

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2022

Pacific Presbyterian Church and First Presbyterian Church of Union, Missouri

SEVENTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME

GATHERING

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP *(from Psalm 118)*

One: "O give thanks to the Lord, for the Lord is good!"
All: **"God's steadfast love endures forever!"**
One: "This is the day that the Lord has made."
All: **"Let us rejoice and be glad in it."**

***OPENING HYMN** "When Morning Gilds the Skies" GtG 667 *(Verses 1-3)*

One: When morning gilds the skies,
my heart awaking cries:

All: **may Jesus Christ be praised!**

One: Alike at work and prayer
to Jesus I repair:

All: **may Jesus Christ be praised!**

One: Does sadness fill my mind?

All: **A solace here I find:**

One: may Jesus Christ be praised!

All: **Or fades my earthly bliss?**

One: My comfort still is this:

All: **may Jesus Christ be praised!**

One: Let earth's wide circle round
in joyful notes resound:

All: **may Jesus Christ be praised!**

One: Let air and sea and sky
from depth to height reply:

All: **may Jesus Christ be praised!**

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***UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Dear Lord, we sing your praise, we proclaim your goodness...and we acknowledge how far short we have fallen from your will. The neighbors we are called to love we too often ignore. The good news we are to proclaim we too often keep a secret. The justice we are to seek for all we twist to our own advantage. The mercy we are to share we hoard for ourselves. Forgive us, gracious God. Have mercy upon us. Instill within us the mind of Christ that we might abide by your will and walk in your way. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

***SILENT CONFESSION**

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

One: God's grace overflows, bringing us new life.

All: God gives us the gift of Jesus Christ to remind us of the truth of Immanuel: that God is with us.

One: So rejoice and be glad, trusting the good news:

All: for in Jesus Christ we are forgiven; in Jesus Christ we are loved. Thanks be to God!

***THE PEACE**

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

(From your seat, a brief sign of peace may be shared: a wave of the hand, a nod of the head, etc.)

THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING Colossians 3:12-17

COLOSSIANS 3:12-17 (New Revised Standard Version)

¹² As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³ Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON “Ordinary ... Yet Not” by Pastor Bill Vincent

You lie in bed awake and thinking...until finally the alarm goes off.
Then it's time to get up and get ready for the day; get dressed, have breakfast.
There are things to do and places to be.
Lunch with family or friends.
Then maybe a nap!
A project to work on
A book to read.
Some shopping to do.
Dinner at the end of the day.
Some time to relax.
Then off to bed. “Now I lay me down to sleep...”

Just another day: a typical, ordinary day.

Into our ordinary days, every now and then, there come special moments and celebrations, times of excitement: birthdays, anniversaries; celebrations of accomplishment, parties, good surprises.

All of it together kind of like the church calendar: the liturgical year.

There's a rhythm to the liturgical year: an ebb and flow that reflects life and reminds us of the story we tell and live by.

Draw a loop in the air.

Special celebrations – ‘up’ times – are on the top of the loop:
Advent/Christmas/Epiphany; Lent/Easter/Pentecost.

And the time in between is...ordinary. Today is the 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time.
Ordinary, as in usual, typical, normative.

It's probably appropriate that "Ordinary Time" is on the "down side" of our loop. Because sometimes – maybe often – that's what it feels like. You know, maybe we like it when there's a little excitement in our lives: something going on, something happening, something to look forward to. And we feel a letdown when life's not like that; it's not exciting but just sort of ordinary.

And that's where we usually are: the daily grind, the tasks and chores of life, the routine. Ordinary can come to mean dull and drab and dreary – a drudgery – without meaning or purpose. But that need not be the case.

One woman wrote...

As a young mother at home with a small baby, I was feeling confined. Dirty diapers and housekeeping duties filled my days, and frustration set in. I wanted to be about "the Lord's business" of helping those in need in my

community. Surely God intended to use me for more [than] tending to one small child!

Then the words of a psalm ran through my mind – “I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go” (Psalm 32:8) – and I realized that this was what God required of me now. And obedience to God's calling is more blessed than all the good works we could ever do in God's name. It is enough, at times, to tend to the needs of only one of God's children, whether that one be a child, a co-worker, a neighbor, a family member. And we should rejoice in even our smallest acts of service. Doing God's will for us will bring great blessing to us and to all those around us.

[For] Sometimes God calls us to very humble, ordinary duties.
(Devotional reflection by Julie Perry - North Carolina)

Ordinary time.

In the liturgical year the color is green: the color of life, the color of ordinary life.

And often – maybe most often – it's where we tend to find God...if we look, if we listen, if we are alert.

And it's where God calls us: in the everyday, ordinary details of life.

The prophet Isaiah was once given these instructions:

The Lord said to Isaiah, "Take your son...and go to meet King Ahaz. You will find him on the road where the cloth makers work, at the end of the ditch that brings water from the upper pool." (Isaiah 7:3 TEV)

To which Elizabeth Achtemeier notes,

We have a God who is so particular in...speaking that [God] gives [the] prophet highway directions! (*Creative Preaching*, p.97)

And the Word became flesh and lived among us.... (John 1:14 NRSV)

God became one of us, enmeshed in the details and minutiae of human life.

So we affirm in the Assurance of Pardon "Immanuel": God with us...even in our ordinary human lives.

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Think of that in our everyday life:

-I change diapers “in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

-I watch the grandkids “in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

-I wash dishes “in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

-I complete this at-home project “in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

-I read this book “in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

-I write this letter “in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

-I make this call “in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

It gives significance to our lives and meaning to our work: what we do, our choices, our actions.

It also gives direction. For if there are details of our ordinary life that don't go together with "doing it in the name of the Lord Jesus" – if we are involved in an activity or making choices that have a disconnect with "doing it in the name of the Lord Jesus" – then maybe we need to ponder, step back, and make a change.

Never forgetting that even the smallest act can be done in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Jesus himself said,

"You can be sure that whoever gives even a drink of cold water to one of the least of these my followers because [they are] my follower, will certainly receive a reward." (Matthew 10:42 tev)

Peter's mother-in-law had a fever (see Mark 1:30-31). They told Jesus about her. Jesus healed her, and she got up and fixed dinner for them – a typical, everyday thing.

An ordinary response...that can be oh-so-much more.

"For I was hungry," the king will say,

"and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. ... For as often as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:35-36, 40)

That's purpose and meaning and significance. And that's not simply ordinary.

Perhaps it is matter of perspective, takes a change in our attitude.

It used to puzzle me what the Apostle Paul meant when he wrote, *"Pray without ceasing"* (II Thessalonians 5:17 KJV) It seemed ridiculous that people should go through the day with their eyes closed, their heads bowed, and their hands clasped together in a gesture of prayer...and bumping into everything!

But that's only one take on prayer. Another way of understanding prayer is to try to keep God in front of us always: **"to live constantly in the presence of God"**. An approach to prayer where we

strive to have the thought and will of God predominate every waking moment of the day so that [we] can see the hand of God in everything that happens. (Chester P. Michael and Marie C. Norrissey, *Prayer and Temperament*, pp. 72 & 74)

The folk singer Carrie Newcomer puts it this way:

**holy is the dish and drain
the soap and sink, and the cup and plate
and the warm wool socks, and the cold white tile
showerheads and good dry towels**

...

**holy is the busy street
and cars that boom with passion's beat**

**and the check out girl, counting change
and the hands that shook my hands today**

...

**holy is the familiar room
and quiet moments in the afternoon
and folding sheets like folding hands
to pray as only laundry can**

...

**it's all a part of a sacrament
as holy as a day is spent**
("Holy as the Day is Spent")

Henri J.M.Nouwen once wrote,

**every experience holds a new promise, every encounter carries a new insight,
and every event brings a new message.**

To take this approach, this stance, this vision in life

gives eyes to see the flower breaking through the cracks in the street.... (from
The Wounded Healer; found in *Guide to Prayer*, pp.67-68)

And gives eyes to see God breaking into our everyday, ordinary life/lives.

If today is a typical day, following worship, we'll pick up something for lunch on our way home. We'll go through the drive-through, and I'll hand the person in the window our money, and they'll hand us our food. But this is not simply just another person who does a job they get paid for. This is a child of God. A person who bears as much the holiness of God as do I, and therefore whom I am called to respect. It's not just an "ordinary" meeting, but an encounter of significance with a person of significance.

And I wonder: If I thought like this, if I took this approach to life,

-maybe I might see more with the eyes of God.

-maybe I might hear more with the ears of God.

-maybe I might touch more with the tenderness of God.

-maybe I might care more with the compassion of God.

Anglican bishop Charles Gore once noted,

**God does not want us to do extraordinary things; [God] wants us to do the
ordinary things extraordinarily well.** (found in *The Presbyterian Outlook*,
2/8/88 p.5)

*And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord
Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Just an ordinary day.

And yet...for those with eyes to see and ears to hear, for those with hands to serve and hearts to love, it is anything but ordinary.

***HYMN** "Take My Life" GtG 697 (*Verses 1-3 & 6*)

1. **Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days;
let them flow in ceaseless praise;
let them flow in ceaseless praise.**

2. **Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love;
take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee,
swift and beautiful for thee.**

3. **Take my voice and let me sing
always, only, for my King;
take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee,
filled with messages from thee.**

6. **Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure store;
take myself and I will be
ever, only, all for thee,
ever, only, all for thee.**

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***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**In life and in death we belong to God.
Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,
whom alone we worship and serve.**

**In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth,
praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"**

**With believers in every time and place,
we rejoice that nothing in life or in death
can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

(from A Brief Statement of Faith, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Confessions)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Pastor: God, in your mercy...

People: ...hear our prayer.

THE LORD'S PRAYER *(Contemporary)*

**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

Invitation

Reflection

**Unison Prayer of Dedication*

We give you thanks, O God, for your gifts that bless us and fill our lives with all good things. Open our eyes, that we might see more and more of your grace in our midst. Open our hearts, that we might share more and more of ourselves in our service to you. Use the gifts that we offer to be a blessing to others. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

SENDING

***CLOSING HYMN** "Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing" GtG 546 *(Verses 1 & 2)*

- 1. Lord, dismiss us with your blessing;
fill our hearts with joy and peace;**

**let us each, your love possessing,
triumph in redeeming grace.
O refresh us,
O refresh us,
traveling through this wilderness.**

- 2. Thanks we give and adoration
for your gospel's joyful sound;
may the fruits of your salvation
in our hearts and lives abound.
Ever faithful,
ever faithful
to your truth may we be found.**

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***CHARGE AND BLESSING**

Pastor: ...And let the gathered people of God say...
People: ...**Amen.**

POSTLUDE

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