



GRACE COVENANT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship September 3, 2023 9:30am
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Gathering

PRELUDE

“Though I May Speak”
English Folk Melody
Linda Dover, organist

O WALY WALY
arr. Emma Lou Diemer

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: God’s creation delights and astonishes.

ALL: Let the people pause and wonder!

ONE: God, the Creator, has made it all.

ALL: Let all creation shout and sing! Alleluia!

*OPENING PRAYER

You opened your mouth and uttered a word and creation sprang forth in abundance. Let us open our mouths in praise, that we may bear fruit in every season and be satisfied by your goodness, for you, O God, are the source of all growth; your grace abounds forever. Amen.

*HYMN 20

“All Things Bright and Beautiful”

ROYAL OAK

20 All Things Bright and Beautiful

Refrain

All things bright and beau-ti - ful, all crea-tures great and small,

all things wise and won-der - ful, the Lord God made them all. *Fine*

1 Each lit - tle flower that o - pens, each lit - tle bird that sings,
 2 The pur - ple-head-ed moun-tain, the riv - er run-ning by,
 3 The cold wind in the win-ter, the pleas-ant sum-mer sun,
 4 God gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell

God made their glow-ing col - ors; God made their ti - ny wings.
 the sun - set, and the morn - ing that bright-ens up the sky:
 the ripe fruits in the gar - den, God made them ev - ery one.
 how great is God Al - might - y, who has made all things well. *to Refrain*

One of a series of hymns the author wrote for children on the Apostles' Creed, this text (originally in seven stanzas) expands "Maker of heaven and earth." The first stanza became the refrain when the text was later set to a popular tune from the age of King Charles II.

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN *(video)*

Angela Krug

“When God Made the World”

by Mathew Paul Turner

(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 *(One)*

Trusting in God's mercy, let us acknowledge to ourselves and each other the ways we fall short from what God intends for us, all of which God already knows.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(Together)*

Merciful God, your creatures cry — creation groans — but we turn away; we surround ourselves with noise. We are quick to excuse ourselves from responsibility: we are young; we are old; we are tired; we are busy. It is hard to imagine that we might make a difference. Life-giving God, wash us clean. Restore our imaginations and our hearts. Let our courage and compassion flow through our veins until we love with abandon and our hands reach out in blessing, for the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God. 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!

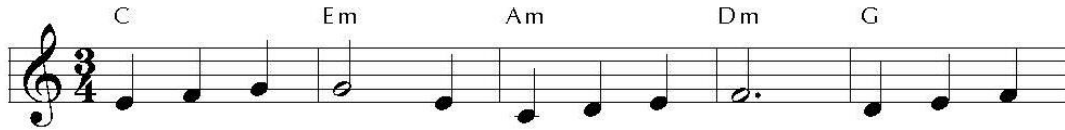
*HYMN 22

“God of the Sparrow”

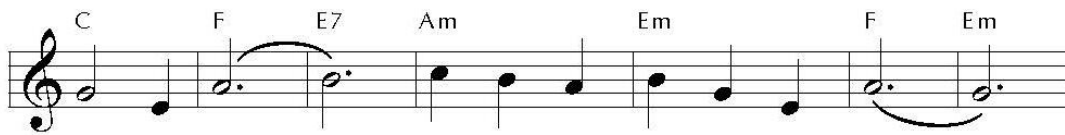
ROEDER

22

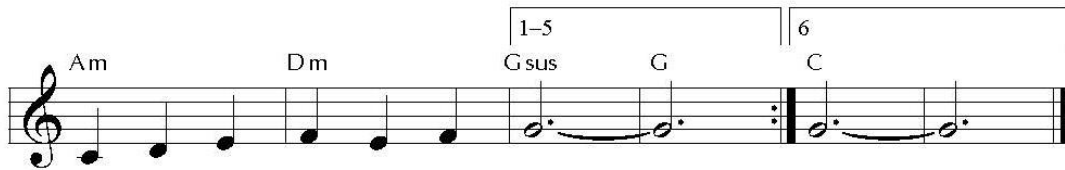
God of the Sparrow



1 God of the spar - row God of the whale God of the
 2 God of the earth - quake God of the storm God of the
 3 God of the rain - bow God of the cross God of the
 4 God of the hun - gry God of the sick God of the
 5 God of the neigh - bor God of the foe God of the
 6 God of the a - ges God near at hand God of the



swirl - ing stars How does the crea - ture say Awe
 trum - pet blast How does the crea - ture cry Woe
 emp - ty grave How does the crea - ture say Grace
 prod - i - gal How does the crea - ture say Care
 prun - ing hook How does the crea - ture say Love
 lov - ing heart How do your chil - dren say Joy



How does the crea - ture say Praise
 How does the crea - ture cry Save
 How does the crea - ture say Thanks
 How does the crea - ture say Life
 How does the crea - ture say Peace
 How do your chil - dren say Home

Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.

Though a lack of punctuation makes this text appear freeform and the flowing tune enhances a sense of movement, each stanza here is firmly anchored by a final weighty word (praise, save, thanks, life, peace, home), a sign of God's eternal presence in an ever-changing world.

Equipping

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Psalm 24 (NRSV)

Cheryl Johnson

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?

Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully.

They will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the God of their salvation.

Such is the company of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah

Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in.

Who is the King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

ANTHEM

“Creation Will Be at Peace”

Music by Anna Laura Page

Chancel Choir

Words by J. Paul Williams

*In the holy mountain of the Lord all war and strife will cease;
in the holy mountain of the Lord creation will be at peace.
The wolf will lie down with the lamb, the cow and bear will feed,
their young will play together; a little child will lead.
The leopard and goat will graze, the lion will feed on straw.
They will war no more; a child will lead them all.
In the holy mountain of the Lord all war and strife will cease;
in the holy mountain of the Lord creation will be at peace.
(Based on Isaiah 11:6-9)*

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Romans 8:12–25 (NRSV)

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was

subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words
Thanks be to God!

SERMON

“Creation Groans”

Rev. Carla Gentry

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

A CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

OFFERING OF GIFTS AND MUSIC “The Lone, Wild Bird”

Southern Folk Tune
Linda Dover, organist

PROSPECT
arr. Emma Lou Diemer

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

The Invitation to the Table

The Great Thanksgiving, 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

The Words of Institution

The Sharing of the Bread and Cup – *partake of the bread first and then drink as instructed.*

Music During Communion

“Flute Clocks”

by Franz Josef Haydn

Prayer After Communion

Sending

*HYMN 14

“For the Beauty of the Earth”

DIX

For the Beauty of the Earth 14

1 For the beau - ty of the earth, for the glo - ry of the skies,
 2 For the won - der of each hour of the day and of the night,
 3 For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's de - light,
 4 For the joy of hu - man love, broth - er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,
 5 For thy - self, best gift di - vine to the world so free - ly given;

for the love which from our birth o - ver and a - round us lies:
 hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light:
 for the mys - tic har - mo - ny link - ing sense to sound and sight:
 friends on earth, and friends a - bove, for all gen - tle thoughts and mild:
 for that great, great love of thine, peace on earth and joy in heaven:

Refrain

Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grate - ful praise.

In the course of many revisions, the original eucharistic emphasis of this text has shifted to a hymn of thanksgiving for a wide range of human experience, with a Christological summation. It is set here to the tune that is customary in North America, though not elsewhere.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kathy Bures

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Rev. Carla Gentry

POSTLUDE

“All Things Bright and Beautiful”
Linda Dover, organist

arr. Phillip Lane

GOD’S PEACE TO YOU

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