



## 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.

18th Sunday after Pentecost  
September 22nd, 2024 10:00 a.m.

1

### GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

#### PRELUDE

#### WELCOME

Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, and make known his deeds among the peoples. Sing to him, sing praises to him and tell of all his wonderful works. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually. (Psalm 105:1-4)

**INTROIT** Seek the Lord

Hal Hopson

#### CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 1

Happy are those

who do not follow the advice of the wicked,  
or take the path that sinners tread,  
or sit in the seat of scoffers;

**but their delight is in the law of the LORD,  
and on his law they meditate day and night.**

They are like trees

planted by streams of water,  
which yield their fruit in its season,  
and their leaves do not wither.

**In all that they do, they prosper.**

The wicked are not so,

but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

**Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;**

for the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,

**but the way of the wicked will perish.**

#### OPENING PRAYER—based on Ephesians 1:3-18

All glorious God, we give you thanks: in your Son, Jesus Christ, you have given us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms. You chose us, before the world was made, to be your holy people, without fault in your sight. You adopted us as your children in Christ. You have set us free by his blood; you have forgiven our sins. You have made known to us your secret purpose, to bring heaven and earth into unity in Christ. You have given us your Holy Spirit, the seal and pledge of our inheritance. All praise and glory be yours, O God, for the richness of your grace, for the splendor of your gifts, for the wonder of your love.

**HYMN PH #327 BH #229**

“From All That Dwell Below the Skies”

**CALL TO CONFESSION:** —based on 1 John 2:1-2, NRSV

The apostle John wrote: My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. In the strength of this assurance, let us confess our sins to God.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)**

**Lord, we have sinned, without considering how much you love us. You see our sins more clearly than we can ourselves. Lord, you know when we are indifferent to your Word, the Bible; how often we forget to pray; the times we come unwillingly to worship; and yet we turn to you when we are in trouble. Lord, you know when we are untruthful and when we think evil of others. You see our anger and unfairness to our friends. You know how hard it is for us to forgive. Forgive us and make us clean, so that we can obey your call to take up your cross and follow you. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

**DECLARATION OF PARDON**—Ezekiel 36:25-26, NRSV

I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

## PROCLAIMING THE WORD

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**Lord God, you have declared that your kingdom is among us. Open our eyes to see it, our ears to hear it, our hearts to hold it, our hands to serve it. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.**

**OLD TESTAMENT LESSON:** Jeremiah 11:18-20

It was the LORD who made it known to me, and I knew;  
then you showed me their evil deeds.

But I was like a gentle lamb  
led to the slaughter.

And I did not know it was against me  
that they devised schemes, saying,  
‘Let us destroy the tree with its fruit,  
let us cut him off from the land of the living,  
so that his name will no longer be remembered!’

But you, O LORD of hosts, who judge righteously,  
who try the heart and the mind,  
let me see your retribution upon them,  
for to you I have committed my cause.

**ANTHEM**

There is a Balm in Gilead

**NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Matthew 20:1-16**

‘For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-place; and he said to them, “You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.” So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, “Why are you standing here idle all day?” They said to him, “Because no one has hired us.” He said to them, “You also go into the vineyard.” When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, “Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.” When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, “These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.” But he replied to one of them, “Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?” So the last will be first, and the first will be last.’

**SERMON****The Kingdom of Heaven is like a landowner hiring Workers**

## RESPONDING TO THE WORD

**A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION**

How might God have gifted you to help build God’s kingdom?  
Where might you place seeds of the Gospel this week?

**HYMN PH #250**

“In the Bulb there is a Flower”

## BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD

**OFFERING**

No one gives oneself freely and willingly to God’s service unless, having tasted the Father’s love, that one is drawn in love and worships God in return. Let us worship with our offerings of our treasure and our hearts. Let us pray...

Gracious God, we give our best, lest in gaining the world we lose life itself. As a covenant people, we seek to witness to your will and way. Help us to know more clearly what you would have us do with the wealth entrusted to our care. As we contribute to the needs of your people, we present ourselves as living sacrifices. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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

*Will the Ushers Please come forward.*

**OFFERTORY**

**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** Planting Flower Seeds

As you leave the Sanctuary the Congregation is invited to sprinkle some wildflower seeds into the paper pulp.

**HYMN PH #697 BH #391** "Take My Life" (verses 1-4)**CHARGE**—based on Ephesians 1:18-19

As you leave the sanctuary today, may you know the hope to which God has called you, experience the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and trust his incomparably great power for us who believe. Amen.

**BENEDICTION PH #540** Shalom**POSTLUDE**

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