

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY, AUGUST 7, 2022

Pacific Presbyterian Church and First Presbyterian Church of Union, Missouri

**19<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME**

**GATHERING**

**PRELUDE**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Come, people of God, to give thanks and sing!  
All: **We come in remembrance of all that God has done for us.**  
One: All around us the world shouts God's praises!  
All: **Let us join in the song of thanksgiving to God.**

**\*OPENING HYMN** "For the Beauty of the Earth" GtG 14 (*Verses 1, 3, 4, & 5*)

1. **For the beauty of the earth,  
for the glory of the skies,  
for the love which from our birth  
over and around us lies:  
Lord of all, to thee we raise  
this our hymn of grateful praise.**
  
3. **For the joy of ear and eye,  
for the heart and mind's delight,  
for the mystic harmony  
linking sense to sound and sight:  
Lord of all, to thee we raise  
this our hymn of grateful praise.**
  
4. **For the joy of human love,  
brother, sister, parent, child,  
friends on earth, and friends above,  
for all gentle thoughts and mild:  
Lord of all, to thee we raise  
this our hymn of grateful praise.**

*(continued...)*

5. For thyself, best gift divine  
to the world so freely given;  
for that great, great love of thine,  
peace on earth and joy in heaven:  
Lord of all, to thee we raise  
this our hymn of grateful praise.

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**\*UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart and mind and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. In your mercy forgive what we have been, help us amend what we are, and direct what we shall be, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

**\*SILENT CONFESSION**

**\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

One: The Lord hears our confession and is eager to forgive.

All: **There is forgiveness for all who accept the gracious gift of a loving God.**

One: We open ourselves now to receive anew the gospel in all its power.

All: **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Alleluia! Amen.**

One: Take to heart the good news; believe it, live it.

All: **And let us share in the inheritance of the saints as we become good neighbors to the weak and needy, the lonely and destitute, whom God loves along with us; and let us share with them the love and peace we know in our Lord.**

**\*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 Luke 10:25-37

LUKE 10:25-37 (New Revised Standard Version)

<sup>25</sup> *Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"* <sup>26</sup> *He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?"* <sup>27</sup> *He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."* <sup>28</sup> *And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."*

<sup>29</sup> *But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"* <sup>30</sup> *Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' <sup>36</sup> Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?"* <sup>37</sup> *He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."*

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

#### SERMON "Choosing Your Neighbors" by Pastor Bill Vincent

Choosing your neighbors is a lot like choosing friends. You try to be discriminating, choosing people with similar interests and values, people with whom you get along, etc. The process is very much like picking out a house, concerned not only with the house itself but with where it is: what part of the city or country it's in, who lives nearby, who are the neighbors.

*Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" [Jesus] said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And [Jesus] said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."*

*But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

Good question. Admittedly, the text says the question is asked for not necessarily the most positive of reasons. The lawyer asks it in order “*to justify himself,*” in order to save face. Nevertheless, it is a good question: Who is my neighbor?

It is obvious we think it is a good question because we are constantly involved in formulating our own answer to that question. That new person who moved in down the street – do they deserve a welcome visit from me...or not? Or talking about those people who receive public aid or government commodities – do they deserve it? Seeing the self-destructive path some people are on, we think to ourselves, “What they are doing is going to hurt them, but I can’t be bothered.” We are constantly engaged in reevaluating and reformulating our definition of a neighbor, and we do it in relationship to individuals and different groups of people. Do I want to be a part of that group, or not? Do I want to get to know that person, or not?

“*And who is my neighbor?*” the lawyer asked.

And Jesus answers – or at least responds – with a story:

“*A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.*”

A priest passes by, and later a Levite, or a temple assistant; and both of them see the man but pass by on the other side.

“*But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity.*”

The story of the Good Samaritan. A story so familiar it can be very difficult to hear and learn from, because we've heard it before and we think we already know what it's all about and what it has to tell us.

Who is my neighbor? And Jesus points to the Samaritan and says, that's your neighbor. Or maybe yet, Jesus points to the man who was beaten and says, that's your neighbor.

Well, actually, Jesus does neither of these things. He tells the story we have heard so many times that we tend to turn it off. And then he asks a question of his own. What is odd about Jesus' question is that it is not the question that the lawyer asked.

The lawyer was concerned with the question, Who is my neighbor? But as we read Jesus' counter-question, we realize that the lawyer's question is not the question Jesus is addressing.

And Jesus asked,

“*Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?*”

A very different question from that asked by the lawyer.

The issue under scrutiny, as you remember, was the commandment to “*love...your neighbor as yourself.*” The lawyer understood the commandment in terms of the question, So who is my neighbor? But Jesus says, “You've got it all wrong. The question is not, Who is your neighbor? The question is, How are you to be a neighbor?”

The lawyer was concerned with picking and choosing his neighbors, much like choosing your friends. How do I define those people around me so I know who to treat as a neighbor, and who not? This is a rather cold, calculating, and in the end, self-serving way of understanding the commandment to love neighbor as self.

But Jesus says that is not the issue. The issue is How are you to act so that you are a neighbor to others?

You see, the issue is not out there – how do I define others? – but in here, with me: How do I define myself, how do I reorient myself so that I am a neighbor to others?

How can I be a neighbor? That is the question. And the story of the Good Samaritan shows us how.

We can be a neighbor  
by demonstrating compassion  
through caring for another  
in response to genuine human need.

Let me repeat that:

We can be a neighbor  
by demonstrating compassion  
through caring for another  
in response to genuine human need.

We read in our passage that the Samaritan “*was moved with pity*” (or ‘compassion’). Literally: “His heart went out to him.”

By being people of compassion, having the same compassion for others that God has for us; by being ready and willing to perceive and respond to human need by caring for another – in that way we fulfill the commandment to love our neighbor as ourself, for in that way we ourselves are then a good neighbor.

I was talking with a colleague about a church he had once served in an area with immigrants and refugees from various parts of the world. In particular he spoke of refugees from one particular country. He said the people of his congregation were not really in favor of helping the refugees. After all, they said, the government of the country from whence they came is one we support, it is friendly to our country. But when these refugees came onto their doorstep and asked for help, it was hard to turn them away. The issue then was not Which side of the political table they came from? but What is the genuine human need found here? And asking that question, they responded with compassion by caring.

Whenever we meet with genuine human need, the question is not who is it that is suffering? The issue is simply the fact of human need. And we are to respond to that specific human need as a neighbor. Remember: The Samaritan did not ask for I.D. from the man in the ditch; in all probability, the two were enemies: Jews and Samaritans really didn’t care for one another, having little if anything to do with each other. But we are not to define our relationship to others by whether or not we consider them to be our neighbors. We define ourself as a neighbor and that defines our relationship to those around us, especially those in need.

This doesn’t mean we have to consider them our bosom buddy. But we are to be a neighbor to them.

Whenever and wherever I come into contact with genuine human need, I am to respond with compassion as a neighbor, like the Good Samaritan, to care for the other.

And to do so the best I can.

This does not answer all the hard questions. What about the panhandler on the street? Do I give them money? Can I still genuinely care for them even by refusing precisely what they ask for? How can I still act as a neighbor to them?

To talk about being a neighbor to another does not answer all the hard questions, but it does give us a more appropriate perspective and starting point for arriving at an answer. For the question is not, Is this person worthy? but, Will I be a neighbor?

How can we be a neighbor? Where can we be a neighbor?

The word translated “neighbor” actually means “someone who is near by.” Who are the ones we are nearby? What about the homeless person that finds his or her way to Second Blessings/Agape House? Are we nearby to them? When we think about it, and the technological advances of past decades that have helped to transform our world into a global village, are we not nearby to all people? So that there is much that we can do (many opportunities) to be a neighbor.

Will we be a neighbor to those in our area who have suffered from recent flooding, or those in Eastern Kentucky where Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and area Presbyterian Churches, are already at work?

Will we be a neighbor to those whose houses have not been washed away by floods, but have been blown away by war in Ukraine?

I think of the ministry of Habitat for Humanity. The philosophy and history of this organization show it to be a group of people who have discerned the basic human need for decent housing at an affordable price for the millions of people who are homeless or living in substandard housing. And they have responded to that need one brick at a time, one house at a time, in our communities, and throughout this country and the world.

What would be different in your life if you defined yourself as a neighbor? And in that way sought to respond with compassion, caring, in a neighborly way whenever and wherever you came face to face with human need?

In the end, it turns out, the question asked by the lawyer, Who is my neighbor? is indeed answered. But only after I have first redefined myself as one who is a neighbor. After taking that step, the question Who is my neighbor? is answered easily.

And Jesus asked,

*“Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” [The lawyer] said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him – and to us – “Go and do likewise.”*

**\*HYMN** "Lord, I Want to Be a Christian" GtG 729 (*Verses 1, 2, & 4*)

**1. Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart;  
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.  
In my heart, (in my heart,)  
in my heart, (in my heart,)  
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.**

**2. Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart, in my heart;  
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.  
In my heart, (in my heart,)  
in my heart, (in my heart,)  
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.**

**4. Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart, in my heart;  
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.  
In my heart, (in my heart,)  
in my heart, (in my heart,)  
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.**

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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!"**

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

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

**One: Gracious Lord...  
All: ...hear our prayer.**

## THE EUCHARIST

### OFFERING

*Invitation*

*Reflection*

*\*Unison Prayer of Dedication*

**As you have blessed us, O God, so may we be a blessing to the world. May our lives shine with the light of faith and hope. May our deeds be expressions of your compassion and love. And may the gifts we bring before you be used to the end of spreading the good news of your grace and mercy. Amen.**

### SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

*Invitation to the Lord's Table*

*Prayer of Thanksgiving*

**Leader:** The Lord be with you.

**People:** **And also with you.**

**Leader:** Lift up your hearts.

**People:** **We lift them to the Lord.**

**Leader:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People:** **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*(The prayer continues...)*

*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.**

*Breaking of the Bread*

*Communion of the People*

(Please go ahead and partake of each of the elements as you are served.)

*Prayer*



## SENDING

**\*CLOSING HYMN** “Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ” GtG 526

1. **Let us talents and tongues employ,  
reaching out with a shout of joy:  
bread is broken; the wine is poured;  
Christ is spoken and seen and heard.  
Jesus lives again; earth can breathe again;  
pass the Word around: loaves abound!**
  
2. **Christ is able to make us one;  
at the table he sets the tone,  
teaching people to live to bless,  
love in word and in deed express.  
Jesus lives again; earth can breathe again;  
pass the Word around: loaves abound!**
  
3. **Jesus calls us in, sends us out  
bearing fruit in a world of doubt,  
gives us love to tell, bread to share:  
God (Immanuel) everywhere!  
Jesus lives again; earth can breathe again;  
pass the Word around: loaves abound!**

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### **\*CHARGE AND BLESSING**

One:           ...And let the gathered people of God say...  
All:            ...Amen.

### **POSTLUDE**

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