

Order of Service

September 20, 2020

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*We are so glad you are able to join us in worship this morning – or whenever you are able to join us on line. We invite you to become part of our community by visiting our web page and signing up to be part of our email list, visiting our Facebook page, or joining our Zoom Bible Study and other events. Even as we worship in new ways, we know that God is present in all times and places, and hears the praise when we lift up our hearts. God’s peace be with you.*

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GATHERING

Gathering Music

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship *(Psalm 105:1-6)*

O give thanks to the Lord, call on God’s name,
make known God’s deeds among the peoples.
Sing to the Lord, sing praises to God;
tell of all the Lord’s wonderful works.
Glory in God’s holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.
Seek the Lord and God’s strength;
seek the Lord’s presence continually.
Remember the wonderful works God has done,
the miracles and the judgments God uttered,
O offspring of God’s servant Abraham,
children of Jacob, the Lord’s chosen ones.

Prelude

Invocation

Lord, the days run together and our ability to discern your voice

through all the world's noise grows difficult. Recognizing that you still speak, no less than to Moses or Mary, we ask you to send your Spirit that we might hear the word you have for us this day. In Christ's name we pray, amen.

Call to Confession

God offers us grace, and yet we grumble. God hears our grumbling and provides, and yet we want more. God's generosity knows no bounds, and yet we begrudge God's goodness. Recognizing the many ways we miss the mark of discipleship, we come to a time of confession, grateful that God's loving kindness persists even in the face of our ongoing sin.

Prayer of Confession (unison)

Lord God, you hear our cries of pain and our murmured complaining. Your relentless compassion for your people defies any human logic or understanding. You provide manna in the wilderness, bread from heaven and the assurance that you will not abandon us in our need. Despite your overflowing goodness, we grumble. Rather than rejoice in your grace to us, we resent that you extend kindness to others. Instead of gratitude for your mercy, we question why you would embrace those we think undeserving — forgetting that none of us are righteous, all of us saved by grace. Forgive us for judging others and begrudging your generosity. We thank you for yet again hearing our cries and responding with love. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

The Lord is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
Jesus Christ came not for the righteous, but to save sinners.
Therefore, we can believe the good news that we are in fact forgiven and even now made new creations in Christ.

Song of Thanksgiving

I Am A Child of God

I am a child of God, I am a glimpse of God's new creation.

I am a child of God, I am a child of God.

THE WORD

Scripture

Sermon

Rev. Karen Russell

Song of Reflection

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once
was lost, but now am found; was blind but now I see.*

*'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved; how
precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.*

*The Lord has promised good to me; his work my hope secures. He will my
shield and portion be as long as life endures.*

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Affirmation of faith *(from A Brief Statement of Faith)*

We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father.

In sovereign love God created the world good

and makes everyone equally in God's image

male and female, of every race and people,

to live as one community.

But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.

Ignoring God's commandments,

we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,

accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature,

and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.

We deserve God's condemnation.
Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.
In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah
chose a covenant people to bless all families of the earth.
Hearing their cry, God delivered the children of Israel
from the house of bondage.
Loving us still, God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.
Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child,
like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home,
God is faithful still.

Call for the Offering

God provides for us, giving us manna in the wilderness, extending mercy when we fail to follow Jesus, granting grace instead of condemnation. In response to such generosity, we offer our gifts for the sake of making God's love of the whole world, all of creation evident to those in need of knowing that the Lord hears their cries and responds with compassion.

Because you support the ministry of this church, we are able, in turn, to support families who are, sometimes quite surprisingly, raising young grandchildren. We are able to reach out to families who are outside the circle of our immediate church family and love and serve our neighbors.

***How to Give:** you can go directly to our website and use our online giving platform to set up a one-time or recurring gift; you can mail your offering directly to the church (POB 132, Palestine IL 62451), or you can drop your tithes and offerings at the church office, Mon – Thurs, 10 am – 2 pm.*

Song of Thanksgiving

God Whose Giving Knows No Ending

God whose giving knows no ending from your rich and endless store,

*nature's wonder, Jesus' wisdom, costly cross, grave's shattered door: gifted by you
we turn to you, offering up our selves in praise. Thankful song shall rise
forever, gracious donor of our days.*

*Skills and time are ours for pressing toward the goals of Christ, your Son:
all at peace in health and freedom, races joined, the church made one. Now direct
our daily labor, lest we strive for self alone. Born with talents, make us
servants fit to answer at your throne.*

Prayer of Dedication

Generous God, receive these gifts as an outward sign of our inward gratitude. We cannot repay you for your goodness to us, but we know you accept that which is given in faith. Take and distribute this offering in ways that show forth your mercy and goodness. Multiply what we offer in ways that nourish others hungry to know they are your beloved people. In Christ's name we pray, amen.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer (*debts & debtors*)

Lord, we find ourselves weary, wondering if we will dwell in this season of uncertainty and stress forever. Everything feels unsettled and upended. Tasks that used to be accomplished without much thought require planning and additional energy that we do not have to spare. Children attend school in their homes or in buildings with multiple protocols for distance and safety. Parents attempt to work even as they contend with limited or non-existent childcare, helping with online learning and the anxiety of tending to multiple and competing needs. Some among us now face not only unemployment but the end of unemployment benefits. Others struggle with illness or feel overwhelmed with grief. In our worries, we call out to you for help, knowing you hear the cries of your people and respond with compassion.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your generosity to us is evident even in our anxiety. You give us a community of faith that upholds us in our weakness, encourages us when our hope lags and makes your love tangible when we feel alone. When we struggle to see your providence, you sustain us with your Spirit. When we fear you have forgotten us, you seek us out and enlist us for your work, giving us purpose and meaning no matter our circumstances. When we are overwhelmed by the pain of the world, you reveal your glory in the beauty of creation. When we want to turn away from suffering, you send your Son, showing us your resurrection Word cannot be silenced.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Trusting in your promise to hear us when we intercede for others, we ask for your healing and wholeness for your people who suffer, those close to us and those known only to you. For those that we have lifted up here we ask that you surround them with your grace and peace, ease their pain, give them comfort and calm. Ease troubled minds, and make us instruments of your peace.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Confident in your mercy and grace, we boldly pray for your people desperate for manna in the desert, relief in the wilderness, a respite from their burdens:

We pray for those reeling from natural disasters; especially we ask you to provide for the victims of the wildfires raging in the West. We pray for those facing economic scarcity, those worried about meeting their basic needs. May those of us with two coats give one away and those who have more than their daily bread, share with those who have none, in order that all may know your manna appears new every morning.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the peacemakers and justice-seekers, the prophets and the policy-makers, the caregivers and the activists. Enlist us all, Almighty God, to work in your vineyard in ways that participate in your will and ways so that all may experience the abundant life your Son came to give. We pray in the name of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who taught us to say when we pray, ***Our Father...***

Charge (*Colossians 3:12-14*)

As God's own, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness and patience, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you, and crown all these things with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. Go forth into the world with compassion and justice in your heart. Give strength to the weak; give voice to the silent.

See one another, hear one another;

Care for one another, love one another.

It's all that easy.

And it's all that hard.

Blessing

Love and serve the Lord your God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and remain with you always.

Postlude

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**THANK YOU to all those who help lead worship, and make our on-line worship possible: Linda Ryan-Catt, David Fulling, MaryAnn Catt, Mark Catt, and Charlie Catt. And thank you for joining us.**

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Online giving links

www.firstprespalestine.com and on the giving app

Online giving lets you make supporting First Presbyterian Church simple. You can set up a one-time gift, or a weekly/monthly offering.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Session and Trustees will meet on September 16. Session meets at 5 pm. Trustees at 6:30 pm.**
- **Morning Prayer** each Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 10 am, Facebook Live.
- **Friday Morning Bible Study** this week – 10:30 am, via Zoom. You can find the log in information on our website: www.firstprespalestine.com.
- **Our next outdoor worship service will be September 26 at 6 pm.**
- **Get the latest information on worship services, church activities, etc by signing up to be on our e mail list. Go to our website, www.firstprespalestine.com and scroll to the bottom to fill out the subscription form. Or e mail the church office and we will add you to the list.**

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