**Order for Worship for 16th Sunday after Pentecost**

 **September 20, 2020**

**Prelude** “Thy Word” *Danielle Allison/Amy Watt*

**Words of Welcome**

**Call to Worship**

O give thanks to the Lord, call on God’s name, make known God’s deeds among the peoples.

**Sing to the Lord, sing praises to God; tell of all the Lord’s wonderful works.**

Glory in God’s holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

**Seek the Lord and God’s strength; seek the Lord’s presence continually.**

Remember the wonderful works God has done, the miracles and the judgments God uttered,

**O offspring of God’s servant Abraham, children of Jacob, the Lord’s chosen ones.**

**Prayer of the Day**

**Hymn # 393** “O Day of Rest and Gladness” *Wordsworth & Price/17th C Memmingen*

O day of rest and gladness, O day of joy and light,

O balm of care and sadness, most beautiful, most bright;

on you, the high and lowly, through ages joined in tune,

sing "Holy, holy, holy" to the great God Triune.

On you, at the creation, the light first had its birth;

on you, for our salvation Christ rose from depths of earth;

on you, our Lord victorious sent Spirit forth from heaven.

And thus on you, most glorious, a triple light was given.

On you, God’s people, meeting, the Holy Scripture hear,

Christ’s living presence greeting, through bread and wine made near.

New graces ever gaining from this our day of rest,

we reach the rest remaining to spirits of the blest.

**Prayer of Confession**

**Lord God, you hear our cries of pain and our murmured complaining. Your relentless compassion for your people defies any human logic or understanding. You provide manna in the wilderness, bread from heaven and the assurance that you will not abandon us in our need. Despite your overflowing goodness, we grumble. Rather than rejoice in your grace to us, we resent that you extend kindness to others. Instead of gratitude for your mercy, we question why you would embrace those we think undeserving — forgetting that none of us are righteous, all of us saved by grace. Forgive us for judging others and begrudging your generosity. We thank you for yet again hearing our cries and responding with love. Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**

**Prayer for Illumination**

**Readings from Holy Scripture**  Jonah 3:10-4:11

 Matthew 20:1-16

**Sermon**  “When God’s Mercy Exceeds God’s Justice”

**Affirmation of Faith** from *A Brief Statement of Faith*

**We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father.**

**In sovereign love God created the world good**

**and makes everyone equally in God’s image**

**male and female, of every race and people,**

**to live as one community.**

**But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.**

**Ignoring God’s commandments,**

**we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,**

**accept lies as truth,**

**exploit neighbor and nature,**

**and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.**

**We deserve God’s condemnation.**

**Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.**

**In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah**

**chose a covenant people to bless all families of the earth.**

**Hearing their cry,**

**God delivered the children of Israel**

**from the house of bondage.**

**Loving us still,**

**God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.**

**Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child,**

**like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home,**

**God is faithful still.**

**Hymn # 435** “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy” *FW Faber, 1854/Dutch melody*

There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea.
There's a kindness in God’s justice, which is more than liberty.
There is no place where earth's sorrows are more felt than up in heaven.
There is no place where earth's failings have such gracious judgement given.

For the love of God is broader than the measures of the mind.
And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God’s word,
and our lives reflect thanksgiving for the goodness of our of our Lord.

**Prayers of the People and the Lord’s Prayer**

**Offering of Our Gifts**

Invitation

Offertory “Gigue from Partita in B-flat Major” by JS Bach *Laura Nicolae-Jozwiakowsko* Doxology

Unison Prayer of Dedication

**Generous God, receive these gifts as an outward sign of our inward gratitude. We cannot repay you for your goodness to us, but we know you accept that which is given in faith. Take and distribute this offering in ways that show forth your mercy and goodness. Multiply what we offer in ways that nourish others hungry to know they are your beloved people. In Christ’s name we pray, amen.**

**Hymn # 716** “God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending” *RL Edwards 1961/Sacred Harp 1844*

God, whose giving knows no ending, from Your rich and endless store,
nature's wonder, Jesus' wisdom, costly cross, grave's shattered door:
Gifted by you, we turn to you, offering up ourselves in praise;
thankful song shall rise forever, gracious donor of our days.

Skills and time are ours for pressing, toward the goals of Christ, your Son:
all at peace in health and freedom, races joined, the church made one.
Now direct our daily labor, lest we strive for self alone.

Born with talents, make us servants fit to answer at Your throne.

Treasure, too, you have entrusted, gain through powers your grace conferred:

ours to use for home and kindred, and to spread the gospel word.

Open wide our hands in sharing, as we heed Christ’s ageless call,

healing, teaching, and reclaiming, serving you by loving all.

**Charge and Blessing**

**Postlude** “All Creatures of Thy God and King**”** *Amy Watt*

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Our thanks go to Stephanie and Gary, Karin, James, Debbie, and Richard for their participation in today’s service, and to Danielle Allison and Amy Watt for their musical offerings. Special thanks go to Laura Nicolae-Jozwiakowski, age 10, a piano student of Inna Nikolyukin, for her performance of JS Bach’s “Gigue from Partita in B-flat Major” as our Offertory.

Notes on today’s hymns from *Glory to God,* 2013:

*In “O Day of Rest and Gladness,” the first day of the week represents a threefold commemoration of Creation, Resurrection, and Pentecost – each an encounter with Trinitarian activity centered on one of the Three Persons. The tune name recalls the secular German song adapted for use with several hymns.*

*These stanzas of “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy,” excerpted from quite a few more, offer a reminder that the model for our dealings with others should be God’s generosity rather than limited human tolerance. The text is effectively set to a broad and sturdy Dutch folk melody, probably from the 17th century.*

*“God, Whose Giving Knows No ending” was one of about 450 submissions in a search for stewardship hymns conducted by the Hymn Society of America in 1961. These words are well grounded by their musical setting, an early American shape note tune named for a Baptist church in Harris County, Geogia.*