



# *Psalm*s

First Presbyterian Church  
Greenville, SC

40 DAYS  
*of* PRAYER 2015



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## HOW TO USE THIS 40-DAY PRAYER JOURNAL

We are excited to see what God has in store for you over these next 40 days. This Prayer Journal\* includes a place for you to name specific prayer requests for yourself, your family, or others, and a place for you to list specific prayer requests for a prayer partner. Our Prayer Journal is loosely modeled after the Pittsburgh Experiment ([pittsburghexperiment.org](http://pittsburghexperiment.org)) to enable “people to open their lives to God so He can make Himself known. It also serves as a tool of discipline and focus in seeking God’s guidance and direction.”

Below you will find an explanation of the steps to follow, the significance of 40 days, and how to pray, along with several different types of fasting to follow over the next 40 days.

### Steps to Follow

*(Steps 1-5 contain, in part, material from the Pittsburgh Experiment)*

#### 1. Decide What to Pray For

As far as what you or your prayer partner should put down, consider the following:

- Right now, what is your relationship like with God, yourself, and others?
- Are there unresolved portions of your past, or do you seek answers for the future?
- What is the need in your life that concerns you the most right now? Be specific.
- Focus on just one need at a time.

#### 2. Pray Every Day

- Commit yourself to praying consistently about your prayer requests every day for 40 days.
- Setting a regular time each day is not necessary, but it can be helpful. Pray wherever you are and as often as you can.
- Lift the situations up to God, and ask Him to meet you at the point of your need.
- Read the selected scriptures as a source of encouragement and guidance.

*\* The original Prayer Journal had specific prayer requests of First Presbyterian Church; this has been modified for you to use along with a prayer partner.*

### 3. Listen

- Take time to be quiet in God's presence. Silence is the language of the Holy Spirit (*John Main, "The Meaning of Silence," p.156, Spiritual Classics, Edited by Richard J. Foster and Emilie Griffin, 2000*)
- There might be things God, through the Holy Spirit, wants to say to you.
- There might be things in the church or in you that need to change before our or your situation is changed.
- Any ideas, questions, convictions, or concerns that come to your mind during prayer could be part of the answer.
- Write them down each day in the spaces provided.

### 4. Have an Open Mind

- Let go of preconceived ideas about possible solutions. For example, if you aren't getting along with your boss, pray for that relationship rather than a transfer.
- Believe that God is at work, even if you cannot see a difference.

### 5. Review the Results

- At the end of the 40 days, see where you are.
- Look at where you started—the situation, your attitude, emotions, everything that went into making it a need or prayer request. Look at where you are now.
- What was the progress from Day 1 to Day 40?
- What has changed? Situation, attitude, relationships—have you changed?

Answers may come in a variety of ways: Common sense, intellectual conclusions, circumstances, emotions, a decision of the will, other people, Scripture, sermons, direct inspiration. Answers may be "yes," "no," or "wait."

### 6. Share What God is Doing in Your life

To share how you are being affected through this time of prayer, email us at [prayer@firstpresgreenville.org](mailto:prayer@firstpresgreenville.org), drop off a card in the prayer boxes located in the back of the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall, or turn the card in to Congregational Care. Prayer requests and stories of encouragement and praise are welcome.

## Significance of 40 Days

(From *New Psalmist Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland, "40-Day Stretch Prayer Journal", 2010*)

A goal of the 40-Day Prayer Journal is for one day to lead to 40 days, and for 40 days to lead to a lifestyle of prayer. Here is the Biblical significance of 40 days:

- **Judgment:** 40 days was a sign in the Bible that God was removing evil (Genesis 7:4).
- **Preparation:** 40 days was a sign in the Bible that God was getting people ready for action (Matthew 4:2).
- **Restoration:** 40 days was a sign in the Bible that God wanted to win people to Himself (Jonah 3:4).

# How to Pray

*(Bill Hybels, Too Busy Not to Pray, 2008)*

Bill Hybels reminds us that we are God's adopted children, Jesus' brothers and sisters. We are God's family and we matter to Him. God is interested in your prayers because He is interested in you. He's your Father and He wants to hear what you have to say (pp. 28-29).

Jesus taught us how we should pray in Matthew 6:9-13, "The Lord's Prayer." Hybels states, "No other passage in Scripture reveals in such straightforward fashion how to pray:

- **Pray regularly.** Jesus said, "When you pray...", not "If you pray..."
- **Pray privately.** God is not impressed by public displays of piety.
- **Pray sincerely.** God is not interested in formulas. He wants to hear what is on our hearts.
- **Pray specifically.** Take the prayer we call the Lord's Prayer as a model (pp. 50-51)."

We also suggest that you get in the habit of kneeling while you pray (Psalm 95:6).

Lastly, Hybels reminds us that "busyness" is the archenemy of spiritual authenticity. Therefore, make an effort to slow down, reflect, and listen to God over these 40 days (p.125).

## Fasting

We are providing three different types of fasting for you to participate in over these next 40 days:

(1) a traditional food fast; (2) an Isaiah 58 "fast" by getting involved serving the poor, oppressed and hungry; and/or (3) a "fast" from any personality trait or habit that God is convicting you to change.

### 1. Food Fast

Following are guidelines for fasting from food for short periods of time, written by Pastor George Moore:

Presbyterians generally understand a call to prayer, but few Presbyterians have been urged to fast as an act of worship and humility. Why then are we now being urged to fast? Fasting is a spiritual discipline taught in the Bible. Jesus expected His disciples to fast, and He said our Heavenly Father rewards fasting. Matthew 6:16-18 states, "When you fast...", not "If you fast..."

- **Fasting gives you more time to pray.** Use the time normally spent eating as time to honor God as we are present with Him in humble prayer. (See Romans 12:1-2.) At such times God often reveals His will. (See Acts 13:2-4 and Ezra 8:23.)
- **Fasting and prayer become partners in demonstrating the depth of our desire when praying.** Fasting helps to put down our fleshly desires, including self-gratification and pride, while at the same time increases our spiritual strength and awareness. It shows we are serious enough about prayers to pay a personal price. (See Joel 1:14.)
- **Fasting releases God's supernatural power.** It is a discipline often used for empowerment from God. (See Acts 14:21-23.)
- **Fasting is a way God prepares us for major events in our lives,** such as an overwhelming victory or some astounding new enlightenment or an awe-inspiring answer to prayer. Through fasting, we humbly receive God's awesome blessings. Meditate on these scriptures: 2 Chronicles 20:2-3; Daniel 9; Nehemiah 1:4; Luke 4:2; Acts 13:2-3.

- **Fasting does not manipulate God to get His blessings of answered prayers.** God answers our prayers out of His grace. Fasting is a way He prepares us for His answers.

If you have any health issues, an eating disorder or are pregnant or nursing, you should not participate in a food fast.

Before deciding to go forward with a food fast, we strongly recommend a detailed review of scriptural fasting as contained in an article we have placed in the literature racks around the church. This article can also be accessed online by going to the following link: [cru.org/train-and-grow/devotional-life/personal-guide-to-fasting.html](http://cru.org/train-and-grow/devotional-life/personal-guide-to-fasting.html).

## 2. An Isaiah 58 “Fast”

### Isaiah 58:6-11

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.”

We encourage you to participate in an Isaiah 58 “fast” during these 40 days and beyond by getting involved in ongoing First Pres ministries for the poor, oppressed, and hungry such as:

- **Hollis Academy Elementary School:** A local public school with approximately 650 students, kindergarten through 5th grade, 99 percent of whom live at or below poverty level; FPC ministers in multiple ways to the students, families, and faculty.  
*Contact: Beth Simmons 787-3159, [simmonsfam@charter.net](mailto:simmonsfam@charter.net)*
- **Neighborhood Focus:** Neighborhood Focus is a free, faith-based out-of-school time program that provides year-round academic support, spiritual enrichment, character education, and life skills development for at-risk children and students in Greenville. Building hope one life at a time, our goal is to provide a solid foundation for future success.  
*Contact: Keith Groce, 704-7848, [kgroce@neighborhoodfocus.org](mailto:kgroce@neighborhoodfocus.org)*

To view all of the ministries First Pres supports, please go to our church website: [FirstPresGreenville.org](http://FirstPresGreenville.org).

## 3. Fasting From a Personality Trait or Habit

(Catherine Marshall, “A Fasting on Criticalness”, *Spiritual Classics*, Edited by Richard J. Foster and Emilie Griffin, 2000)

You may want to pray over a particular personality trait or habit of yours, one from which you would like to “fast.” Catherine Marshall teaches us about a way of fasting that is not from food, but from a critical spirit. One of the things we learn from fasting is how it reveals what controls us. Here, Catherine Marshall saw what was controlling her, and this released her to begin moving in a new direction, a direction free of a critical spirit.

Excerpts from Catherine Marshall's selection on fasting from criticalness follow. Is God convicting you of any personality trait or habit to "fast" from? If so, you can use Catherine Marshall's methodology as a template.

The Lord continues to deal with me about my critical spirit, convicting me that I have been wrong to judge any person or situation:

Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way as you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you (Matthew 7:1-2 NIV).

One morning last week, He gave me an assignment: for one day I was to go on a "fast" from criticism. I was not to criticize anybody about anything.

...For the first half of the day, I simply felt a void, almost as if I had been wiped out as a person... I listened to others and kept silent. Barbed comments on the tip of my tongue... were suppressed... Now it was apparent what the Lord wanted me to see. My critical nature had not corrected a single one of the multitudinous things I found fault with. What it had done was to stifle my own creativity—in prayer, in relationships, perhaps even in writing—ideas that He wanted to give me...

What He is showing me so far can be summed up as follows:

1. A critical spirit focuses us on ourselves and makes us unhappy. We lose perspective and humor.
2. A critical spirit blocks the positive creative thoughts God longs to give us.
3. A critical spirit can prevent good relationships between individuals and often produces retaliatory criticism.
4. Criticalness blocks the work of the Spirit of God: love, good will, mercy.
5. Whenever we see something genuinely wrong in another person's behavior, rather than criticize him or her directly, or—far worse—gripe about him behind his back, we should ask the Spirit of God to do the correction needed.

Convicted of the true destructiveness of a critical mindset, on my knees I am repeating this prayer: "Lord I repent of this sin of judgment. I am deeply sorry for having committed so gross an offense against You and against myself so continually. I claim Your promise of forgiveness and seek a new beginning." (pp. 57-61)

Upon completion of your fast from whatever personality trait or habit you select, summarize what God is showing you and what steps you can take to change.

**God's Love, Peace, Hope, and Blessings,**

**First Presbyterian Church Session Prayer Committee, 2015**

Please use the lines below on the left to write in what God is speaking to you about your prayer request and on the right what God is speaking to you about your prayer partner's request.

**My Prayer Request:**

**My Prayer Partner's Request:**

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*Day 1*

*Psalm 95:6-7:* Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;  
for he is our God And we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

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*Day 2*

*Psalm 19:1-2:* The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.  
Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.

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*Day 3*

*Psalm 139:1, 13-14:* You have searched me, LORD, and you know me... For you created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

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*Day 4*

*Psalm 51:10-11:* Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.  
Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

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## Day 5

**Psalm 1:1-3:** Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.

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## Day 6

**Psalm 112:1:** Praise the LORD. Blessed are those who fear the LORD, who find great delight in his commands.

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## Day 7

**Psalm 119:105:** Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

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## Day 8

**Psalm 119:133:** Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me.

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## Day 9

**Psalm 119:35-37a:** Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight.  
Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Turn my eyes away from worthless things.

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## Day 10

**Psalm 37:4:** Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

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## Day 11

**Psalm 25:4-5:** Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

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## Day 12

**Psalm 143:10:** Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

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## Day 13

*Psalm 55:1-2a:* Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea; hear me and answer me.

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## Day 14

*Psalm 102:1-2:* Hear my prayer, LORD; let my cry for help come to you. Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress. Turn your ear to me; when I call, answer me quickly.

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## Day 15

*Psalm 121:1-2:* I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from?  
My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

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## Day 16

*Psalm 80:19:* Restore us, LORD God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

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## Day 17

*Psalm 109:21-22:* But you, Sovereign LORD, help me for your name's sake; out of the goodness of your love, deliver me. For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.

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## Day 18

*Psalm 42:1, 11:* As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God... Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

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## Day 19

*Psalm 34:18-19:* The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. The righteous person may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all.

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## Day 20

*Psalm 82:3-4:* Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

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## Day 21

*Psalm 105:4:* Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.

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## Day 22

*Psalm 91:14:* "Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name."

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## Day 23

*Psalm 46:10a:* "Be still, and know that I am God."

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## Day 24

*Psalm 37:7:* Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret...

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## Day 25

**Psalm 40:1-3a:** I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry.

He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.

He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.

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## Day 26

**Psalm 77:13-14:** Your ways, God, are holy. What god is as great as our God?

You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples.

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## Day 27

**Psalm 103:8-12:** The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;

as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

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## Day 28

**Psalm 119:71:** It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.

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## Day 29

**Psalm 71:20:** Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again;  
from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up.

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## Day 30

**Psalm 51:17:** My sacrifice, O God, is a broken Spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

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## Day 31

**Psalm 62:5-6:** Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him.  
Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.

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## Day 32

**Psalm 23:1-3a:** The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.

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## Day 33

*Psalm 23:5b-6:* You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

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## Day 34

*Psalm 116:1-2:* I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live.

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## Day 35

*Psalm 90:17:* May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands.

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## Day 36

*Psalm 56:11:* In God I trust and am not afraid. What can man do to me?

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## Day 37

*Psalm 95:1-2:* Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.  
Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.

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## Day 38

*Psalm 100:1-5:* Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us,  
and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.  
Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.  
For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

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## Day 39

*Psalm 118:24:* This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

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## Day 40

*Psalm 133:1:* How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

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## WHAT HAPPENED?

Please use the lines below on the left to write in what God revealed to you about your prayer requests and on the right what God revealed to you about your prayer partner's requests.

Please share how you were affected through this time of prayer. Email us at [prayer@firstpresgreenville.org](mailto:prayer@firstpresgreenville.org), drop off a card in the prayer boxes located in the back of the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall, or turn in the card to Congregational Care. Prayer requests and stories of encouragement and praise are welcome.

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And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds,  
not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another...

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## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



*First Presbyterian is  
a House of Prayer for  
our members, visitors, and  
the downtown community.*

## OPPORTUNITIES TO RECEIVE PRAYER

### Prayer Room

Intercessors on the Prayer Room Team spend one to two hours a week praying for our congregation, our staff, and our missionaries. All requests are kept confidential.

### Prayer Cards

Prayer cards are mailed to the congregation throughout the year to let them know that they are being prayed for and to give them an opportunity to write down any requests and mail them back to the church to be prayed for by the Prayer Room Team.

### Elder Prayer

First Presbyterian's Elders and Deacons are available to pray with anyone following Sunday morning services and in Harper Prayer Chapel.

### Tuesday Night Prayer

This service, held every Tuesday evening at 7:00pm in Harper Chapel, includes praise and worship, ministry by the Prayer Team, and expanded opportunities for prayer.

### Prayer Requests

Prayer requests may be made using the cards found in the pews or by calling the following prayer lines.

- Call 672.1838 to leave a message for the Prayer Team.
- Call 672.1848 to schedule a Prayer Appointment.
- Call Tammy Burkhalter at 672.0327 to place a name on the Prayer List.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE IN THE PRAYER MINISTRY

### Prayer Card Team

Contact Dody Cunningham (325.2934, dixon4@charter.net)

### Prayer Room Team

Contact Marion Austell (270.5779, mimi.austell@gmail.com)

### Tuesday Evening Prayer Service Team

Contact Wendy Gaillard (982.6716, emgail@aol.com)

First Presbyterian

200 West Washington Street  
Greenville, SC 29601  
864.235.0496  
FirstPresGreenville.org



Church