



## GRACE COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship August 24, 2025 9:30am  
Eleventh 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

“Prelude”  
(No. 1, from Well-Tempered Clavichord)  
“Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring”  
Linda Dover, organist

J.S. Bach

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 & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Karen Wright

#### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.

**ALL: If one falls, the other lifts up a companion.**

ONE: We are the body of Christ, many members yet one community.

**ALL: When one suffers, all suffer together; when one rejoices, all rejoice together.**

ONE: Come, beloved of God—bring your gifts, your stories, your lives.

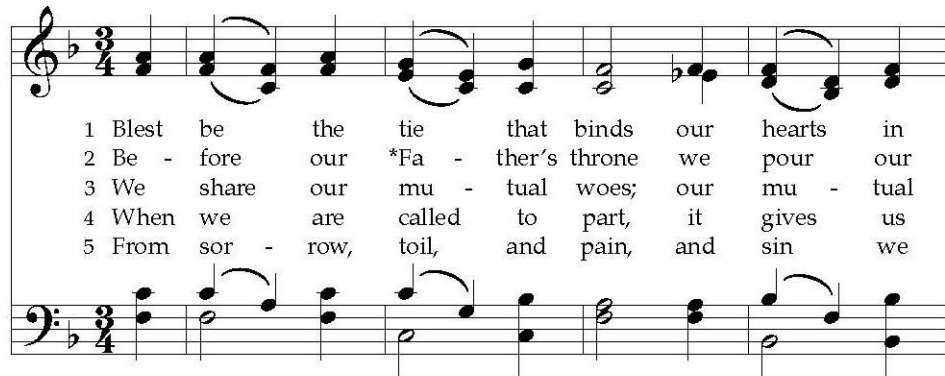
**ALL: We come to worship the One who binds us together in love.**

#### \*HYMN 306

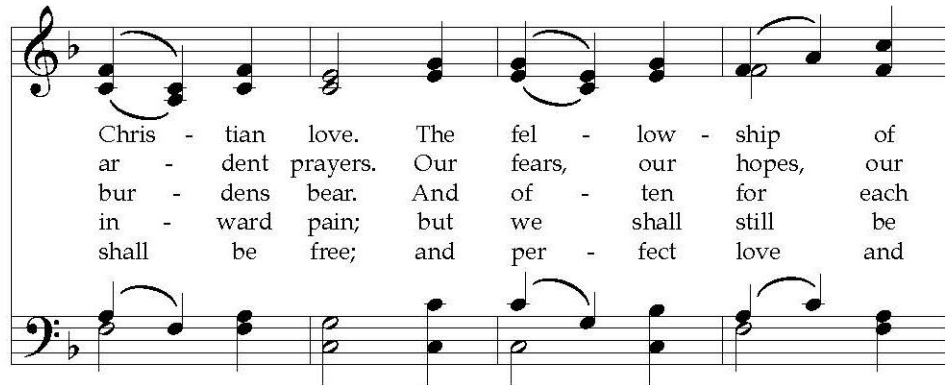
“Blest Be the Tie That Binds”

DENNIS

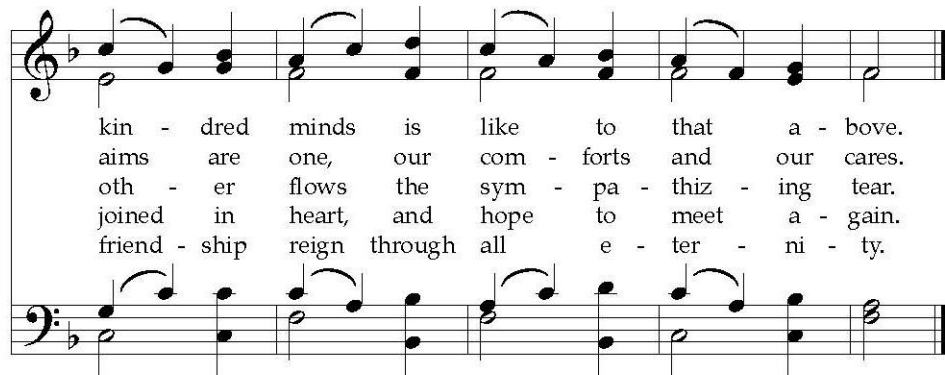
## Blest Be the Tie That Binds 306



1 Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in  
 2 Be - fore our \*Fa - ther's throne we pour our  
 3 We share our mu - tual woes; our mu - tual  
 4 When we are called to part, it gives us  
 5 From sor - row, toil, and pain, and sin we



Chris - tian love. The fel - low - ship of  
 ar - dent prayers. Our fears, our hopes, our  
 bur - dens bear. And of - ten for each  
 in - ward pain; but we shall still be  
 shall be free; and per - fect love and



kin - dred minds is like to that a - bove.  
 aims are one, our com - forts and our cares.  
 oth - er flows the sym - pa - thiz - ing tear.  
 joined in heart, and hope to meet a - gain.  
 friend - ship reign through all e - ter - ni - ty.

\*Or "Maker's"

Written to express a pastor's unwillingness to leave a beloved congregation, this hymn is frequently used as an expression of Christian fellowship, especially at the conclusion of the Lord's Supper. The tune is attributed to an influential Swiss musician and publisher.

## A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

## NOISY OFFERING

*(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

Emily Nelson Dixon

God calls us to live as one body, joined in love and service. Yet too often we go our own way, neglecting our neighbors and undervaluing the gifts God has placed among us. Trusting in God's mercy, let us confess our sins together.

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(Together)*

**Merciful God, You have called us into the body of Christ, yet we confess that we do not always honor the gifts of others. We are quick to compare, slow to celebrate, and hesitant to rely on one another. We cling to independence, forgetting that You created us for community. Forgive us, Lord. Bind up our divisions, stitch us together in Your love, and teach us again to be one body, serving and rejoicing together in Christ. Amen.**

## ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Hear the good news: If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. In Christ, we are bound together by grace and raised to new life. People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and made whole.

**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!**

\*HYMN 399

"God Welcomes All"

THEMBA AMEN

# God Welcomes All

399

God wel - comes all, strang - ers and friends;

God's love is strong and it nev - er ends.

This "short song," as the Iona Community calls it, can be especially effective as a means of setting a welcoming tone for a service (especially an ecumenical one). Like most such songs, it needs to be sung several times, adding and improvising harmony with each repetition.

TEXT: John L. Bell, 2008

MUSIC: South African song; transcr. John L. Bell, 2008

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THEMBA AMEN

4.4.9

## Equipping

### SCRIPTURE LESSON

Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 (NRSVue)

Susan Fitzgerald

Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other, but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.

### ANTHEM

"Take My Hand, Precious Lord"

arr. Ed Lojeski

Summer Choir

*Precious Lord, take my hand,  
Lead me on, let me stand,  
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;  
Through the storm, through the night,  
Lead me on to the light:  
Take my hand, pre-cious Lord,  
Lead me home.*

*When my way grows drear,  
Precious Lord, lin-ger near,  
When my life is al-most gone,  
Hear my cry, hear my call,  
Hold my hand lest I fall:*

*When the dark-ness ap-pears  
And the night draws near,  
And the day is past and gone,  
At the riv-er I stand,  
Guide my feet, hold my hand:*

SCRIPTURE LESSON                      2 Corinthians 12:12–27(NRSVue)

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect, whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words  
**Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

“Engaged — Stitching Us Together”

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

**"Gift of Love"**  
Linda Dover, organist

arr. Alec Wyton

[Sending](#)

\*HYMN 318

**"In Christ There Is No East or West"**

ST. PETER

## In Christ There Is No East or West 318

1 In Christ there is no east or west, in  
 2 In Christ shall true hearts ev - ery - where their  
 3 Join hands, dis - ci - ples of the faith, what -  
 4 In Christ now meet both east and west; in

him no south or north, but one great fel - low -  
 high com - mu - nion find; his ser - vice is the  
 e'er your race may be. All chil - dren of the  
 him meet south and north. All Christ - ly souls are

ship of love through - out the whole wide earth.  
 gold - en cord close - bind - ing hu - man - kind.  
 liv - ing God are sure - ly kin to me.  
 one in him through - out the whole wide earth.

This text formed a very small part of an elaborate Christian missionary pageant in the early 20th century, yet it has endured while the grander aspects of that production have faded away. It is set to a simple 19th-century tune that does not get in the way of its message.

TEXT: John Oxenham, 1908, alt.  
 MUSIC: Alexander Robert Reinagle, 1836

ST. PETER  
 CM  
 (alternate tune: MC KEE, 317)

## CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

## CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Rev. Karen Wright

## POSTLUDE

“Postlude in G Major”

Linda Dover, organist

G.F. Handel

arr. Walter E. Buszin

*\*Stand in body or spirit*

## GOD’S PEACE TO YOU

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**GRACE COVENANT**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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