



GRACE COVENANT

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Service of Worship November 12, 2023 9:30am
Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Gathering

PRELUDE "Voluntary on Morning Song" arr. Anna Laura Page
"Awake, Awake to Love and Work"
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 Rev. Karen Wright

INTROIT "Zion" arr. Stan Pethel
Chancel Brass
Jim Kelly & Darryl Prater, directors
*Come, we that love the Lord, and let our joys be known.
Join in a song of sweet accord and thus surround the throne.*

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We are pulled in many directions.

All: Many duties and tasks seek to lay claim on our lives.

One: This day, in this place, let service to God be your choice.


All: This day, in this place, we open our hearts and spirits to God.

One: Blessed be the God of creation who has called us here.

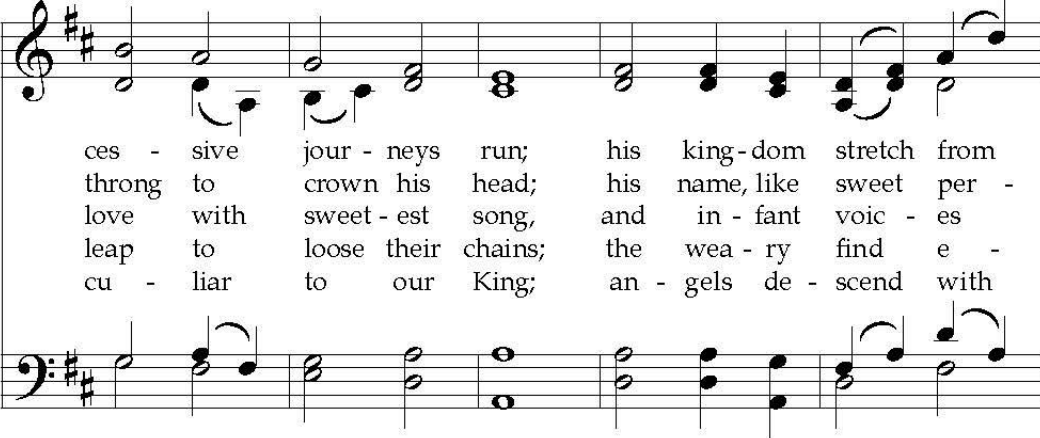
All: Praise be to God who sustains and nurtures our lives. Amen.

*HYMN 265 "Jesus Shall Reign Where E'er the Sun" DUKE STREET

265 Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun



1 Je - sus shall reign wher - e'er the sun does its suc -
2 To him shall end - less prayer be made, and prais - es
3 Peo - ple and realms of ev - every tongue dwell on his
4 Bless - ings a - bound wher - e'er he reigns: the pris - oners
5 Let ev - every crea - ture rise and bring hon - ors pe -



ces - sive jour - neys run; his king - dom stretch from
thron - to crown his head; his name, like sweet per -
love with sweet - est song, and in - fant voic - es
leap to loose their chains; the wea - ry find e -
cu - liar to our King; an - gels de - scend with



shore to shore, till moons shall wax and wane no more.
fume, shall rise with ev - every morn - ing sac - ri - fice.
shall pro - claim their ear - ly bless - ings on his name.
ter - nal rest, and all who suf - fer want are blest.
songs a - gain, and earth re - peat the loud A - men!

This hymn is a classic example of how Isaac Watts Christianized the Psalms, in this case Psalm 72:5-19, by turning their messianic language to New Testament equivalents. The tune was at first nameless and anonymous, but is now called by the address of the supposed composer.

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

Rev. Karen Wright

(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

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(Together)*

God of grace, we confess that we have elevated the things of this world above you. We have made idols of possessions and people and used your name for causes that are not consistent with you and your purposes. We have permitted our schedules to come first and have not taken the time to worship you. We have not always honored those who guided us in life. We have participated in systems that take life instead of give it. We have been unfaithful in our covenant relationships. We have yearned for, and sometimes taken, that which is not ours, and we have misrepresented others' intentions. Forgive us, O God, for the many ways we fall short of your glory. Help us to learn to live together according to your ways through Jesus Christ, our Lord. 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 331

"God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand"

NATIONAL HYMN

331 God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand

(optional)

1 God of the a - ges, whose al-might - y
 2 Thy love di - vine hath led us in the
 3 From war's a - larms, from dead - ly pes - ti -
 4 Re - fresh thy peo - ple on their toil-some

hand leads forth in beau - ty all the star-ry band
 past. In this free land by thee our lot is cast.
 lence, be thy strong arm our ev - er sure de-fense.
 way. Lead us from night to nev - er-end-ing day.

of shin - ing worlds in splen - dor through the skies,
 Be thou our rul - er, guard - ian, guide, and stay:
 Thy true re - li - gion in our hearts in - crease.
 Fill all our lives with love and grace di - vine,

our grate - ful songs be - fore thy throne a - rise.
 thy word our law, thy paths our cho - sen way.
 Thy boun - teous good - ness nour - ish us in peace.
 and glo - ry, laud, and praise be ev - er thine.

This hymn was generated by 19th-century centennial celebrations: the words by the Declaration of Independence and the music by the adoption of the United States Constitution. Despite these origins, no specific nation is mentioned in this hymn of praise and prayer for peace.

Equipping

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Matthew 25:1–13 (NRSVue)

Chris Krug

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten young women took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those young women got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet, and the door was shut. Later the other young women came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’ Keep awake, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

ANTHEM

“Come, Thou Fount”

arr. Eric Nelson

Chancel & Exaltation! Singers

Text by Robert Robinson

*Come, thou Fount of ev’ry blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount, I’m fixed upon it mount of thy redeeming love.*

*Here I raise my Ebenezer; hither by thy help I’m come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger wand’ring from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger, interposed his precious blood.*

*O to grace how great a debtor daily I’m constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter, bind my wand’ring heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;
here’s my heart, O take and seal it, seal it for thy courts above.*

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Joshua 24:1–3a; 14–25 (NRSVue)

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel, and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac, “Now, therefore, revere the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt and serve the Lord. Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living, but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” Then the people answered, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods, for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of

Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went and among all the peoples through whom we passed, and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God.” But Joshua said to the people, “You cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm and consume you, after having done you good.” And the people said to Joshua, “No, we will serve the Lord!” Then Joshua said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him.” And they said, “We are witnesses.” He said, “Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel.” The people said to Joshua, “The Lord our God we will serve, and him we will obey.” So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words
Thanks be to God!

SERMON	“Making the Choice Again and Again”	Rev. Karen Wright
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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

A CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

OFFERING OF GIFTS & MUSIC	+“Very Soon I’ll Fly Away” Charter Ringers Celia Nicholas & Chris Krug, co-directors	arr. Benjamin Tucker
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Sending

*HYMN 697	“Take My Life and Let It Be Consecrated” <i>Stanzas 1 – 3 and 6</i>	HENDON
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Take My Life

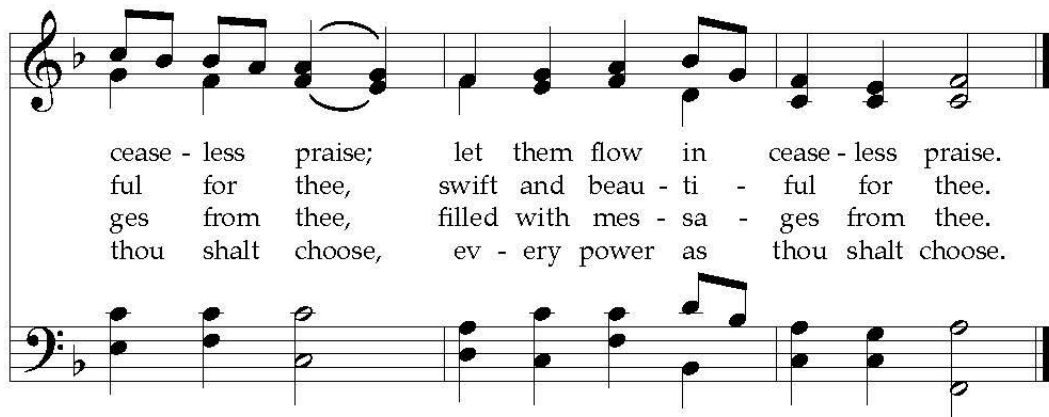
697



1 Take my life and let it be con-se - crat-ed, Lord, to thee;
 2 Take my hands and let them move at the im - pulse of thy love;
 3 Take my voice and let me sing al-ways, on - ly, for my King;
 4 Take my sil - ver and my gold; not a mite would I with-hold;



take my mo - ments and my days; let them flow in
 take my feet and let them be swift and beau - ti -
 take my lips and let them be filled with mes - sa -
 take my in - tel - lect and use ev - ery power as



cease - less praise; let them flow in cease - less praise.
 ful for thee, swift and beau - ti - ful for thee.
 ges from thee, filled with mes - sa - ges from thee.
 thou shalt choose, ev - ery power as thou shalt choose.

5 Take my will and make it thine;
 it shall be no longer mine.
 Take my heart, it is thine own;
 it shall be thy royal throne,
 it shall be thy royal throne.

6 Take my love; my Lord, I pour
 at thy feet its treasure store;
 take myself and I will be
 ever, only, all for thee,
 ever, only, all for thee.

This hymn of consecration radiates from the repeated word "take," resulting in a remarkably full survey of a person's attributes and possessions and giving weight to the "all" at the end. The composer of the tune was influential in the renewal of Reformed hymnody in French.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Rev. Karen Wright

POSTLUDE

"Doxology Postlude"

Linda Dover, organist

OLD 100TH

by Peter Pinder Stearns

***+Today's handbell piece,
"Very Soon I'll Fly Away" arr. Benjamin A. Tucker,
was donated in memory of
Luther Smith, Sr. (who loved gospel music)
by his daughter & son-in-law, Celia & Mike Nicholas.***

GOD'S PEACE TO YOU

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