



Time After Pentecost

Sunday, August 29, 2021

*An asterisk * invites you to stand in body or in Spirit.
You are welcome to sing during worship if you are vaccinated!*

Gathering in God's Presence

Prelude — “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian”

African American Spiritual, Setting by Stan Pethel

Lauren Russell (GAC), viola

*Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.
Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart.
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.*

Welcome

***Gathering Hymn** — no. 532

“Gather Us In”

***Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the God of manna,
the God of miracles,
the God of mercy. **Amen.**

Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance,
let us confess our sin. God, our provider,
help us.
It is hard to believe there is enough to share.
We question your ways when they differ from
the ways of the world in which we live.
We turn to our own understanding
rather than trusting in you.
We take offense at your teachings and your
ways.

Turn us again to you.
Where else can we turn?
Share with us the words of eternal life
and feed us for life in the world. Amen.

Beloved people of God:
in Jesus, the manna from heaven,
you are fed and nourished.
By Jesus, the worker of miracles,
there is always more than enough.
Through Jesus, † the bread of life,
you are shown God's mercy:
you are forgiven and loved into abundant life.
Amen.

*Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Let us pray.

O God our strength, without you we are weak and wayward creatures. Protect us from all dangers that attack us from the outside, and cleanse us from all evil that arises from within ourselves, that we may be preserved through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Hearing & Responding to Scripture

A Reading from Hebrew Scriptures — Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

1So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. 2You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God with which I am charging you.

6You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!” 7For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? 8And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?

9But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children’s children.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 15 — spoken responsively by half verse

1Lord, who may dwell in your | tabernacle?

Who may abide upon your | holy hill?

2Those who lead a blameless life and do | what is right,

who speak the truth | from their heart;

3they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil | to their friends;

they do not cast discredit up- | on a neighbor.

4In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those who | fear the Lord.

They have sworn upon their health and do not take | back their word.

5They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes a- | gainst the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be | overthrown.

A Reading from the Epistles — James 1:17-27

17Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. 18In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

19You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. 21Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

22But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. 23For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; 24for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. 25But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

26If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. 27Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Acclamation — hymn no. 814, *sung three times*

“Take, Oh, Take Me As I Am”

***Gospel** — Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

The Gospel of Mark, the 7th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

1Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around [Jesus], 2they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. 3(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; 4and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) 5So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” 6He said to them, “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

‘This people honors me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me;
7in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts as doctrines.’

8You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”

14Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: 15there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.”

21For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, 22adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. 23All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon — “With God's Grace, Be Doers of the Word”

Pastor Bill Nelsen

***Hymn —**

“The Well-Loved Traditions”
Sung to the tune FOUNDATION

"The well-loved traditions have gotten us through,
Yet see your disciples — the things that they do!"
Some leaders told Jesus, "They have no respect!
The old ways we follow are what they reject!"

The Lord said, "Isaiah has shown who you are!
You wash every bottle, container and jar.
You're clean in appearance. Yet look deep within:
You're distant from God and content in your sin!"

Forgive us, Lord Jesus, for caring too much
For rules and traditions and standards and such.
For while they are useful and good in their place,
In keeping them, sometimes we overlook grace.

Our worship is proper, yet some feel left out.
We celebrate faith, then pass by those who doubt.
We pray at our tables yet sometimes ignore
The hungry and homeless, the outcast and poor.

O Lord, may appearances match what's inside.
Take all our hypocrisy, hatred and pride.
Lord, fill us with good things from heaven above,
Till old ways and new ways are bursting with love.

***Affirmation of Faith — Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the power of the Holy
Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;**

**he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the
dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen**

***Prayers of Intercession**

Made children and heirs of God's promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

We pray for the church, that it is a safe haven for all who seek your presence. Fill it with pastors, deacons, and leaders who echo your expansive and generous welcome. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the whole of creation, that plants and animals have the habitat and resources to thrive and flourish. Inspire us to protect threatened habitats and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for individuals in positions of authority. Raise up wise and discerning leaders in federal, state, and local governments and guide them to seek the benefit of every person. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are in need. Support and encourage those who are unemployed, underemployed, or experiencing poverty. Bring food, shelter, clothes, and stability for daily life. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for this congregation, especially those beginning a new school year. Empower teachers and school administrators. Guide students in their learning and development. Accompany parents, foster parents, and caregivers who provide encouragement and love. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the faithful departed who showed us how to honor God with our heart. Inspire us by their example and renew our faith, trusting that we will be united with them in glory. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

***The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Offering

Please leave an offering in the basket outside the sanctuary, mail a check to the office, or give online: <https://tithe.ly/give?c=283920>.

Departing to Serve God's World

Announcements

***Sending Hymn** — no. 987 from *All Creation Sings*, found on last page

“Guide My Feet”
Led by Vocal Octet

***Blessing**

The blessing of God, who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us,
✠ be upon you now and forever. Amen.

***Dismissal**

Go in peace. With God's grace, be doers of the Word. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude — “Sent Forth by God's Blessing”

Setting by Stan Pethel
Lauren Russell (GAC), viola

Acknowledgements

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“Confession and Forgiveness” written by James E. Janeczek, in *Seeds of Faith: Service Prayers for the Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost*. Posted on the United Church of Christ's Worship Ways archive. <http://www.ucc.org/worship/worship-ways/year-c/p/pentecost-ordinary-time-21.html>

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