



Bethany Presbyterian Church

Graham, North Carolina

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August 21, 2022 – 9:30 am

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost



Anthony Neff, "Ouerbacker Mansion"

Listen! Hear the cries of the wages of your field hands. These are the wages you stole from those who harvested your fields. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of heavenly forces.
James 5:4 (CEB)

GATHERING AS GOD'S PEOPLE

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Welcome to our service of worship. Although we are worshipping in a variety of locations, we still affirm that God is present in our worship, whether in-person or virtually. Our prayer is that all who worship with us this day will truly feel the presence of God in this time. Know that you are loved and we are so glad you are here! The liturgy today is from the Wild Goose Resource Group, A Wee Worship Book, (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2015).

PRELUDE: *Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee*

JOHN B. DYKES/ARR. BY FRED BOCK

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*OPENING SENTENCES

In the beginning, before time, before people, before the world began, **God was.**
Hear and now, among us, beside us, clearer than air, closer than breathing, **God is.**
In all that is to come, when we have turned to dust and human knowledge has been completed, **God will be.**
Not despairing of earth, but delighting in it, not condemning the world, but redeeming it through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, **God was, God is, God will be.**

Let us worship our God.

***GATHERING PRAYER**

Let us pray. May it not be long, Lord...

May it not be long before the world we pray for and the world we inhabit are one.

May it not be long before the domination of wealth over want, white over black, man over woman, the privileged over the poor, are facts of history, not facts of life. ***May it not be long.***

May it not be long, Lord, before the earth no longer suffers through human selfishness, so that the valleys can sing again, the meadows laugh and barren places burst into bloom. ***May it not be long.***

May it not be long, Lord, before economic power comes only with accountability, and money and taxation are wedded to just purposes. ***May it not be long.***

May it not be long, Lord, before the countries that the West once evangelized show us the larger Christ we have yet to encounter. ***May it not be long.***

May it not be long, Lord, before we vacate the safe refuges of pessimism and cynicism, and find wells of hope deeper than shallow pools of optimism. ***May it not be long.***

May it not be long, Lord, before we find ourselves directly addressed by your voice, as those first disciples did in hearing you summon the strangest of people to the greatest of callings. ***May it not be long.***

May it not be long, Lord.

And to enable that day to come soon, raise up for us prophets who will give us new sight for better seeing. Raise up for us prophets who will increase our altruism and diminish our greed. Raise up for us prophets who will spell out that God has no favorite race, nor heaven a favorite language.

Raise up for us prophets who, in their own person, will bridge the gaps through which too many fall.

Raise up for us prophets who will make clear for our day the truths Jesus said in his, and who will speak with the urgency of those who have glimpsed the coming of the Lord.

And if you will not raise up for us prophets, then raise up in us that holy restlessness to get your work done and your people saved, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN :** *In the Garden*

C. Austin Miles

I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses;
And the voice I hear, falling on my ear,
The Son of God discloses.

Refrain:

And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own,
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.

He speaks, and the sound of His voice
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing;
And the melody that He gave to me
Within my heart is ringing. **[Refrain]**

I'd stay in the garden with Him
Tho' the night around me be falling;
But He bids me go; thro' the voice of woe,
His voice to me is calling. **[Refrain]**

OFFERING OURSELVES FOR RENEWAL

A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Guide us, O God, by your Word and Spirit, that in your light we may see light, in your truth find freedom, and in your will discover your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

ENCOUNTERING SCRIPTURE

PSALM 124

PEW BIBLE, PAGE 767

JAMES 5:1-6

PEW BIBLE, PAGES 1473

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

*HYMN OF THE DAY : *If it Had Not Been For the Lord On My Side*

MARGARET DOURoux

Refrain:

If it had not been for the Lord on my side
Where would I be? Where would I be?
If it had not been for the Lord on my side
Where would I be? Where would I be?

He kept my enemies away
He let the sun shine through a cloudy day
Oh, he wrapped me in the cradle of his arms
When he knew I'd been battered and torn
So...**[Refrain]**

He never left me all alone
He gave me peace and joy I've never known
He answered when I knelt to Him to pray
And in victory, the Lord showed me the way
So...**[Refrain]**

TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT OURSELVES

Let us pray.

Holy and gracious God, we live in a world of wonder, conceived by your divine imagination. The universe is your creation born out of love and generosity. Hallowed by your name. ***Hallowed be your name.***

Through centuries of thought and searching, through law and wisdom, insight and experience, your will and purpose were gradually glimpsed until, in Jesus, all that was hidden was revealed, and you let earth be touched by heaven. Hallowed by your name. ***Hallowed be your name.***

In the beauty of the earth, in the silence of our hearts, in the community of your church, in all works of grace and kindness, in forgiving from the heart and in worship from the soul, your Spirit confirms the truth by which we live. Hallowed by your name. ***Hallowed be your name.***

If, knowing this, we have failed to love you, our Maker, been hesitant to follow your Son, and suspected the power of your Spirit: Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

If we have desired comfort more than devotion; if we have satisfied our wants more than we have served your will; if we have worshipped a lesser god and gone for an easier gospel: Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

If, in the face of your openness, we have privatized our wealth, limited our company to those like us, restricted our conversation to matters of no consequence, and in all this compromised our integrity and lost faith in our faith: Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

A MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

AN OFFERING OF GOD'S GRACE

Forgive us, O God, but not to ease our consciences until we feel penitent again.

Forgive us, so that we may have no defense against your will; and then make us friends of your purpose and worthy companions of Jesus, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

So now, as Jesus taught us, let us pray in the language we are most familiar with, saying:

*... Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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.*

AN OFFERING OF OUR RESOURCES

OFFERTORY – THE WORD IN MUSIC: *I am So Glad*

PHILIP MCINTYRE

*DOXOLOGY #592: *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*

THOMAS KEN

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*BLESSING OUR GIFTS

LISTENING FOR GOD'S VOICE

THE WORD PROCLAIMED

Sermon: *"Wage Justice"*

REV. PHILLIPS

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD AS WE LEAVE TO SERVE

*PROCLAIMING WHAT WE BELIEVE

FROM THE CONFESSION OF 1967 (INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE TEXT)

God's redeeming work in Jesus Christ embraces the whole of human life: social and cultural, economic and political, scientific and technological individual and corporate. It includes the natural environment as exploited and despoiled by sin. It is the will of God that the divine purpose for human life shall be fulfilled under the rule of Christ and all evil be banished from creation.

Biblical visions and images of the rule of Christ, such as a heavenly city, the household of God, a new heaven and earth, a marriage feast, and an unending day culminate in the image of the kingdom. The kingdom represents God's triumph over all that resists the divine will and disrupts God's creation. Already God's reign in present as a ferment in the world, stirring hope in all people and preparing the world to receive its ultimate judgement and redemption.

With an urgency born of this hope, the church applies itself to present tasks and strives for a better world. It does not identify limited progress with the kingdom of God on earth, nor does it despair in the face of disappointment and defeat. In steadfast hope, the church looks beyond all partial achievement to the final triumph of God.

"Now to him by the power within us to do far more abundantly than we ask or think, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." (EPH. 3:20)

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS AND BLESSING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

CONGREGATIONAL LITANY

O Holy God, the time is come when school begins. As these your children begin their studies, we ask a blessing on their backpacks in which they carry the books and notebooks, markers and pens and pencils and devices they will use to learn. O Lord of Life and Love,

Hear our prayer.

Bless, O God, all who will teach our students in the coming days and weeks and months. Give them the wisdom to find inspiration for each learner. Give them the energy and creativity and love that will make their work a blessing to them. O Lord of Life and Love,

Hear our prayer.

Bless, O God, all education administrators that they may be faithful stewards of the resources entrusted to their care. Make them fair and merciful, able to do their crucial work with a spirit of grace and compassion. O Lord of Life and Love,

Hear our prayer.

Bless, O God, all who together work to ensure the education of our students. Protect those who protect our students, bless and guide those who drive for our students, care for the needs of our students, who counsel our students, who cook for our students, who work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the education of our children and youth

Hear our prayer.

Bless, O God, each one gathered here that we will seek every opportunity to grow in our knowledge and love of you – in our church school classes for all ages. Grant that we may see you more clearly, love you more dearly, follow you more nearly. O Lord of Life and Love,

Hear our prayer.

And bless, O God, these our cherished children, those whom we have promised to love and nurture at their baptism. Keep them safe, keep them excited, keep them ever seeking to learn more and to develop their gifts. Grant that through their study, they may gain the tools to grow in love and faith and service, all their days. O Lord of Life and Love,

Hear our prayer.

Bless, O God, these backpacks and the learners who carry them. O Lord of Life and Love,

Hear our prayer. Amen.

DISTRIBUTING BACKPACK TAGS

***CLOSING HYMN #341:** *Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine!*

FANNY JANE CROSBY

Blessed assurance: Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

Refrain:

This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels, descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love. **(Refrain)**

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
Watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with His goodness, lost in His love. **(Refrain)**

***SENDING**

Now may God who gives seed to the sower and corn to the reaper,
give to us all we need to produce a good harvest.

***May God make us fertile in faith, hope and love, and take us out with joy, and lead us on in peace,
as signs of the fruitfulness of heaven. Amen.***

POSTLUDE: *I Sing the Greatness of Our God*

FRED BOCK

** Please stand in body or spirit.*

This Week's Calendar:

Today:

Sunday, August 21st – Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost & Blessing the Backpacks

- 9:30 – Worship (In-Person outside at the Manse parking lot & Live Stream)
- After Church – “Jesus and the Gospels”, Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, August 24th

- 6:30 – Choir Practice

Sunday, August 28th – Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

- 9:30 – Worship (In-Person outside at the Manse parking lot & Live Stream)

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Session

Moderator: Rev. Jon Phillips

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