

GATHERING AROUND GOD'S WORD

You are invited to silently pray as you prepare to offer thanksgiving to God.

As we offer to you this morning a small portion of what you have entrusted to us, help us to have hands that hold nothing of this world as tightly as we hold on to you and your son Jesus our Savior. In that holy name, we pray. Amen.

VOLUNTARY

*Toccata No. 1
Melody Davis*

Johann Pachebel

*OPENING HYMN 4 *Holy God, We Praise Your Name*

CALL TO CONFESSION

The deepest longing of our hearts is to be forgiven and embraced by our God. As we confess our sins, God speaks peace to us and makes us whole. Join me, as we pray together, saying,

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord Jesus Christ, we remember with gratitude those people who generously sowed the seeds of faith in our lives. Above all, we recognize how you have blessed our lives with the gift of the Holy Spirit so that our faith has miraculously and mysteriously grown. We confess the times we fail to involve ourselves in planting any seeds of faith in the lives of others. We know that when we become disconnected from you, our lives become parched and unfruitful and our faith becomes stunted and dry. Bless and renew our lives so that we remain connected to you at all times and in all places, strengthening our faith to bear the fruit of your mercy, your love, your undying life. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

All who respond to God's call to repentance are embraced in the generous mercy of God. Whether you responded to God's call at the first opportunity, or whether you are responding for the first time now, God's gracious forgiveness is yours, in Jesus Christ.

RESPONSE 582 *Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me*

PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Give us hearts that hunger for your Word, ears that are quick to hear and a heart of understanding so that we may grow in grace and in a knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Illumine our minds with all that you would have us learn and guide us into all truth, through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen

OLD TESTAMENT READING (*Pew Bible*, page 26)

Genesis 29: 15-28

¹⁵Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?"¹⁶Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.¹⁷Leah's eyes were lovely, and Rachel was graceful and beautiful.¹⁸Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."¹⁹Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me."²⁰So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.²¹Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed."²²So Laban gathered together all the people of the place, and made a feast.²³But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her.²⁴(Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her maid.)²⁵When morning came, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?"²⁶Laban said, "This is not done in our country—giving the younger before the

firstborn.²⁷ Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.”²⁸ Jacob did so, and completed her week; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife.

ANTHEM

Lay Up Your Treasure in Heaven
Sanctuary Choir

Peter Choplin

NEW TESTAMENT READING (*Pew Bible*, page 14)

Matthew 13: 31-32 and Romans 8: 38-39

³¹He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;³²it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The grass withers, the flowers fade, but this, the Word of our Lord, lasts forever. Thanks be to God.

*HYMN 175 *Seek Ye First*

SERMON

God's Extravagant Love Story

Sherry Holloman

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

from *The Iona Community*

We believe in God above us, maker and sustainer of all life, of sun and moon, of water and earth, of male and female. We believe in God beside us, Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, born of a woman's womb, servant of the poor. He was tortured and nailed to a tree. A man of sorrows, He died forsaken. He descended into the earth to the place of death. On the third day He rose from the tomb. He ascended into heaven to be everywhere present, and His kingdom will come on earth. We believe in God within us, the Holy Spirit of Pentecostal fire, life-giving breath of the church, Spirit of healing and forgiveness, source of resurrection and life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

God, in whose love we live and move, we pray for a world crying out to feel loved, wanted, cherished and unique. We pray for a world torn apart by conflict and war. A world that lives uneasily in a climate of fear with no clear vision for future days We pray for a world that thinks less of others than of self. A world where division between nations, race, religion, neighbor and family leads to distrust. We pray for a world that is short on happiness, too busy to enjoy this world you have created, too preoccupied with living to appreciate life. We pray for a world where spiritual longing is satisfied by fashionable notions and temporary solutions with no thought for tomorrow. We pray for a world that needs to know your love, your hope, your peace, your joy and salvation, a world that needs to know it is special, unique and is uniquely loved by our creator. We lift these and the prayers of our hearts to you God. And now together, we pray as our Lord modeled...**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.**

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

Do we have the courage to make the right choices, with our lives and resources, for the sake of God's kingdom? Ask the Lord to let us choose him and his kingdom. All the rest does not count.

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY

Children of the Heavenly Father
Katie Karlen, Sean Turner, accompaniment

arr. Sean Turner

*RESPONSE 647 *Give Thanks*

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Gracious God, as expressions of our gratitude for your unending love, we make this offering for the benefit of those in the human family in need of physical, emotional or spiritual sustenance. In Christ's healing name, we pray. Amen

GOING INTO THE WORLD WITH GOD'S WORD

* INVITATION TO DISCIPLESHIP AND BENEDICTIO

May the beauty of God be reflected in our eyes,
the love of Christ be reflected in our hands,
the wisdom of the Spirit be reflected in our words,
and the knowledge of our True God flow from our hearts, that all might see, and seeing, believe.

*CLOSING HYMN 450 *Be Thou My Vision*