



TO BE HIS LIGHT THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES



## Thoughts of Preparation

For me, every hour is grace. And I feel gratitude in my heart each time I can meet someone and look at his or her smile. -- *Elie Wiesel*

I do not at all understand the mystery of grace - only that it meets us where we are but does not leave us where it found us. -- *Anne Lamott*

Life is full of awe and grace and truth, mystery and wonder. I live in that atmosphere. -- *Dion DiMucci (Dion and the Belmonts)*

## Welcome and Announcements

**Prelude**                      *"I Will Sing Of My Redeemer"*              (*Dale Wood*)

## Tower Bell

### **\*Responsive Call to Worship**

May we find courage here—

**courage to follow our call, courage to live out our faith.**

May we find hope here—

**hope for a better world, hope that refuses to let us go.**

May we find truth here—

**truth that lives in sacred community, truth that lives in ancient stories.**

May we find all that we seek.

**And in our seeking, may we know God. Amen.**

### **\*Call to Confession**

There are very few things as powerful as a group of people that admits they are not perfect, and asks for grace as they grow. Imagine what our world might be like if every institution had such a weekly rhythm? Friends, we can light the way. Let us be brave in our truth-telling and honest in our confession. For we will always be met by grace. Let us pray.

**\*Unison Prayer of Adoration & Confession**

**Father, it was said of the Prodigal Son that he “came to himself. Help us to wake up to ourselves, and to You—to find again the “You” that forms and lives in “Us.” Set us free from the illusion of trying to be perfect so that we might be more fully human;**

**HELP us discern that becoming holy cannot be done without becoming fully human! Help us not to chase after an imaginary life, and to find satisfaction in our real lives, our full-with-YOU-to-the-brim, lives.**

**Forgive us, Graceful God, when we gracelessly judge and reject others. And turn us away from our self-rejection, so that we might see that Your arms open in welcome. Always open. Always welcoming. Amen.**

**\*Words of Assurance (Responsive)**

Family of faith, hear this good news:

Even in our silence, **God loves us.**

Even in our fear or shame, **God chooses us.**

Even when we sin, **God wraps us in grace.**

You are free—to be bold, to be brazen, to be exactly who God called you to be.

**Thanks be to God, amen.**

**\*Gloria Patri**

*(Creatorex)*

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son  
and to the Holy Ghost**

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen. Amen.**

## **Scripture Lesson: Luke 15.1-10 (Part One)**

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

So he told them this parable: “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

“Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

## **Gathering Together in Prayer**

### **Silent Prayer—Pastoral Prayer—Lord’s Prayer**

#### **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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.*

#### **Offertory Invitation**

Grace is always a gift. Let us be graceful in our giving, as we bring offerings to God today, that God’s grace might grow in this world, and gift more and more people!

## Offertory

*“The Perfect Wisdom of Our God” (Townend/Getty)*

*The perfect wisdom of our God, revealed in all the universe  
all things created by His hand and held together at His command.  
He knows the myst'ries of the seas, the secrets of the stars are His,  
He guides the planets on their way, and turns the earth through another day.*

*The matchless wisdom of His ways that mark the path of righteousness;  
His word a lamp unto my feet, His spirit teaching and guiding me.  
And, O, the myst'ry of the cross, that God should suffer for the lost  
so that the fool might shame the wise, and all the glory might go to Christ.*

*O grant me wisdom from above to pray for peace and cling to love,  
and teach me humbly to receive the sun and rain of your sovereignty.  
Each strand of sorrow has a place within this tapestry of grace;  
so through the trials I choose to say “Your perfect will in your perfect way.”*

## Scripture Lesson: Luke 15.11-32 (Part Two)

Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his

feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

“Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

## **Sermon**

### **“Prodigal Grace”**

Pastor Barry Bordenkircher

### **\*Affirmation of Faith (Unison) “What Doesn’t Play by the Rules”**

**I come into the room calculating what I’ve done, as if hurt could be measured, as if there was a score system, as if we could say what I owe in return. I come into the room ready to apologize, ready to make amends, ready to tell you all the things I’ll do to make it better, but you put your arms around me. Grace is the ocean that softens the edges. Grace is rain in the desert—you’re not sure whether to laugh, cry, or dance. Grace is a miracle, all by itself. In a scorekeeping world, grace doesn’t play by the rules. I come into the room calculating what I’ve done. You say there’s grace here. It feels like a miracle. I don’t know whether to laugh, cry, or dance. O, So-full-to-the-brim-with-LOVE-God, We affirm Your wonderful grace all of that—laughing, crying, dancing! Amen.**

### **\*Hymn #255**

*“Beneath the Cross of Jesus” (St. Christopher)*

(see last page)

### **\*Lenten Series Benediction (Unison)**

As we leave this place we'll seek to be awestruck by the beauty of this world. We'll laugh, and may it be contagious. We'll try to make our lives overflow with love for those around us. God is making us effusive with hope and quick to point out joy. In all of your living, and breathing, and being, we will remember that we are full to the brim with God's Holy Spirit, and may it keep changing our lives. In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself—we go in peace, full to the brim. Amen.

**Postlude**

*“Prelude in C Minor”*

*(J.S. Bach)*

#### **WORSHIP NOTES**

With the exception of the *Prayer of Confession*, today's worship liturgy is adapted from the work of Rev. Sarah Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org. *The Prayer of Adoration & Confession* is adapted from a prayer written by Ann Siddall, *Lent to Easter liturgies: Year C* (from the website of Stillpoint Spirituality Centre – stillpoint.unitingchurchsa.org.au). Today's HYMNS are used with permission from *Gifts of Love: New Hymns for Today's Worship* by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette (Geneva Press, 2000). *The Affirmation of Faith* is adapted from “What Doesn't Play by the Rules,” written by: Rev. Sarah Speed | sanctifiedart.org |.

#### **Today's Worship Leaders:**

Preaching Today: Rev. Barry Bordenkircher

Liturgist: John Robson

Organist: Michael Sullivan

Choral Director: Dobin Park

Thanks to all the musicians and to Michael Sullivan and Dobin Park for assisting with filming and to Dobin Park for film editing.

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**New in Christ**  
by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman  
Inspired by 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

How does one image the transformation we experience in Christ? I began with this verse: “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (2 Cor. 5:17, NRSV) When I closed my eyes and repeated this verse over and over again, I began to see the silhouette of a person filled with the echoes of the first creation narrative in Genesis. This came at no surprise to me, considering I like to think of the first creation narrative in a radial fashion, with the imagery of each day starting from the center and building in rings upon the next. Within this person experiencing new life in Christ is imagery of the delineation of light and darkness, water and sky, water and earth. They contain seeds yielding vegetation, the light of the sun and the moon, the feathers of winged creatures, the patterned wings of butterflies, and the closed buds of Sabbath. From there the creation narrative begins again, continuing to ripple and move toward the edges of the figure.

At the center of the creation narrative is a fire poppy, which symbolizes new life, for it grows and thrives in the ash following the destruction of wildfire. A butterfly is poised on the flower, also representing new life, for it transforms from a caterpillar into an intricately-designed, delicately-winged creature. The poppy grows from the wound of the golden figure who is meant to personify the transformative love of Christ. The figures, one experiencing new life, and the other sharing the love of Christ, embrace and dance, offering a new picture of what the ministry of reconciliation might look like.

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## Beneath the Cross of Jesus

1 Be - neath the cross of Je - sus I glad - ly take my stand—  
2 Up - on that cross of Je - sus my eye at times can see  
3 I take, O cross, your shad - ow for my a - bid - ing place;

the shad - ow of a might - y Rock with - in a wea - ry land,  
the ver - y dy - ing form of One who suf - fered there for me;  
I ask no oth - er sun - shine than the sun - shine of his face,

a home with - in the wil - der - ness, a rest up - on the way,  
and from my smit - ten heart with tears two won - ders I con - fess—  
con - tent to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,

from the burn - ing of the noon - tide heat, and the bur - den of the day,  
the won - ders of re - deem - ing love and my un - wor - thi - ness.  
my sin - ful self my on - ly shame, my glo - ry all the cross.