

July 18, 2021
8th Sunday after Pentecost

PRELUDES

Then Shall the Righteous Shine Forth Felix Mendelssohn
Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart
Robert W. Thygerson

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 100)

L: Enter the gates of the Lord with thanksgiving and the courts of God with praise;

P: Give thanks and bless God's holy name.

L: For the Lord is good; God's love is eternal, and God's faithfulness has no end.

All: Let us worship God.

WELCOMING SONG #667

When Morning Gilds the Skies *Laudes Domini*
(verse 1)

When morning gilds the skies, my heart awaking cries: may Jesus Christ be praised! Alike at work and prayer to Jesus I repair: may Jesus Christ be praised!

(verse 3)

Let earth's wide circle round in joyful notes resound: may Jesus Christ be praised! Let air and sea and sky from depth to height reply: may Jesus Christ be praised!

(verse 4)

Be this, while life is mine, my canticle divine: may Jesus Christ be praised! Be this the eternal song through all the ages long: may Jesus Christ be praised!

CALL TO CONFESSION (adapted from Colossians 2)

L: We have been buried with Christ in baptism, in order that we might be raised to new life with him through faith in the power of God. Confident of God's grace, let us confess our sins and the sin of this world.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love; in your abundant mercy, blot out our transgressions. For we know that against you we have sinned and done what is evil in your sight. And so, create in us a clean heart, O God. Renew a right spirit within us and receive us into the arms of your mercy as a new creation; where the past is left behind and everything has become fresh and new.

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (from Colossians 2)

L: Because we were buried with Christ in baptism, we are, also, raised to new life with him. Believe the good news; in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God. Amen.

CHORAL RESPONSE #695

Change My Heart, O God *Change My Heart*
**Change my heart, O God; make it ever true. Change my heart, O God;
may I be like you. You are the Potter; I am the clay. Mold me and make
me; this is what I pray.**

By Eddie Espinosa
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UNISON PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Your Word, O God, enlightens our path and shows us the way to go. Open our hearts and speak to us now that we may know your desires for our lives and respond with joy. Amen.

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING – Psalm 66:1-4, 16-20

¹ Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth; ² sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise. ³ Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds! Because of your great power, your enemies cringe before you. ⁴ All the earth worships you; they sing praises to you, sing praises to your name.”

¹⁶ Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for me. ¹⁷ I cried aloud to him, and he was extolled with my tongue. ¹⁸ If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. ¹⁹ But truly God has listened; he has given heed to the words of my prayer. ²⁰ Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me.

VALLEY LIVES

Mackensie Bush

SPECIAL MUSIC

Sinking Deep *Joel Davies & Aodhan King*
Soloist: Brenda Wahl
Please join in the refrain:

***I'm wide awake, drawing close, stirred by grace and all my heart is
Yours. All fear removed. I breathe You in, I lean into Your love. Oh,
Your love. Your love so deep is washing over me. Your face is all I seek,
You are my everything. Jesus Christ, You are my one desire. Lord, hear
my only cry to know You all my life.***

By Joel Davies and Aodhan King; ©2012 HillSong Music Publishing (APRA); CCL # 11043756

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING – Acts 17:16-34

¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and also in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, “What does this babblers want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities.” (This was because he was telling

the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.) ¹⁹ So they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰ It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means.” ²¹ Now all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new. ²² Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. ²³ For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶ From one ancestor^[b] he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷ so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’ ²⁹ Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. ³⁰ While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.” ³² When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed; but others said, “We will hear you again about this.” ³³ At that point Paul left them. ³⁴ But some of them joined him and became believers, including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

SERMON

“Searching for God”

Rev. John Wahl

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD’S PRAYER

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY

In a Quiet Moment

Steven Scott

RESPONSE #609 *Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow*

Lasst Uns Erfreuen

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures high and low. Alleluia, alleluia! Praise God, in Jesus fully known: Creator, Word, and Spirit one. Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

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PRAYER OF DEDICATION

SENDING SONG #432 *How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord*

Repton

(verse 1)

How clear is our vocation, Lord, when once we heed your call to live according to your word and daily learn, refreshed, restored, that you are Lord of all and will not let us fall.

(verse 4)

In what you give us, Lord, to do, together or alone, in old routines or ventures new, may we not cease to look to you: the cross you hung upon, all you endeavored, done.

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SABBATICAL LEAVE-TAKING

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Immortal, Invisible

Edward Broughton

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Health and Safety Protocols

As we return to in-person worship services, we ask you to follow these guidelines:

- Windows will be open and fans turned on, so please dress to be comfortable.
- In order for proper distancing, please do not sit in the pews that have been blocked or directly next to people not in your family.
 - Please wear face coverings when inside the church building.
 - If you are not feeling well today, please stay home.
- Hymnals and pew bibles have been put away, the words are printed in the bulletin.
- At this time, we will not be passing the peace, the offering plate, or holding hands for the benediction at the close of the service.
- Since we are livestreaming the service, we ask that you remain seated in the pews during the prelude and postlude.
- After the worship service has concluded, we ask that you move outside for any extended conversations.

Thank you for your patience and understanding. Any changes to these protocols will be shared in advance of Sunday gatherings.

Valley Lives

You are invited to participate in a new “Valley” outreach called “Valley Lives.” It will be a brief narrative from the members of the congregation to share their experiences from the time we spent apart during COVID. “Valley Lives” will give you a chance to share what has happened in your life; the challenges you faced; the adjustments you made to be connected with others; the faith that helped you handle the day to day; and, well, simply how you are. This will be included in the Summer Sunday services and scheduled at a date that is convenient for you. Please contact the church office or Nancy Sullivan; if you are interested.

Videographers Needed



We are looking for volunteers to film the worship service for livestreaming, with training and instructions provided. If you are interested in helping, please contact the church office or Elder Beth Krause.

CFPCC Food Bank Needs

Please consider donating the following items to help stock the shelves at Chagrin Falls Park Community Center:



Miracle whip, sandwich bread (no bakery bread), fresh vegetables, snacks, tea bags for making ice tea, sugar.

CFPCC is receiving donations at your car. Someone will come out and retrieve donations.

Pass-it-on Resale Store



The **store will be open** on:

Friday, August 20

(10 a.m. – 4 p.m.)

Saturday, August 21

(10 a.m. – 2 p.m.)

VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

www.valleypresbychurch.org

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Heart of Valley Preschool
Heidi Cregar, Director
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Director of Music: Nancy Sullivan
Liturgist: Sue Doughman

Organist: John Kautzman
Greeter: Beth Krause

Sabbatical Leave-Taking

Pastor John will be on Sabbatical from July 19 – August 30 for a time of rest and renewal, as well as working on his Doctor of Ministry project thesis. This opportunity is possible because of a grant from the Board of Pensions of the PC(USA) and the support of this congregation and its leaders. If you are in need of pastoral care during this time, please contact past intern, Amber Balista, Parish Associate, Rev. Chip Steele, or the church office.

Elder: We pray God's blessings upon Pastor John as he begins his Sabbatical time – a time of remembering, rest, and renewal.

People: We pray that God will guide you in what you will do and the places you will go.

Pastor: God's peace be with you as I depart to walk in new places, to renew my spirit, my ministry, my life.

People: God be with you while we are away from one another.

Elder: This is our time to renew our spirits and revitalize our church life.

Pastor: God's blessings upon you while I am gone from you, during your time of Sabbath and renewal.

People: May you experience the gift of spiritual growth in your journey. May God grant you a trusting heart as you explore new places. We send you forth with our blessing.

Elder: The primary symbol for pastors is their stole. It points to their being set apart by the Church for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. We now remove Pastor John's stole and place it on the pulpit where it will remain until he returns from Sabbatical. The presence of his stole will remind us of our shared Sabbatical journey and of our mutual commitment to prayer for one another during this time of restoration and growth.

Elder removes Pastor John's stole.

Pastor John's keys – the ones he uses every day – to open the building, unlock the church office, and close up when services are concluded. He will not need these while he is away, so we take them from him as a sign that he is being untethered from his daily responsibilities to this congregation.

Pastor John hands keys to Elder.

They will remain in our safe keeping until you return.

People: While you are away, we will pray that you will return renewed and energized for ministry.

Pastor: While I am away, I will pray that this will be a time of discovery and re-commitment, seeking the future that God envisions for our lives and for the ministry of this church.

Elder: Let us pray – Spirit of God, descend upon our hearts. Renew John for ministry through this time set aside for reflection and study, the refreshment of a break from daily tasks and routine, the excitement of new learning and direction. Grace him with your presence and keep him steadfast in faith while we are gone from one another. Trustworthy God, lift up the lay leaders and staff members who will look after the congregation during his Sabbatical time. We give thanks for the generosity and courage of those who will be filling the pulpit and assisting with pastoral care.

Eternal God, you fill us with every good thing and your steadfast love endures forever. We thank you for Pastor John – and for his wife, Brenda, and their family – and for the life they share with Valley Presbyterian Church. Send them forth with your blessing, fill them with your Spirit, and bring them again into our presence with renewed life; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. And let all God's people say...

People: Amen! Go in peace!

Pastor: Go in peace!