year.

While reading today's scripture, two things stood out for me: God has a plan and He will open your eyes if you are willing.

Luke 24:36, *"Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day"*. The first four words of this verse really took me by surprise. "Thus it is written". This statement by Jesus to the Disciples proves that Christ has a plan for all of us. Personally, it is hard to think that God really has spent time creating a special plan just for me. That just makes me think in my mind that God has

like a little diary with my name on the front and all my monumental moments in life all plotted out on a timeline. This thought makes me feel good inside, knowing that God is big enough to care for the 7 billion people on this Earth and still is able to have a singular plan for me. With this plan though, apparently the hardships are planned as well, which is hard to understand for myself and many other people.

Being able to accept God's Plan, is something that I have been working on and hoping to accomplish. From being a kid and not making the middle school basketball team my 7th grade year, or having our most recent Puerto Rico mission trip canceled, these types of disappointments have always been hard to handle. This Senior year with all of the college applications and hard work involved, I really hoped that it would all fall into place with an acceptance into UGA. Sadly to me, God has other plans for me. I was a little disappointed at first, but that disappointment later turned into optimism towards my other favorite school choice, Kennesaw State University, and the plan that God had for me the whole time. As I continue to navigate my way through college and the real world, believing in God's Plan and my faith, will help me head to my new journeys with positivity and optimism.

Not only is there a plan for each and every one of us, but God also blesses each of us with gifts. Now LeBron and I aren't so different in our gifts that were given to us by God, as he was blessed with a 6'9, 250 lb body, and a net worth of around \$500 million, I myself was blessed with 3rd period team sports at school and having a 5 month long summer last year. But in all seriousness with the gifts that LeBron was given by God, with the position he was able to be blessed with, he has been able to give back so much from speaking out on social injustice, building and financing a school for the underprivileged in Ohio, and much more, all because of his god given talent.

For myself, it took me awhile to really figure out what my gift from God was, cause when I would try to think of it, my mind would just go straight to my athletic ability, or educational status, and I just thought there wasn't really anything that God gave me that really stood me apart from other people. But through the process of writing this sermon, I realized that God has blessed me and given me the gift to be able to make people laugh and smile for pure joy and fun. Most of the time that I am around people, I always have a way to get a good smile out of someone. Just to see them feel happy, that to me is the best feeling in the world. I believe that spreading laughter and smiles is one of the purest forms of showing God's love to other people.

A lot of the times when I am reading scripture, it is very challenging to understand it. In school when I don't understand a story, by the end of the explanation from the teacher I usually have the realization that that story had no improvement to my life, and usually my annoyed thoughts towards school always come back to my mind. When reading scripture though, such as at youth group or at places like Montreat, if there was a scripture that I did not understand, the explanation would always open my mind and leave an effect of trying to understand myself and others better. In today's lesson, it states how Christ had to open the disciples minds to understand the scriptures. This does not just relate to reading scripture though, but more so to opening our minds to better understand our fellow brothers and sisters and Christ, so that love can be spread.

For much of my childhood, being born in Oconee County, there wasn't much diversity in the people and true poverty was rarely seen, so my mind was clouded by the Oconee bubble. I had no way of understanding what most people really had to go through around the world. One of the biggest blessings for me was the resources that God gave me to be able to go out on mission trips with my youth group and see how the real world was. The summer after my 8th grade year, we went on a mission trip to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It was one of the most eye opening experiences of my life as I had never experienced poverty

or true suffering up to that point. Seeing the parts of North Philly that were ravaged by drugs, needles on the ground, people asleep in the middle of the sidewalk, it really burst that Oconee bubble for me and gave me the realization of what it is like for people around the world. During our week in Philadelphia we would serve dinner a few times to the homeless people of the city. Just being able to interact with them and hear their stories was awesome, and when I could get a smile out of some of them, it was the greatest gift I could have asked for.

This past year, we have all fallen, with the suffering from the pandemic, the country being divided in politics, and social injustice, and to be honest, it's not looking too hot for us right now I would say. But the real sign of Christianity is do we as Christians, have the strength of faith to be able to get back up and thrive? The gifts that God has given all of us should not be shared with just family or close friends, but with the people we don't know, that we haven't even thought about. For myself, I have come to accept the gifts that God has given me, and for these next few unknown years, I pray that I have the strength to share these gifts to the people I will meet. I believe in trusting God's path that he has written out for me in his little notebook, and I believe that the suffering and pain that was around last year, will be overshadowed by God's love, through our actions as Christians for the upcoming year.

affirmation of faith

HENRY

The Apostles Creed, while not written by the apostles, documents their teachings. It reminds us that we stand with the church throughout the ages and belong to a great line of faithful people of God. As we say these words, we are uniting our voices with the voices of those who have been reciting these words down through the centuries. Join me as we say what we believe...

**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 Ghost,
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 sitteth on the right hand of
God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church;
the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

ANN HARPER

Dear God, We thank you for gathering all of us together today to honor your word and appreciate the family this church has provided.

We are grateful for the love and guidance you have given us through our lives, especially through this last year where we can often feel alone and stuck. We find comfort knowing that you are by our sides always, even when it becomes difficult to see.

Thank you for showing us that there is always light and hope, even when times seem dark. We acknowledge the shelter you have created for us all, and are grateful for giving us the opportunity to gather this morning to worship your name all together. Although we have had to remain in solitude throughout this past year, we appreciate our time together to honor you.

We thank you for the season of Easter, allowing us to celebrate this time of joy and love as a community, and showing us the hope that remains even as this time of Covid continues.

We ask for your guidance in this time of uncertainty, especially as the seniors present today transition toward our next stage of life. We ask that you continue to stand with us, taking our hands and helping us to step away from the childhoods we have known and walk toward the next steps.

We request that you continue to fill our spirits with peace when we are left with questions or stress, and instill your everlasting love into our hearts so we know you are there with us. Just as the disciples learned to have faith once Jesus descended into heaven, we ask that you give us the strength to have faith in the unseen. Even though we cannot look at you with our own eyes, we continue to feel your presence in our hearts.

We ask that you heal those who are hurting, give guidance to those who feel they are lost, and instill hope in those whose heads are filled with doubt. Your everlasting love for all is more powerful than we can ever understand, and we thank you for giving us the opportunity to remember and honor it today.

Now please join me as we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us:

**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 tithes and offerings

JOHN

The psalmist reminds us that the earth is the Lord's, and everything that is in it: the world, and those who live in it. God has trusted us with the stewardship of some of what is rightfully God's, and so remembering who and whose we are, let us give to God with glad and generous hearts.

In addition to mailing checks or setting up auto payment through your bank, you can donate online. You'll see in the bulletin that we have a new QR code. If you've never used a QR code before, all you do is use the camera on your phone and scan the image. It will open up an internet browser which will take you straight to the giving page on our church website. Thank you for your generosity.

prayer of dedication

Dear Lord,
Thank you for the opportunity to bring our offerings to you today.
Let us find joy in giving in your name.
We know that all we have and all of our blessings come from you.
Lord, please keep us ever mindful of the needs of others.
Amen.

charge/benediction**MADISON**

We wanted to thank you all for joining us in worship today. And we especially want to thank our parents for all they've done to support us in school and in our faith. Today, you heard the story of the Ascension of Jesus and the charge for us to be witnesses to his life and resurrection.

And so, as you go out into the world today,
may God open your mind to His presence,
so that you may truly come to know Him;
may He open the eyes of your heart
so that you can experience the hope he offers
to all who follow Him;
and may you come to understand
the full extent of God's power at work in your life—
the very same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead,
and seated him at the right hand of God.

Go in peace to love and serve our Lord.