

Spirit of Grace

ELCA UMC



Worship
September 12th, 2021
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Prelude

Welcome

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
whose teaching is life,
whose presence is sure,
and whose love is endless.

Amen.

Let us confess our sins to the one who welcomes us with an open heart.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God our comforter:

like lost sheep, we have gone astray.

We gaze upon abundance and see scarcity.

We turn our faces away from injustice and oppression.

We exploit the earth with our apathy and greed.

Free us from our sin, gracious God.

Listen when we call out to you for help.

Lead us by your love to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Amen.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

By the gift of grace in ☩ Christ Jesus, God makes you righteous.

Receive with glad hearts the forgiveness of all your sins.

Amen.

Greeting & Prayer of the Day

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

God who calls us to follow in your footsteps. We know that the way will not be easy - we have seen the hardships you endured. Yet we believe in God's promise of everlasting life, and know that the resurrection is our whole truth. Strengthen us to answer your call, that we might live lives according not to human standards, but your divine life.

Amen.

You may be seated.

First Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9a (First Egalitarian Translation)

Exalted YHWH has given me
a skilled and well-trained tongue,
so that I can sustain the weary
with a timely word.

God awakens me morning after morning -
wakens my ear, to listen like a student.

Exalted YHWH opened my ears
and I have obeyed, I did not turn away.

I offered my back to those beating me,
offered my cheeks to those who would humiliate me.

I did not hide my face from insults
or spitting.

Because Exalted YHWH helps me,
insults cannot wound me,
for I have set my face like flint,
because I know I will not be put to shame.

My vindicator
is at my side.

Who would dare accuse me?

Let us confront each other!

Who are my adversaries?

Let them accuse me!

It is Exalted YHWH who helps me.

Who will judge me guilty?

Psalm 116:1-9 (First Egalitarian Translation)

I love you, YHWH, for you have heard
my cry for mercy.
You have listened to me;
I will call on you all my days.
The bands of Death encircled me;
The messengers of Sheol ambushed me,
I was overcome with trouble and sorrow.
Then I called your Name, YHWH -
“Help, YHWH, save me!”
You are gracious, YHWH, and just;
YHWH is compassionate.
You protect those without guile;
when I was brought low, you saved me.
Be at rest once again, my soul,
for YHWH has been good to you.
You have rescued my soul from Death,
my eyes from Tears,
and my feet from Banishment.
I walk before you, YHWH,
in the land of the living.

Gospel: Mark 8:27-38 (First Egalitarian Translation)

Please stand as you are able for the reading of the gospel.

The holy gospel according to Mark, the eighth chapter:

Then Jesus and the disciples set out for the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way, Jesus asked the disciples this question: “Who do you say that I am?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptizer; others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets.”

“And you,” Jesus went on to ask, “who do you say that I am?”

Peter answered, “You are the Messiah!” But Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anyone about him.

Then Jesus began to teach them that the Promised One had to suffer much, be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and religious scholars, be put to death, and rise again three days later. Jesus said these things quite openly.

Peter then took him aside and began to take issue with him. At this, Jesus turned around and, eyeing the disciples, reprimanded Peter: “Get out of my sight, you Satan! You are judging by human standards rather than by God’s.”

Jesus summoned the crowd and the disciples and said, "If you wish to come after me, you must deny your very self, take up your cross, and follow in my footsteps. If you would save your life, you'll lose it, but if you lose your life for my sake, you'll save it. What would you gain if you were to win the whole world but lose yourself in the process? What can you offer in exchange for your soul? Whoever in this faithless and corrupt generation is ashamed of me and my words will find, in turn, that the Promised One and the holy angels will be ashamed of that person, when all stand before our God in glory.

Word of God for the People of God,
Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

Hymn of the Day: The Summons - FWS 2130, v. 1, 2, 4

Note: The hymn of the day will be hummed only. Please read the lyrics on the screen or in the hymnal and use this as a time of quiet meditation.

A New Creed - Statement of Faith of the United Church of Canada
Please stand as you are able as we confess our faith in God together:

**We are not alone
we live in God's world.
We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.
We trust in God.
We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our redeemer and our hope.
In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

You may be seated.

Joys & Concerns

At this time all are invited to share their joys and concerns - simply raise your hand and a microphone will be brought to you. When you have concluded, you are invited to say "This is my joy" or "This is my concern," to which the congregation will reply, "This is our joy" or "This is our concern."

If you are worshipping online, please type any joys, concerns, or prayer requests you have this morning into the comment section and those will be read aloud and held in our worship space this morning.

Prayers of the People

Made children and heirs of God's promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Revealing God, you have made yourself known through bread and wine, water and word, death and new life. Continue to nurture your church, that it may be a place where your presence is experienced, embodied, and shared widely.

God, in your grace,

Hear our prayer.

Creating God, you brought life into being and called it good. Bring new creation to lands devastated by tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, fires, and other natural disasters exacerbated by human neglect and climate change. Restore your lands and help us to be stewards of and advocates for your creation.

God, in your grace,

Hear our prayer.

Protecting God, you desire all people to live in peace and safety. Provide for all who are in danger. Strengthen first responders who answer the call to help those most in need, often risking their own safety to do so. May we honor and support these heroes in their work, and create a world in which all receive the care and support they so desperately need.

God, in your grace,

Hear our prayer.

God of Peace, turn our eyes to your mercy as we remember 9/11. Bring comfort to those who mourn, relief to those who witnessed devastation, healing to those still suffering physical or emotional trauma, and reconciliation to a world in need of peace.

God, in your grace,

Hear our prayer.

Transforming God, you announce release to the captives and freedom to the oppressed. Break the chains of discrimination and injustice. Amplify voices that go unheard and inspire us to advocate for those who are overlooked and forgotten.

God, in your grace,

Hear our prayer.

Redeeming God, you accompany your people through every stage of life. We give you thanks for the saints who now rest in your embrace, especially Bob White's sister, Karin, who passed away earlier this week. May you hold her family in your arms, that they might feel your comforting presence surrounding them in this time of grief.

God, in your grace,

Hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Together let us pray as Jesus taught us, using the language you are most familiar with - the language of your heart.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Offering

Thanksgiving for the Word

O God of justice and love, receive these gifts we freely bring to you, and use these to do your work of caring for all of creation. We give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken our hearts to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. **Amen.**

Blessing of Students and Educators

All students, parents, educators, and those involved in the education of our future generations are invited to stand where they are and receive this blessing

John Wesley lived in a time when education was not available to or even encouraged for all. Yet he believed that education was a universal right based on the Scriptural truth that we are all created in the image of God. We all equally deserve to learn and grow in knowledge, wisdom, and grace.

He inherited from his mother the view that each and every child is “a talent committed to us under a trust by the great Lord of all families, both of heaven and earth.”

Martin Luther also argued for education to be available for all people, believing that it was the key to understanding Scriptures and learning our own unique gifts and callings on the path towards our personal vocation. Education is an opportunity to embrace and live our lives to the fullest.

And so today, as we begin a new school year, we take a moment now to recognize and bless our students, parents, teachers, and all those involved in the education of our future generations.

To the parents, grandparents, and all in this community that help to care for our young people, I remind you of these words from Proverbs:

“Train children in the way they should go; when they grow old, they won’t depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6)

Their success in the classroom can be aided and even amplified by the love, support, and direction you provide to them. Throughout the Bible, God tasks parents and caretakers with the responsibility of participating in the education of our children.

With that responsibility on our hearts and minds, we extend our hands in blessing toward you and pray together:

O God, our eternal and heavenly parent, bless now these families. Fill their homes with joy and their hearts with love. Give them energy, strength, and discernment as they raise these children. And remind them that we, their community and church family, are here to support them. Amen.

To the teachers who serve in our schools and in this community, I remind you that teaching is not only a profession but a calling. It is not simply a skill, but it is prominently featured in Paul’s listing of spiritual gifts.

John Wesley believed that education was a channel for God’s grace and that excellent teachers have the ability to transform the lives of their students.

We thank you for the commitment you make to our children. We recognize that you do not simply recite information, but you teach our students how to learn, understand, and apply knowledge.

With that commitment on our hearts and minds, we extend our hands in blessing toward you and pray together:

Holy Spirit, the source of all wisdom, bless now these teachers. Fill their classrooms with learning and their hearts with compassion. Give them focus, patience, and creativity as they educate these children. And remind them that we, their community and church family, are here to support them. Amen.

To the students who stand before us today, I remind you of this promise that the Apostle Paul testifies to in the Scriptures:

“The one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion...”
(Philippians 1:6)

This means that while you are growing and learning at home and at school, God is working alongside of your parents and teachers to form you into the person God sees you can be. God is equipping you and inviting you to be a part of the great adventure of life.

Listen to and respect both your parents and your teachers. At the same time, know that your voice and your point of view matter. The Bible tells us adults not to look down on you because you are young, but to recognize that you can be an example to us in speech, behavior, love, and faith.

In gratitude for all that God will do in and through you this year, we extend our hands in blessing toward you and pray together:

Lord Jesus, who welcomed the children and held up their faith as an example, bless now these students. Fill their schools with community and their hearts with wonder. Develop within them wisdom, integrity, and maturity as they learn and grow this year. And remind them that we, their community and church family, are here to support them. Amen.

Blessing & Dismissal

The blessing of our Triune God,
Creator of Love, Redeemer of our Hearts, and Sustainer of our Lives,
✠ abide within you, now and forever.
Amen.

Go in peace. Be the body of Christ in this world.
We will! Thanks be to God.

Sending Song: Earth and All Stars - ELW 731

Announcements

- We have returned to our rhythm of offering communion on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month. Join us next Sunday for a service of **Holy Communion**.
- The Spirit of Grace **Board of Directors** will meet this week on September 14th at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Room.
- Our **vocal choir** has discontinued rehearsals again due to the spike of COVID cases in our county. They hope to resume as numbers decrease. If you are interested in participating at that time, please contact Audrey Bentz or stay tuned for updates about rehearsals
- Our **bell choir** will resume rehearsals on Wednesday, September 15th at 6:30 pm.
- The next **church newsletter** will be a combined issue for the months of September and October, and will be released in a couple of weeks. If you have any church related news, updates, or photos, please send them to Jennifer in the office at office@hoodriverchurch.com
- **Oregon Synod Day of Learning: Faithful in the Fray: Facing our Histories of Racism.** Saturday, September 25 from 9:15 am to 3:45 pm.
 - Workshops and the keynote address will all be offered via Zoom. Conversations and workshops will follow the theme “Faithful in the Fray”. Look at faithfulness as it applies to faith and racism, with local leader and author Pr. Lenny Duncan, as keynote speaker. Here is a link with more information:
<https://oregonsynodelca.regfox.com/2021-oregon-synod-day-of-learning>
 - We would love to encourage as many members to participate in this worthwhile event as possible! The cost of this event is \$50 per screen (not per individual). However, if the cost is prohibitive for you or your family, please contact Pastor Miranda to discuss alternative options.
- We have been invited by the Oregon Synod Office to put together a group of 4 or more individuals to participate in this year’s **Reckoning with Racism Cohort** through Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. This program offers accompaniment for faith communities as they grappled with Oregon’s legacy of racism in a process of learning, listening, and engaging. The cohort will meet twice a month beginning in October - once as a large group with the cohort from around the state via zoom, and once as a small group. There is an informational session next Sunday evening. For more information, please go to this website:
<https://emoregon.org/education-dialogue/racism/> If you are interested in participating, please contact Pastor Miranda as soon as possible!

Spirit of Grace ELCA UMC

1140 Tucker Rd. Hood River, OR 97031

541-386-3993

www.hoodriverchurch.org

Church Office Hours

Closed on Fridays

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

M-W 9-12, or by appointment

spiritofgracepastor@gmail.com

Jennifer Fowler, Office Assistant

Mon 9:30-2, Wednesday 9:00-2, Thursday 9:00-2

office@hoodriverchurch.com

Linda Boris, Pastoral Assistant

Tuesday 10-1