

Spirit of Grace ELCA UMC



August 20th, 2023
12th Sunday after Pentecost

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship

Listen! Listen for the voice of God, naming us all: Holy. Beloved. Cherished. Valued.

We believe you delight in us!

Make us people who recognize and proclaim your beauty and goodness in unexpected places.

Surprise us. Challenge us. Transform us.

We trust in you, Holy One, to reveal to us the sacredness of every life, of every way of being, of every physical manifestation of your Spirit.

May it be so!

Confession & Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who greets us in this and every season,
whose word never fails,
whose promise is sure.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God
and of our neighbors.

Silence is kept for reflection

Merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned.
We have hurt our community.
We have squandered your blessings.
We have hoarded your bounty.
In the name of Jesus,
forgive us and grant us your mercy.

Silence is kept for reflection

Righteous God,
we confess that we have sinned.
We have failed to be honest.
We have lacked the courage to speak.
We have spoken falsely.
In the name of Jesus,
forgive us and grant us your mercy.

Silence is kept for reflection

God is a cup of cold water when we thirst.
God offers boundless grace when we fail.
Claim the gift of God's mercy:
you are freed and forgiven
in the name of † Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Opening Hymn

Bring Many Names
Bulletin Insert, verses 1, 4, 5, 6

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.
Let us pray.
Almighty God, through your son, Jesus Christ, you have called us to follow you in faithful footsteps, daring to leave behind that which we know in order to step into the boundless expanse of the Kingdom of Heaven. Open our eyes and hearts to the many and varied ways of faithful living in this world, and help us to learn from your teachers of all walks of life. Through your Holy Spirit we pray,
Amen.

First Reading: Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

I ask, then, has God rejected the chosen people? Of course not! I myself am an Israelite, descended from Sarah and Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. No, God has not rejected the chosen people, who were foreknown long ago.

For God's gift and call are irrevocable.
Just as you were once disobedient to God and now have received mercy through Israel's disobedience, now they have become disobedient – since God wished to show you mercy – that they too might receive mercy. God has imprisoned everyone in disobedience in order to have mercy on everyone.

Word of God, Word of Life
Thanks be to God.

Psalm 67

O God, show us kindness and bless us,
and make your face smile upon us!
**For then the earth will acknowledge your ways,
and all the nations will know of your power to save.**
Let the peoples praise you, O God,
let all the peoples praise you!
**Let the nations shout and sing for joy,
for you dispense true justice to the world –
you guide the nations of the earth!**
Let the peoples shout and sing for joy;
let all peoples praise you!
**The land has given its harvest:
God, our God, has blessed us.**
May God bless us, and may God be revered
even to the ends of the earth!

Gospel: Matthew 19:1-12

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 19th chapter.

When Jesus finished teaching, he left Galilee and moved on to the area of Judah across the Jordan River. Large crowds followed him, and Jesus healed them there.

Some Pharisees approached Jesus to test him. They said, “May we get divorced for any reason whatsoever?”

Jesus replied, “Haven’t you read that in the beginning, the Creator ‘made them male and female’ and declared, ‘This is why one person leaves home and cleaves to another, and the two become one flesh’? Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh – and what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

The Pharisees said to Jesus, “Then why did Moses command a formal decree that be written when we divorce?”

“Because of your stubbornness, Moses let you divorce,” he replied, “but at the beginning it was not that way. I say to you now that whoever divorces and marries another – except when the other partner has committed adultery – commits adultery themselves.”

The disciples said to Jesus, “If that’s the case between husband and wife, it’s better not to marry!”

Jesus replied, “Not everyone can accept this teaching – only those to whom it is given to do so. Some people are incapable of sexual activity from birth. Some have been made this way by human beings. And there are some who have renounced sexual relations for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone who can accept this teaching do so.”

Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

*The Expansive God Sermon Series:
Celebrating the Upside-Down Kingdom of Heaven*
Rev. Miranda Bermes-Goller

Hymn of the Day

Build a Longer Table
See Bulletin Insert

Affirmation of Faith: A New Creed

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.**

Joys & Concerns

If you have any joys, concerns, or prayer requests to share, please type them into the comment section of the livestream so that we may lift them up together as a community.

Prayers of the People

Trusting in God's abundant mercy, let us offer our prayers for a world in need.

A brief silence.

O God, your Spirit gathers the church across the world, equipping and enabling us to live faithful lives in service to you. May we learn from those courageous enough to step outside of the order of this world and into the boundless expanse of your promised kingdom of Heaven.

God, in your mercy,

Receive our prayer.

God of earth, sea, and sky, we lament the harm that has been done to your sacred creation – the abuse and exploitation that have diminished resources and permanently altered ecosystems. Send your healing and comforting presence to all those affected by the Maui fires, and lend your strength and protection to first responders in harm's way. May we learn to change our ways, and see the lasting impact our actions have on your precious earth.

God, in your mercy,

Receive our prayer.

You call leaders to bridge differences and practice generosity. Inspire all in authority to protect people in harm's way, deliver those in bondage, support fair elections, provide care for military personnel and veterans, and show mercy to those for whom they have responsibility.

God, in your mercy,

Receive our prayer.

You provide for those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit. Embrace people who have been rejected because of difference, heal trauma caused by racism or prejudice, shield any who are persecuted, console the dying, and heal the sick.

God, in your mercy,

Receive our prayer.

O God, you journey with us in all of life's transitions. Guide those preparing for new beginnings, new endings, and new opportunities. Guide our leadership team and committees in their visioning and ministry, and be with those discerning how to respond to your call to ministry

God, in your mercy,

Receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Offering

*At this time, if you are willing and able, please consider giving to Spirit of Grace Church to support our ongoing ministry.
Checks can be mailed to 1140 Tucker Road, Hood River OR, 97031.
Online Donations can be made through the link below:
[Spirit of Grace Church](#)*

Offertory Prayer

God of field and forest, sea and sky,
you are the giver of all good things.
Sustain us with these gifts of your creation,
and multiply your graciousness in us,
that the world may be fed with your love,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

Preface - TFWS 2257-a

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.
You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.
When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.
You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God,
and spoke to us through your prophets, who looked for that day
when justice shall roll down like waters
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream,
when nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Sanctus - TFWS 2257-b

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.
Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
and to announce that the time had come
when you would save your people.
He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners.
By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your Church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.
At his ascension you exalted him
to sit and reign with you at your right hand.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread,
gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Memorial Acclamation - TFWS 2257-c

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father (God), now and for ever.

Great Amen - TFWS 2257-d

Gathered together by the Holy Spirit, 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.**

Invitation to Communion

This table of bread and wine has now been made ready.
So come to this table,
You who have much faith
and you who would like to have more;
you who have been here often
and you who have not been here long
you who have tried to follow Jesus,
and you who have failed;
Come and eat. It is Christ who invites us all to meet him here.

Communion Distribution

Prayer after Communion

We thank you, generous God,
for the refreshment we have received
at your banquet table.
Send us now to spread your generosity into all the world,
through the one who is our dearest treasure,
Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

Sending Song:

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy
UMH 121 – verses 1-4

Blessing

The God who calls across the cosmos
and speaks in the smallest seed
✠ bless, keep, and sustain you
now and to the end of the age.
Amen

Dismissal

Go in peace. The Spirit of God is alive in you!
Thanks be to God!



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Church Office Hours

Closed on Fridays

Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller

M-Th 9-1, or by appointment

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Linda Boris, Pastoral Assistant

Tuesday 10-1

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