

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
WILLMAR, MN
September 6, 2020**



Prelude

Welcome to Worship

Friends, we are doing worship in a new way during this season. Welcome to those of you who are here in the sanctuary. It is a joy to have you back. Many of you have good reason to still be joining us virtually. We miss you, but we understand. And we look forward to when all of us will be able to be together again safely. Let me assure you, wherever you are, we are still the church. The church has always been the people, not the building in which we gather. Even if we are not all together in this place, we are together in worship today by the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives and by the digital signal that helps us connect to one another.

Wherever you are, and whether you are participating in worship live or as a recording, this is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Please join me in the Call to Worship.

Call to Worship

One: Praise the Lord!

**All: Sing God's praise in the assembly of the faithful,
for the Lord takes pleasure in the people.**

One: Let the faithful sing for joy.

Preparing Our Hearts

“To God be the Glory” (#634)

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To God be the glory;
great things he has done!
So loved he the world that gave us his Son,
who yielded his life an atonement for sin,
and opened the life gate that all may go in.

(Refrain)

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord;
let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord;
let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory:
great things he has done!

Great things he has taught us;
great things he has done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son,
but purer and higher and greater
will be our wonder, our transport,
when Jesus we see.

(Refrain)

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord;
let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord;
let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory:
great things he has done!

Opening Prayer

One: Amid the countless things that
human beings cannot fully comprehend about God,
there stands this:
God so loves us
as to bathe us with grace
and feed us with mercy
and forgive our sins.
Confident in the love of God,
let us pray together.

**All: Lord God,
while we were still slaves to sin,
you died for our salvation.
Yet we still worship the false gods of the world,
forgetting that you are Lord.
Loving worldly wealth,
we have not loved you with our whole heart
nor loved our neighbors as ourselves.
Trusting worldly strength,
we have not trusted your word
nor followed the Word-made-flesh.
Forgiving by worldly norms,
we have not shown mercy to others
as you have shown mercy to us.
Forgive us yet again,
we pray in Christ's name. Amen.**

One: Friends, hear the good news of the gospel:
Who is in a position to condemn?
Only Christ. And Christ died for us; Christ rose for us;
Christ reigns in power for us; Christ prays for us.
Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:
In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

Hymn

“Here in This Place (Gather Us In)” (#401

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Here in this place the new light is streaming;
Now is the darkness vanished away;
see in this space our fears and our dreamings
brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken;
gather us in, the blind and lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken;
we shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young, our lives are a mystery.
We are the old who yearn for your face.
We have been sung throughout all of history,
called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in, the rich and haughty;
gather us in, the poor and strong;
give us a heart, so meek and so lowly;
give us the courage to enter the song.

Here we will take the wine and the water;
here we will take the bread of new birth.
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters,
call us anew to be salt for the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion;
give us to eat the bread that is you;
nourish us well, and teach us to fashion
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

Not in the dark of buildings confining,
not in some heaven, light years away:
here in this place the new light is shining;
now is the kingdom, and now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us forever;
gather us in and make us your own;
gather us in, all peoples together,
fire of love in our flesh and our bones.

Scripture Lesson

Exodus 12:1-14

Message

By: Karen Skaggs

Hymn of Affirmation

“My Shepherd Will Supply My Need” (#803)

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My shepherd will supply my need;
Jehovah is his name.
In pastures fresh he makes me feed,
beside the living stream.
He brings my wandering spirit back
when I forsake his ways,
and leads me, for his mercy's sake,
in paths of truth and grace.

When I walk through the shades of death
your presence is my stay;
one word of your supporting breath
drives all my fears away.
Your hand, in sight of all my foes,
does still my table spread;
my cup with blessings over flows;
your oil anoints my head.

The sure provisions of my God
attend me all my days;
O may your house be my abode,
and all my work be praise.
There would I find a settled rest,
while others go and come;
no more a stranger, or a guest,
but like a child at home.

Prayers of Intercession

God of grace and steadfast love,
we thank you for your commandments,
which order our life together.
We thank you for calling us
to live honorably with one another
and pray for your grace
as we try to do all that you require of us.
Increase in us, we pray,
the capacity to love you and our neighbors
without reserve
and to love even those who harm us.
Not halfheartedly,
but with our whole hearts,
we bring before you
the cares, the concerns, and the joys that occupy us.

We remember before you
those who are at odds with one another
in families, in neighborhoods or offices,
and even in the church.
We pray for nations
in the midst of internal or external
struggles and conflict.
Teach us, O God,
to seek nonviolent ways toward resolution.
Help us to speak the truth
and to listen with understanding
when perspectives are far apart.
We pray for love to bring peace
into every troubled heart and place.

We remember before you
those who have physical needs today.
People who are hungry and thirsty;
people who are exhausted by the demands
of work or caregiving;
people who are sick or undergoing surgery;

and people who live with chronic pain.
Bring relief and rest, we pray.

We remember those weighed down
with needs of heart and soul.
A worry that keeps us up at night,
grief that accompanies us everywhere we go,
depression that clouds us,
or an addiction that grips us.
Lift all these heavy burdens
with the light and peace of your presence, we pray.
Sustain us over the long journey toward health
and give us trust
in you, ourselves, and those who love us.

We remember before you not only our cares,
but also our joys –
a birthday celebrated, an anniversary enjoyed;
new beginnings –
a baby born, a new school year begun,
a new job, a new relationship.
We thank you, O God, for the gift of laughter,
for enduring friendships,
and for cherished memories.
We give thanks that with you
there is always a new beginning,
a way where there is no way,
hope beyond hope,
and life beyond death.
Through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

And now, with the confidence of the children of God,
we pray the prayer which Jesus taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread; and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

You are aware by now that we are not passing an offering plate during this season. We invite you to leave your offering in the plate by the door on your way out of the sanctuary, or you may continue to send your offering to the church or give online. Today is the first Sunday of the Month when we receive special offerings for the work of the Deacons. Please consider a special gift to support the important work of caring carried out by our Deacons. I want to thank you for continuing to give generously. Your gifts allow us to continue to be the church. So, I would like to take this moment to say thank you, and to bless your financial offerings and the offering of your lives.

Offering Prayer

Ever-present God,
just as Jesus promised to be among us
when two or three gather in his name,
be among us now
that these offerings may become instruments of
your love and justice.
In the name of Jesus, we pray.
Amen.

Closing Hymn

“Called as Partners in Christ’s Service” (#761)

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Called as partners in Christ’s service,
called to ministries of grace,
we respond with deep commitment
fresh new lines of faith to trace.
May we learn the art of sharing,
side by side and friend with friend,
equal partners in our caring
to fulfill God’s chosen end.

Christ's example, Christ's inspiring,
Christ's clear call to work and worth,
let us follow, never faltering,
reconciling folk on earth.

Men and women, richer, poorer,
all God's people, young and old,
blending human skills together
gracious gift from God unfold.

Thus new patterns for Christ's mission,
in a small or global sense,
help us bear each other's burdens,
breaking down each wall or fence.
Worlds of comfort, words of vision,
words of challenge, said with care,
bring new power and strength for action,
make us colleagues, free and fair.

So God grant us for tomorrow ways
to order human life that surround
each person's sorrow
with a calm that conquers strife.
Make us partners in our living,
Our compassion to increase,
Messengers of faith,
thus giving hope and confidence
and peace

Charge and Benediction

God's commandments are an invitation
to daily faithfulness.
Love God and your neighbor every day,
and you will fulfill all that God intends.

The grace of Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
fill you and the whole church
until all things in heaven and on earth
are reconciled. Amen.