

*Growing Together through Faith, Love, and Fellowship.*

**26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**October 1, 2023**

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

**Meditation before Worship (Shona and English, adaptation of “A Non-Traditional Blessing” by Sister Ruth Fox)**

*Mwari wedu (Our God who is), Musiki wedu (Our Creator God), Nyadenga wedu (Our Heavenly Father), bless us with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships. Bless us with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people. Bless us with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war. Bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in this world. Muzita raBaba, nere Mwanakomana, nere Mweya Mutsvene. (In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.) Amen.*

**Gathering Music**

**The Gathering of God’s People**

**Prelude - a time to prayerfully prepare oneself for worship**

"The King of Love My Shepherd Is"

arr. Janet Linker

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Minute for Mission**

Martha Geib Scholarship Auction

Stephanie Huddleston

**\*Call to Worship**

Leader: God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

People: **We have gathered to hear the story of God and the people he chooses as his own.**

Leader: It is a story of God's mercy and steadfast love.

**People:** It is our story for we are God's people. Inspire us, loving God, to faithfulness, to mercy, to steadfast love. Help us to become the obedient people you have willed us to be. Amen.

**\*Hymn**

“O God of Every Nation”

#756

## **The Confession of Sin and Assurance of Pardon**

**\*Call to Confession**

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

Gracious Lord, creator of the universe, in your generosity you have given us a world of abundance and diversity, yet we live guided by greed and selfishness. We confess that we have defaced your creation and poisoned our environment through our consumerist behavior and our desire for personal gain. In Christ, you made us brothers and sisters and intended for us to be united, yet we have built walls to separate us from those who are different. You gave us wisdom and creativity, which we have used to deceive each other and to develop weapons of destruction and death. You gave us laws to order our lives, which we have abused to punish and take revenge on our enemies. We love war rather than strive for peace. We ignore the poor and the weak and honor the rich and powerful. In all this we have not lived according to your will. Forgive us, Lord, for daring to boast in our human achievements and for failing to recognize that you alone are worthy of praise. In your mercy, forgive us our sins. 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

Philippians 1:21-30

### Choir Anthem “The Old Rugged Cross”

arr. Roger Wilson, 1955

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,  
The emblem of suffering and shame.  
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best  
For a world of lost sinners was slain.  
(refrain) So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,  
Till my trophies at last I lay down;  
I will cling to the old rugged cross,  
And exchange it some day for a crown.  
To the old rugged cross I will ever be true,  
Its shame and reproach gladly bear;  
Then he'll call me some day to my home far away,  
Where his glory forever I'll share. (refrain)

## Second Scripture Reading

Matthew 21:23-32

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

## Sermon

“Yes or No?”

Rev. Désirée M. Youngblood

### The Response to the Word

#### \*Affirmation of Faith

The Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

**\*Invitation to Offering**

**\*Response**

“Doxology”

#606

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

**The Sacrament of Holy Communion**

(We will be receiving communion by coming forward to one of the two stations on each side of the communion table. Please exit the pew to the center aisle and return to your pew from the outside aisles. An elder or deacon will be available to serve communion to those who wish to remain seated. Gluten-free bread can be found on the communion table.)

**\*Invitation to the Lord’s Table**

**\*Hymn of Invitation**

“For the Healing of the Nations”

#346

**The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Leader: The peace of the Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you!**

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

**People: We lift them up to the Lord.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Leader: Almighty Creator ... found in you, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**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.**

# Breaking of the Bread

## Communion of the People

### Prayer after Communion

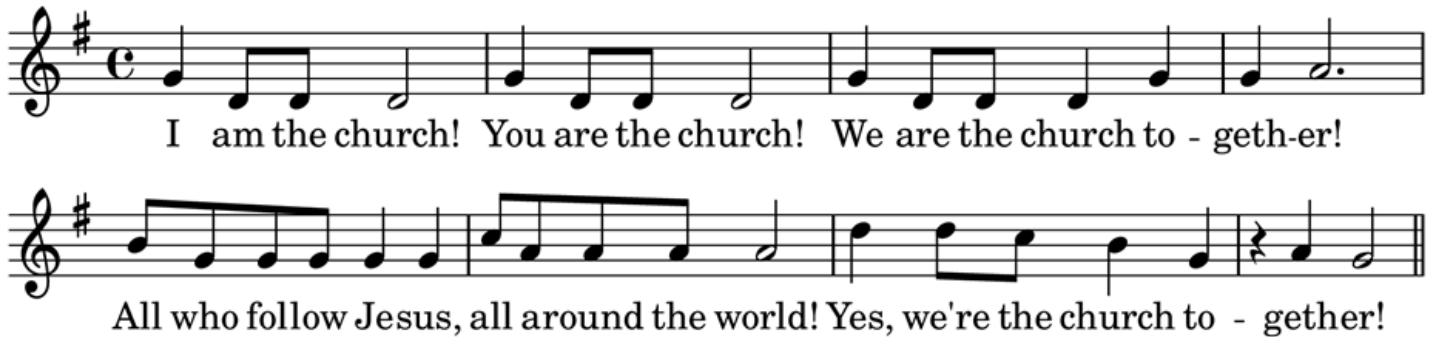
Lord, this special communion reminds us of being members of a global community. We have feasted at your table. As you have nourished us, may we go into your world to bring a feast of peace and hope to others, listening with loving ears and acting with loving hearts, in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

## The Sending of God's People

\*Closing Hymn "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace" #753

\*Charge and Blessing

\*Congregational Response "We Are the Church"



The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and common time (C). The first staff contains the melody for the lyrics: "I am the church! You are the church! We are the church to - geth-er!". The second staff contains the accompaniment for the lyrics: "All who follow Jesus, all around the world! Yes, we're the church to - gether!".

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\*Postlude "Alleluia! Sing to Jesus" arr. Charles Callahan

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

**Music Director:** Thomas Lloyd

**Organist:** Carol Welk

**Liturgist:** Stephanie Huddleston

**Acolytes:** Devin Griggs, Nate Angel

*Stephanie grew up in London. She has attended the First Presbyterian Church her entire life. She has been very active in the church, serving in many ways. Currently, she is an elder and also chairs the Mission Committee. Stephanie and her husband, Richard, have two sons ... Dustin and Bryan, and 5 grandchildren. Stephanie taught at London Schools for 30 years before retiring. Now, she and her husband divide their time between London and Florida.*