

Growing Together through Faith, Love, and Fellowship.

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 17, 2023

The asterisk () indicates to please rise in body or spirit.*

Silent Prayer of Preparation

From the beginning until now, loving God, we have turned away from you, following lesser ways, pursuing a lesser life than the life offered to us in Christ. Yet you will not abandon us. You call out, warning and wooing us to turn, to return to you. Even when we fall away from brothers and sisters in the church, you remain present with us. Help us to love as you love—wholeheartedly—until we are reconciled to you and to our neighbor. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

Gathering Music

The Gathering of God's People

Prelude - a time to prayerfully prepare oneself for worship

"How Can I Keep from Singing?"

arr. Benjamin M. Culli

Welcome and Announcements

Introit "The Voice of the Beloved"

J. B. Dykes, 1868

I heard the voice of Jesus say,

"Behold, I freely give the living water, thirsty one;

Stoop down, and drink, and live."

I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream;

My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,

And now I live in Him.

***Call to Worship**

Leader: Come, let us gather in the awareness of God's love.

People: **God's love has brought us to this place, it has made of us a church.**

Leader: We can live with confidence and hope in the assurance that we are forgiven and accepted by a power greater than ourselves.

People: **Because we are forgiven, we too can forgive. Let us praise this God of endless grace and mercy, and offer our heart's true worship.**

***Hymn**

What Wondrous Love Is This"

#215

The Confession of Sin and Assurance of Pardon

***Call to Confession**

***Prayer of Confession** (*in unison*)

Just and gracious God, once again we approach you in search of forgiveness and mercy. We are cut off from full communion with you and with one another because of our desire to determine justice and mete out judgment. We treat others unfairly even though you treat us justly. We make unreasonable demands on others even though you choose to offer us grace. Forgive us, we pray, and move us to appreciate your generosity. In thanksgiving for your mercy, may we then offer full pardon and forgiveness to those whom we consider to be our debtors. Amen. (Silent prayer of confession.)

***Assurance of Pardon**

***Response Hymn** "In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful"

#654

Ministry of the Word

Prayer for Illumination

Children's Sermon

First Scripture Reading

Romans 14:1-12

Choir Anthem “From All the Earth Send Up the Song!” Robert Weaver
From all the earth send up the song! & William Pasch, 2019

Shout glad hosannas loud and long!

Serve joyfully! Our God adore.

Acclaim God's honor evermore!

Our God is true from age to age.

Our God is good beyond our gauge.

Our God is faithful, ever sure.

God's kindness, love, and grace endure!

Second Scripture Reading

Matthew 18:21-35

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

“The Final Dong”

Rev. Désirée M. Youngblood

The Response to the Word

***Affirmation of Faith**

The Heidelberg Catechism (4.126)

Pastor: What does the fifth petition mean?

People: “**Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors**”
means: Because of Christ’s blood, do not hold against us, poor sinners that we are, any of the sins we do or the evil that constantly clings to us. Forgive us just as we are fully determined, as evidence of your grace in us, to forgive our neighbors.

***Hymn**

“Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive”

#444

Prayers of the People and 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.

Invitation to Offering

*Prayer of Dedication

The Sending of God’s People

*Closing Hymn “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy”

*Charge and Blessing

*Congregational Response

“We Are the Church”

I am the church! You are the church! We are the church to - geth-er!

All who follow Jesus, all around the world! Yes, we're the church to - gether!

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and common time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of lyrics, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are printed below the notes.

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*Postlude "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring"

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

Pastors: Désirée M. Youngblood
Dr. Mark A. Johnson

Music Director: Thomas Lloyd

Organist: Carol Welk

Liturgist: David Parrott

Acolytes: Devin Griggs, Nate Angel

David grew up and went to school throughout the state of Iowa, but recently moved to London, Ohio in the summer of 2020 with his wife, Stephanie, after she graduated with her PhD in chemistry from Iowa State University. They will be celebrating their 3rd wedding anniversary this September. David and Stephanie can often be found gardening and riding their tandem bicycle on the trails surrounding London. They love to spend time with their furry children (Minnie, a 2 year old Staffordshire terrier, and Charlie, a 10 year old Mini Rex rabbit). If you happen to find yourself at the Madison Health Hospital in London, you might see David, as he recently started working there as a phlebotomist and lab technologist.