



GRACE COVENANT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship September 24, 2023 9:30am
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Gathering

PRELUDE "Crown Him with Many Crowns" arr. Robert Knox

Chancel Brass

Darryl Prater & Jim Kelly, directors

*"Awake my soul, and sing of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless King through all eternity." – Matthew Bridges*

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 Kevin Johnson

*CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: Children of God, open your hearts to the Lord.

**ALL: We open our hearts anticipating the Holy Spirit's
peace filled breath to flow through us.**

ONE: Give thanks to God for the joy we can find in her presence.

ALL: We thank you oh Lord for your constant love, mercy, and grace.

ONE: Be with us Lord.

ALL: We pray always for your guiding Spirit to be with us and bless us.

*HYMN 305 "Come Sing, O Church in Joy!" DARWALL'S 148TH

305 Come Sing, O Church, in Joy!

1 Come sing, O church, in joy! Come join, O church, in song!
 2 Long years have come and gone, and still God reigns su - preme,
 3 Let cour - age be our friend; let wis - dom be our guide,
 4 Come sing, O church, in joy! Come join, O church, in song!

For Christ the Lord has led us through the a - ges long!
 em - power - ing us to catch the vi - sion, dream the dream!
 as we in mis - sion mag - ni - fy the Cru - ci - fied!
 For Christ the Lord has tri - umphed o'er the a - ges long!

In bold ac - cord, come cel - e - brate the jour - ney now and praise the Lord!

This text was the winner in a hymn competition sponsored by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Bicentennial Committee for the 1988–1989 observance, which had the theme “Celebrate the Journey.” The late 18th-century tune (first used with Psalm 148) is appropriately celebratory.

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

Kevin Johnson

(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.)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(Together)*

Creator God, we come before you today asking for your continued grace, mercy, and peace. We know that we are at times not as open to your presence and the joy that being with you can bring into our lives. We murmur in our hearts against that which we perceive as other's shortcomings. Help us become more aware of your yearning voice as we live and deal with others. Guide us with the presence of your loving Holy Spirit to long for you, seek you, and find you. Forgiveness is yours to give. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

ONE: May the peace of Christ be with you.

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

*HYMN 727

“Will You Let Me Be Your Servant”

THE SERVANT SONG

Stanzas 1 - 4

Will You Let Me Be Your Servant 727

The Servant Song

1, 6 Will you let me be your ser - vant, let me
 2 We are pil - grims on a jour - ney; we're to -
 3 I will hold the Christ - light for you in the
 4 I will weep when you are weep - ing; when you
 5 When we sing to God in heav - en, we shall

be as Christ to you? Pray that I may have the
 geth - er on the road. We are here to help each
 night - time of your fear. I will hold my hand out
 laugh I'll laugh with you. I will share your joy and
 find such har - mo - ny, born of all we've known to -

grace to let you be my ser - vant too.
 oth - er walk the mile and bear the load.
 to you, speak the peace you long to hear.
 sor - row till we've seen this jour - ney through.
 geth - er of Christ's love and ag - o - ny.
 (repeat stanza 1)

The opening and closing stanza expresses the essence of this folk-style song about the mutuality of servant ministry: those who serve must also be willing to be served. This is what Christ intended when he commanded the disciples to "wash one another's feet" (John 13:14).

Equipping

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Exodus 16:2–15 (NRSV)

Nelson Townsend

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.” Then the Lord said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.” So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your complaining against the Lord. For what are we, that you complain against us?” And Moses said, “When the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the Lord has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the Lord.” Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, ‘Draw near to the Lord, for he has heard your complaining.’” And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. The Lord spoke to Moses and said, “I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.’”

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.

ANTHEM

“Sing Community, Sing Peace”

by Mark Hayes

Chancel & Exaltation! Singers

Sister, brother, live in harmony. Same and other, live in harmony.

Human fam’ly, in choirs for all to hear and see, sing community, sing peace.

(Refrain) *Simple song, sacred call; dare to sing and live in peace, and love for all.*

Against the silence, against the shouting, dare to sing and live in peace and love for all.

With your neighbor, live in harmony. With the stranger, live in harmony.

With the refugee, in choirs for all to hear and see, sing community, sing peace. (Refrain)

For the children, live in harmony. With the frightened, live in harmony.

With the enemy, in choirs for all to hear and see, sing community, sing peace, sing peace.

(Refrain) *Simple song, sacred call; dare to sing and live in peace, and love for all.*

Against the silence, against the shouting, dare to sing and live in peace and love for all.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Matthew 20:1–16 (NRSV)

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words

Thanks be to God!

SERMON

“The Seeds of Love”

Kevin Johnson

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

A CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

OFFERING OF GIFTS AND MUSIC “Thou I May Speak”

English Folk Melody

Linda Dover, organist

O WALY WALY

by Emma Lou Diemer

Sending

*HYMN 761

“Called as Partners in Christ’s Service”

BEECHER

Called as Partners in Christ's Service 761



1 Called as part-ners in Christ's ser-vice, called to min-is-tries of grace,
 2 Christ's ex-am-ple, Christ's in-spir-ing, Christ's clear call to work and worth,
 3 Thus new pat-terns for Christ's mis-sion, in a small or glob-al sense,
 4 So God grant us for to - mor-row ways to or - der hu - man life



we re-pond with deep com-mit-ment fresh new lines of faith to trace.
 let us fol-low, nev-er fal-tering, rec-on-cil-ing folk on earth.
 help us bear each oth-er's bur-dens, break-ing down each wall or fence.
 that sur-round each per-son's sor-row with a calm that con-quests strife.



May we learn the art of shar-ing, side by side and friend with friend,
 Men and wom-en, rich-er, poor-er, all God's peo-ple, young and old,
 Words of com-fort, words of vi-sion, words of chal-lenge, said with care,
 Make us part-ners in our liv-ing, our com-pas-sion to in-crease,



e - qual part-ners in our car-ing to ful-fill God's cho-sen end.
 blend-ing hu-man skills to-gether gra-cious gifts from God un-fold.
 bring new power and strength for ac-tion, make us col-leagues, free and fair.
 mes-sen-gers of faith, thus giv-ing hope and con-fi-dence and peace.



This hymn is a celebration of mutuality and diversity as well as a challenge to the Christian community to live out a ministry of reconciliation and inclusion. This 20th-century text is set to a 19th-century tune named for the noted pastor and preacher Henry Ward Beecher.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kevin Johnson

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“All You Works of God, Bless the Lord!”
(“Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ”)
Jamaican Folk Tune
Linda Dover, organist

LINSTEAD
arr. Doreen Potter
and John A. Behnke

GOD’S PEACE TO YOU

Some music is reprinted by permission of CCLI 1154643 and OneLicense A-705105.
Our Church Streaming & Podcast Licenses are CSPL 048834 through CCLI & included in OneLicense A-705105.
Any videos are shown by permission of CVLI #504397326.

RECORD YOUR ATTENDANCE AT TODAY’S WORSHIP SERVICE WITH OUR VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE PAD:

Click this link: <https://bit.ly/GCPCattendance>, or scan the QR Code below, and it will take you to the link.

