



*A Service for the Worship of God
Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost*

September 13, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

PREPARATION

Please set out a candle that you can light as we light the Christ Candle during worship.

Gathering Around God's Word

Prelude

Jim Pera

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Dr. Nancy Birdsong

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Josh Sweeney

Call to Worship

*One: Loving and gracious God,
we are grateful for the guidance that you give us
when we seek to follow in the pathways of Christ.*

**All: We thank you for choosing to dwell among us
and praise you for calling us to be your faithful people.**

*One: Bless this time of worship,
that those who need comfort may be comforted,
those who need challenge may be challenged,*

**All: and that all of us might be renewed
to live in ways that speak of your love. Amen.**

Hymn # 436

“God of Compassion, in Mercy Befriend Us”

verses 1 and 3

Prayer of Confession

Holy God, we seek your mercy. When we have been wronged, we try to justify our

desire to retaliate. We use harsh words or we withdraw from relationships. Deep down inside, we know that you offer us your grace – loving us even when we have done nothing to deserve it. Still, we have trouble showing mercy and grace to one another. While we are grateful for the forgiveness you freely offer us in Jesus Christ, we are too eager to judge and punish those who hurt us. Our hidden fears and insecurities keep us from opening our hearts to each other. Compassionate God, free us from our sin and help us to love as you love.

(Silence for personal reflection and confession.) Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

One: God's hand of mercy is stretched out to us,
making a way through our brokenness, to touch us with grace and hope.

All: We stand before God, singing praise to the One
who turns our despair into joy and our fears into faith.

One: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God! Amen.

Response to Forgiveness “Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me” *Hymn #582, verse 1*

**Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me
And to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me
And to the Spirit, whose love has set me free
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be Amen.**

Passing of the Peace

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Hearing God's Word

Prayer for Illumination

Rev. Laura Nile Tuell

Scripture Reading

Psalm 103: 1-11

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all the benefits of the Lord

who forgives your iniquity, who heals your diseases,

who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The Lord executes righteousness and judgement for all who are oppressed.

O Lord, you made your ways known to Moses and your works to the children of Israel.

You are full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Anthem

“Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”

arr. Lloyd Larson

Vocal Ensemble

Scripture Reading:

Matthew 18:21-33

Then Peter came and said to Jesus, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together

with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt.

When his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?'

Children's Time

Rev. Dr. Nancy Birdsong

Hymn # 444

"Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive"

verses 1,2, and 4

Sermon

"Why Forgive?"

Rev. Dr. Nancy Birdsong

Responding to God's Word

Hymn #445

"God, How Can We Forgive?"

verses 1 and 3

Presentation of Offerings

Rev. Laura Nile Tuell

If you would like to give online, please go to www.sminster.com/give where you can give once or set-up a reoccurring monthly offering to the church.

Presentation Hymn # 607

Doxology

(Inclusive Version)

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all people here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.*

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Rev. Laura Nile Tuell

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

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.

Hymn # 692

"Spirit, Open My Heart"

Benediction

Postlude



*FLOWERS for this Sunday's service were given to the glory of God
by Maggie Jones in memory of loved ones
and by Shailendra Dwyer with thanksgiving and praise
for answered prayers for employment and in celebration of his birthday.*