

Call to worship

Psalm 25: 1-9

- 1 - I offer my life to you, Lord.
- 2 - My God, I trust you. Please don't let me be put to shame! Don't let my enemies rejoice over me!
- 3 - For that matter, don't let anyone who hopes in you be put to shame; instead, let those who are treacherous without excuse be put to shame.
- 4 - Make your ways known to me, Lord; teach me your paths.
- 5 - Lead me in your truth—teach it to me—because you are the God who saves me. I put my hope in you all day long.
- 6 - Lord, remember your compassion and faithful love—they are forever!
- 7 - But don't remember the sins of my youth or my wrongdoing. Remember me only according to your faithful love for the sake of your goodness, Lord.
- 8 - The Lord is good and does the right thing; he teaches sinners which way they should go.
- 9 - God guides the weak to justice, teaching them his way.

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Opening Prayer

We sing, O Lord, not with the confidence of those who think we have it all together, but with the humility of those who hope that we are teachable. In these moments broken open by your presence,

reveal to us glimpses of glory,
overwhelm us with grace,
rekindle our passion for your kingdom, and
nudge us toward footsteps of faithfulness.

This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Please be seated.

Please rise in body or spirit, and join in singing
“Oh, how wondrous the grace”

hymn #147

Affirming our faith

Hymnal #714

Let's join our voices now with words that affirm what we know of the One who is at the center of the Gospel. You will find it in the back of your hymnal, #714, as well as upon the screen. Half of the lines are in regular print - those will be read by you who sit on the left side (your left) of the sanctuary. I will read with you. Those on the right side (your right), will speak the words in bold print. Together, we will speak our faith. Let's begin.

(congregation:)

He was the Son of God.

He was the Son of Man.

He came down from heaven.

He was born in a stable.

Kings came to his cradle.

His first home was a cave.

He was born to be a king.

He was a child of Mary.

He was the greatest among rulers.

He was the least among servants.

He was loved and honored.

He was despised and rejected.

He was gentle and loving.

He made many enemies.

He counseled perfection.

He was a friend of sinners.

He was a joyful companion.

He was a man of sorrows.

He said, "Rejoice."

He said, "Repent."

"Love God with all your heart."

"Love your neighbor as yourself."

"Don't be anxious."

"Count the cost."

"Deny yourself."

"Ask and receive."

In him was life.

He died on a cross.

He was a historic person.

He lives today.

He was Jesus of Nazareth.

He is Christ the Lord.

Hymnal #714

adapted from *We Gather Together*, Kenneth I. Morse,
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Philippians 2:1-13

P - We turn now to Paul's letter to the followers of Jesus in Philippi. Most scholars believe that in this chapter Paul quotes from an early Christian song with which the Philippians would be familiar. Whether Paul wrote it, or just uses it here, is a question for which we don't have an answer. The words clearly have the feel of a song, phrased out like the Psalms of the Old Testament. Many years ago, I put them to music. Every time I read this chapter, this is where my mind goes... Listen to what Paul wrote – then, as now, an encouragement as well as a challenge.

M - ¹*If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶who*

P then sings →

The Christ Hymn

Philippians 2:5-11

Let your attitude to life be that of Christ Jesus himself:

The musical notation consists of three staves of music. The first staff starts with a C chord, followed by an F chord, then a C chord, and finally an Am chord. The lyrics for this section are: "Tho' he was in the form of God, he did not count e - qual - i - man put on hu - mil - i - gave a name a - bove all". The second staff begins with a G chord, followed by a C chord, an Am chord, and then an F chord. The lyrics for this section are: "In hu - man like-ness he was born, this high and There - fore God lift - ed him up ty, with o - ty, names, that be - di - at this name ent - all that he Je - sus should grasp, in - trod bow, and". The third staff begins with a C chord, followed by a Dm chord, a G chord, an F chord, a G chord, and a C chord. The lyrics for this section are: "stead he gave up all he was, and be - came a slave. path that led him to his death, death up - on a cross. ev - 'ry tongue con - fess that Je - sus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God."

music © 1987, Peter L. Haynes

M - *to the glory of God the Father. ¹² Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

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Sharing a joy, a concern,
a word of testimony or praise

Invitation to Love Feast

(shared by a deacon)

Though this is a day of rest, your deacons will be hard at work this afternoon, preparing for Love Feast. Having done this many times before, we have written down what needs to happen when. For instance, our deacon notebook says, put the meat on at _____ pm (*or share some other detail*). Even so, there is joy in putting our hands and hearts together in this task. As we cook and set tables and fill feetwashing tubs, amid our busy-ness, the Spirit will be preparing us.

Let me extend to you an invitation to the Lord's table. Yes, our lives are full of all sorts of events. My prayer is that, amid your busy-ness today, the Spirit will be preparing you for this special meal, starting in the sanctuary at 5pm. Won't you come and join us? What's extra special about today is that it is World Communion Sunday. Let your thoughts expand as you realize that followers of Jesus around this globe will be breaking bread and drinking from the cup of Christ in their own traditional way on this day. Our way is to include feet (or hand) washing and a meal. Come.

Now, deacons do more than prepare Love Feast twice a year. We are part of the caregiving ministry if this church. Towards the end of today's worship all of us together will dedicate a new deacon to help us fulfill our calling, Eugenia. Pray for us as we pray for you. And join us tonight, if you are able.

the servant's feast

The musical score consists of four staves of music in G major, common time. The lyrics are integrated into the music, corresponding to the chords shown above them. The chords are: D, A, Bm, Bm7, Em, A7, D, G, Em, F#m, Bm, A7, D, G, D, A, D, G, F#m, Bm, A7, D.

Some knees bend and some knees don't.
You can bow and still be proud.
To be eat-en, bread must break;
Hand in hand we walk the way,
Some knees jump and some knees
Whispered thoughts can still be
and to love, a heart must
hearts un - i - ted on this

won't. Some knees run the fast - est race.
loud. Seat - ed saints have wings to fly.
ache; for in shar - ing, we let go,
day, find - ing ways to dis - a - gree,
Some knees walk a slow - er
"Down to earth" can touch the
and we wait for seeds to
yet be bound in har - mo -

pace. But all knees on earth shall bow
sky. Yes, the last can come in first,
grow. Then we trust in what will come,
ny. In the song we hear the One
as the Lord has show'd them
and all pub - bles may be
and to fear we won't suc -
who puts joy on ev' - ry

how: car-ing for the lost and least.
burst. In the won- der of the yeast,
cumb. Sim-ple faith leads to re - lease.
tongue. And the glo - ry is un - leashed.
Wel-come to the ser-vant's feast.
wel-come to the ser-vant's feast.
Wel-come to the ser-vant's feast.
Wel-come to the ser-vant's feast.

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Prayer for others

After you hear me say, "great Lover of the world," pray:
Hear our prayers, God of mercy and peace.

That the meek may be encouraged and the proud may be humbled, we pray to you, great Lover of the world.

Hear our prayers, God of mercy and peace.

That the losers may be comforted and boastful winners may be discomfited, we pray to you, great Lover of the world.

Hear our prayers, God of mercy and peace.

That the thin-skinned may be encouraged and the tough-hided become more sensitive, we pray to you, great Lover of the world.

Hear our prayers, God of mercy and peace.

That the downtrodden may be uplifted and the oppressors may be overthrown, we pray to you, great Lover of the world.

Hear our prayers, God of mercy and peace.

That the suffering may receive relief and the unthinking and heedless may be made more aware, we pray to you, great Lover of the world.

Hear our prayers, God of mercy and peace.

That the drug addicts may find release and the power-freaks may be kept in check, we pray to you, great Lover of the world.

Hear our prayers, God of mercy and peace.

That the lonely may find friends, and the much admired and praised may be saved from believing such adulation, we pray to you, great Lover of the world.

Hear our prayers, God of mercy and peace.

That the dying may see God's face in the darkness, and the grieving may find Christ in their tears and loneliness, we pray to you, great Lover of the world.

Hear our prayers, God of mercy and peace.

That those who feel sorely tempted may be held safe, and those who don't even recognize temptation be given a wake-up call, we pray to you, great Lover of the world.

Hear our prayers, God of mercy and peace.

That the secular world may be saved from despair, and that the church may be saved from self-righteousness, we pray to you, great Lover of the world.

Hear our prayers, God of mercy and peace.

That those thirsty for faith may permit Christ to find them, and that believers may permit Christ to regularly invade their comfort zone, we pray to you, great Lover of the world.

Hear our prayers, God of mercy and peace.

Source of all light and life and holy joy, bless all who pray to you this day, and bless also those who do not know how to pray. Through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen!

Matthew 21:23-32

1 - When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said,

2 - "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?"

1 - Jesus said to them,

3 - "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?"

1 - And they argued with one another,

4 - "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet."

1 - So they answered Jesus,

2&4 - "We do not know."

1 - And he said to them,

3 - "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

(pause while 3 non-speaking characters get in place
to act out the parable in the next 3 lines)

3 - "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and

said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?"

1 - They said,

2&4 - "The first."

1 - Jesus said to them,

3 - "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him."

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Message

"*By what authority?*"

Hymn (on insert)

"*Lord of the Dance*"

Dedicating a new Deacon

(As the previous hymn is sung, the deacons come forward and stand in a line in the front of the sanctuary. When the song has finished, they pass the microphone. Each read a line of the following – all but the new deacon being dedicated. She stands in front of the line, facing the rest. They are speaking to the congregation in general, but more specifically to her. If seven are present, the seventh in line speaks two lines in a row, then passes the microphone back. Otherwise, the last in line reads one line and passes it back, and so on. p.s. this is for a deacon body where the new deacon would make eight.)

- By what authority do we serve in Jesus' name?
- by the need of all to be fed and clothed.
- by the tears of those grieving a loss.
- by the dignity of someone struggling to ask for help.
- by the pain of a person recovering at home.
- by the restlessness of a child and the fatigue of a parent.
- by the hurt of sisters and brothers in conflict.
- by the love of Jesus.
- by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- by the creativity of our Creator.
- by the hope that more is in store.
- by the peace within our hearts.
- by the joy of simple gifts.
- by the grace of God.

Pastor: Brothers and sisters, we have been guided, as followers of Jesus were in days of old, to set apart deacons to assist in identifying and caring for needs in our fellowship, and to work toward our spiritual unity and

growth as Christ's body. Commitment to this fellowship and active trust in God; being open and responsive to the Holy Spirit; exercising wisdom and sound judgment – these are qualities we seek in a deacon. With this in mind, you as a church - at our last council meeting - called our sister Eugenia to be part of this ministry.

(turning to her, specifically:)

Let me ask you a few questions, sister.

First, do you declare anew your faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ?

If so say, "Yes, I do."

Will you seek to cultivate more fervently your spiritual life by Bible reading, meditation, prayer, and witnessing to your faith?

If so say, "With God's help, I will."

Will you encourage and help lead this congregation in deepening its spiritual life and its ministries of compassion?

If so say, "I will."

Will you seek to be a good example in faith and conduct?

If so say, "I will."

Do you then accept this call to the ministry of deacon in this body of Christ, and promise to perform faithfully all the duties thereof?

If so say, "I do."

(Eugenia kneels and the rest of the deacons surround her, laying hands upon her)

Let us pray:

Eternal God, you have come in Jesus Christ not to be served but to serve. Now we set apart and consecrate this your servant to this ministry of deacon, that she may serve in your name. Grant her deep compassion for human needs; fill her with tender care and steadfast love for those for whom Christ died. Inspire her with devotion to your church. Grant her growth in faith that she may lead others by precept and example. Grant to the church the grace to work with her for the increase of faith and caring within this fellowship. Sustain all of us in these labors. Through Christ we pray. Amen.

(*Eugenia rises*)

Pastor & Deacons:

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are now set apart as a deacon. Serve God and this congregation faithfully and courageously. And may God bless you in your service.

Congregation:

We, the members of this body of Christ, in the spirit of joy and in renewed loyalty to our Lord, acknowledge and receive you as deacons. We promise to pray for you and support you in confidence, encouragement, cooperation, and prayers, that together we may increase in the knowledge and the love of God, manifested to us in Jesus Christ.

heavily adapted from *For All Who Minister*
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Responding with our Tithes and Offerings

I invite you now to respond
to the good news of Jesus,
to the grace of our God, and
to the power we have been given by the Holy Spirit,
with your offering.

If you give on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, and don't have something tangible to put in the plate as it is passed, pray your own "yes" to the Lord, for we offer more than money – we present our very lives. That's something all of us can do.

Ushers, come and guide our giving.

Offertory

"Adagio" by Guilmont

*Hymn #384
“We give thee but thine own”
(vs. 1,2, & 5)

Benediction

Go now to will and to work for God's purposes.
Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.
Be filled with the same love
and look to the interests of others.
With reverence for God,
work out your salvation.

And may God quench your thirst
with love and consolation;
May Christ Jesus strengthen you and encourage you;
And may the Holy Spirit lead you on
and make your joy complete.

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Postlude

“Come, Come Ye Saints”
an American Folk Hymn