



First
Presbyterian
Church of Monroe

1820 to 2020

Celebrating
200 Years
of Faith
&
Service



October 4, 2020

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The mission of the First Presbyterian Church is to be ambassadors for Jesus Christ and to proclaim his salvation in worship, education, and outreach.

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost and World Communion Sunday

OPENING WORDS

(Psalm 25:1, 4-5)

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me,

for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Take heart, beloveds. We are not an aimless people!

It is the Kingdom of Heaven we desire.

The path does not need to be clear:

We need not fear if we wander or we stray.

Love will be an ever-present guide, calling us with patience and truth.

As we go, we practice healing.

We keep learning and unlearning.

We right our wrongs.

We set down our defenses, our power, our closed-minded thinking.

The practice of justice will be our north star.

Thanks be to God, our way in the wilderness.

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OPENING HYMN #611

“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”

vss. 1-3

- 1 Joyful, joyful, we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love! Hearts unfold like flowers before thee, opening to the sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; drive the dark of doubt away. Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.
- 2 All thy works with joy surround thee; earth and heaven reflect thy rays; stars and angels sing around thee, center of unbroken praise. Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea, chanting bird and flowing fountain, call us to rejoice in thee.
- 3 Mortals, join the happy chorus which the morning stars began. Love divine is reigning o'er us, joining all in heaven's plan. Ever singing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife. Joyful music leads us sunward in the triumph song of life.

CALL TO CONFESSION

We are God's beloved people. As we rest in God's love, let us confess our sins.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Loving and Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. We see a world undone by strife, torn by violence, in turmoil through fear, and separated by hatred. Yet you call us to walk the way of peace and justice.

Forgive us, Lord, for refusing to follow you on this path because the cost seems too high, the direction too confusing, the conditions too harsh. Forgive us our complacency in the face of injustice. Grant us clarity of vision to see your light shining through the darkness and the strength to follow, walking in your path. In the power of your Spirit we pray.

Hear now the silent confessions on our hearts.

SILENT CONFESSION

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

As we have died with Christ, so also we live with him, dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus, the Christ. Friends, hear and believe the Good News, in the name of Jesus, our Savior, we are forgiven. **Amen.**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

SONG OF AFFIRMATION #581 “Glory Be to the Father”

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, amen.

TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Creator God, open our hearts and minds to hear your word for our lives. May it light anew the Spirit of Wisdom within us, encouraging us to conform our lives to the life of Jesus. **Amen.**

FIRST READING — Isaiah 5:1-7

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING — Matthew 21:33-46

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON: “Grapes and People, Wild and Good” Debra Davies

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH – from “The Brief Statement of Faith”

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.

HYMN #522 “I am the Bread of Life” vss. 1, 2, 5

- 1 “I am the bread of life. You who come to me shall not hunger, and who believe in me shall not thirst. No one can come to me unless the Father beckons.”
Refrain
“And I will raise you up, and I will raise you up, and I will raise you up on the last day.”
- 2 “The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world, and if you eat of this bread, you shall live forever; you shall live forever.”
Refrain
- 5 Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who has come into the world.
Refrain

CALL TO OFFERING/Peace and Global Witness Offering

One way we do things differently is by claiming and celebrating that we belong to each other, all the peoples of the world. We are each other’s to protect, to hold accountable, to feed, and to nurture. Like iron sharpens iron, we grow together. With commitment to this shared journey, let us bring our offerings to God.

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DOXOLOGY

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Spirit of Imagination, come to us with your creative and radical visions of hope for the world. Deepen our collective capacity to live for justice and reconciliation, practicing alternatives to the destructive ways of the world. Bless our offerings to the work of love in ways that make all things new throughout the world. **Amen.**

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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (*Pray for those who are ill and all health care workers and those in essential jobs serving us. Pray for our congregation now separated. Pray for our country's leaders as they make tough decisions. Pray for our world.*)

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION

Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God!
We believe that at the Lord's Supper the community of believers is renewed by the memory of Christ's life and death, by his real presence in the power of the Holy Spirit, and by the promise of his coming again.

**Christ makes himself known to us
in the breaking of bread.**

He offers us his body broken for our sake
and his blood shed for the forgiveness of our sins.

**We accept his promises and gifts
and depend on his life to sustain ours.**

In turn we offer ourselves in thanksgiving
to the risen Lord who has conquered death.

**So we celebrate his victory here and now
and anticipate the joyous feast in his coming kingdom.**

**Reunited around one loaf and cup,
we receive strength and courage
to continue our pilgrimage with God in the world.**

Declaration of Faith, 6.5

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Sisters and Brothers, the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise, O Lord our God, Creator and Ruler of the universe. In your wisdom, you made all things and sustain them with your power. You formed us in your image, setting us in the world to love and serve you, and to live in peace with your whole creation.

When we rebelled against you, refusing to trust and obey you, you did not reject us, but still claimed us as your own. You sent prophets to call us back to your way.

Then in the fullness of time, out of your great love for the world, you came as a human being to be one of us, to redeem us and heal our brokenness. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with choirs of angels, with prophets, apostles, martyrs, and with all the faithful of every time and place, who forever sing to the glory of your name:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of power and might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

You are holy, O God of majesty. In Jesus, born of Mary, your Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. In Jesus, you lived as one with us, knowing joy and sorrow.

In Jesus, you healed the sick,

fed the hungry,

opened blind eyes,

broke bread with outcasts and sinners,

and proclaimed the good news of your kingdom to the poor and needy.

Dying on the cross,

Christ gave himself for the life of the world.

Rising from the grave,

Christ won for us victory over death,

Seated at your right hand,

Christ leads us to eternal life.

We praise you that Christ now reigns with you in glory,

and will come again to make all things new.

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ. By your spirit unite us with the living Christ and with all who are baptized in his name around the world, that we may be one in ministry in every place.

As this bread is Christ's body for us,

send us to be the body of Christ in the world.

By the fire of your spirit, O God, forge us into one church, many and different people,

together in Christ's embrace.

Set our hearts aflame with a love for the truth and the desire to do your will,
that our witness to Christ may burn brightly in lives of joyful discipleship.
Keep us faithful in your service until Christ comes in final victory **and we shall
feast with all your saints in the joy of your eternal kingdom.**
Gracious God, all glory and honor are yours, now, and forever.

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into
temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

On the night of his betrayal, Jesus sat with his disciples at table. He took the bread,
blessed it and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat. This is my
body, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, after the meal, Jesus took the cup, saying, "This is the cup of the
new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for all for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in
remembrance of me."

DISTRIBUTION

*The ushers will pass cups containing a wafer and juice. After everyone has been
served, we will partake of the bread together and then of the cup together. Those at
home are invited to join with their own bread and juice so that all in the sanctuary
and at home receive the elements together.*

The Bread of Life.

(all eat the bread/wafer)

The Cup of Salvation.

(all drink the juice)

PRAYER

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given
yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit,
dedicating ourselves to the care of all your creation in the name of Jesus the Christ.
Amen.

HYMN #546

“Lord, Dismiss us with Your Blessing”

vss. 1-3

- 1 Lord, dismiss us with your blessing; fill our hearts with joy and peace; let us each, your love possessing, triumph in redeeming grace. O refresh us, O refresh us, traveling through this wilderness.
- 2 Thanks we give and adoration for your gospel’s joyful sound; may the fruits of your salvation in our hearts and lives abound. Ever faithful, ever faithful to your truth may we be found.
- 3 Savior, when your love shall call us, from our struggling pilgrim way, let no fear of death appall us, glad your summons to obey. May we ever, may we ever reign with you in endless day.

CHARGE AND BLESSING

Friends,

God is still speaking:

Love deeply, compassionately, with your whole self;

Listen more, speak less, and when you speak, speak the truth in love, following

Christ’s example;

Forgive yourself and others, releasing the bonds of hatred;

Respect all persons and welcome them into the fellowship of Jesus Christ, believers or not;

The road to transformation is crowded with unexpected people and events, know the Spirit travels with you;

Find quiet in yourselves, listening for the rush of wind over the water and the rustling of the trees, for these are the voice of God;

Find humor where you can, laugh often and with abandon;

Follow the rhythm of life; and

Choose joy, always.

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May the grace of our Lord, Jesus the Christ,

The love of God,

And the love and comfort of the Holy Spirit go with each of us as we leave this service. **AMEN**

Ushers: John Chesman and Marilyn Marshall

About our Guest Speaker this Sunday!

Debra Davies, M.Div., is a graduate of San Francisco Theological Seminary (1998). She is a Ruling Elder of 40 years, having served four different congregations in that role as well as Clerk of Session in two congregations. She has long been involved in ecumenical activities, visited churches on three continents, and values the diversity of people of faith across Christian and non-Christian denominations and traditions.