

August 9, 2026 + 10:30 A.M.
Twelfth Sunday of Pentecost

We Join in Worship

Liturgist: Tracy Oprea

*If you need extra space for a wheelchair or walker, or if you have young children with you, please feel free to make use of our
Prayground, the extra space across the aisle from the sound booth.*

PRELUDE

Jesus Loves Me

William B Bradbury, arr. Melody Bober

WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*THE PEACE OF CHRIST

*CALL TO WORSHIP (Adapted from *Psalm 85*)

Leader: LORD, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob. You forgave the iniquity of your people; you pardoned all their sin.

ALL: Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation!

Leader: Let us hear what God the LORD will speak, for God will speak peace to the people, to the faithful, to those who turn to God in their hearts.

ALL: Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation!

Leader: Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other. Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky.

ALL: Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation!

Leader: The LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness will go before the LORD and will make a path for the LORD's steps.

ALL: Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation! We worship you, O LORD!

*OPENING HYMN: "Come! Live in the Light!" (Glory to God, 749)

INVITATION TO CONFESSION:

Leader: In his letter to the Romans, Paul writes, "One believes with the heart, leading to righteousness, and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth, leading to salvation and so is saved."
Trusting in our salvation, let us confess with our mouths.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

God who saves us, hear our prayer. We confess that we have allowed the idols of this world to divide the body of Christ. We have followed the words of ideologues instead of the words of the Gospel. We have chosen loyalty to ideology over commitment to community. We have started seeing fellow children of God as enemies to be vanquished rather than siblings to be loved. We have forgotten that repentance, reparation, reconciliation, and redemption are at the heart of what it means to be a follower of Christ. Bring us back to your Gospel. Bring us back to you. Bring us back to each other. In the name of Jesus Christ, our risen Lord, we pray. Amen.

KYRIE:

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Friends, hear the good news! If we confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead, we will be saved!

ALL: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!

GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

STATEMENT OF FAITH: (Adapted from *The Confession of 1967*)

In Jesus Christ, God was reconciling the world to God's self. Jesus Christ is God with humanity. He is the eternal Son of the Father, who became human and lived among us to fulfill the work of reconciliation. He is present in the church by the power of the Holy Spirit to continue and complete his mission. This work of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is the foundation of all confessional statements about God, humanity, and the world. Therefore the church calls people to be reconciled to God and to one another.

We Hear God's Word

EMBODIED WORD FOR DISCIPLES OF ALL AGES

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Gracious God, as we turn to your Word for us, may the Spirit of God rest upon us. Help us to be steadfast in our hearing, in our speaking, in our believing, and in our living. Amen.

HEBREW BIBLE LESSON: *Genesis 33:1-11*

EPISTLE LESSON: *Romans 10:9-15*

GOSPEL LESSON: *Matthew 14:22-33*

SERMON: Some Good News

MUSICAL MEDITATION: *Because He Lives* Gloria and William Gaither
Sung by Nancy and Jerry Veltman

We Respond in Faith

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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.

OFFERING INVITATION:

Leader: Jesus calls us out of fear onto the waters of faith. Let us give our tithes and offerings with faith that we can heal the brokenness between us and that we can heal the brokenness of this world. If you are here in person, please place your offering in the plate as it is passed. If you are worshiping from home, please mail in your checks or use our online giving option on the website. Now let us practice stewardship as we listen to today's offertory.

OFFERTORY *How Deep the Father's Love for Us*

Stuart Townsend, arr. Jan Sanborn

*** DOXOLOGY:**

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

PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (Unison)

God who saves us, we dedicate these gifts to you and to the work of healing brokenness by seeing your face in each other. In the name of Jesus Christ, our risen Lord, we pray. Amen.

We Go Into the World

***CLOSING HYMN:** "O for a World" (Glory to God, 372)

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Where He Leads Me

John S. Norris, arr. Cindy Berry

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* So that we can properly greet people who come to the building during Sunday morning worship, Door A will be the only unlocked external door during the worship service.

PEEK AT THE WEEK:

SUNDAY 8/9:	Worship In Person & Online – 10:30 AM
MONDAY 8/10:	GA – 6:30 PM Al-Anon – 7:00 PM
TUESDAY 8/11:	Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) Mission – 6:00 PM Stewardship/Finance – 6:30 PM AA – 7:30 PM
WEDNESDAY 8/12:	No Trustees Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) GA – 7:00 PM
THURSDAY 8/13:	Scripture in the Park 6:30-7:30 PM at Redar Park in Schererville
SATURDAY 8/15:	Sharon's Table Prep AA – 6:30 PM
SUNDAY 8/16:	Outdoor Worship

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **WORSHIP IN THE GARDEN ON AUGUST 16TH** If weather permits, we will be worshipping in our beautiful garden next Sunday! Wear comfortable clothes and bring a comfortable chair. If weather does not permit (a reality we know all too well at this point), we will worship in our beautiful sanctuary.
- **FAITH DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE** We're once again collecting school supplies to support students and teachers in Highland! If you'd like to participate, you're invited to bring a few school supplies to worship on August 9 & 16. If you aren't able to come to worship, supplies can be dropped off Mondays-Thursdays, 8 am to noon, in the collection bin near the church office from August 10-20. If you'd like to help but can't make it to the church building at all, you can mail in a monetary donation marked for school supplies, and we'll do the shopping for you. If you have any questions, contact Heather Casiano. Needed school supplies include: Boxes of facial tissue (such as Kleenex) • Disinfectant wipes • Hand sanitizer • #2 pencils • Crayons – box of 24 • washable markers – box of 8 • dry erase markers, low-odor • glue sticks and bottles of glue • highlighters • single subject notebooks, spiral & composition style • wide-ruled loose leaf paper • pocket folders • scissors • colored pencils – box of 12 • pink erasers
- **POOL PARTY FOR YOUNG ADULTS AND THE "YOUNG AT HEART" AUGUST 16TH** After worship on August 16 (rain date August 23), Jean Smith will be hosting this event sponsored by the Ministry of Faith Development. We will have lunch as well! RSVP to Jean at 219-730-7749.
- **AUGUST CALENDAR FUNDRAISER** For the month of August, we will be doing a Calendar Fundraiser. A person selects a day to sponsor and donates the amount of the date sponsored. For example, if someone sponsors August 20, they would donate \$20. A copy of the calendar will be available in the narthex and digitally online. There is a limit of two sponsors per day, and it is open to members of the congregation and friends of the church.
- **SCRIPTURE IN THE PARK** We're going to join together with folks from Immanuel Presbyterian Church in Schererville for 6 weeks of informal Bible study at Redar Park in Schererville. The final "Scripture in the Park" night will be on Thursday, August 13, from 6:30-7:30 pm. We meet at the picnic shelter; feel free to bring a Bible, something to drink, and a lawn chair (or you can sit at the picnic tables, whichever is more comfortable). If you have any questions, contact Heather Casiano.
- **FELLOWSHIP HOSTING IN THE FALL** We are asking folks to sign up to host fellowship time in the Fall. Our ministries and committees have been doing a fantastic job, and they are getting a well-deserved break! Hosting entails bringing a simple snack to share, setting it out, and cleaning up afterwards. On Sundays with no sign-ups, we will still have coffee and tea to enjoy.
- **FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!** If you don't already follow us on Facebook and Instagram, please start doing so @firstpchighland on both Facebook and Instagram.
- **INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF FPCH?** You are always welcome here, whether a member or not! If you are interested in joining as a member, though, we would love to have you! Please talk to Pastor Tyler if you would like to learn more.

Opportunities to serve as the HEART, HANDS, and FEET of Jesus Christ:

- **BLESSING BOX** Please continue to place items in the Blessing Box and take items if you are a person in need! Items most commonly donated: Canned goods with pull tabs, socks, toilet paper, non-perishable foods, small snacks, toiletries, baby wipes and diapers. Please check expiration dates!
- **HELP STOCK OUR PANTRY!** Please pick up a beautifully decorated grocery bag in the narthex and fill it to help the church's food pantry.
- **GOT SNEAKERS??** The sneakers that we all collect will help raise money to support our church's general fund AND will help our environment by keeping sneakers out of landfills. Bring the sneakers (athletic shoes only) to the church and put them in one of the blue bins...either by Door D (inside) or in the narthex.

Prayer List

Anthony
Brady Vanes
George Griner
Guy Hendricks
Bill and Anettia Holmes
David Markley
David Kingen
Diana and Ray Mendoza
Janet Orem
Cindy Waltz and Sister
Yvonne Suroviak
Georgette and Garry Sknerski
Jakob Holden
Denise Matthys
Jan Oprea
Florance Cody
Kathy & Chuck Pumnea
The Windstrups
Rick Parker
Gary Everhart
Darlene O'Brien
Doug & Sue Matthews
Janet Terpstra
Glen Nahler
Tom
David Hamblin
Jana Tolley
Larry & Bonnie Perryman

Delta Rose
Winnie Owen
Breeanne
Mom Bechtler
Marian Clayton
Ella P
Rita Stronczek
Keren, Zuriel, and Gedeon
Edna Cruz
Charlie
Jerry & Rena Martinez
Tyler Gall
Luana Sulkowski
Sonny Buono
Tammy
Mike Kelly
Sue Heth
Oscar Ochoa
Jean and Clara
Dave Shelborne
Kali Rosalia
Wendy
Jessica S
Shirley McKnight
Renee Williams

Genesis 33:1-11

33 Now Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two maids. ² He put the maids with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all. ³ He himself went on ahead of them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near his brother.

⁴ But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. ⁵ When Esau looked up and saw the women and children, he said, "Who are these with you?" Jacob said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." ⁶ Then the maids drew near, they and their children, and bowed down; ⁷ Leah likewise and her children drew near and bowed down; and finally Joseph and Rachel drew near, and they bowed down. ⁸ Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company that I met?" Jacob answered, "To find favor with my lord." ⁹ But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself." ¹⁰ Jacob said, "No, please; if I find favor with you, then accept my present from my hand, for truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God, since you have received me with such favor. ¹¹ Please accept my gift that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me and because I have everything I want." So he urged him, and he took it.

Romans 10:9-15

⁹ If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For one believes with the heart, leading to righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, leading to salvation. ¹¹ The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. ¹³ For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

¹⁴ But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? ¹⁵ And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

Matthew 14:22-33

²² Immediately he made the disciples get into a boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴ but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. ²⁵ And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. ²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.”

²⁸ Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” ²⁹ He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and, beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” ³² When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Some Good News

Genesis 33:1-11; Romans 10:9-15; Matthew 14:22-33

Early on in the Covid-19 pandemic—when we were in the depths of despair and isolation, afraid for our loved ones, afraid for ourselves, and afraid for the world—actor John Krasinski, perhaps better known as Jim Halpert from *The Office*, developed and put on a web series from his home in Brooklyn with the initialism *SGN* emblazoned in the messy, free-spirited hand-drawn and hand-colored style that was emblematic of so many of our own attempts at home arts and crafts at the time. *SGN* was a marvel of a concept. It stood for “Some Good News,” and every bit of it was joyful, heart-warming, and healing at a time when we needed it the most. It featured stories of essential human lovingkindness. He opened the very first episode with these words: “We are all going through an incredibly trying time, but, through all the anxiety, through all the confusion, all the isolation, and all the *Tiger King*, somehow the human spirit found a way to break through and blow us all away.”

Well, I have *some good news* for you, dear Church! We always have at our fingertips and upon our lips and hopefully emblazoned across our hearts *The Good News*! The word “Gospel,” or *εὐαγγέλιον* in Greek, literally means “The Good News,” and my God, what good news it is! Our scriptures are chock full of stories of the human spirit finding a way to break through and blow us all away—and, of course of God’s Spirit finding a way to break through us and blow into us. Indeed, the human spirit has the power to shine so brightly because God’s spirit animates it, bringing it to life. When we are at our best, it is because the image of God is alive within us and we are choosing to embrace that image in ourselves and in each other. And in today’s reading from *Genesis*, we have one of the most powerful illustrations of that in all the scriptures. It is a story of harm being repented for, of brokenness being repaired, of brothers being reconciled, and of a sinner being redeemed. Oh yes, we have some good news today!

Before we get to the good part, though, let's review how we got to the point where repentance, reparation, reconciliation, and redemption were needed. Jacob and Esau had a rough history as brothers, going all the way back to the womb. When Rebekah was pregnant with them, so extreme was their struggle within her, that she cried out, "If it is to be this way, why do I live?" That struggle continued at birth—Esau entered the world first, but Jacob was gripping his heel, refusing even then to let his twin have undisputed claim as the firstborn. As they grew up, their differences in character and personality became stark. "Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents." As if that were not enough, they had their parents' favoritisms and power struggles in the mix. According to *Genesis* 25, "Isaac loved Esau because he was fond of game, but Rebekah loved Jacob." No both/and mentioned there! Isaac loved Esau, and Rebekah loved Jacob! And you can bet that they contributed to the rivalry, each doing their best behind the scenes to maximize the position of their preferred child.

Throughout it all, Jacob was the aggressor. He was deceptive and dishonest, seeking power and position no matter what the cost to his brother and, perhaps more profoundly, no matter what the cost to their brotherhood—to the sacred bond that siblings share. One day when Esau was famished to the point of feeling like he would die from working hard in the field, Jacob refused to share food with him unless Esau sold him his birthright—meaning his right to inherit as the firstborn. Then, when their father Isaac was near death, he wanted to perform the ritual of blessing his firstborn child, Esau. Rebekah and Jacob conspired to dress Jacob up like Esau, even to the point of wearing furs that would feel like body hair, to trick Isaac whose eyesight was failing. And so, Jacob stole Esau's blessing from their father. Oh yes, this was nasty business indeed! Not only was it the theft of a beautiful moment between father and son, but it was also the theft of future power. The blessing meant that Jacob would hold authority over his siblings and their descendants—including Esau. Time after time Jacob did Esau dirty, and in the end he was still the victor in the way that human society so often views victory—winning the power and the wealth.

But that victory came at great cost! Esau was understandably furious and reacted by saying that he would kill Jacob once their father died. As we will see, that reaction was one of rage in the moment rather than one of sustained revenge, but Jacob did not know that. At Rebekah's urging, he fled to seek safety. We have heard the rest over the past few weeks. Jacob dreamt of steps unto heaven. Jacob married Leah and Rachel and had lots of children over the course of at least fourteen years. And then after some more deceit and trickery against the father of Leah and Rachel, Jacob again found himself in the position of having to flee. And where was he to go? You guessed it! To his big brother Esau. And my oh my, was he ever scared! He knew full well all that he had done to him, and he knew full well that his brother had every right and every reason to hate him and want to hurt him.

Ah...but let's not forget, there's *some good news*! Esau would defy the petty logic of revenge. He would defy the mantle of fragile, egomaniacal masculinity that was expected of him. When the time of their reunion ultimately came, he would be the best kind of big brother—gracious and loving and committed to the bond of brotherhood. But first! Ah yes, there is a "but first!" Jacob had some important internal and external work to do! He had to be honest with himself about how he had harmed his brother, and he had to take action to repair what he had broken. And so he paid reparations. He sent herds and herds of livestock, the bounty of his wealth, ahead as a gift to Esau. And he was indeed honest with himself. His fear was a manifestation of his guilt—of his awareness that he had done horrible things to his brother. And so he prayed and wrestled within himself and then, ultimately, he had that rumble in the wilderness with God—that physical catharsis of all that was roiling and boiling inside of him. Now let me point out a really important detail that we did not really focus on last week. Jacob called that wrestling place Peniel, that is "the face of God," saying, "For I have seen God face to face, yet my life is preserved." That it is an amazing thing on its own, but it will get even more amazing in a moment!

So there was repentance. And there were reparations. Those processes are crucial in all of this! And then there was the good news we have been waiting for! Throughout all of this, Jacob still assumed that Esau would try to kill him and his family. In other words, he assumed the worst of his brother. He even did this awful thing of hiding his favored wife and child in the back of the pack, with the rest of his children and their mothers on the front line to face the possible slaughter. But what actually happened? Are you ready for it? *Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.* Hallelujah! What an astoundingly beautiful image! What brilliant defiance of expected violence! "Somehow the human spirit found a way to

break through and blow us all away.” And then Esau wanted to get to know all of his in-laws and nephews and niece. And then they did this thing that family members sometimes do—Jacob pled with Esau to accept his gifts, and Esau pushed back saying that he had more than enough. And then Jacob pled harder, saying that the gift belonged to Esau and that he himself also had more than enough in that moment. For in that moment, they both finally saw each other and understood each other and loved each other as brothers.

And in that moment, Jacob said an amazing thing that should sound familiar. He looked at his brother Esau, with whom he had all of this rough, rough history and said: “For truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God.” Aha! Jacob had just had this miraculous encounter in which he had seen the face of God and lived, so he alone among human beings knew what God’s face looked like. And then, here in this moment of reconciliation, he saw God’s face in his brother’s face. Sure, Esau’s love, kindness, grace, and joy at seeing his little brother again, probably made it easy to see, but it was deeper than all of that. When Jacob finally understood what it mean to have that bond of siblinghood with Esau, Jacob finally saw the image of God in him. And so to go through that process of repentance, reparation, and reconciliation with his brother was also to do so with the God who had created his brother in God’s image and loved his brother into existence. And in that moment of recognition was redemption. Hallelujah! Some good news indeed!

And loved ones, we need this good news indeed! For we are living in times of great struggle. We humans, all created in God’s image and all loved into existence by God—all in truth siblings to each other—are splitting at the seams. The world is divided. This country is divided. Our communities are divided. Our families are divided. The body of Christ is divided. The powers and principalities urge us to make enemies of each other, urge us to make an enemy out of “the other.” And in doing so, we cause great harm. But we don’t have to keep causing harm! We don’t have to keep breaking the sacred bonds that bind us as siblings!

We can choose a different way. We can choose the way of repentance, reparation, reconciliation, and redemption. We can choose to look at each other and see the face of God. We can choose to look at the so-called “other” and see the face of God. And we can choose to run to each other with joy and weeping. If Jacob and Esau could do it, anyone can do it! Now it’s not easy. It takes unusual bravery to be honest with ourselves about harm we have done. It takes untold courage to openly admit it and to take action to repair it. It takes uncommon humility to truly reconcile. It takes extraordinary faith to trust that we can indeed be redeemed. And here the good news gets even better! For we have God in the flesh calling us out upon the waters of that faith, telling us that we can be brave and that we need not be afraid and that we can do hard things—even miraculous things! And what is more miraculous than brokenness healed and relationship restored?

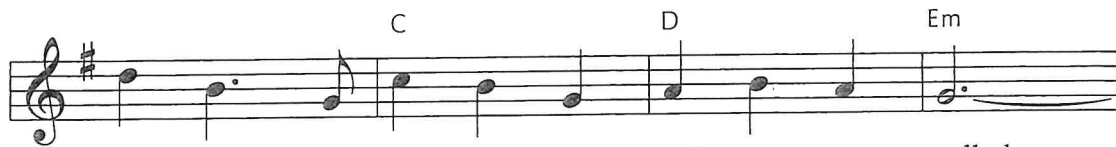
Jacob and Esau went their separate ways after that, and that is ok. Sometimes we need that for restored relationships to work out! But their bond was never broken again. Here is how their story ended, as recorded in *Genesis* 35: “Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kiriath-arba, that is, Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac had resided as immigrants. Now the days of Isaac were one hundred eighty years. And Isaac breathed his last; he died and was gathered to his people, old and full of days, and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.” In the moment that mattered most, they were there with each other, they were there for each other. Some good news indeed! Amen!

Come! Live in the Light!

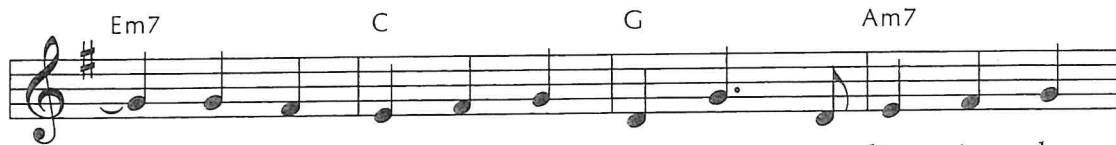
We Are Called



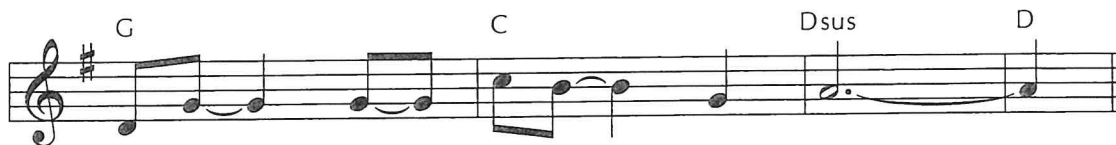
1 Come! Live in the light! Shine with the
 2 Come! O - pen your heart! Show your
 3 Sing! Sing a new song! Sing of that



joy and the love of the Lord! We are called
 mer - cy to all those in fear! We are called
 great day when all will be one! God will reign,

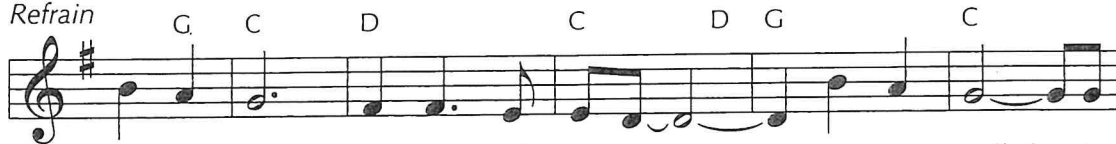


to be light for the king - dom, to live in the
 to be hope for the hope - less so ha - tred and
 and we'll walk with each oth - er as sis - ters and

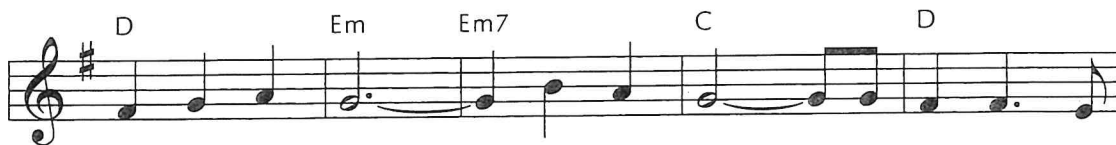


free - dom of the cit - y of God.
 vio - lence will be no more.
 broth - ers u - nit - ed in love.

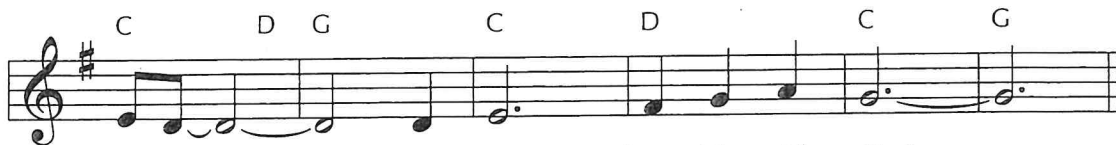
Refrain



We are called to act with jus - tice; we are called to



love ten - der - ly; we are called to serve one an -



oth - er, to walk hum - bly with God.

O for a World

372

1 O for a world where ev - ery - one re - spects each oth - er's ways,
 2 O for a world where goods are shared and mis - er - y re - lieved,
 3 We wel - come one world fam - i - ly and strug - gle with each choice
 4 The poor are rich; the weak are strong; the fool - ish ones are wise.
 5 O for a world pre - par - ing for God's glo - rious reign of peace,

where love is lived and all is done with jus - tice and with praise.
 where truth is spo - ken, chil - dren spared, e - qual - i - ty a - chieved.
 that o - pens us to u - ni - ty and gives our vi - sion voice.
 Tell all who mourn: out - casts be - long, who per - ish - es will rise.
 where time and tears will be no more, and all but love will cease.

PERSEVERING *toward* WHOLENESS

The 227th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, addressed constitutional governance, racial justice, gender justice, denominational finances and the direction of the church, laying groundwork for work continuing through the next assembly.

Co-moderators elected, GA228 to be held in Puerto Rico

Commissioners elected the **Rev. Marta Pumroy-Cordero**, border ministry coordinator for the Tres Rios Border Foundation in Tres Rios Presbytery, and the **Rev. Dr. Kristopher D. Schondelmeyer**, pastor and head of staff at First Presbyterian Church in Davenport, Iowa, as co-moderators. They will preside at GA228, June 11-22, 2028, in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Commissioners also **approved full, in-person assemblies**, including an exhibit hall, beginning in 2030.

Budget and per capita

Commissioners approved a **balanced \$188.4 million unified budget** for Presbyterian Life & Witness (PL &W) and the A Corporation for the 2027–2028 biennium, about \$5.8 million more than the previous budget: \$90.45 million for 2027 and \$97.92 million for 2028. Per capita rates were set at \$13.04 in 2027 and \$12.72 in 2028.

General Assembly Relationships

The GAR Committee approved the new Organization for Mission, the structure for the General Assembly as the denomination's highest council, and **established PL&W** and its governing board.

Israel/Palestine

Commissioners approved RIW-04, declaring that the **Israeli government has violated international law** prohibiting genocide in its war in Gaza. As amended, RIW-04 directs the denomination's Office of Public

Witness to advocate against U.S. military sales to Israel and purchases from Israel. It also encourages members to avoid products from Israeli companies linked to violations of international law.

Constitutional interpretation, missiology, and mission co-worker dismissals

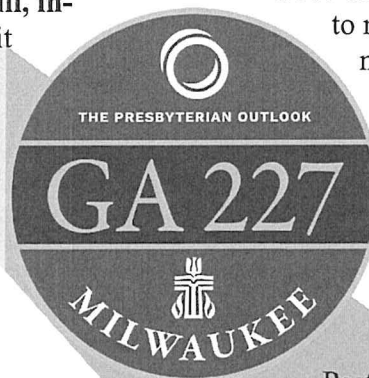
Following testimony on staff dismissals during **World Mission's closure**, the assembly approved CON-02, directing PL&W and the A Corporation to revise employment policies to prohibit nondisclosure covenants for employees, with a report due to the 2028 assembly. RIW-01 calls for review of the processes that terminated mission co-worker positions and World Mission. RIW-02 directs the development of a new missiological statement for global engagement.

Pastors will now be required to complete **boundary and abuse-prevention training** at least every three years. An overture to remove the Board of Pensions' medical coverage requirements was rejected.

Commissioners referred CON-10, which seeks an authoritative interpretation of monogamy, for discussion within the theological framework proposed in GEN-09, "Beyond Changing Families."

Gender and Sexuality Justice

The Constitutional Interpretation Committee **rejected a call for a special study of the Olympia Overture amendments**, citing related proposals GEN-06 and GEN-09. GEN-06 directs the development



of a mechanism that would allow congregations to indicate their openness and readiness to call an LGBTQIA+ candidate on their Ministry Discernment Profiles. Candidates would be allowed to view congregational responses. GEN-09, “Beyond Changing Families: Flourishing Relationships and Belonging,” seeks a theological framework and a study guide on human sexuality and gender that reflect the PC(USA)’s commitment to full inclusion.

The assembly reaffirmed support for **access to medically necessary gender-affirming healthcare** and approved development of a survey collecting non-identifying information about sexual misconduct in church settings.

Climate and Environmental Justice

The Climate Justice Committee approved CLJ-02, “Changing Course for a Green Future,” **directing divestment from more than 50 companies** by 2030 and barring new investments in them. All CLJ items were placed on the consent agenda, including a call for education on regenerative farming and prioritizing responses to the climate crisis.

White Christian nationalism

Commissioners voted overwhelmingly to declare White Christian nationalism and similar ideologies “**a theological error**” incompatible with the teachings of Jesus Christ; language changes in the *Book of Order* require presbytery ratification. Commissioners rejected an amendment that would have removed references to White Christian nationalism from the Special Committee on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Race report.

Racial justice

The Racial Justice Committee advanced several recommendations **strengthening the denomination’s**

anti-racism work, including RAC-04, “The Report from the Special Committee on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on Race,” directing “PL&W to create a tracking system that displays the progress/ completion of all GA business... related to race, racism, and White supremacy ...”

RAC-01 calls for PC(USA) entities to report to the 228th GA on implementation of RGJ-13, the 2022 Report from the Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls Task Force. RAC-03, the “Resolution on Liberia Project 180,” explores establishing theological learning and repair, and developing **acknowledgment and apology for Presbyterian involvement** in and support of the American Colonization Society and its lasting effects on Indigenous Liberians.

Ordered ministry

The Theological Education and Ordination Committee approved changes **modernizing preparation for ministry** while preserving Presbyterian ordination standards. ORD-02 clarifies that ministry preparation in G-2.06 and G-2.07 of the *Book of Order* applies to those training for the ministry of Word and Sacrament; it requires a two-thirds presbytery vote. ORD-03, addressing collaborative ministry teams, was approved; ORD-04, seeking removal of the time-of-service requirement for ruling elders in mid council roles, was not.

A new confession

A newly appointed special committee will continue **considering a new confession**. The draft seeks to articulate Christian faith in response to contemporary challenges including racism, economic inequality, environmental degradation, violence and political polarization.

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