

Eastminster Presbyterian Church

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

24th Sunday after Pentecost/Commitment Sunday

November 15, 2020-11:00 a.m.

GATHERING AROUND GOD'S WORD:

PRAYER: Lord, we give you our hands to do your work. We give you our feet to go your way. We give you our eyes to see as you see. We give you our tongues to speak your words. We give you our minds to think as you think. We give you ourselves so that you may grow in us. In and through us, Lord, live, and move and be. Amen

GREETING: We come to this Dedication Sunday, as we began our series on the *Grace of Giving*, with these words of invitation: The hospitality of God knows no bounds. The love of God is immeasurable. The generosity and favor of God is beyond our wildest dreams. We worship together today as invited ones, as beloved ones, as blessed ones. We come as individuals, yet God unites us as one. So, welcome to worship at Eastminster Presbyterian Church this day! May we meet God in new and surprising ways this and every day.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Sunday, November 15 is Commitment Sunday, that time when we offer our gifts in service to God. If you plan to attend the outdoor worship service, you are invited to bring your pledge form, as well as your Time and Talent Form. However, the Stewardship Committee recommends that all members who have internet access fill out the pledge form on the church website as well as download and complete a printable Time and Talent Form. The paper forms mailed to members can be returned by mail or in person.

*The planning for a reimagined Christmas Village has begun. You will be receiving more information.

*The church-wide survey has been received and tabulated. The Re-Entry Task Force and the Session will be reviewing the results and making plans. When the plans have been approved, the congregation will be informed.

PRAYERS

*We give thanksgiving to God for the very good life of Jenelle Symns and keep all her family close in prayer and heart.

*For the family of Brian Edmonds, a dear friend to Betty Crabtree, we offer our hearts and prayers in Brian's death.

*We keep our country and all our leaders in prayer as our governmental transition moves forward.

*As we celebrated Veteran's Day, we continue to hold all who gave of their time, energy and lives for our safety, even as we pray now for those who serve in our day and time.

CALL TO WORSHIP: As we are called to worship, we remember that God is a God of all provision, so may we come today with gifts of tithes and offerings, so that our financial giving reflects not our bounty, but God's. Uniquely and wonderfully crafted, each of us, may we come today with the gifts

of our talents so that our creativity brings glory to God's creating Spirit. For the one who is our Alpha and Omega, may we come this day with the gift of time, so that we may live as God's people in every place, in every moment, from this day until our last. May our worship come from a very deep place of gratitude this day!

VOLUNTARY

Melody Davis

CALL TO CONFESSION: Sinners we are and sinners we will always be, except for the God's grace in giving us salvation through the gift of his only son, Jesus the Christ. Acknowledging that in our sin we too often neglect and reject gifts that have been provided by God, let us confess together, trusting in the gift of forgiveness.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: God of abundant giving, we long to be faithful stewards of your abundant grace: to serve each other in love and humility and to serve your world with wisdom and energy. Forgive us when we stumble over pride, when our words and actions are not guided by love. Turn our hearts when we act in self-centered ways. Restore our energy when it is gone. Sometimes, many times, O God, our efforts fail. But your abundant grace is strong and eternal, and forgiveness is ours through Jesus Christ.

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS: Children of God, know that God can provide us with every blessing, in abundance, so that by always having enough, we may in turn share abundantly! The God who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply our seeds for sowing, and increase the harvest. We will be enriched as we excel in the grace of giving and freed from all fear that holds us back from sharing with abandon and joy! Thanks be to God.

PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: God, one of the great gifts that you have shared with us is your Word. Open our hearts and minds as the scriptures are read and the message is proclaimed. Help us to hear with anticipation what you have to say and give us a sense of urgency to share it with others. Amen

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Lamentations 3: 22-26

In these words from Lamentations, we find the promise of hope. Hear the Word of the Lord. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Corinthians 9: 6-15

This passage from 2 Corinthians follows on the heels of Paul's plea for generosity for Christians in need. Now he begins to talk about why giving in this way matters so much, both for the givers and those who receive the gift. With our hearts may we hear the Word of the Lord.

⁶The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. ⁹As it is written, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." ¹⁰He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; ¹²for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. ¹³Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, ¹⁴while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. ¹⁵Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! This is the Word of the Lord! Amen!

SERMON *Giving Thanks For What God Does When We Excel in the Grace of Giving*
Sherry Holloman

Lamentations 3: 22-26 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

HOW THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD FACED 2020!

Thanks be to God, and the gifts of God's people, we can see the Spirit moving in ways we never imagined in the middle of a pandemic. We are now called to give thanks and to trust all the ways God will transform lives in seen and unseen ways because even though we have not gathered in a physical space, we have been gathered by the power of the Spirit, and God's mission and ministry has not, and never will cease. Great is God's faithfulness! Every! Single! Day!

- New carpet in chapel, chancel and on choir loft stairs
- Fresh paint in chapel
- New and additional signage in parking lots for handicap, visitor, and staff parking
- Restripped parking lots
- ADA Task Force - Architectural plans produced
- Security Task Force created
- Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee created
- Nursery Advisory Group created
- Safety and security review by consultant
- New alarm system
- Replacement and addition of security cameras

- Additional Nest thermostats
- Remodel of Nursery
- New replacement windows for east wing
- Tile backsplash in kitchen
- Replacement of kitchen faucet
- Establishment of preventive maintenance schedule/spreadsheet
- Replacement of window coverings/blinds
- Addition/replacement of TV's in nursery and Pre-K classroom
- LED lighting added/replacement both interior and exterior
- Repainting of wrought iron railing on east side
- Additional mulch added to playground
- Complete overhaul of sprinkler system
- Tree trimming
- Inside and out washing of sanctuary windows
- Power washing of concrete walkways
- Carpet cleaning in office
- Stripping and waxing of flooring in two classrooms
- Addition of new area rugs in two children's classrooms
- There is a new desk in the office

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: As our hearts feel, we proclaim with our lips and show with our actions. In this way, we affirm our faith, saying: we believe in a giving God who is at work in our world turning hopeless and evil situations into good. We believe that goodness and justice will triumph in the end and that tyranny and oppression cannot last forever. One day all tears will be wiped away; the lamb will lie down with the lion, and justice will roll down like a mighty stream. True peace and true reconciliation are not only desired, they are assured and guaranteed in Christ. This is our faith. This is our hope.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH AND THE LORD'S PRAYER: Remembering to give thanksgiving to God in the simple and the abundant blessings of life and provision, we pray with the heart of a child, God's child, in each of us. Dear God, thank you for our family, our friends, our families of faith. Thank you for our daily provisions that sustain us in our every day living. Thank you for the blessings we see and for those we are called to see in new ways. Thank you that, in life and in death, we are never separated from your love in Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, saying: 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: Paul exhorts his friends to be cheerful givers, having made up their own minds, not reluctantly or under compulsion. We give cheerfully because we are sharing good news! Through our offering, we are sharing the good news of a world where justice is possible! Where peace is real! Where love is no scarce resource, but spills out in abundance in God's good world! The gifts that we offer today will be used for tangible ministries that further God's kingdom, by meeting the human needs: bringing good news to the oppressed; binding up the broken-hearted; proclaiming liberty to the captives; comforting all who mourn; repairing ruined cities; providing for those who have lost too much; proclaiming the year of the Lord's favor; sharing from a heart of praise rather than a faint spirit. With joy we receive God's tithes and our offerings.

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS AND THE GIFTS OF OUR LIVES

OFFERTORY

Lord of All Good

Genevan Psalter

Sean Turner

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND COMMITMENT: We dedicate these gifts, freely given and gratefully received, to the work of this congregation: Building honest, caring relationships across all lines of difference; growing in spirit and searching for meaning, together and apart; promoting religious freedom and spiritual growth; practicing compassion, and working for justice. May these gifts, and the work of our hands and hearts, give power to all we stand for as a community of faith, as the body of Christ, prayerfully seeking to excel in the grace of giving. Amen.

GOING INTO THE WORLD WITH GOD'S WORD

DISMISSAL AND BLESSING: May we go from all our many places today with our hearts filled with thankfulness for all God has given. And as we go, we have this promise as we seek to excel in the grace of giving:

The living Lord is with us: Behind us encouraging us; beside us befriending us; above us watching over us; within us giving us the gifts of faith, hope and love; beneath us holding us; and, always before us showing us the way. Amen!

CLOSING HYMN *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*