

Finding God in the Flames



Sunday July 6th, 2025, 10:30am
Southminster Presbyterian Church (USA)

GATHERING

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

PRELUDE “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”

WELCOME Rev. Dr. Tom Bryson

INTROIT “Spirit Divine, Attend Our Prayers” (Hymn 470)

Spirit divine, attend our prayers, and make this house your home. Descend with all your gracious powers.

O come, great Spirit, come! Come as the fire and purge our hearts, like sacrificial flame. Let our whole soul an offering be to our Redeemer's name.

CALL TO WORSHIP Jim Pittman

Call to mind the mighty acts of God.
Remember the wonders God has revealed in your life.
All the ways of God are holy.
Nothing in heaven or earth is so great as God.

With a strong arm, God redeems the people.
Day by day, God leads us with a shepherd's care.
Even when the earth trembles, God is with us.
When lightning flashes, we are confident of God's care.

We have inherited the mission of the prophets.
We need the prophet's mantle from God.
We have come to be equipped for our tasks.
We have gathered for the renewal of our lives.

***HYMN 395**

“Blessed Jesus, At Your Word”

*Blessed Jesus, at your word we have come again to hear you;
let our thoughts and hearts be stirred and in glowing faith be near you.
By your gospel true and holy, teach us, Lord, to love you solely.*

*All our knowledge, sense, and sight lie in deepest darkness shrouded,
till your Spirit breaks our night, filling us with light unclouded.
All good thoughts and all good living come but by your gracious giving.*

*Glorious Lord, yourself impart, Light of Light, from God proceeding.
Touch our lips and ears and heart; help us by your Spirit's pleading.
Hear the cry your church now raises; hear, and bless our prayers and
praises.*

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

The Spirit calls each of us, but we are often reluctant to heed the call. The wind of the Spirit blows, at times fiercely, and draws us onward. Yet we cling to the fragile familiarities, to security and to safety. Help us to risk letting go, to stand free as your servant people. Help us to capture visions of the future, so that we can truly be the church. Amen.

SILENCE

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

**Friends, believe the good news of the Gospel:
In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

***SUNG RESPONSE (Hymn 475)**

*Come, thou Fount of every blessing; tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it, mount of God's unchanging love!*

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

WORD

TIME FOR CHILDREN

Kyle Henderson

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING

2 Kings 2

Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?" And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent." Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here; for the Lord has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know; be silent." Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground. When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you." Elisha said, "Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit." He responded, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am

being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not." As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching and crying out, "Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. He picked up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over. When the company of prophets who were at Jericho saw him at a distance, they declared, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." They came to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. They said to him, "See now, we have fifty strong men among your servants; please let them go and seek your master; it may be that the spirit of the Lord has caught him up and thrown him down on some mountain or into some valley." He responded, "No, do not send them." But when they urged him until he was ashamed, he said, "Send them." So they sent fifty men who searched for three days but did not find him. When they came back to him (he had remained at Jericho), he said to them, "Did I not say to you, Do not go?" Now the people of the city said to Elisha, "The location of this city is good, as my lord sees; but the water is bad, and the land is unfruitful." He said, "Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it." So they brought it to him. Then he went to the spring of water and threw the salt into it, and said, "Thus says the Lord, I have made this water wholesome; from now on neither death nor miscarriage shall come from it." So the water has been wholesome to this day, according to the word that Elisha spoke. He went up from there to Bethel; and while he was going up on the way, some small boys came out of the city and jeered at him, saying, "Go away, baldhead! Go away, baldhead!" When he turned around and saw them, he cursed them in the name of the Lord. Then two she-bears came out of the woods

and mauled forty-two of the boys. From there he went on to Mount Carmel, and then returned to Samaria.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM **“Spirt of God, Descend Upon My Heart”**

SERMON Rev. Dr. Tom Bryson

***HYMN 432 “How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord”**

*How clear is our vocation, Lord, when once we heed your call
to live according to your word and daily learn, refreshed, restored,
that you are Lord of all and will not let us fall.*

*But if, forgetful, we should find your yoke is hard to bear;
if worldly pressures fray the mind and love itself cannot unwind
its tangled skein of care: our inward life repair.*

*We marvel how your saints became in hindrances more sure:
whose joyful virtues put to shame the casual way we wear your name,
and by our faults obscure your power to cleanse and cure.*

*In what you give us, Lord, to do, together or alone,
in old routines or ventures new, may we not cease to look to you:
the cross you hung upon, all you endeavored, done.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

EUCHARIST

OFFERING

***COMMUNION SONG #582**

*Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,
and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,
and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.*

*World without end, without end. Amen.
World without end, without end. Amen.
World without end, without end. Amen.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.*

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Invitation to the Table

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The Lord's Prayer

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, the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

Communion of the People

SENDING

***HYMN 366 "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"**

*Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling; all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion; pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation; enter every trembling heart.*

*Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast;
let us all in thee inherit; let us find the promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.*

*Come, Almighty, to deliver; let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never, nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.*

*Finish then thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.*

***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE**

“Prelude in B Flat”

Leading Today's Worship

Rev. Dr. Tom Bryson, Co-Pastor

Kyle Henderson, Director of Music and Arts

David Renaker, Organist

Ty Thornton, Pianist and Interim Choir Director

Jim Pittman, Liturgist

Coming Up

Lunch Bunch today following worship

All are invited for lunch and fellowship today following worship. We will gather at Newk's in Vestavia.

Lunch & Learn, Thursday, July 10th, 12pm

Join us on Thursday at noon. Our speaker will be Darien Roche from the Birmingham Service League. A light lunch is served; a \$5 donation is appreciated.

Backpack and School Supply Drive

It's backpack time and we need your help! This year we have a goal of filling 100 backpacks to be distributed at Greater Birmingham Ministries Community Day on July 19th. We'll be collecting monetary donations until July 17th. All items will be purchased

for you by a member of the Matthew 25 committee. We'll have a backpack packing event on Friday, July 18th at 10am if anyone is able to join us.

Welcome to Southminster

Connect: If you are new to Southminster, we are glad you are here! Fill out a connect card and visit us online at southminsterpcusa.org to learn more about what's coming up.

Children: We welcome children of all ages in worship. Childcare is also available for infants through age three in our Nursery (Room 213), staffed by caring, experienced workers. Worship bags for children are available in the entryway.

Communion: All are welcome at the table as we celebrate the Lord's Supper each week. The bread and juice are alcohol-free and gluten-free. If you prefer to remain seated during communion, an elder will be glad to bring the elements to you.

Prayer concerns: Fill out a card to share prayer concerns with our pastoral staff. You can pick up a copy of prayer concerns at the entrances to the sanctuary each week.

Offering: Offerings may be placed in the offering boxes located at the sanctuary entrances, or you may give securely online by visiting southminsterpcusa.org/give.

This Week

SUNDAY / JULY 6

10:30am / Worship Service

11:45am / Lunch Bunch – Newk's

MONDAY / JULY 7

10:30am / Centering Prayer

11:30am / Congregational Care Committee

5:30pm / Officer Training

TUESDAY / JULY 8

4:00pm / Vestavia West Food Bag Pickup

THURSDAY / JULY 10

11:00am / Bible Study

12:00pm / Lunch & Learn

1:30pm / Memorial Service for Gene McElroy

SUNDAY / JULY 13

9:15am / Sunday School

10:30am / Worship Service

11:45am / Matthew 25 Committee

11:45am / Day School Meeting