SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
SEPTEMBER 24, 2023
11:00 AM

As a courtesy to others, please silence your phone.

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

RINGING OF THE BELLS

WELCOME AND INVITATION Rev. Timothy T. Boggess

PRELUDE *Jesu, Joy of Our Desiring* J. S. Bach

CALL TO WORSHIP Michael Fingerle

Psalm 130, the *Message* translation.

If you, God, kept records on wrongdoings,
who would stand a chance?
As it turns out, forgiveness is your habit,
and that's why you're worshiped.
O people, wait and watch for GOD—
with God's arrival comes love,
with God's arrival comes generous redemption.

*** HYMN 49** *The God of Abraham Praise* LEONI

The God of Abraham praise,
who reigns enthroned above,
the Ancient of Eternal Days,
the God of love!
The Lord, the great I am,
by earth and heaven confessed,
we bow before your holy name,
forever blest.

Your spirit still flows free,
high surging where it will.
In prophet's word you spoke of old
and you speak still.
Established is your law,
and changeless it shall stand,
deep writ upon the human heart
by your strong hand.

Your goodly land we seek,
with peace and plenty blest,
a land of sacred liberty
and Sabbath rest.
There milk and honey flow,
and oil and wine abound,
and trees of life forever grow
with mercy crowned. *(continued next page)*

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

You have eternal life
implanted in the soul;
your love shall be our strength and stay,
while ages roll.
We praise you, living God!
We praise your holy name:
the first, the last, beyond all thought,
and still the same!

*** PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

From the United Church of Christ *Book of Worship.*

Gracious God,
our sins are too heavy to carry,
too real to hide,
and too deep to undo.
Forgive what our lips tremble to name,
what our hearts can no longer bear,
and what has become for us
a consuming fire of judgment.

Set us free from a past that we cannot change;
open to us a future in which we can be changed;
and grant us grace to grow more and more
in your likeness and image;
through Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

(a moment for silent reflection)

*** ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

*** SONG OF JOY 269** (v 2) *Lead On, O King Eternal* LANCASHIRE

Lead on, O King eternal,
till sin's fierce war shall cease,
and holiness shall whisper
the sweet amen of peace;
for not with swords' loud clashing,
nor roll of stirring drums;
with deeds of love and mercy
the heavenly kingdom comes.

*** PASSING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.

LIFE OF THE CHURCH

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

ANTHEM *Do Not Be Afraid* Phillip Stopford
(The Chancel Choir with Greg Stead, Oboe) Words by Gerard Markland

Refrain
Do not be afraid.
Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by your name: You are mine.
You are mine.

When you walk through the waters I'll be with you;
You will never sink beneath the waves.
When the fire is burning all around you,
You will never be consumed by the flames. (Refrain)

When the fear of loneliness is looming,
Then remember I am at your side.
When you dwell in the exile of a stranger,
Remember you are precious in my eyes. (Refrain)

You are mine, O my child,
I am your Father and I love you.
I love you with a perfect love. (Refrain)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING Genesis 32:3-7; 33:1-5 Page 28

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Is God prompting you to let go of something?

SERMON *Holding on to Letting Go* Rev. Boggess

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

* **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** *The Study Catechism*
Michael Fingerle

The Study Catechism was approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998) as a teaching tool of the PC(USA).

What do you mean when you speak of "the forgiveness of sins"?
That because of Jesus Christ,
God no longer holds my sins against me.
Christ alone is my righteousness and my life;
Christ is my only hope.

How can you forgive those who have really hurt you?
I cannot love my enemies,
I cannot pray for those who persecute me,
I cannot even be ready to forgive those who have really hurt me,
without the grace that comes from above.
Yet I am promised that I can do all things
through Christ who strengthens me.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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.

OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

OFFERTORY *Meditation for Oboe and Piano: Morning Light* Steven Phillips
(Greg Stead, Oboe)

* **DOXOLOGY 608** *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow* PRAISE GOD (Hopson)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise Christ, all people here below;
praise Holy Spirit evermore;
praise Triune God, whom we adore.

* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

BEARING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

* **HYMN 432** *How Clear is Our Vocation, Lord* REPTON

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.

But if, forgetful, we should find
your yoke is hard to bear;
if worldly pressures fray the mind
and love itself cannot unwind
its tangled skein of care:
our inward life repair.

We marvel how your saints became
in hindrances more sure:
whose joyful virtues put to shame
the casual way we wear your name,
and by our faults obscure
your power to cleanse and cure.

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.

* **CHARGE AND BENEDICTION** Rev. Boggess

POSTLUDE *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty* Paul Manz