

Eastminster Presbyterian Church
SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY
15th Sunday after Pentecost

September 13, 2020-11:00 a.m.

GATHERING AROUND GOD'S WORD

GREETING

God before us, God behind us, God within us. Lead us. Use us. This and every day, our thanksgiving to you. Amen.

As we come to you from Eastminster Presbyterian Church in Dallas, Texas, we extend a word of welcome from us and from the Lord whose presence is here and in all places. May you be surrounded by holiness as Moses and the Israelites were surrounded by the presence of God with them. Like the prayers of God's people, we may also discover today that the Lord still listens to the prayers of our hearts, and has the power to turn our unforgiving souls into living works of forgiveness.

Announcement

Eastminster's Re-Entry Task Force continues to meet weekly and monitor the data offered through Dallas County for COVID-19. We are praying, and asking all to pray, that this holiday weekend, coupled with the return to school, will not give reason to extend our absence from in-person worship. We pray health and healing, and a reminder that wherever we do worship, the Lord is among us. For further information about our plans and other ministries of this congregation, visit our website at www.eastminsterdallas.org or go to our FaceBook page.

Prayers

*Melissa Whitley's mother, Mary, is hospitalized with double pneumonia and sepsis. Prayers for complete healing.

*Prayers continue for Bettye Clark as she is still experiencing back pain and is returning to rehab. On a note of joy, Bettye's granddaughter Lauren is getting married this weekend, on Bettye's birthday.

*Lewis remains in our prayers for strength to withstand the chemo treatments and always, prayers for healing. We keep Vicki in prayer for strength and peace as she cares and gives support to Lewis.

*Prayers for Naomi as her health continues to decline, and prayers for peace and strength for Chandra as her caregiver.

*We keep Sylvia Falcon in prayer as she continues healing and rehab following a stroke. On a note of hope and thanksgiving, she has been moved to a new facility where physical and occupational therapy will be increased and she will not be so isolated. For Tom, who has not been able to see her, we pray for peace and strength.

*As Janet Muller prepares for surgical procedure on September 18th, we keep her and all who care for her in prayer.

*Prayers for our members and friends, and all of God's people who experiencing feelings of isolation and depression.

*For all who are facing the devastating fires across our country, we pray.

*For all who lead-those near to us and all across the world-we pray wisdom, compassion, listening hearts and the willingness to boldly follow the leading of God's Spirit of good to all and for all

PSALM OF PRAISE (Psalm 100)

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come into his presence with singing. For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

VOLUNTARY

Melody Davis

*OPENING HYMN 65 *Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah*

CALL TO CONFESSION

Jesus tells us that those who wish to be his disciples are to place no limits, no conditions on their mercy or their love. Jesus tells us that when we refuse to forgive those in our debt, we hinder the gift of God's grace and forgiveness from entering our own lives. Even as we seek to be disciples, we confess our need for God's grace.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of mercy, God of grace, we know that yours is an unconditional love which freely gives without any strings attached. We confess that we forget to love and serve you as we should. Touch our hardened hearts with your goodness, we pray, and remind us that forgiveness is one of the most precious gifts that we can offer one another. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

Hear these words of comfort: In Jesus Christ God accepts us as we are. In the midst of pain, when memories will not heal, when anger overtakes us, when hostility displaces hospitality, God comforts. God understands and forgives. Listen, and rejoice in the love of God that passes understanding.

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

PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Dear God, thank you for the Bible that teaches us about your love and the love of Jesus. And thank you for all the stories that teach me how to love others like you and Jesus! Amen

OLD TESTAMENT READING (*Pew Bible, page 61*)

Exodus 14: 19-31

From Exodus 14, verses 19-31, hear the story of God's protection over the Israelites as they are being led out of captivity from the Egyptians, and how God gave Moses both the call and the commission to be part of this movement into freedom. We learn first that the angel of God was both before and behind, surrounding the people with hope and separating God's people from the Egyptian army. Picking up in verse 21, we hear the rest of the story:

²¹Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. ²²The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. ²³The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. ²⁴At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. ²⁵He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt." ²⁶Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." ²⁷So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. ²⁸The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. ²⁹But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. ³⁰Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians

dead on the seashore. ³¹Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

ANTHEM

Total Praise
Katie Karlen, Sanctuary Choir

Richard Smallwood Arr. Keith Christopher

NEW TESTAMENT READING (*Pew Bible*, page 20)

Matthew 18: 21-35

From the 18th chapter of Matthew, verses 21-35, Peter asks Jesus how often he should forgive someone who sins against him. True to Jesus' teaching gifts, he tells a story, a parable, about a servant whose massive debt is forgiven by the King. The forgiven servant refuses to do so with someone indebted to him. Just as God forgives us, Jesus says, so should we forgive others.

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²²Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. ²³"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, 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. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt.

²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

*HYMN (LUYH) 136 *Freely, Freely*

SERMON

A Much-Needed Conversation

Sherry Holloman

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

from *Testimony of Faith*

Into the silence of the void the Creator spoke, and the world came into being. The Word of God in the vastness brought light from darkness, matter from nothing, flesh from dust, life from lifelessness.

In the quiet of a small town, the Word of God came to us. Even though of one being with the Creator, Jesus our Christ, taking on human form, was born, lived and walked among us, speaking the words of life. He was crucified, died, and was buried. He rose from the dead and speaks to us today. He is the one who saves us from ourselves.

In the stillness of our souls the Spirit of God, who is one with the Creator and the Christ, whispers the Word, and calls us back to the Creator, back to the Christ, back to the wholeness of everlasting life in the unity of the Creator, Christ and Spirit. Amen

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

When we look over our shoulders at fear shadowing us today, you go before us, God, into tomorrow, making a path through the sea of yesterday's doubts. When our legs tremble from the effort of standing up for what you hope for all creation, you stand at our side, offering your hope's strength. Cloud of grace, we offer our love to

you. When we turn our hearts into deserts of stony bitterness, you transform them into an oasis of joy. When we come up with all sorts of rules for those who come to us seeking to find you, you tear up the list, stretching wide your arms in welcoming grace. Servant of all, we offer our lives to you. When we would clasp old worries to our hearts, you open our eyes to that hope which paves the path ahead of us. When we spend each day consumed with doubts and fear, you remind us that this day is the time to honor God by serving God's children. Lord of mercy, we offer our hearts to you. We have named before you those resting heavy on our hearts, as well as the joys that make them light. Both, we give to you with thanksgiving for the gift of conversation we can have with you. Into your hands, we trust your plan for us all. God in community, holy in one, as you are all to us, so we would offer all we are to you, even as we pray as Jesus taught us...**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

When we work and when we play, God watches over us. Every moment of every day, God loves us and cares for us. Everywhere we go, God is with us. How can we say, "Thank you?"

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY

I Will Arise
Sanctuary Choir

Mark Hayes

*RESPONSE 605 *Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow*

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

God of all that is good, we know that too often we focus on what is owed us rather than the great abundance that has been provided through you. With your help, we can become generous and grace-filled, using our resources as tools for ministry rather than for our own desires. Help our hearts understand how earthly wealth can be used for your kingdom work. Amen.

GOING INTO THE WORLD WITH GOD'S WORD

* INVITATION TO DISCIPLESHIP AND BENEDICTION

Each day is a new chance to act with compassion and offer forgiveness. May our eyes, ears, and hearts be opened to the new beginnings forgiveness can offer, for the forgiver and the forgiven. And just as the Israelites were surrounded by the presence of God, so too are we:

The living Lord is with us: Behind us to encourage us; beside us to befriend us; above us to watch over us; within us to give us the gifts of faith, hope and love; beneath us holding us; and, always before us showing us the way.

*CLOSING HYMN 616 *Awesome God*