



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.

14th Sunday after Pentecost
September 3rd, 2023 10:00 a.m.

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

PRELUDE

WELCOME

INTROIT PH #634 BH #485 "To God be the Glory" (1st verse and refrain)

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

We come into your presence together with open hearts, dear Lord. Heal our hurts, comfort our grief and fill us with power by your Holy Spirit. May we hear your word clearly today and act on it in faith. Amen.

HYMN PH #69 BH #525 "I, the Lord of Sea and Sky"

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy Spirit, who spoke to Moses from the burning bush, speak to us now in the reading and proclaiming of your word. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Jeremiah 15:15-21

15 O LORD, you know;
remember me and visit me,
and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors.
In your forbearance do not take me away;

know that on your account I suffer insult.
16 Your words were found, and I ate them,
 and your words became to me a joy
 and the delight of my heart,
 for I am called by your name,
 O LORD, God of hosts.
17 I did not sit in the company of merry-makers,
 nor did I rejoice;
 under the weight of your hand I sat alone,
 for you had filled me with indignation.
18 Why is my pain unceasing,
 my wound incurable,
 refusing to be healed?
 Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook,
 like waters that fail.
19 Therefore thus says the LORD:
 If you turn back, I will take you back,
 and you shall stand before me.
 If you utter what is precious and not what is worthless,
 you shall serve as my mouth.
 It is they who will turn to you,
 not you who will turn to them.
20 And I will make you to this people
 a fortified wall of bronze;
 they will fight against you,
 but they shall not prevail over you,
 for I am with you
 to save you and deliver you,
 says the LORD.
21 I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked
 and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

ANTHEM PH #59 “The Steadfast Love of the Lord” (Psalm 105)

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Matthew 16:21-28

21 From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised. **22** And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.” **23** But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me, for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. **25** For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. **26** For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

27 “For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. **28** Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

SERMON God Forbid it, Lord!

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

How can your life include a faithful response to Jesus’ charge that his followers must “deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Matt. 16:24)?

OFFERING

The apostle Paul encourages us: do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. In loving service to this loving Lord, we now return to God a portion of the bounty God has provided. Let us pray:

Holy God of holy ground, like Moses, we question our fitness to serve heaven’s purposes on earth. Overcome our qualms with the assurance of your presence; bless these offerings that, through them, we may do your will; in the name of the triune One. 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.

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.***

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Romans 12:9-21 says: **9** Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; **10** love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. **11** Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. **12** Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer. **13** Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality to strangers. **14** Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. **15** Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. **16** Live in harmony with one another; do not be arrogant, but associate with the lowly;] do not claim to be wiser than you are. **17** Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. **18** If it is possible, so far as it

depends on you, live peaceably with all. **19** Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord.” **20** Instead, “if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink, for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.” **21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

While Moses was tending sheep on a mountainside, You, Lord appeared to him in a burning bush and called out to him, saying, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” Jesus taught us that all ground is holy: all of life for our Master is a sacrament to be dedicated fully to You, God. Each of us is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are on holy ground in our work as teachers, lawyers, volunteers, doctors, parents, secretaries, students, business owners, construction workers, and every other vocation You have given us. Today we affirm before You and one another that our work and our worship are interwoven, our work growing out of worship and our worship growing out of work.

As teachers, let our classrooms be places where your light and your truth shine in all learning, and where we celebrate and nurture the varied gifts and abilities of each student.

As students, let our minds, our talents, and our character be shaped more and more in your image as we learn to use our gifts in the service of your kingdom.

In the workplace, may mutual respect govern our relationships, and integrity govern our contracts and finances, as we produce useful goods and services.

As caregivers of children and family, the sick and the aged, may we remember the example of Jesus as he washed the feet of his disciples, and treat each person as one who bears Your image.

As scientists, writers, and artists, may your Spirit inspire and govern the work of our minds, and transform the professions in which we work.

As those retired from many years of work, may we enjoy the gift of rest, encourage one another, pray for the church, and mentor the next generation.

In all our daily labors, even amidst dull routine or frustrating demands, may we hear the call to serve you, gracious Lord.

The rule of Jesus Christ covers the whole world. To follow this Lord is to serve him everywhere, without fitting in, as light in the darkness, as salt in a spoiling world. May we plant your Word into the wilderness and watch it burst forth in fruit.

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.

CALL TO CONFESSION:

Jesus Christ overcame evil with good so that all people might be saved from sin. Let us then confess our need for grace, confident of God's forgiveness

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

God of mercy, we confess that, like the disciples, we set our minds not on divine things but on human things. Doubting your loving care, we grab for more than we need.

Doubting your loving purposes, we shrink from living as your followers. Doubting your loving plan, we become stumbling blocks in your creation. Forgive us that we may gain new life in you, for it is in Jesus' forgiving name we pray. Amen.

DECLARATION OF PARDON:

Jesus took up his cross for our salvation. In return for our old life of sin, he promises a new life of grace. Know that you are forgiven and be at peace.

COMMUNION

May the God of burning bushes be with you!

And also with you!

People of God, offer your hearts to God,
who calls to you from the mystery of grace.

We turn aside from our worries to open ourselves to the One who calls us to new life.

Children of God, remember all the joy and wonder
which has been done for you.

We will lift our voices in praise to the One who is beyond all imagining.

In a moment, creation began, and from that time on, God of Freedom,
you began to pour out your goodness and genuine love.

Earth laughed with flowers
and rejoiced with sunrises.

You shaped us in your image
and began to show us all
you wanted to give us.

But chasing after the temptations and seductions of the world,
 we tripped over the stumbling blocks of sin and death,
 falling flat on our fears and doubts.

Observing our misery in such living,
 you sent the prophets to call us back to you,
 but we did not hear their cries.

Knowing we would continue to suffer and lose our way,
 you sent Jesus to come and deliver us from our slavery.

Joining our voices with those who have faithfully followed,
 and with those who stumbled along the way,
 we call on your name, singing praises to you:

Holy, holy, holy are you, God of Wonder.

Watching our struggles,

your heart breaks;

hearing our cries,

you whisper our names;

knowing our loneliness,

you came to deliver us.

Blessed is Jesus Christ, who comes in your name!

Hosanna in the highest!

Holy are you, Listener of cries in the night,
 and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Child.

Hearing the pain of your heart,

he came to speak of your hopes;

seeing the brokenness of our relationships,

he came to make us whole;

knowing our fear of death,

he came to defeat its power;

aware of what it would cost him,

he journeyed to Jerusalem

to embrace suffering and heartache;

hating evil so much

he was willing to let it believe

it had won the battle,

until he burst from the grave

bringing life for all

even as you raised him from the dead.

Remembering his wonderful works,

recalling his miracles, his words, his life,
we speak of that mystery we know as faith:

**Christ rejoices with us,
Christ weeps with us,
Christ died for us,
Christ was raised for us.**

As we prepare to gather around
your Table, God of Love,
pour out your Spirit upon us,
and on the gifts of the bread and cup.
Feed us on the rich food
of your forgiveness and grace,
so we might go forth
to feed all those we only know
by the name 'enemy.'
Quench our thirst for power
with the sweet wine of your servanthood,
so we might choose
honor over fame,
humility over pride,
forgiveness over vengeance,
and in so doing,
lose ourselves in your life
of denial and service,
giving ourselves to others,
thus returning your love for us.

And when all moments come to an end,
and the time has come to gather around
that great feast in heaven,
there will be no enemy, no them, no us -
just our siblings from every time and place joining
hearts and voices in singing your praise,
God in Community, Holy in One. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Communion Prayer:

O God, you have so greatly loved us, long sought us, and mercifully redeemed us. Give us grace, that in everything we may yield ourselves, our wills, and our works, a continual thank-offering to you, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD

TABLETALK WITH GOD'S CHILDREN

Rest - How do you best Rest?

HYMN PH #727 "Will You Let Me Be Your Servant" (verses 1-4)

CHARGE

Hold fast to what is good; repay no one evil for evil.
Rejoice in hope; be patient in suffering; persevere in prayer.

May Almighty God,
who creates all good,
redeems from all evil,
and hears all prayer,
be with you and all people in suffering and in hope.

BENEDICTION #727 "Will You Let Me Be Your Servant" (verse 5,6)

POSTLUDE

May the Peace of Christ be with you...

...And also with you!