

First Presbyterian Church

Laurens South Carolina

September 20, 2020

Prelude

“Variations on IN BABILON”

Arr., Raymond H. Haan

There's a wideness in God's mercy; like the wideness of the sea. There's a kindness in God's justice, which is more than liberty. There is no place where earth's sorrows are more felt than in heaven. There is no place where earth's failings have such kindly judgement give.

For the love of God is broader than the measures of the mind. And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind. If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God's Word, and our lives reflect thanksgiving for the goodness of our Lord.

Jean Cann, Organist

Announcements

Dr. McCracken

Call to Worship

Dr. Lister

Minister: It is good to come into the house of the Lord!

Congregation: YES! Amen!

Minister: It is more than good to be together again, gathered with our brothers and sisters in Christ to worship Almighty God.

Congregation: YES! Amen!

Minister: We are here with thanksgiving and praise.

Congregation: The Lord is good! We praise Almighty God!

Hymn “God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand” NATIONAL HYMN

Please meditate on the stanzas of this hymn as they are played by Jean and Harriette.

God of the ages, whose almighty hand leads forth in beauty all the starry band of shining worlds in splendor through the skies, our grateful songs before thy throne arise.

Thy love divine hath led us in the past. In this free land by thee our lot is cast. Be thou our ruler, guardian, guide and stay: thy word our law, thy paths our chosen way.

From wars alarms, from deadly pestilence, be thy strong arm our ever sure defense. Thy true religion in our hearts increase. Thy bounteous goodness nourish us in peace.

Refresh thy people on our toilsome way. Lead us from night to never ending day. Fill all our lives with love and grace divine, and glory, laud, and praise be ever thine.

Prayer of Confession

Have mercy, O God, have mercy on us. When we sin against neighbor, condone injustice, and quarrel with one another, we sin against you. Forgive us, we pray, for we are broken in spirit. Do not see us for our faults, and do not go away from us. Keep us always in your presence so that we may be restored to the joy of your salvation. Sustain in us a willing spirit to treasure what you desire; then our hearts will be opened in joy and gladness. In Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Friends, believe the Good News!

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Dr. McCracken

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 evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Hymn "In the Midst of New Dimensions"

In the midst of new dimensions, in the face of changing ways, who will lead the pilgrim peoples wandering in their separate ways? God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where eagles soar, we, your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now and evermore.

Scripture: Ezra 3: 10-13

Dr. McCracken

Sermon Joy and Tears

Dr. McCracken

Affirmation of Faith

The Apostles' Creed

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Hymns "The Church of Christ in Every Age" GERMANY

The church of Christ in every age, beset by change but Spirit led, must claim and test its heritage and keep on rising from the dead.

The Church's One Foundation

AURELIA

The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord. She is his new creation by water and the word. From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride. With his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.

Mid toil and tribulation, and tumult of her war, she waits the consummation of peace forevermore: till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest, and the great church victorious shall be the church at rest.

Benediction

Dr. McCracken

Postlude "Improvisation on AURELIA"

Jean Cann, Organist

Yet she on earth hath union with God, the Three in One, and mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won: O happy ones and holy! Lord, give us grace that we, like them, the meek and lowly, may live eternally.

Thank you to Harriette Brewington for assisting in worship this morning.