



## 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.

9th Sunday after Pentecost

July 30th, 2023 10:00 a.m.

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### GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

#### PRELUDE

#### WELCOME

#### DEDICATION OF NEW HYMNALS

##### CALL TO WORSHIP from Psalm 105

1 O give thanks to the LORD; call on his name; make known his deeds among the peoples.

**2 Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works.**

3 Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

**4 Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually.**

5 Remember the wonderful works he has done, his miracles and the judgments he has uttered,

#### OPENING PRAYER

God is Heaven may your kingdom be to us like a treasure hidden in a field; What a joy it is to find your riches in the grit and dirt of our lives. May your kingdom be to us like fine pearls in the window shop; so beautiful and worth everything we have and more to call it our own. May your kingdom, today, be for us a net that is cast into the sea and draws in people of every kind. Catch our heart today so that we might praise you, serve you and find our place in your kingdom. Amen.

#### HYMN #795 “Healer of Our Every Ill”

#### CALL TO CONFESSION:

Jesus said, “The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs.”

So is the giving of confession and the receiving of forgiveness. Experiencing God’s mercy through Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit we grow and are able to share and support those around us. Let us pray...

#### PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

**Dear Jesus, you call us into your Kingdom. Yet we hesitate. We would rather organize our ashes than accept the fire of your rule and reign in our lives. You call us to purity and we work hard to be holy, but we end up sterilized rather than pure. We avoid the yeast of your love and mercy and settle for flat dry crackers rather than the expansiveness of your life within us. Hid in us your love, mercy and forgive us when we stifle the chemical reactions of your Holy Spirit in**

**us. Grow within us so that we might grow to be your holy people and living reflection of your goodness and grace.**

#### **DECLARATION OF PARDON:**

Jesus preached, spoke in parables and challenged the prevailing beliefs so much as to leave our heads spinning. But one thing is clear, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom [we] are the foremost.” Jesus’ love for us transforms us, saves us, and we can rest secure in the knowledge of this.

#### PROCLAIMING THE WORD

#### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Give wisdom to your servants, O Lord. Allow us to understand your Word with our minds and grant us the grace to live it out with our hands and feet. Amen.

#### **EPISTLE LESSON:** Romans 8:26-39

**26** The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. **27** And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

**28** We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. **29** For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. **30** And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

**31** What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? **32** He who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up for all of us, how will he not with him also give us everything else? **33** Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. **34** Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. **35** Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? **36** As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;  
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

**37** No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. **38** For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, **39** nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**ANTHEM**                      The Night Has Passed, Morning has Broken      *Video*

#### **NEW TESTAMENT LESSON:** Acts 18:18-28

**18** After staying there for a considerable time, Paul said farewell to the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had his hair cut, for he was under a vow. **19** When they reached Ephesus, he left them there, but first he himself went into the synagogue

and had a discussion with the Jews. **20** When they asked him to stay longer, he declined, **21** but on taking leave of them he said, “I will return to you, if God wills.” Then he set sail from Ephesus.

**22** When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch. **23** After spending some time there he departed and went from place to place through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

**24** Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos from Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. **25** He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord, and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. **26** He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately. **27** And when he wished to cross over to Achaia, the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. On his arrival he greatly helped those who through grace had become believers, **28** for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Messiah is Jesus.

**SERMON**                      Dealing with Estrangement: Ephesus

### RESPONDING TO THE WORD

#### A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Have you ever felt on the outside of a group?

Have you ever been welcomed into a group by someone?

How did that draw you closer to Jesus?

**HYMN #435**                      “There's a Wideness in God's Mercy”

### BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD

#### OFFERING

Let us be faithful stewards of our time, our talents, and our money. so that our treasure is in heaven and our giving pleases God.

Dear God, receive our offering. Guide those who use it, that it may help to bring fullness of life to those who live in need and long for our care. 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)*

*Will the Ushers please come forward.*

**OFFERTORY**                      Dulcimer

Jim Foster

#### 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.*

### TABLETALK WITH GOD'S CHILDREN

PLEASE just print in bulletin and not on screen

1. Think about someone you have been reaching out to who seems open to you and to Jesus. If you can't think of anyone, ask God to bring someone you know to mind who doesn't know Jesus.
2. Simply ask God, "What's next?"<sup>1</sup> That is, what is my next step in reaching out to this person?
3. Over the next day or more, listen for God's answer.
4. When an idea for a next step comes to mind, do it.

**HYMN #721** "Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore"

### CHARGE

Go in peace, remember that God is strong.  
 Go and be brave, because God can do it.  
 Go in joy, knowing that God loves each of us!

**BENEDICTION #721** "Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore" (refrain only)

### POSTLUDE

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