



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FENTON

To be a loving community of faith dedicated to helping people know Jesus Christ and grow, share and serve as his disciples.

8th Sunday after Pentecost

July 31, 2022 10:00 AM

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GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

PRELUDE "I Carry You in My Heart"

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 107

1 O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

2 Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, those he redeemed from trouble

4 Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to an inhabited town; 5 hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

...and he delivered them from their distress;

10 Some sat in darkness and in gloom, prisoners in misery and in irons,

...and he saved them from their distress;

17 Some were sick through their sinful ways and because of their iniquities endured affliction;

19 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress;

23 Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the mighty waters;

28 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out from their Distress;

42 The upright see it and are glad, and all wickedness stops its mouth.

43 Let those who are wise pay attention to these things and consider the steadfast love of the Lord.

OPENING PRAYER

Generous God, by your mercy you provide all that we really need. Teach us not to store up treasures for ourselves on earth, but to put our trust and hope in the extravagance of your grace, so that we might come to inherit the abundant life you offer; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMN "Christ is Made the Sure Foundation"

CALL TO CONFESSION:

We are invited to pray - all who have hurt someone else, and all who have been hurt by another. We are called to pray: for hope, for healing, for mercy. We pray to the One who seeks to make us whole; whose will it is to restore us to new life. Join me as we pray, saying,

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

Faithful and loving God, we confess that we have not lived in faith and love. You offer us the gift of salvation, but we spend our lives in vain pursuits. You provide enough for all to share, but we store up treasures for ourselves. Forgive us, God of grace. Teach us to seek the way of heaven and to let go of earthly desires so that we might have abundant life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

DECLARATION OF PARDON:

Here is the good news, my friends: Christ came searching for us, calling us by name, leading us into God's kingdom.

In Christ, we become new people: broken, we are made whole; lost, we are found; forsaken, we are restored to new life. Thanks be to God. Amen.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Just as the morning breeze whispers your name, O Lord, and the thunder shouts your praises in the heavens, your scriptures speak about your great love for all of us and the whole earth. May we hear today, your word to us, and may our hearts be open to act faithfully on what we hear. Amen.

EPISTLE LESSON: Colossians 3:1-4

3:1 So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 3:2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, 3:3 for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 3:4 When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

ANTHEM**"Hallelujah Anyhow"****Pastor Robbie Carnes****NEW TESTAMENT LESSON:** Acts 6:8-7:2a; 7:51-60

8 Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. **9** Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. **10** But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. **11** Then they secretly instigated some men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." **12** They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council. **13** They set up false witnesses who said, "This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law, **14** for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us." **15** And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Stephen's Speech to the Council

7 Then the high priest asked him, "Are these things so?" 2 And Stephen replied:

"Brothers and fathers, listen to me...

51 "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. 52 Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. 53 You are the ones who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it."

The Stoning of Stephen

54 When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. 55 But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" 57 But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. 58 Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him, and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.

SERMON

Hallelujah Anyhow (Martyrdom)

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Is Martyrdom relevant to modern day Christians? Why or why not?

Is the Holy Spirit calling you to do something today?

BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD

OFFERING

As Jesus has done with us, may we do for others, holding nothing back, but offering our treasures and lives that hope may be restored, that healing might touch the broken, that the suffering might be revived, and that all might know of Jesus' steadfast love in their lives.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Take all we have for your service, precious Lord. We pray confidently because we know that you will faithfully use everything offered to your glory and for the good of our neighbors. We

give confidently because we know that you provide all we need. Even as we give we thank you for your gifts to us, in Jesus' name, Amen!

(If you would like a written prayer request included in our prayers today, please indicate that and an usher will collect them)

(Financial Offerings can be placed in dropbox located in the New Narthex)

OFFERTORY “No More Night” Michelle Carter

DOXOLOGY

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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.

HYMN “It Is Well with My Soul” Sunday School Handbells

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

You have heard the words of peace and hope from God, so go.

We will go to speak to those filled with fear and doubt.

You have been reminded of the One who came looking for us, so go.

We will go to search for all tossed aside by the world.

You have been embraced in the love and grace of the Spirit, so go.

We will go to open our hearts to all searching for hope.

POSTLUDE “Festival of Praise”

Peace be with you!
...and also with you!