

FALL KICK-OFF

SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

11:00 AM



OPENING VOLUNTARY

AMAZING GRACE
JUDITH BROWN, PIANO

ARR. BY CHRIS TOMLIN AND LOUIE GIGLIO

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

* CALL TO WORSHIP & PRAYER FOR THE DAY

We've come to worship God,
who makes streams flow from rock,
who turns the parched earth into springs of water,
who sends the rain from heaven and makes the wilderness blossom and flourish.
As the deer thirsts for flowing streams, so we thirst for You, O God.
Come, let's worship our life-giving God, who pours out living water on all who thirst.

Let us pray -

O God, we gather at your waters, as a hot crowd gathers on the beach on a sweltering, summer day. O God, we drink at your fountain, as a parched dog laps at the fresh, running water of a creek. O God, we await your refreshment, as a tired worker watches for the change of shift. Quench our thirst, satisfy our longings. May we be refreshed and restored in you; and teach us where to find the bucket and how to carry it so that we might draw that water for those who need it most. Amen.

* HYMN #475

COME, THOU FOUNT OF EVERY BLESSING

"NETTLETON"

1 Come, thou Fount of ev-ery bless-ing; tune my heart to sing thy grace;
2 Here I raise my Eb - e - ne - zer; hith-er by thy help I'm come;
3 O to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be!

streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud-est praise.
and I hope, by thy good plea-sure, safe-ly to ar - rive at home.
Let that grace now, like a fet - ter, bind my wan-dering heart to thee.

Teach me some me - lo-dious son - net, sung by flam-ing tongues a-bove;
Je - sus sought me when a strang-er, wan-dering from the fold of God;
Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;

praise the mount! I'm fixed up - on it, mount of God's un-chang-ing love!
he, to res - cue me from dan-ger, in - ter-posed his pre-cious blood.
here's my heart; O take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image, through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

(Silence for personal prayer and reflection.)

RESPONSE #551

LORD, HAVE MERCY

“LAND OF REST”

Lord, have mer - cy; Christ, have mer - cy; Lord, have
 mer - cy up - on us. Lord, have mer - cy;
 Christ, have mer - cy; Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

PASSING OF THE PEACE AND CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY

*Please stand and greet those in the pews near you. Send a wave to the camera for those joining online.
 We recognize how important we are to each other; we belong to each other and are stronger together.*

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST READING

PSALM 149

- ¹ Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the faithful.
- ² Let Israel be glad in its Maker; let the children of Zion rejoice in their King.
- ³ Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him with tambourine and lyre.
- ⁴ For the LORD takes pleasure in his people; he adorns the humble with victory.
- ⁵ Let the faithful exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their couches.
- ⁶ Let the high praises of God be in their throats and two-edged swords in their hands,
- ⁷ to execute vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples,
- ⁸ to bind their kings with fetters and their nobles with chains of iron,
- ⁹ to execute on them the judgment decreed. This is glory for all his faithful ones. Praise the LORD!

SOLO

HOW BEAUTIFUL
 JUDITH BROWN, PIANO

TWILA PARIS, ARR. JOHN CARTER

SECOND READING

JOHN 7:37-43

³⁷ On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, ³⁸ and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’ ” ³⁹ Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive, for as yet there was no Spirit because Jesus was not yet glorified. ⁴⁰ When they heard these words, some in the crowd said, “This is really the prophet.” ⁴¹ Others said, “This is the Messiah.” But some asked, “Surely the Messiah does not come from Galilee, does he? ⁴² Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is descended from David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?” ⁴³ So there was a division in the crowd because of him.

SERMON

“WATERS”

REV. ALISON PETERS

INVITATION TO OFFERING

(Please place all tithes and offerings as well as any orange prayer request cards in the offering plate.)

OFFERTORY SOLO

FILL ME NOW
 JUDITH BROWN, PIANO

MICHAEL HANSEN AND CHRISTINA PEPPIN

1 Glo - ry to God, whose good - ness shines on me,
 2 World with - out end, 7 with - out end. A - men.

and to the Son, whose grace has par - doned me,
 World with - out end, 7 with - out end. A - men.

and to the Spir - it, whose love has set me free.
 World with - out end, 7 with - out end. A - men.

As it was in the be - gin - ning, is now and ev - er shall be. A - men.

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE CONCLUDING WITH THE 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

REAFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Beloved people of God, Our baptism is the sign and seal of our cleansing from sin, and of our being grafted into Christ. Through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the power of sin was broken and God's kingdom entered into our world.

Through our baptism, we were made citizens of God's kingdom, and freed from the bondage of sin.
 Let us celebrate that freedom and redemption through the renewal of promises made at our baptism.

I ask you therefore, once again, to reject sin, to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, and to confess the faith of the church, the faith in which we were baptized. Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world?

I do.

Who is your Lord and Savior?

Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.

Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his word and showing his love?

I will, with God's help.

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty?

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Let us pause in the silence of our hearts and offer praise to God for God's covenant faithfulness to us. (*Silence*)

We remember as well God's reconciling acts in salvation: Noah and his ark, Moses and the Exodus from slavery, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and the tremendous gift of the Holy Spirit. At this font, holy God, we pray: Praise to you for the water of baptism and for your Word that saves us in this water.

Breathe your Spirit into all who are gathered here and into all creation.

Illuminate our days. Enliven our bones. Dry our tears. Wash away the sin within us, and drown the evil around us.

Satisfy our thirst with your living water, we pray. Amen.

REAFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

You are invited to come forward and dip your hands in the water as you celebrate God's promises!

BLESSING AND COVENANT PRAYER

Holy One, I am no longer my own, but yours. You have placed me where and with whom you desire.

We praise you, for we have been emptied; We praise you, for we have been filled! To you, Great and Wonderful God, we surrender ourselves to your glory and service. You are ours. We are yours. Let this covenant be made in heaven and on earth, may it be so until your return! Amen.

* HYMN #741

GUIDE MY FEET

"GUIDE MY FEET"

1 Guide my feet while I run this race;
guide my feet while I run this race;
guide my feet while I run this race, for I
don't want to run this race in vain! (race in vain!)

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2 Hold my hand ... | 5 Search my heart ... |
| 3 Stand by me ... | 6 Guide my feet ... |
| 4 I'm your child ... | |

* BENEDICTION

* RESPONSE AFTER BENEDICTION #306 *BLEST BE THE TIE THAT BINDS (Verse 1)*

"SUO GAN"

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.

The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.

POSTLUDE

SING PRAISE TO GOD WHO REIGNS ABOVE

"MIT FREUDEN ZART"

JUDITH BROWN, ORGAN

* When this symbol precedes an element of the service, if you are able, please stand.
Please join in reading or singing those parts of the service printed in **bold**.

This Morning's Worship Leaders

Preacher Rev. Alison Peters
Liturgist.....Cathy Levitas
Director of Music Ministries/Pianist.....Judith Brown
Audio/Video Technicians.....Joe Aurigemma and Eric Ringler
Ushers.....Mike Levitas & Sharon Squires

OUR STAFF

Teaching Elder/Pastor.....Rev. Alison Peters
Director of Music MinistriesJudith Brown
Executive Administrative Assistant.....Brittany Jackson
Sexton.....Zach Dodge
Sound Tech/Security.....Joe Aurigemma
Audio/Video Technician.....Eric Ringler

MISSION STATEMENT

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we worship God and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ by loving our neighbors and promoting peacemaking, justice and care of the earth.

VISION STATEMENT

We strive to be a community grounded in the good news of God's love in Christ where all of God's children are:

- Welcomed and cherished
- Called to worship, learn and grow together in faith, and
- Sent to share God's love and justice with a broken and hurting world.

-Adopted by the Session on September 17, 2015

SESSION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CLERK OF SESSION

Carolyn Mathews

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

Carl Belt & Cindy Corley

BUILDING & GROUNDS

Bob Courtney & Evan Swanger

CONGREGATIONAL CARE & OUTREACH

Mikayla Dodge & Linda Mellon

FAITH FORMATION

Josh Gilhart & Ann Kellermeyer

MISSION

Aaron Hendrickson & Brenda Luger

WORSHIP & MUSIC

Sharon Kazary & Mike Levitas

FAITH FORMATION

RULING ELDERS: JOSH GILHART & ANN KELLERMEYER

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL: *Follow Me* is a curriculum from PCUSA that takes a look at the spiritual practices that Jesus taught. Prayer is both a central spiritual practice for followers of Jesus, and, for many, one of the most difficult to grasp. Join us starting on September 17th at 10:00 AM in the Dakota Room as we explore prayer.

SEPTEMBER 10, 2023
FIFTEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

taking
faith
home

Love your neighbor as yourself.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 18:15-20	Seeking reconciliation
Monday	Ezekiel 33:7-11	God's judgment seeks repentance
Tuesday	Romans 13:8-14	Love for one another
Wednesday	Deuteronomy 4:5-14	Israel is favored by God
Thursday	Galatians 5:13-15	Christ gives freedom
Friday	Leviticus 19:9-18	Living a holy life
Saturday	Psalms 119:33-40	A prayer for understanding
Sunday	Matthew 18:21-35	A parable about forgiveness

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Romans 13:9 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

God of goodness and mercy, give us hearts to love and to care for others as you care for us through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, with this gift of food strengthen us to delight in your law of love for the sake of all you have created through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May you long for the ways of God that teach love and mercy through Jesus Christ.



© 2022 Milestones Ministry, LLC. All rights reserved.

SEPTEMBER 10, 2023
HYMN OF THE WEEK

Beloved, God's Chosen

taking
faith
home

WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What news have you seen or heard recently where laws have been broken?
- Jesus said, "love your neighbor as yourself." What makes it hard to love others as you love yourself?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Romans 13:8-14.

The law of God was—and is—intended as a gift from God that we may live in peace with one another. The commandments are plain and simple: we should not commit adultery, murder, steal, or covet what others have. The law mirrors the love of God that intends goodness and mercy for people. As Deuteronomy 4:8 states, "[W]hat other great nation has statutes and ordinances, as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?" The law demands right action toward people that is merciful, especially for the less powerful who cannot otherwise protect themselves. Mercy is well summarized by saying, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Romans 13:9), a reference to Leviticus 19:18 that was quoted by Jesus, Paul, and others in the Bible. The gospel life offers mercy and acts of love for the sake of the health of individuals and communities alike.

Discuss: What do you think it means to show mercy through the love and care of others?

Pray: **Loving God, we thank you for the gift of your law and for freeing us to love others as you have loved us through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how can you care for the daily needs of others?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Bible studies, Sunday school, and youth groups are wonderful opportunities to gather to read the Bible, have caring conversations, and learn together. Think or talk about where and how you learn God's word. Psalm 119 is a lovely text that promotes learning God's will and word. *Pray: Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes, and I will observe it to the end. Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart. Amen.* (Psalm 119:33-34)



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org