

GATHERING FOR THE WORD

Let us take this time to quiet our hearts and minds and prepare for worship.

* Please stand in body or spirit Plain text = Leader **Bold text = People**

Prelude: “Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal” Organist, Julie Pulliam
Arr. Gilbert M. Martin

Welcome The Rev. Dr. Whitney Dempsey

* Call to Worship (Please stand) Elder, Linda Johnston
Steady our steps, O God, as we travel the journey set before us. (Psalm 27:1)

Let us walk in the way of light and pursue the path of peace.

Keep us on your course of life as we seek to be faithful

And as we gather to praise you, our faithful Lord and God.

Let us worship God.

* Hymn “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing” No. 356

Call to Prayer and Prayer for Renewal (Be seated) Elder

Into the shadows of our isolation, God speaks the words of life and community.

Through God’s graceful, healing presence,

God redeems our woundedness and restores us to wholeness.

Trusting in God’s gracious provision,

let us together confess our limitations and proclaim God’s faithfulness.

Generous God, we are baptized as your people,

called to live and serve together as your church.

We confess that we have sought to live for ourselves,

not reaching out to others

and honoring the divine image in all your children.

Forgive us, we pray.

In your abundant mercy give us the grace to be your church,

confessing our faults, offering forgiveness

and working for reconciliation.

Turn our hearts to your intentions that we may hold fast

to one another and draw near to your presence.

In Jesus, we ask it.

(A time for silent prayer)

Assurance of Pardon (responsive) Whit Dempsey

Amen. Friends, in Jesus Christ, we have been fed God’s grace and redemption.

And that redemption gives us the strength to love our neighbors near

and far, proclaiming in our words and deeds:

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

* Sung Response (Stand as desired.)

Tune: Bring a Torch

Love has come: a light in the darkness! Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.

See all heaven has come to proclaim it; hear how their song of joy arises:

Love! Love! Born unto you a Savior! Love! Love! Glory to God on High.

HEARING THE WORD

Prayer of Illumination and Scripture Readings

Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 30:15-20 Deacon Reader, Lori Golightly
The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.** (pg. 190)

Anthem “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” Charles Wesley
WRPC Choir Rowland Hugh Prichard PH # 376

Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:21-37 The Rev. Dr. Whitney Dempsey
The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.** (NT pgs. 4-5)

Time with all Ages: C.E. director of Children & Youth, Linda Valo
(As the children come forward, please join in singing.)

This, this is where children belong, part of our family, part of our song.

Be with us, pray with us, help us grow strong, this is where children belong.

Sermon “Being Kind in a Culture of Mean” Rev. Whit Dempsey

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

* Affirmation of Faith (From *A Brief Statement of Faith*) Elder

We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life. The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the church.

The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the church. In a broken and fearful world, the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. 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!”

* **Hymn** "Goodness Is Stronger than Evil" STF No. 2219

Announcements The Rev. Dr. Whitney Dempsey

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer Front of Hymnal, Pg. 16
(Pray, "Forgive us our sins...")

Offertory "Thought Like Music" Organist, Julie Pulliam
Johannes Brahms, Arr. Lily Moline

* **Presentation of Offering** "Doxology" No. 591/2
*Praise God, From whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, All creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

* **Prayer of Dedication**

* **Hymn** "Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love" No. 367

Charge and Benediction

* **Sung Congregational response:** *Christ, Be Our Light!* GTG 314



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the dark - ness.



Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered to - day.

Postlude "Grand Choer" Organist, Julie Pulliam
Theodore Dubois

*Please come through to Fellowship Hall for refreshments, conversation,
and the Red, White, and Chocolate Luncheon. All are invited!*

Pulpit Elder: Linda Johnston
Time with All Ages: Linda Valo
Ushers: Betsy Smith and Jeff Stimson

Deacon Reader: Lori Golightly
Greeter: Eleanor Fowler
Flowers: Betty Niquette



*WPC Mission Statement
To worship God through faith and action,
to nurture the spirit of Jesus Christ in each of us,
to be an extended family to all,
and to serve the community
through programs, education and prayer.*

*February 12, 2023
Sixth Sunday after Epiphany*