

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Ninth Sunday After Pentecost

August 7, 2022 – 9:30 am

Bonnie Jacque, Interim Pastor

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS

JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRELUDE

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Praise be to God.

MANY: Praise be to God for the gift of life

One: Praise be to God for the gift of death

MANY: Praise be to God for the gift of hope

One: But above all else,

MANY: Praise be to God for the gift of love.

***HYMN**

Praise to the Living God

#8

CALL TO CONFESSION

RESPONSIVE PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

One: When we feel so negative about ourselves, and we do not hear the acceptance of those who care about us.

ALL: Forgive us, O Lord.

One: When our sense of isolation blocks out our awareness of your abiding love.

ALL: Forgive us, O Lord.

One: When we feel so guilty, we cannot hear your forgiveness and find new life.

ALL: Forgive us, O Lord. Amen. The good news is that we are accepted and affirmed by God as we are.

One: The good news is that we are not strangers to ourselves or to one another.

ALL: We are God's children, members of one body. Our sins are forgiven. We have been brought into new life.

SUNG RESPONSE

(Sung Twice)

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit to this place,
Lord, listen to your children praying,
Send us love, send us power, send us grace.

PASSING THE PEACE

One: Peace be with you.

MANY: And also with you.

SCRIPTURE READINGS Isa 1: 1, 10-20, Ps 50: 1-23, Luke 12: 32-40

A SECOND PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: We gather here as God's people to worship, to sing God's praises, to hear God's Word. But to be honest, we want to keep what we sing and pray and hear just between you and me. We are not ready to take it out to our workplaces, shopping malls, playgrounds, and swimming pools. So, our worship must include a second confession today. Let us pray.

Members of the Choir: Lord of the arts, we love to sing your praises. We enjoy beautiful music and find friends among choir members. But we are not so ready to praise you during the week. We are hesitant to stand up for what is right among our friends, and unwilling to live up to our sung praises. Forgive us.

Ushers: Lord of loving friends, we are happy to welcome people to worship. We gladly smile and help them find a seat. But we are not always so open to others outside our church building. We often ignore people who come our way. We feel no responsibility for those who need our help. Forgive us.

One: Lord of the Word, I work hard to find beautiful words to praise you and clear words to help others understand your will. But I often fail to practice what I preach. My actions do not live up to my words. Forgive me.

Congregation: Lord of the Church, we come to hear words that reassure us and to hear hymns that give us hope. We want to be told that we are okay, and that God loves us. We would rather not hear your calls to take care of others and to change our ways. Forgive us.

All: Forgive us when our actions do not match our songs and prayers. Amen.

MEDITATION

***HYMN** Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart #290

INVITATION TO OFFERING

***DOXOLOGY** Halle, Halle, Halleluja, (Sung Twice)
Halle, Halle, Halleluja,
Halle, Halle, Halleluja, Halleluja, Halleluja

PRAYER OF DEDICATION We give in grateful thanksgiving for all that God has given us. In the upside-down world of the gospel, we measure our wealth not by what we have, but what we can give away. We bring this offering to bless your church, your people, your creation. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMN Eat This Bread (Sung Twice) #788

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Responsive Litany
(Isaiah 1: 10-18)

Listen to the Lord, you leaders of “Sodom.”

Listen to the law of our God, people of “Gomorrhah.”

“What makes you think I want all your sacrifices?” says the Lord.
“I am sick of your burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fattened cattle.

I get no pleasure from the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.

When you come to worship me,
who asked you to parade through my courts with all your ceremony?

**Stop bringing me your meaningless gifts;
the incense of your offerings disgusts me!**

As for your celebrations of the new moon and the Sabbath
and your special days for fasting—
they are all sinful and false.
I want no more of your pious meetings.
I hate your new moon celebrations and your annual festivals.
They are a burden to me. I cannot stand them!

**When you lift up your hands in prayer, I will not look.
Though you offer many prayers, I will not listen,
for your hands are covered with the blood of innocent victims.**

Wash yourselves and be clean!
Get your sins out of my sight.

**Give up your evil ways.
Learn to do good.**

Seek justice.

Help the oppressed.

Defend the cause of orphans.

Fight for the rights of widows.

“Come now, let’s settle this,” says the Lord.
“Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow.

Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool.

Our God, we give you thanks.

Thank you for not giving up on us.
We know we are prone to bad habits,
to preoccupation with ourselves, with what we want,
with that with which we feel comfortable,
with fulfilling the obligations that give us affirmation.
Thank you for hanging in there with us

even when we become lost in all the junk of our lives.
Thank you for the possibility of conversations –
with friends, lovers, spouses,
those who come into our lives as your angels in disguise.
So much of our life becomes routine and automated
and we are drawn to live into what next needs to be done,
we ask for your help to be courageous in our listening and talking,
to be still in order to hear, to let down the shields.

And this we also ask for our conversations with you.
We know there are times you draw near and want to talk and we divert.
We know there are times when you desperately want to lead us
into green pastures; beside still waters;
to restore our soul, to lead us in right paths ...
Help us listen and give us courage.

Thank you for your persistence, for your love,
for the many voices, the many ways in which you try and get through to us.
Do not give up on us even when we have given up on ourselves
through despair or self-satisfaction.

Our God, you draw us back to the fundamentals –
cease to do evil, learn to do good;
seek justice, rescue the oppressed,
defend the orphan, plead for the widow.
Are we not too old, too tired, too entitled
to rest here in the beauty of this sanctuary,
to enjoy this solemn assembly at least for a little while?

And yet, we are your people,
formed with these concerns now in our bones;
so we lift our hearts and our prayers to you for all those who suffer –
oppression, injustice, neglect, poverty,
a sense of being alone against massive powers which ignore or destroy.
We open our hearts and our eyes
and ask you to continue to move against all these forces
even if it requires us to move from our comfort.
Rally the heavenly hosts and the angels
who protect and fight for those who have no one else ...
and we shall try not to be too far behind.

For we will be your people even in spite of ourselves.

We join our voices with those early ones, the lepers, the sick,
the outcast who pleaded with Jesus outside of Jerusalem,
for the sake of the world and their own sakes, to teach them a prayer.
(the Lord's Prayer)