



GRACE COVENANT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship September 27, 2026 9:30am
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Gathering

*The prelude, the first act of worship, sets the tone for what is to follow.
So, we invite you as worshipers to gather, to transition from your busy lives
into a sacred place of communion with God and with each other. – Dr. Kimo Smith, adapted*

PRELUDE “Shall We Gather at the River?” arr. Gordon Young
Linda Dover, organist

*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 & ANNOUNCEMENTS

SPECIAL MUSIC “God Cares for Me” Ruth Elaine Schram
Joy Singers
Emily Hussey & Hilary Schmidt, co-directors
Declan Cabe, Drake Cabe, Wyatt Schendel, Abby Schmidt,
Weston Sellers, Zoey Wetzig & Landon Wilson

*CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: We gather as people who thirst — for water, for justice, for hope, for the
assurance that God is with us.

ALL: We come to the God who meets us in the wilderness.

ONE: When the way is uncertain and our trust runs thin, God remains faithful.

ALL: We come to the God whose grace flows from unexpected places.

ONE: Jesus calls us not only to speak words of faith but to live them.

ALL: We come with open hearts, ready to receive God's gifts and respond to God's love. Let us worship the God who gives us life, sustains us in the wilderness, and calls us into faithful action.

*HYMN #39

“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”

FAITHFULNESS

39 Great Is Thy Faithfulness

1 *Great is thy faith - ful - ness, O God my Fa - ther;
 2 Sum - mer and win - ter, and spring - time and har - vest,
 3 Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur - eth,

there is no shad - ow of turn - ing with thee.
 sun, moon, and stars in their cours - es a - bove
 thine own dear pres - ence to cheer and to guide,

Thou chang - est not; thy com - pas - sions they fail not.
 join with all na - ture in man - i - fold wit - ness
 strength for to - day and bright hope for to - mor - row:

As thou hast been thou for - ev - er wilt be.
 to thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy, and love.
 bless - ings all mine, with ten thou - sand be - side!

*Or "Great is thy faithfulness, O God, Creator."

Written as a meditation on Lamentations 3:22-23, this text is one of the few hymns among the 1200 poems by this Methodist writer and pastor that has gained much currency. The tune that appears here was composed especially for these words, and the pairing has proved enduring.

TEXT: Thomas O. Chisholm, 1923

MUSIC: William Marion Runyan, 1923

Text and Music © 1923, ren. 1951 Hope Publishing Company

FAITHFULNESS

11.10.11.10 with refrain

CREATION AND PROVIDENCE

Refrain

Great is thy faith - ful - ness! Great is thy faith - ful - ness!
오 신 실 하 신 주 오 신 실 하 신 주

Morn - ing by morn - ing, new mer - cies I see.
날 마 다 자 비 를 베푸 시 며

All I have need - ed thy hand hath pro - vid - ed.
일 용 할 모 든 것 내 려 주 시 니

Great is thy faith - ful - ness, Lord un - to me!
오 신 실 하 신 주 나 의 구 주

CALL TO CONFESSION

God's provision is abundant, yet fear often convinces us that there will never be enough. We question God's presence, resist God's invitations, and sometimes speak words of faith without allowing them to shape our lives. Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sins together.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(Together)*

Gracious and faithful God, You lead us through wilderness places, yet we confess that we are quick to complain when the path becomes difficult. When we are

afraid, we forget your faithfulness. When resources seem scarce, we cling tightly to what we have rather than trusting your abundance. When you call us to act, we sometimes offer words of agreement without the courage to follow through. Forgive us for our anxious hearts, our resistant spirits, and our failure to recognize your provision. Teach us to trust your presence even when we cannot see the way forward. Open our eyes to the gifts that surround us and open our hearts to share those gifts with others. Make our lives a faithful response to your grace. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Hear the good news: God does not abandon us in the wilderness. From the rock, God brings forth water. Through Christ, God offers us living grace. We are forgiven, renewed, and invited once more into lives of faithful love. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

MUSICAL RESPONSE

“Jesus Loves Me”

arr. Martha Lynn Thompson

Celebration! Chimes

Katie Hearn, Director

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.)

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

ONE: May the peace of Christ be with you.

ALL: And also with you and all others!

***RESPONSE 581**

“Glory Be to The Father”

Equipping

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Matthew 21:23–32

Joy Slayton

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will

say to us, 'Why, then, did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not,' but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.

ANTHEM

"Like a River in My Soul" Chancel Choir

arr. Tim Osiek

*I've got peace like a river,
like a river in my soul.
I've got peace like a river,
soothing river, calmly flow.
When the world closes in,
feel the stillness within.
I've got peace like a river,
like a river in my soul.*

*I've got love like an ocean,
like an ocean in my soul.
I've got love like an ocean,
endless ocean, deep and full.
When you're lost and alone,
let the waves bring you home.
I've got love like an ocean,
like an ocean in my soul.*

*I've got joy like a fountain,
like a fountain in my soul.
I've got joy like a fountain,
like a fountain in my soul.
When your hope nearly dies,
just remember, once again you shall rise!*

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Exodus 17:1–7

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" But the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do for this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words
Thanks be to God!

SERMON

"Silly People, God Is With You "

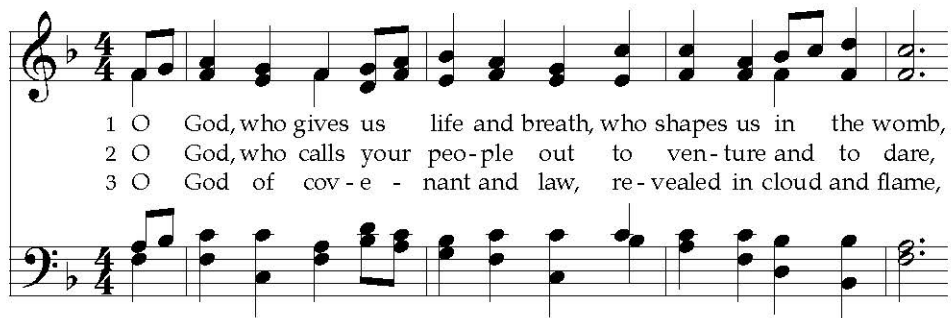
Rev. Karen Wright

HYMN #53

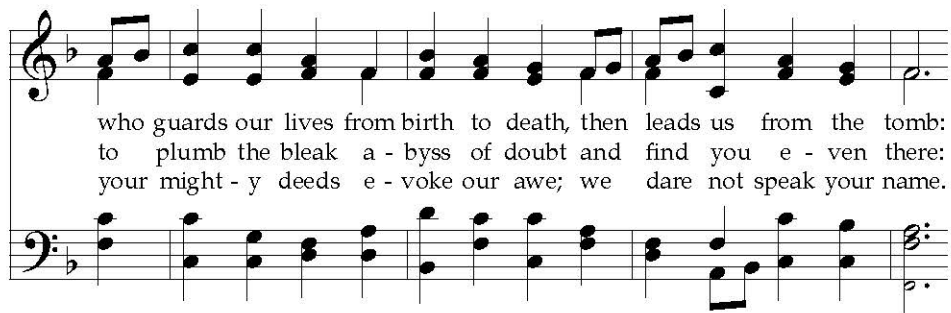
"O God Who Gives Us Life"

NOEL

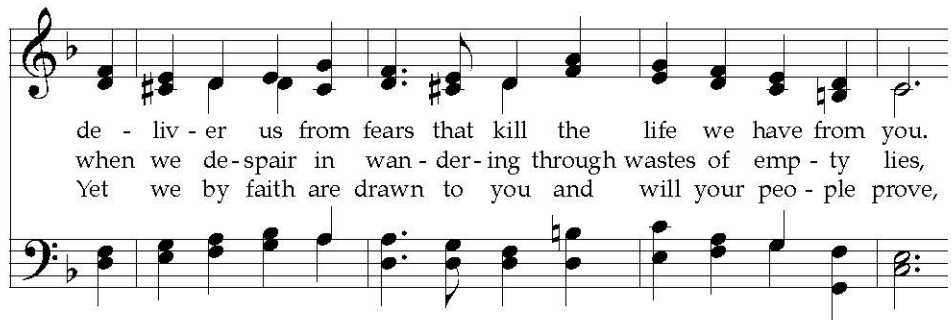
53 O God, Who Gives Us Life



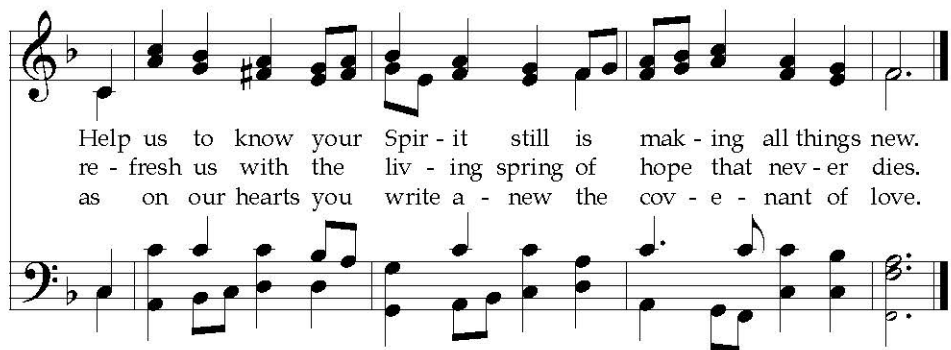
1 O God, who gives us life and breath, who shapes us in the womb,
 2 O God, who calls your peo-ple out to ven-ture and to dare,
 3 O God of cov-e - nant and law, re-vealed in cloud and flame,



who guards our lives from birth to death, then leads us from the tomb:
 to plumb the bleak a - byss of doubt and find you e - ven there:
 your might - y deeds e - voke our awe; we dare not speak your name.



de - liv - er us from fears that kill the life we have from you.
 when we de-spair in wan - der-ing through wastes of emp - ty lies,
 Yet we by faith are drawn to you and will your peo - ple prove,



Help us to know your Spir - it still is mak - ing all things new.
 re - fresh us with the liv - ing spring of hope that nev - er dies.
 as on our hearts you write a - new the cov - e - nant of love.

Christians often fail to appreciate how much we can learn about God from the Hebrew Scriptures. This text draws on a variety of passages that call attention to God's faithfulness toward the Chosen People and the promise of a new covenant written on the heart (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

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

"Prelude in C"
Linda Dover, organist

J.S. Bach

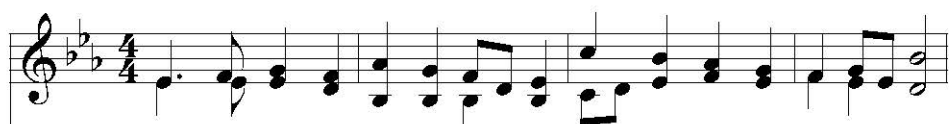
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*HYMN #81

"Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken"

AUSTRIAN HYMN

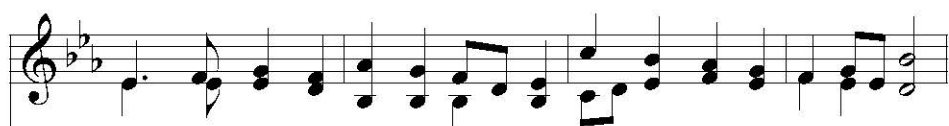
81 Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken



1 Glo - rious things of thee are spo - ken, Zi - on, cit - y of our God.
 2 Round each hab - i - ta - tion hov - ering, see the cloud and fire ap - pear
 3 See, the streams of liv - ing wa - ters, spring - ing from e - ter - nal love,



God, whose word can - not be bro - ken, formed thee for a blest a - bode.
 for a glo - ry and a cov - ering, show - ing that the Lord is near.
 well sup - ply thy sons and daugh - ters and all fear of want re - move.



On the rock of a - ges found - ed, what can shake thy sure re - pose?
 Thus de - riv - ing from their ban - ner light by night and shade by day,
 Who can faint while such a riv - er ev - er flows, their thirst to as - suage?



With sal - va - tion's walls sur - round - ed, thou may'st smile at all thy foes.
 safe they feed up - on the man - na which God gives them when they pray.
 Grace, so like the Lord the giv - er, nev - er fails from age to age.



The Nazi appropriation of this tune for propaganda purposes has clouded a noble piece of music first associated with this text in 1889. In a 1779 collection, the author indicated that this hymn is primarily based on Isaiah 33:20-21 with allusions to several other passages.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“Toccata on ‘How Firm a Foundation’”
Linda Dover, organist

arr. Gordon Young

**Stand in body or spirit*

GOD’S PEACE TO YOU

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