FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BETHLEHEM

Traditional Service
Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost

October 1, 2023

The Service for the Lord's Day

WE GATHER

PRELUDE Poem Mystique — Richard Purvis

WELCOME

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: O sing to the Lord a new song, for God has done marvelous things!
People: The Lord has revealed his victory in the sight of all nations!
Leader: Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!
People: Let the waters clap their hands, let the hills sing together for joy!
All: Come, let us worship God!

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

*GATHERING HYMN — #361

How Firm a Foundation — FOUNDATION

1 How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!
What more can be said than to you God hath said,
To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

2 "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

3 "When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
For I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

4 "When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

*Please stand if you are able.

5 "The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

CALL TO CONFESSON

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious and Loving God, Christ taught us that the greatest commandment is to love you with all of our being, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Too often, though, it is so difficult not to put our own interests and desires first, to hold back our love and compassion, our generosity and commitment to justice. We fear there will not be enough to give and make a difference; we fear there will not be enough left for us. Forgive us, Lord, and help us to love as you have taught and called us to love, so that through our lives others may witness your love at work in the world.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

WE LISTEN

CHILDREN'S SERMON

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE Romans 12:1-13 Betsy Simpson

Leader: The word of the Lord;
People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON The Rev. J.C. Austin

"An Off-Road Faith: Discerning the Way"

WE RESPOND

*SERMON HYMN #251

Your Faithfulness, O Lord, Is Sure WINCHESTER NEW

1 You faithfulness, O Lord, is sure
In all Your words, Your gracious deeds;
You gently lift all burdened souls
And well provide for all our needs.

2 The eyes of all are fixed on You;
By You their wants are all supplied;
Your open hand is bountiful
And every soul is satisfied.

3 Lord, You are just in all You ways,
And kind in everything You do;
Forever near You stand to hear
And help all those who call on You.

4 My mouth shall speak Your praise, O Lord,
My soul shall bless Your holy name;
Let all things living join the song
Of praise, from age to age the same.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (from 1 Corinthians 15)

This is the good news which we have received, in which we stand, and by which we are saved, if we hold it fast: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day, and that he appeared first to the women, then to Peter, and to the Twelve, and then to many faithful witnesses. We believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus Christ is the first and the last, the beginning and the end; he is our Lord and our God. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL FOR OFFERING

Call to Give

Offertory By Gracious Powers Jean Gelineau

Chancel Choir

By gracious powers so wonderfully sheltered
and confidently waiting come what may.
We know that God is with us night and morning
and never fails to greet us each new day.

Yet is this heart by its old foe tormented;
still evil days bring burdens hard to bear;
O give our frightened souls the sure salvation for which
O Lord, you taught us to prepare.

And when this cup you give is full to brimming
with bitter sorrow, hard to understand,
we take it thankfully, and without trembling
out of so good and so belov'd a hand.

Yet when again in this same world you give us
the joy we had, the brightness of your sun.
We shall remember the days we lived through,
and all our days shall then be yours alone.

Of all of the hymns written in the 20th century, "By Gracious Powers" has one of the most poignant stories.

Australian hymnologist Wesley Milgate provides the setting for this text, written in the wan-ing days of World War II by the imprisoned Lutheran minister Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945):

"From the Gestapo bunker in Prinz-Albert-Strasse, Berlin, to which he had been transferred from Tegel on 8 October 1944, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote this New Year message to his friends on the last New Year's Eve of his life, 31 December 1944; it was smuggled out of his prison, and has become one of Bonhoeffer's best known compositions.

"Bonhoeffer had traveled to the United States in 1939, where he was met with acclaim among theologians. Knowing the perilous situation in Germany, he was encouraged by many in the United States to remain in this country. (continued…)

"He chose to return to Germany, however, where he participated in the Nazi resistance and was arrested in April 1943. The Nazis executed Bonhoeffer on April 9, 1945, just a month before the end of World War II.

*Doxology #592

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication

WE CELEBRATE THE LORD'S SUPPER

Invitation to the Lord's Table

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give thanks and praise.

Leader: It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise…

As our Savior Christ has taught us, so we pray:

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.

Words of Institution

Sharing the Bread and the Cup

Communion Music Aria Ned Rorem

*SENDING HYMN #538

Lord, Dismiss Us with Thy Blessing SICILIAN MARINERS

1 Lord, dismiss us with Thy blessing;
Fill our hearts with joy and peace;
Let us each, Thy love possessing,
Triumph in redeeming grace.
O refresh us, O refresh us,
Traveling through this wilderness.

2 Thanks we give and adoration
For Thy gospel's joyful sound;
May the fruits of Thy salvation
In our hearts and lives abound.
Ever faithful, Ever faithful
To the truth may we be found.

3 So that when Thy love shall call us,
Savior, from the world away,
Let no fear of death appall us,
Glad Thy summons to obey.
May we ever, May we ever
Reign with Thee in endless day.

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE "Rondeau" from *Abdelazer* Henry Purcell/arr. C. Morris