Westminster Presbyterian Church

LITURGY FOR AUGUST 9, 2020
10TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Gathering Words **Diane and Joel Chupp**

Here, in this place, God welcomes all the dreamers,
as well as the doubters.
Here, in these moments, we are reminded
that God is with us, always!

Here are gathered those daring enough
to step out of comfort into the unknown.
Here, in this faith space, we will find the courage to cry out,
"Save us, O God. Preserve us for your purposes."

Opening Prayer **Diane and Joel Chupp**

God of steadfast love,
True to your promise to never leave us, you come into the midst of the turmoil of our lives.

We confess that we are intimidated by our circumstances,
We feel trapped in cisterns of despair—some dug by our own hands.
Save us from becoming presumptuous about your will for us and for others;
From belittling each other;
Afraid to dream and despise others for daring to do so;
From becoming hardened to the suffering of our sisters and brothers,
Feeding ourselves in the face of the injustice that holds them captive.

God of power,
liberate us from the shackles of
What isn't, what doesn't work, what cannot happen.

Raise us up,
Lift our eyes to notice every glimmer of light, no matter how faint,
to see you in all things.
Give us courage to live out of the abundance of your love for all your children.
Amen.

Opening Hymn God is Calling through the Wisper GTG410

Scripture Reading Genesis 37: 1-4, 12-28 Dr. Enikő Ferenczy

Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. 2 This is the story of the family of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. 3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. 4But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

12 Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. 13 And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." He answered, "Here I am." 14 So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock; and bring word back to me." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron.

He came to Shechem, 15 and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" 16 "I am seeking my brothers," he said; "tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock." 17 The man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan.

18 They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. 19 They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. 20 Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams." 21 But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." 22 Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him"—that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father. 23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; 24 and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

25 Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. 26 Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers agreed. 28 When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

Sermon Choose to Dream Dr. Enikő Ferenczy

Invitation to Offering

Hymn Love is Greater than Fear *The Many*

Prayer of the People **Diane and Joel Chupp**

Holy and gracious God,
We find ourselves like Jacob, living these days like strangers in our lives and our skin,
Like Joseph, trapped in cisterns of despair.
It is hard to see the rays of hope, and we need to hear the assurance of the Psalmist:
"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea…
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;

God will help it when the morning dawns."

Raise those who face the seemingly unsurmountable walls of poverty and financial crisis.
We cry out on behalf of families unable to provide basic necessities for their children,
our siblings wrestling with food insecurity,
those on the cusp of eviction and the unemployed facing the end of benefits.

Free those who are trapped by the endless tunnels of the mass incarceration system,
whose dreams are shattered by unjustifiably harsh sentences,
by the shackles of being a felon with no options to restoration.

Raise those who are lost in the dungeons of violence, of terror and war,
Your children who are feared and dehumanized because of the color of their skin,
Because of their ethnic or religious background,
Your children on our streets, in Beirut, in other places torn my conflict.

Reach out and give courage and strength to people in leadership positions.
Grant them wisdom to make decisions in the best interests of the most vulnerable.
Inspire our communities to use our various levels of power and resources, will and gifts,
to support the people pushed to the margins,
those for whom this difficult season has been catastrophic.

May your Spirit hold teachers, administrators, parents and students
as they all seek to navigate a new school year
rife with uncertainty and unprecedented challenges.
Protect the essential workers,
who are facing the danger of this public health crisis every day.
Lift up the sick and all those who suffer,
who face loss, grief, and depression.

God of abundance, God of dreams,
Lift all of us trapped in the cisterns of self-doubt, or even self-hate,
Who are wounded and the only way we know how to cope is to wound others.
Lift us from our fear of not being enough, of not having enough.
Give is courage to choose sisterhood and brotherhood over our fear.
Empower us to keep on dreaming, inspite of our circumstances.

For in Christ, you make us new,
And call us to be co-creators of the abundance you dream for all your children.
May we be freed from our fears to do so.
Amen.

Closing Hymn Guide My Feet GTG741

Benediction Dr. Enikő Ferenczy

Note: Gathering Words adapted from Thom Shuman.