



GRACE COVENANT
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship August 25, 2024 9:30am
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Gathering

SONG TO GATHER

“This Is the Day” by Phil Wickham & Evan Wickham
Praise Team

*Can you hear it, the gentle voice of the spirit?
There's no reason to fear it, he's calling you to life.
Just surrender, run into the arms of the father.
The night is finally over, take a step into the light.
This is the day when the lost are found.
This is the day for a new beginning.
Amazing grace how sweet the sound.
Oh can you hear all the angels are singing:
This is the day, the day when life begins.*

WELCOME

Rev. Karen Wright

*CALL TO WORSHIP

written by Thom Shuman

ONE: We come, for God gathers us here, with that community called faith:

ALL: where the hungry are served first, where the thirsty drink life's water.

ONE: We come, for God welcomes us here into that home called grace:

**ALL: where the naked are clothed in robes of hope;
where the stranger is embraced as the long-lost prodigal.**

ONE: We come, for God reunites us here, sisters and brothers in that family called love:

**ALL: where the imprisoned model justice, where the sick are cradled in
God's peace.**

All

**Oh, I have days I lose the fight, try my best but just don't get it right,
Where I talk a talk that I don't walk and miss the moments right before my eyes.**

**Somebody with a hurt that I could have helped,
somebody with a hand that I could have held,
When I just can't see past myself, Lord, help me be.**

**A little more like mercy, a little more like grace,
a little more like kindness, goodness, love and faith,
A little more like patience, a little more like peace,
a little more like Jesus, a little less like me.**

**Yeah, there's no denying I have changed. I've been saved from who I used to be.
But even at my best, I must confess, I still need help to see the way you see.**

**Somebody with a hurt that I could have helped,
somebody with a hand that I could have held,
When I just can't see past myself, Lord, help me be.**

**A little more like mercy, a little more like grace,
a little more like kindness, goodness, love and faith,
A little more like patience, a little more like peace,
a little more like Jesus, a little less like me.**

**Oh, to feed the beggar on the street, love to be your hands and feet,
Freely give what I receive, Lord, help me be.**

**I want to put you first above all else, love my neighbor as myself.
In the moments no one sees, Lord, help me be.**

**A little more like mercy, a little more like grace,
a little more like kindness, goodness, love and faith,
A little more like patience, a little more like peace,
a little more like Jesus, a little less like me.**

**A little more I'm living ev'rything I preach.
A little more like Jesus, a little less like me.**

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

They are the promises stretching back into the dim recesses of time, yet as new as this very moment. When we lose our way, God searches for us until we are found. When we hurt others, God brings healing to all. When we sin, God forgives us. Let us hold these promises close to our hearts, as we confess those things we try to hide.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(Together)*

We stock the food pantries but brush aside those who hunger for friendship. We give our hand-me-downs away but overlook those whose hopes have been stripped away. We glad-hand those just like us but turn a deaf ear to our neighbors who “talk funny.”

Forgive us, Hope of the ages. You persistently search for us in the side streets of the world, gathering us up and bringing us home, so we may be drenched in the waters of your bottomless pool of forgiveness, watched over by your Child, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God searches for the lost, and finds us;
God invites the hungry to the table, and feeds us;
God sends Jesus, and frees us from death's prison;
God forgives all who sin, and heals us with mercy and grace.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

ONE: May the peace of Christ be with you.

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

SONG OF PEACE

“This Is the Day” by Phil Wickham & Evan Wickham

All

**Can you see it? A light shines into the darkness.
Bringing hope to the hopeless, it's leading you to life.**

**This is the day, when all your sins are washed away.
In the waves of his unending grace, forever you're alive.**

**This is the day when the lost are found.
This is the day for a new beginning.
Amazing grace how sweet the sound.
Oh can you hear all the angels are singing:
This is the day, the day when life begins.**

**Have no fear, salvation has come and he is here.
Have no fear, salvation has come and he is here.
Have no fear ~ Have no fear!**

**This is the day when the lost are found.
This is your beginning.
Amazing grace how sweet the sound.
Oh I can hear the angels sing:**

**This is the day when the lost are found.
This is the day for a new beginning.
Amazing grace how sweet the sound.
Oh can you hear all the angels are singing:
This is the day, the day when life begins.**

Equipping

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Nehemiah 8:5–12 (NRSVue)

Joy Slayton

And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people, and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. Also the Levites Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah helped the people to understand the law, while the people remained in their places. So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then

he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord, and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, "Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved." And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.

SONG TO REFLECT

"Perfect Peace"

by Laura Story

Praise Team

*Stay close by my side. Keep your eyes on me. Though this life is hard,
I will give you perfect peace.
In this time of trial, pain that no one sees, trust me when I say that
I will give you perfect peace.*

*And you'll never walk alone, and you'll never be in need.
Though I may not calm the storms around you, you can hide in me.
Burdens that you bear offer no relief. Let me bear your load, 'cause
I will give you perfect peace.*

*Stay close by my side, and you'll never walk alone.
Keep your eyes on me, and you'll never be in need.
Though this life is hard, know that
I will always give you perfect peace.
I will give you perfect peace.*

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Matthew 25:31–46 (NRSVue)

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You who are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and

you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life.”

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words
Thanks be to God!

SERMON

“Telling Our Story: Send”

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

SONG FOR GIVING

“I Love Your Word”

Psalm 119

Praise Team

by Anne-Claire Cummings
& Caroline Cobb Smith

*I love your word because it speaks of you.
Teach me, O Lord, and guide me in your truth.
Better than gold, sweeter than honey to the taste.
It brings me life, it’s my delight to seek your face.
I love your word, because I love you, Lord.*

*I love your word because I long for you.
Come lift my gaze, incline my heart to you.
Better than gold, sweeter than honey to the taste.
It brings me life, it’s my delight to seek your face.
I love your word, because I love you, Lord.*

*Your law is my freedom, my light when I’ve lost my way.
Like a treasure, I will see your wisdom
and my lips will pour out your praise.*

*I love your word because I trust in you.
With my whole heart, I want to follow you.
Better than gold, sweeter than honey to the taste.*

*It brings me life, it's my delight to seek your face.
I love your word, because I love you, Lord.
I love your word, because I love you, Lord.*

Sending

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Rev. Karen Wright

SONG TO SEND

“Glory, Glory (God is Able)” as recorded by David Crowder

All

**Glory, glory, I've been singing since I laid my burden down.
Glory, glory, I've been singing since I laid my burden down.**

**I'm singing hallelujah! God is able!
Hallelujah! God is faithful.
Hallelujah, Lord, I'm gonna sing!**

**I feel better, so much better since I laid my burden down.
I feel better, so much better since I laid, oh Lord, I laid my burden down.**

**I'm singing hallelujah! God is able!
Hallelujah! God is faithful.
Hallelujah, Lord, I'm gonna sing! (2x)**

**As long as I'm alive, there's gonna be praising.
As long as I'm alive, there's gonna be shouting!
One thing that I know deep down in my soul,
As long as I'm alive, I'm gonna sing!**

**I'm singing hallelujah! God is able!
Hallelujah! God is faithful.
Hallelujah, Lord, I'm gonna sing! (2x)**

I'm gonna sing!

GOD'S PEACE TO YOU

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