

July 25, 2021

9th Sunday after Pentecost

Making Holy Spaces

Memory Verse:

“Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” (Exodus 3:5b-6)

Pastor John is 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.

Amber Balista – our former intern and recent seminary graduate – will be guiding us through a six-week worship series called “Gathering & Gospeling,” which will include time for creative conversation among church members. Today, we are pleased to welcome Rev. Sharon Core – General Presbyter, Presbytery of the Western Reserve – as guest preacher.

If you are in need of pastoral care during this time, please contact Amber Balista or Parish Associate, Rev. Chip Steele via the church office.

PRELUDE

*Thoughts of Worship
Bound for the Promised Land*

*Lorre
Livingston, Jr.*

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: God, we are longing for silence; we are seeking and searching for solitude. Where do we find you God?

P: In running restful waters, shimmering leaves, and whispering winds.

L: In ancient ruins and stories, in Celtic crosses standing strong, and ancestors remembered. Where do you find you God?

P: In sacred spaces and mysteries unfolding, God is in the known and unknown.

All: Come let us find God in this holy space.

OPENING HYMN #410

*God Is Calling through the Whisper
(verse 1)*

W Żłobie Leży

God is calling through the whisper of the Spirit’s deepest sighs, through the thrill of sudden beauties that can catch us by surprise. Flash of lightning, crash of thunder; hush of stillness, rush of wonder: God is calling—can you hear? God is calling—can you hear?

(verse 2)

God is calling through the voices of our neighbors’ urgent prayers, through their longing for redemption and for rescue from despair. Place of hurt or face of need; strident cry or silent pleading: God is calling—can you hear? God is calling—can you hear?

(verse 3)

God is calling through the music of sublime and human arts, through the hymns of earth and angels, and the carols of our hearts. Lift of joy and gift of singing; days and nights our praises bringing: God is calling—and we hear? God is calling—and we hear?

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TIME OF CONFESSION

CALL TO CONFESSION (from Isaiah 43)

When we pass through deep waters or go through times of fiery trial, the Lord our God is with us. With Confidence in God, our creator and redeemer, let us confess our sin.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O Lord our God, you call us to proclaim the gospel, but we remain silent in the presence of evil. You call us to be reconciled to you and one another, but we are content to live in separation. You call us to seek the good of all, but we fail to resist the powers of oppression. You call us to fight injustice, but we sit idly by.

Forgive us. Reconcile us to you by the power of your Spirit, and give us the courage and strength to be reconciled to others; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (from Isaiah 43)

Do not fear, says the Lord, for I have redeemed you, I have called you by name; you are mine. God is doing a new thing; now it springs forth! By the grace of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! **Thanks be to God!**

CREATIVE CONVERSATION

Amber Balista

*What is your favorite space at church? Or another place you feel close to God?
Where do you like to pray? What is your favorite Hymn?*

CHORAL PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION #701

Lord, Prepare Me

Sanctuary

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true. With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

By John Thompson and Randy Scruggs
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FIRST SCRIPTURE READING – Exodus 3:1-6

¹Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ²There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. ³Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." ⁴When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see,

God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” ⁵ Then he said, “Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” ⁶ He said further, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

SPECIAL MUSIC

In the Garden

Miles

Soloist: Chip Steele

Please join in the 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.

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING – Isaiah 6:1-3

¹In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. ² Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. ³ And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

SERMON

“Taking Off Our Shoes”

Rev. Sharon Core

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

OFFERTORY

To a Wildrose

McDowell

UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Holy, holy, holy God, Creator of all things. Help us to embrace holy spaces: between you and me, between my neighbor and me, between strangers and me. Teach us how to invite others to experience the infinite grace that is contained in single moments of holiness: when a baby laughs, when I look at the stars, when a good story is told about someone we loved and lost. Accept all that we are, and all that we give, in your Son’s holy name. Amen.

WORK IN THE WORD (Homework)

Amber Balista

Think of someone you would like to invite into Holy Space. This week, invite them for coffee, a walk, or phone conversation. Ask them about something challenging or uplifting happening in their life, and take time to listen well. Pray for them during or after your visit.

HYMN #450

Be Thou My Vision

Slane

(verse 1)

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art; thou my best thought, by day or by night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

(verse 2)

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true Word; I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord; thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tower; raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

(verse 3)

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise; thou mine inheritance, now and always; thou and thou only, first in my heart, High King of Heaven, my treasure thou art.

(verse 4)

High King of Heaven, my victory won, may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun! Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

BLESSING

POSTLUDE

Seasons

Fox & Newmark

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

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