

Trinity-Grace United Church
November 26th, 2023
REIGN OF CHRIST SUNDAY

GATHERING

PRELUDE

WELCOME

CANDLE LIGHTING

INTROIT: "As Long As We Follow" (MV 140)

(1st time - soloist, 2nd time - all)

As long as we follow
in the way that God is leading,
we know God's reign will surely come.

Refrain
We know this, we know this!
Yes, God's reign will surely come.

INVITATION

(One/All)

We don't see it, but its effect is clear;
We don't hear it, but its message is never silent;
We don't feel it, but its influence constantly moves us.

Reaching through every system,
Flowing through every interaction,

Silently moving the world toward its God-designed purpose,
More powerful than the strongest army,
Yet infinitely gentle;

More significant than the most influential government,
Yet without coercion or manipulation.

The kingdom of God is organically, subversively at work,
And it is here.

We open our hearts and minds to it in this time of worship.

GATHERING PRAYER

(Leader)

Holy, loving God,

Today we reflect on who we are as your church, reflecting your reign:

We consider the traditions, experiences and evolving faith journey
that have brought us to this time, this space,
this community and the larger movement
of which we are a part.

We acknowledge today a past full of memories,
and a future full of possibility.

As the past calls to the future for a word of forgiveness,
and the future sings to the past
of your goodness and faithfulness,
may your spirit bind together past and future,
speaking into our present moment,
a word of hope and promise.

In Christ's name, Amen.

HYMN: "This is the Day" (VU 412)

1. This is the day, this is the day
that our God has made, that our God has made;
we will rejoice, we will rejoice,
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.

This is the day that our God has made,
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day, this is the day
that our God has made.

2. Open to us, open to us
your gates, O God, your gates, O God;
we will go in, we will go in,
to your holy place, to your holy place.
Open to us your gates, O God,
we will go in to your holy place.
Open to us, open to us
your gates, O God.
3. You are our God, you are our God,
we will praise your name, we will praise your name;
we will give thanks, we will give thanks,
for your faithfulness, for your faithfulness.
You are our God, we will praise your name,
we will give thanks for your faithfulness.
You are our God, you are our God,
we will praise your name.
4. This is the day, this is the day
that our God has made, that our God has made;
we will rejoice, we will rejoice,
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.
This is the day that our God has made,
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day, this is the day
that our God has made.

PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS

(One/All)

God of life,
Sometimes the cares and fascinations of the world
Pull us in many directions and away from You, our centre
And the witness we are called to, from that Centre.

When we are tempted to add our noise
To the shouting of opinions and doctrines,
Teach us, O Christ, the art of quiet proclamation.

When we face the crashing of guns and missiles,
And the loud justifications of violence,
Teach us, O Christ, the art of quiet proclamation.

When we are overwhelmed by the sobs of those who grieve and suffer,
And by the rhetoric of those who deny the world's pain,
Teach us, O Christ, the art of quiet proclamation.

When we are lured by the song of materialism,
And lulled by the lure of the immediate and expedient,
Teach us, O Christ, the art of quiet proclamation.

In all the places where your love and justice are unheard,
Where the song of your grace is silenced,
And where the noise of sin robs people of life,
Teach us to hear the whispers of your reign,
And to quietly, gently, persistently
Proclaim your gospel of life in word and action.

(Silence is held)

A WORD OF GRACE

The Holy One reaches out to us when others have turned away.
God heals us when we thought we were beyond repair,
God's amazing love transforms our lives over and over again.

This morning, God gives us an assurance of what we cannot always see, the gift of grace beyond measure. Amen.

SHARING PEACE

One: May the peace of Christ be with you all!

All: And also with you!

We take a moment to greet each other and share a sign of peace

ENCOUNTERING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

(One)

O God, Open our hearts and minds today
to listen for your wisdom spoken
as your spirit has moved through your people.
Move in us and among us by your Spirit so that in their words,
we may meet your Living Word, Jesus Christ and your Good News.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 42-43 (VU 768)

Sung Refrain:

Why restless, why cast down my soul?

Hope still and you will sing!

Like a deer that longs for life-giving waters,
so longs my soul for you, O God.

My soul thirsts for you, the source of my life.

When shall I come and behold your face?

Day and night I taste only tears,
while they steadily belittle me, saying, 'Where is your God?'

**But I remember - though my soul is distressed -
how I went with the crowds to the house of God,**
our voices joyful and filled with praise,
a multitude keeping festival.

Sung Refrain:

***Why restless, why cast down my soul?
Hope still and you will sing!***

My soul is overwhelmed within me;
therefore I remember you in this land of Jordan,
in Hermon, and on Mount Mizar.

**Like the turbulent roar of your waterfalls,
all your waves and currents wash over me.**

With loving kindness you bless my days,
and by night your song is with me,
a prayer to you, Giver of life.

**I say to God, my rock, 'Why have you forgotten me?
Why must I go like a mourner
because my foes oppress me?'**

I am like one whose bones are broken to pieces
through the taunting of my enemies.

**They steadily belittle me, saying,
'Where is your God?'**

Sung Refrain:

***Why restless, why cast down my soul?
Hope still and you will sing!***

Vindicate me, O God,
and plead my cause against faithless ones.
Save me from those who are deceitful and unjust.

**You are the God in whom I take refuge.
Why have you rejected me?**

**Why must I go like a mourner
because my foes oppress me?**

O send your light and your truth to lead me,
let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling!

**Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy.
I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God.**

Sung Refrain:

*Why restless, why cast down my soul?
Hope still and you will sing!*

**One: For the living word of God in scripture,
and among us, and within us:**

All: Thanks be to God!

EXPLORING THE WORD

“Questions About Life and Death”

- Rev. Marianna Harris

RESPONDING

HYMN: “There is A Time” (MV 165)

During the hymn, the offering box is brought forward

1. There is a time that we must rise
There is a time that we must stand
There is a time that we must come (come)
together (together)
For blessed are our lives (our lives)
Blessed our love (our love)
and blessed the promise gathered now.
2. There is a time that we must leave
Go from the place where hatreds breed
and, turning, feel the Spirit breathe (breathe) us

together (together)
For blessed are our lives (our lives)
Blessed our love (our love)
and blessed the promise gathered now.

3. There is a time we know the way
There is a time we watch and pray
In living faith we make our way (way)
together (together)
For blessed are our lives (our lives)
Blessed our love (our love)
and blessed the promise gathered now.

4. Upon the dry a cloud will rise
And truth will shine among the lies
And wisdom sing as we arise (rise)
together (together)
For blessed are our lives (our lives)
Blessed our love (our love)
and blessed the promise gathered now.

5. There is a bow within the rain
And it will come and bend again
And colours shine where we have been (been)
together (together)
For blessed are our lives (our lives)
Blessed our love (our love)
and blessed the promise gathered now.

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

Trinity-Grace is grateful for the many ways
we are gifted and called to contribute to God's mission
through this faith community.

Prayer of Dedication

(One/All)

Holy one, with these offerings,
we seek to open our hands and hearts.

**May our gifts may be entrusted to Christ's ministry
of hospitality, justice and peace
as we seek to care for your creation and all your people.**

Bless all we offer this day, in the name of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

CONNECTING IN COMMUNITY

We share announcements, insights, joys & concerns.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Prayers of gratitude and of concern for our community, world and those we know.

THE PRAYER OF THE DISCIPLES (The Lord's Prayer)

(All)

**O Breathing Life,
Your Name shines everywhere!
Release a space to plant your Presence here.
Imagine your possibilities now.**

**Embody your desire in every light and form.
Grow through us this moment's bread and wisdom.
Untie the knots of failure binding us,
as we release the strands we hold
of others' faults.**

**Help us not forget our Source,
yet free us from not being in the Present.
From you arises every Vision, Power and Song
From gathering to gathering.**

Amen.

- Retranslation from the Aramaic

HYMN: "When Hands Reach Out Beyond Divides" (MV 169)

1. When hands reach out beyond divides
and hope is truly found,
each chain of hate will fall away
and bells of peace shall sound,
and bells of peace, of peace shall sound,
and bells of peace shall sound,
each chain of hate will fall away
and bells of peace shall sound.

2. When fear no longer guides our steps
and days of war are done,
God's dream for all shall live anew;
our hearts will heal as one,
our hearts will heal, will heal as one,
our hearts will heal as one,
God's dream for all shall live anew;
our hearts will heal as one.

3. When race and creed blind us no more,
a neighbour's face we'll see,
and we shall dance the whole world round,
for love will set us free,
for love, yes love will set us free,
for love will set us free,
and we shall dance the whole world round,
for love will set us free.

The Christ candle is extinguished.

CLOSING RESPONSES

(One/All)

In the beginning, before time, before people,
Before the world began,
God was.

Here and now,
Among us, beside us,
Enlisting the people of earth,
For the purposes of heaven,
God is.

And in the future,
When the pain of the world is past
And all we know has found its fulfilment,
God will be.

Not denying the world, but delighting in it,
Not condemning the world, but redeeming it,
Through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit,

God was; God is; God will be.

- from Wee Worship Book (Wild Goose Worship Group)

SENDING & BLESSING

As our worship concludes, our prayers rise as we sing:

AMEN: "Sing Amen" (**VU 431**)

Sing 2 times

Amen, we praise your name, O God
Amen, we praise your name, O God
Amen, Amen! Amen, Amen!
Amen, we praise your name, O God!

POSTLUDE