



# GRACE COVENANT

## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship July 23, 2023 9:30am  
8<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

### Gathering

PRELUDE

“We Are God’s People”  
Linda Dover, organist

Johannes Brahms  
arr. Fred Bock

*In worship following reflective music, we are requesting a response of quiet or a contemplative “amen.” Any music that elicits a response of applause is to the glory of God.*

WELCOME

Kathy Bures

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: We come, because we seek our God.

**ALL: Every morning, every day, every evening,  
every moment, God is with us.**

ONE: We come, because we hunger for Christ.

**ALL: Jesus will feed us with hope,  
will replace our emptiness with grace.**

ONE: We come, because we thirst for the Spirit.

**ALL: Who fills our yearning for peace,  
who ends the drought of justice.**

\*HYMN 401

“Here in This Place”

GATHER US IN

**Verse 1 High Voices – ALL on Refrain**

**Verse 2 Children through Young Adults & Senior Adults – ALL on Refrain**

**Verse 3 Low Voices – ALL on Refrain**

**Verse 4 & Refrain – ALL**

## Here in This Place

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## Gather Us In



1 Here in this place the new light is stream-ing; now is the dark-ness  
 2 We are the young, our lives are a mys-tery. We are the old who  
 3 Here we will take the wine and the wa-ter; here we will take the  
 4 Not in the dark of build-ings con-fin-ing, not in some heav-en,



van-ished a-way; see in this space our fears and our dream-ings  
 yearn for your face. We have been sung through-out all of his-tory,  
 bread of new birth. Here you shall call your sons and your daugh-ters,  
 light years a-way: here in this place the new light is shin-ing;



brought here to you in the light of this day.  
 called to be light to the whole hu-man race.  
 call us a-new to be salt for the earth.  
 now is the king-dom, and now is the day.



Gath-er us in, the lost and for-sak-en; gath-er us in, the  
 Gath-er us in, the rich and the haugh-ty; gath-er us in, the  
 Give us to drink the wine of com-pas-sion; give us to eat the  
 Gath-er us in and hold us for-ev-er; gath-er us in and



blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall a-wak-en;  
 proud and the strong; give us a heart, so meek and so low-ly;  
 bread that is you; nour-ish us well, and teach us to fash-ion  
 make us your own; gath-er us in, all peo-ples to-geth-er,



we shall a-rise at the sound of our name.  
 give us the cour-age to en-ter the song.  
 lives that are ho-ly and hearts that are true.  
 fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

The "you/your" mentioned in every stanza is never identified, but this 1979 hymn is clearly a corporate prayer to God on behalf of the diverse congregation who have assembled for worship, longing to be transformed and used as God's witnesses and for God's purposes.

## A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

*(Awakening to Worship, our child-friendly worship time, is on summer hiatus. Our Nursery welcomes young children, and our ushers can assist families to the nursery located in the children's wing. Worship bags are available for children who stay in worship.)*

## PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS *(Responsive)*

ONE: The thirsty come,

**ALL: and we offer lead-filled water;**

ONE: the hungry come,

**ALL: and we offer a single can from our overflowing pantries;**

ONE: the lonely come,

**ALL: and we cling to our cliques;**

ONE: the broken come,

**ALL: and we hand them an aspirin;**

ONE: the needy come,

**All: but we have wasted everything on stuff we do not need.**

**Have mercy on us, Steadfast love, and pour your heart into our grace-parched souls. As you have been with us in every moment, may we go to be with all around us. May we listen to the needs and hearts of others, even as you lean down to listen to us in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.**

## ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GRACE

ONE: Friends in every moment,  
God seeks what is best for us,  
continually offering us peace, hope,  
and forgiveness.

**ALL: God blesses us in every moment.**

ONE: Friends believe the Good news of the Gospel we are forgiven!

## SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

**All: And also with you and all others!**

\*HYMN 300, st. 2

"We Are One in the Spirit" THEY'LL KNOW WE ARE CHRISTIANS

**We will walk with each other; we will walk hand in hand;  
we will walk with each other; we will walk hand in hand;  
and together we'll spread the news that God is in our land;  
and they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love;  
yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.**

## Equipping

### SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 13:6–9

*(adapted from The Message)*

Then Jesus told them a story: “A man had a fig tree planted in his front yard. He came to it expecting to find figs, but there weren’t any. He said to his gardener, ‘What’s going on here? For three years now I’ve come to this tree expecting figs and not one fig have I found. Chop it down! Why waste good ground with it any longer?’

“The gardener said, ‘Let’s give it another year. I’ll dig around it and fertilize, and maybe it will produce next year; if it doesn’t, then chop it down.’”

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words

**Thanks be to God!**

### SONG OF COMFORT

“Come to Me”

Music by Dan Forrest

Madeline Mahoney, *soprano* – Ky Townsend, *cello*

*Come. Come to me, all you who labor. Come to me, and I will give you rest.*

*Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and you will find rest for your souls.*

*Come my child, learn my heart, for I am gentle and lowly.*

*See how great my love for you, that I have called you my child.*

*Come to me, all you who labor. Come to me, and I will give you rest.*

*Oh, come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and you will find rest for your souls.*

*See my love for you, that I have called you my child, my child.*

*Come to me, all you who labor. Come to me, and I will give you rest.*

*Oh, come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and you will find rest, you will find rest,  
you will find rest for your souls. Come to me. Come to me. Come.*

(Text adapted from Matthew 11:25, 28-29, 2 Corinthians 6:18, 1 John 3:1)

### SERMON

“The Possibility of Figs”

Rev. Dale Jackson

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

### A CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

### OFFERING OF GIFTS AND MUSIC

“Jesus and the Children”

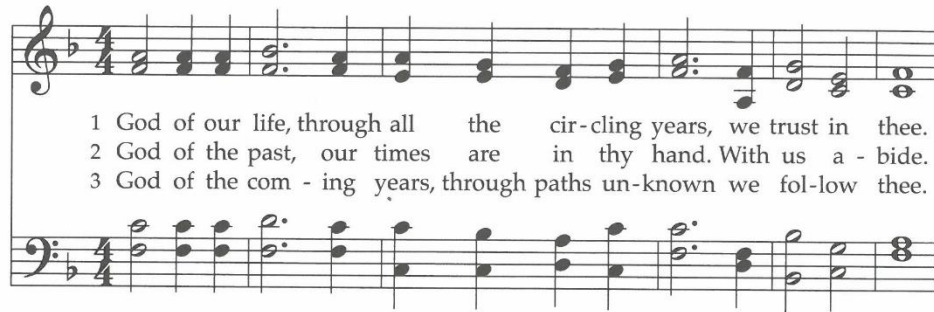
Linda Dover, organist  
by Austin Lovelace

## Sending

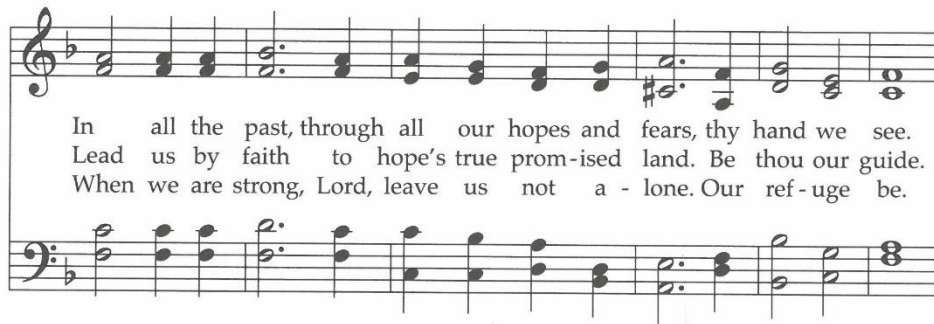
CELEBRATING TIME

## God of Our Life

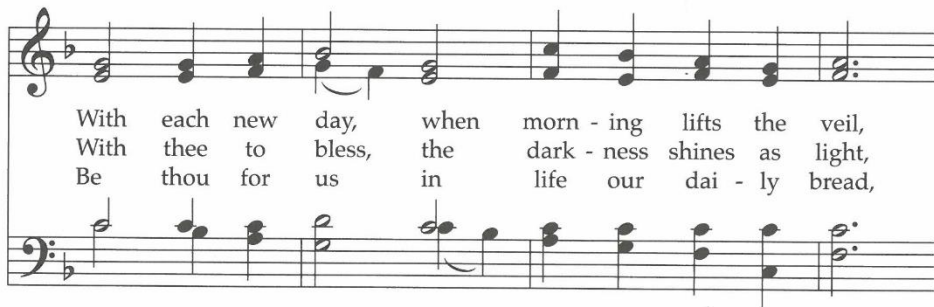
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1 God of our life, through all the cir-cling years, we trust in thee.  
 2 God of the past, our times are in thy hand. With us a - bide.  
 3 God of the com - ing years, through paths un-known we fol-low thee.



In all the past, through all our hopes and fears, thy hand we see.  
 Lead us by faith to hope's true prom-ised land. Be thou our guide.  
 When we are strong, Lord, leave us not a - lone. Our ref-uge be.



With each new day, when morn - ing lifts the veil,  
 With thee to bless, the dark - ness shines as light,  
 Be thou for us in life our dai - ly bread,



we own thy mer - cies, Lord, which nev - er fail.  
 and faith's fair vi - sion chang - es in - to sight.  
 our heart's true home when all our years have sped.

This text was created for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, by its pastor. He wrote these words especially for this tune, originally composed for John Henry Newman's text "Lead, Kindly Light."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“Praeludium in F”  
Linda Dover, organist

by J.S. Bach

GOD’S PEACE TO YOU

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