



GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship September 8, 2024 9:30am
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Gathering

PRELUDE

“Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring”
Linda Dover, organist

arr. Jim Lucas

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

Rev. Karen Wright

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Emily Nelson-Dixon

ONE: We trust in you, O God, for you are faithful.

ALL: Show us your ways and teach us your paths.

ONE: We wait for you.

ALL: Lead us in your paths of truth.

ONE: Do not remember our failures.

ALL: Out of your merciful grace, forgive us.

ONE: You are faithful, O God. Your love is steadfast.

ALL: We lift up our souls to you and praise you always.

*Hymn 315

“In the Midst of New Dimensions”

NEW DIMENSIONS

315 In the Midst of New Dimensions

1 In the midst of new di - men - sions, in the face of
 2 Through the flood of starv - ing peo - ple, war - ring fac - tions,
 3 As we stand, a world di - vid - ed by our own self -
 4 We are man and we are wom - an, all per - sua - sions,
 5 Should the threats of dire pre - dic - tions cause us to with -

chang - ing ways, who will lead the pil - grim peo - ples
 and de - spair, who will lift the ol - ive branch - es?
 seek - ing schemes, grant that we, your glob - al vil - lage,
 old and young, each a gift in your cre - a - tion,
 draw in pain, may your blaz - ing phoe - nix spir - it

Refrain

wan - dering in their sep - arate ways?
 Who will light the flame of care?
 might en - vi - sion wid - er dreams. God of rain - bow, fi - ery pil - lar,
 each a love song to be sung.
 res - ur - rect the church a - gain.

lead - ing where the ea - gles soar, we your peo - ple, ours the jour - ney

now and ev - er, now and ev - er, now and ev - er - more.

In this simultaneously-created text and tune, the author-composer was seeking to incorporate imagery from both Native American and Hebrew spiritual traditions. Also included is the mythological phoenix, which had received a Christian interpretation as early as the first century.

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

(Children ages 4 through 1st grade may go to Awakening to Worship, our child-friendly worship time. Greeters at the back of the Sanctuary will go with children to Room 12 downstairs where parents may pick up their children following worship. 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.)

CALL TO CONFESSION

Rev. Karen Wright

God will not fail us. God remembers us. We are held in God's love. Trusting in God's love, let us confess our sins together.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(Together)*

God of the rainbow, you made a covenant with all creatures, promising life and hope. God of pathways, you show us how we should walk. Yet we forget our connection with one another and think that we are the center of the universe. We wander from your paths of truth into paths of deceit and pride. Forgive us and lead us back into the arms of your love. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God is merciful and full of steadfast love. God will not forget us. God will wash us clean and lead us on paths of steadfast love and faithfulness.

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

ONE: May the peace of Christ be with you.

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

*HYMN 435

"There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"

IN BABILONE

FORGIVENESS

435 There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

1 There's a wide-ness in God's mer-cy, like the wide-ness
2 For the love of God is broad-er than the mea-sures
of the sea. There's a kind-ness in God's jus-tice,
of the mind. And the heart of the E-ter-nal
which is more than lib-er-ty. There is no place where earth's
is most won-der-ful-ly kind. If our love were but more
sor-rows are more felt than up in heaven. There is no place
faith-ful, we would glad-ly trust God's Word, and our lives re-
where earth's fail-ings have such kind-ly judg-ment given.
flect thanks-giv-ing for the good-ness of our Lord.

These stanzas, excerpted from quite a few more, offer a reminder that the model for our dealings with others should be God's generosity rather than limited human tolerance. The text is effectively set to a broad and sturdy Dutch folk melody, probably from the 17th century.

Equipping

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 54:9–14 (NRSVue)

Nelson Townsend

These are like the days of Noah for me,
when I promised that Noah’s waters would never again cover the earth.
Likewise I promise not to rage against you or rebuke you.
The mountains may shift,
and the hills may be shaken,
but my faithful love won’t shift from you,
and my covenant of peace won’t be shaken,
says the Lord, the one who pities you.
Suffering one, storm-tossed, uncomforted,
look, I am setting your gemstones in silvery metal
and your foundations with sapphires.
I will make your towers of rubies,
and your gates of beryl,
and all your walls of precious jewels.
All your children will be disciples of the Lord —
I will make peace abound for your children.
You will be firmly founded in righteousness.
You will stay far from oppression because you won’t fear,
far from terror because it won’t come near you.

ANTHEM

“Know My Heart” Text Adapted from Psalm 139

Chancel & Exaltation! Singers Music by Benjamin Harlan

Lord, you have searched me, you know ev’rything I do.

When I rise, when I lie down, you are with me.

Before I speak you hear me, your presence follows day by day.

O know my heart, O God. (Repeat)

*If I ascend into heaven, you are there on the wings of the morning
or in my deepest despair. God’s hand shall lead me, God’s right hand will guide me,
though darkness should cover me, light shall surround me,
and I will praise the Lord, I will praise the Lord, I will praise God with my whole heart!*

Lord, you have searched me, you know ev’rything I do.

When I rise, when I lie down, you are with me.

Before I speak you hear me, your presence follows day by day.

O know my heart, O God.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Genesis 6–9

Growing in God’s Love: A Story Bible

Edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim

Almost everyone on earth has a story about a time when the world almost ended. Most of these stories are about a huge flood, the hugest flood ever. The people who tell these stories put all their little fears into a story about one great big fear: the end of the world. Here's the Bible story about how the world almost ended and how it began again after a huge and terrible flood.

It rained for days and days. The water rose and rose until it covered everything. Every living thing died – almost. Just one person, Noah, built a boat, a boat so big that there was room for his whole family. Actually, Noah built his boat even bigger than that. He built it so big he could bring a family of every animal along too: dogs and cats, elephants and ants; lions and tigers. Noah even brought spiders and snakes on board. And everyone got along just fine. They were all safe for now.

The big boat floated on the big flood. It seemed like forever for all the families on the boat. Then one day, the sun came out. The clouds disappeared and the rain stopped. Noah's huge boat came to rest on dry land. Noah opened the windows. When he saw that it was safe, he opened the door. Everyone went bounding out into the new world, running and jumping and scampering in all directions. They found new homes and started new families. They made new lives for themselves.

Then God told them all, "Don't be afraid that that world will end. Don't worry that this will ever happen again. I'm going to make a promise to all of you, to the whole world and to everyone who lives in it. I will keep you safe."

When God made this promise, God was talking to the whole world. God was talking to elephants and ants. God was talking to spiders and snakes. God was talking to pet dogs and pet cats and pet hamsters. God was talking to everyone in Noah's whole family. God was talking to your whole family. God was talking to you.

God said, "Just to remind you of my promise to keep you safe, I'll make the rainbow. When it rains, don't be afraid. Just look for the rainbow."

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words
Thanks be to God!

SERMON

"Awakening to Worship: Noah"

Rev. Karen Wright

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

A CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

OFFERING OF GIFTS AND MUSIC

Based on Psalm 23, Isaac Watts, alt.

“My Shepherd Will Supply My Need” arr. Lloyd Larson

Karen Kesler, soprano

My Shepherd will supply my need, the God of love supreme.

In pastures green you let me feed beside the living stream.

*You bring my wand’ring spirit back when I forsake your ways,
and lead me for your mercy’s sake in paths of truth and grace.*

When I walk though the shades of death, your presence is my stay.

One word of your supporting breath drives all my fears away.

Your hand, in sight of all my foes, does still my table spread.

My cup with blessings overflows, your oil anoints my head.

The sure provisions of my God attend me all my days.

O may your house be my abode, and all my work be praise!

There would I find a settled rest, while others go and come.

No more a stranger nor a guest, but like a child at home.

My Shepherd will supply my need, the God of love supreme.

Sending

*HYMN 738

“O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee”

MARYTON

738 O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee

1 O Mas - ter, let me walk with thee
 2 Help me the slow of heart to move
 3 Teach me thy pa - tience, still with thee
 4 In hope that sends a shin - ing ray

in low - ly paths of ser - vice free;
 by some clear, win - ning word of love;
 in clos - er, dear - er com - pa - ny,
 far down the fu - ture's broad - ening way;

tell me thy se - cret; help me bear the
 teach me the way - ward feet to stay, and
 in work that keeps faith sweet and strong, in
 in peace that on - ly thou canst give, with

strain of toil, the fret of care.
 guide them in the home - ward way.
 trust that tri - umphs o - ver wrong.
 thee, O Mas - ter, let me live.

In honestly admitting the limits of human ability, this prayerful hymn does not seek a sense of God's presence for self-comfort but for strength and companionship in pursuing the tasks that God sets before us. The author specifically chose this tune to accompany his words.

Sending

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Rev. Karen Wright

POSTLUDE

“Psalm XIX”
Linda Dover, organist

by Benedetto Marcello

GOD’S PEACE TO YOU

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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

11100 College Boulevard ♦ Overland Park, KS 66210
Phone (913) 345-1256 ♦ www.gcpc.org