

August 29th, 2021 - Fourteenth After Pentecost

Welcome and Announcements:

Good morning and welcome to worship with us today at Central United Church. We begin our service by acknowledging that the earth is the Lord's and everything in it. We give thanks for those who came before us, those who are present here with us, and those who will come after us, and we remember our commitment towards peace-building and reconciliation with all peoples. We invite the Holy One's presence to speak to us today through worship, song, and Scripture.

Lighting of the Christ Candle:

We begin by lighting the Christ candle this morning as a sign and symbol that God's love is always around us. God's peace fills our hearts and souls, and God's grace covers all of us. In thanksgiving we remember all that Christ has done for us, and all the ways the Holy Spirit works in our daily lives.

Opening Hymn: Open My Eyes that I May See #371 (VU)

1 Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

2 Open my ears, that I may hear
voices of truth thou sendest clear;
and while the wave-notes fall on my ear,
everything false will disappear.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!

3 Open my mouth, and let me bear
gladly the warm truth everywhere;
open my heart and let me prepare
love with thy children thus to share.

Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Call to Worship:

One: Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent?

All: Only the one whose way is blameless

One: Only the one who seeks peace and pursues it

All: Only the one who hungers for justice and seeks after righteousness.

One: Who may live on your holy mountain?

All: The one who listens to your word.

One: Who listens, receives it, and puts it into action.

All: The one whose heart is pure.

One: Lord, we are imperfect, we often fail, but our hearts long to do what is right. Our hearts long to follow peace and justice. We pray that you will help guide us on this path. Amen.

Opening Prayer:

Gracious God, we come with joy to meet with you, forgiven, loved, and free. In awe and wonder we recall your love poured out on us. We thank you for the ways that you are moving here with us and within us. We pray that we will spend this next hour as an opportunity to reflect, to discover, and to dream. We pray that in being filled, we will be able to give back to others. We pray this in Christ's Name. Amen.

Hymn: We are Pilgrims #595 (VU)

“We are pilgrims on a journey, fellow travellers on the road;
We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.

Sister, let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.

I will hold the Christ-light for you in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping, when you laugh I'll laugh with
you;
I will share your joy and sorrow, till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony,
Born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.”

Scripture (Ninia): Psalm 15 & James 1:17-27

Psalm 15

Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may live on your holy mountain? The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from their heart; whose tongue utters no slander, who does no wrong to a neighbor, and casts no slur on others; who despises a vile person but honors those who fear the Lord; who keeps an oath even when it hurts, and does not change their mind; who lends money to the poor without interest; who does not accept a bribe against the innocent.

Whoever does these things will never be shaken.

James 1:17-27

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this:

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Special Music (Lee Amlin):

Reflection:

Solo (Sandy): Give Me Jesus

Offertory Prayer:

Eternal Provider, out of the storehouses of your grace you have given us blessings upon blessings. It is our delight to give back to you in any way we can whether of our time, talents, or treasures. May you take our resources and multiply them so that they may bless others for the sake of your kingdom and your holy church. Amen.

Prayers of the People:

Loving God, it is in love that you have called us, and it is in mercy that you have kept us going. You chase away all fears and apprehension in our lives

for perfect love casts out all fear. Your love is imaginative, creative and expansive, beyond human knowing or comprehension.

Faithful God, even when we stray, you do not give up on us because faithfulness is your very character. Thank you for the gift of a second chance, the blessing of a fresh start. We pray that our hearts will remain steadfast and pure.

Eternal One, we thank you that you invite us and include us at your table. We give thanks that with you there is more than enough food to share, more than enough love to give, and more than enough water to drink. And yet we know that this is not the case for all our siblings around the world. We pray for the justice of food security, for clean access to water, and for the even distribution of our resources. We pray that we may be good stewards of the natural world you have entrusted us with.

Redeeming God, we pray for those who stand in the gap. For the peacemakers, the prophets, the intercessors, and those who seek and advocate on behalf of the voiceless. We pray that justice will prevail, that mercy will triumph, and that righteousness will reign. We pray for strength to stand up for what is right even when the world disagrees. When society looks down on us, may we look up towards you.

Healing God, we cling to you for your strength, peace, and comfort when we are grieved. We pray for those who need a healing touch from you today. We pray for the people we know who are close to our hearts who need a touch from you, and for those whom we do not know yet. We lift up the situations we hear and see on the news especially praying for the nations in our world which are currently in a time of unrest. In this time of silence, we now silently name those who are closest to our hearts.

[Silence if Kept]

Listening God, you understand every human language, you know a word even before it is on our tongue, and you know the greatest needs and desires of our own hearts. We thank you that when we call, you hear, and when we speak, you respond.

Joining together we now say the words that Jesus taught us to say:

Lord's Prayer:

Closing Hymn: Will You Come and Follow Me #567 (VU)

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to re-shape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

Christ, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I'll go where your love and foot-steps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

Blessing and Sung Bless Amen: God has met with us here this morning, and now it is our joy to go out to meet with others. We give thanks for this fellowship, for these friends, and for our faith which directs our journey.

Dan Bryant Thank you and Gift Presentation to Deborah Ferber

Amen. Amen Amen