

***The First Church of Christ in Marblehead
Old North Church, United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation***

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

November 22, 2020

Thanksgiving Sunday

GATHERING

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

One: We come, for God gathers us here,
with that community called faith:
where the hungry are served first,
where the thirsty drink life's water.

We come, for God welcomes us here
into that home called grace:
where the naked are clothed in robes of hope;
where the stranger is embraced as the long-lost prodigal.

We come, for God reunites us here,
sisters and brothers in that family called love:
where the imprisoned model justice,
where the sick are cradled in God's peace.

We come to worship the Lord our God...

HYMN

We Gather Together

#23

Stephanie Scarella, mezzo- soprano; Maria vanKalken, organ

CENTERING

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

One: Generous God, we come to you this morning with grateful hearts. So much has been taken away from us in these last months; we are learning to recognize what we have, and to give thanks for it.

For the beautiful world around us, for the changing of the leaves and the ebbing of the tides, we say thank you. For the people whom we love, and for the connections we maintain even across great distance, we say thank you. For all of those who have worked to sustain our common life and to protect those most vulnerable, we say thank you. For a faith that extends beyond the walls of our sanctuary, we say thank you. For hope and joy that persist even through grief and loss, we say thank you. For all the numberless gifts of this life, too many to name, we say thank you.

LORD'S PRAYER (debts)

One: Jesus showed us how to live a life of radical generosity and gratitude. We pray now as he taught us, saying:

ALL: **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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 and ever. Amen.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: We know that we have not lived up to who we long to be. We know that we are dogged by old habits and patterns. We pray now in silence to confess our sins, and open ourselves to God's mercy.

SILENT PRAYER

One: We hear our own longings in this prayer from theologian Howard Thurman:
Open unto me — light for my darkness, courage for my fear, hope for my despair.
Open unto me — peace for my turmoil, joy for my sorrow, strength for my weakness.
Open unto me — wisdom for my confusion, forgiveness for my sins, love for my hates.
Open unto me — thy Self for my self. Lord, Lord, open unto me! Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: Of this we are sure: God has already given us hope, courage, and strength. God has given us forgiveness for every sin. As grateful and joyful people, we rest assured of God's grace and love.

LISTENING

MOMENTS WITH OUR CHILDREN

Thank You

Linda Armold

Cecilia Choir; Sarah Del Dotto, director, Dara VanRemoortel, piano

MUSICAL OFFERING

Amazing Grace

arranged and performed by Charlyn Bethell, oboe; Guy Urban piano

FIRST LESSON

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the

Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

Therefore, thus says the Lord God to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken.

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 25:31-46

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you? Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

SERMON

“Sorted Out”

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

PASTORAL PRAYER

RESPONDING

OFFERTORY MOMENT DOXOLOGY (#45)

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

Praise God for love we all may share.
Praise God for beauty everywhere.
Praise God for hope of good to be.
Praise God for truth that makes us free. Amen.

SENDING

HYMN

Now Thank We All Our God

#27

Holly Cameron, soprano; Maria vanKalken, piano

BENEDICTION

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun