



October 1, 2023
Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ

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Sunday Morning Meditation

Every person, on coming to the knowledge of himself, is not only urged to seek God but is also led as by the hand to find him.

— John Calvin
Institutes of the Christian Religion (16th century)

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October 1, 2023

Greenfield 11:00am

18th Sunday after Pentecost / 'Going Ahead in God's Leading'

World Communion Sunday

Community News

Prayer List and Prayers of the People

Prelude/Lighting of the Candles

* *Call to Worship*

We gather as God's people to celebrate the beauty of our diversity.

**Let us love each other as God loves us beautifully and
wonderfully made in God's image.**

We give thanks for who we are, Beloved of God.

Let us open our hearts to God's spirit of love and unity.

We celebrate the gifts of all gathered here today.

**Let us worship God with all we are and celebrate the beauty
of all God's creation.**

* *Invocation*

Lord, open our eyes to see the beauty in each person we meet.

Help us freely share your love with all your creation. We give

thanks for beautifying your creation and for making a diverse

world. Help us to be kind, compassionate, and loving to all. We

thank you, O Lord, for allowing us to grow in our welcome and

learn about other cultures as we share your amazing grace and love

with each other and the world. Amen!

* *Opening Hymn*

"Open My Eyes, That I May See"

CH #563

Prayer of Confession

Lord Jesus, we confess we have been dishonest in our walk with you. We have not treated others with respect and acceptance and have not cared for the least of these as you have called us to do. We acknowledge that too many times, we have taken the effortless way to our benevolence and have mistreated those in need and with judgment. We ask your forgiveness for all we have done that is not pleasing to you, Oh Lord. We ask your mercy on us. Amen!

Words of Grace

Jesus has already paid for your transgressions, and we are free because Jesus Christ, our Savior, has made His grace accessible to us. People of God, your sins are forgiven. Amen!

Old Testament Reading

Exodus 17:1-7 NIV

Water From the Rock

17 The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ² So they quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.”

Moses replied, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?”

³ But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?”

⁴ Then Moses cried out to the LORD, “What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.”

⁵ The LORD answered Moses, “Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

²³ Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. “By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave you this authority?”

²⁴ Jesus replied, “I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ²⁵ John’s baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?”

They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’” ²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin’—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet.”

²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”

Then he said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

²⁸ “What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’

²⁹ “‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

³⁰ “Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go.

³¹ “Which of the two did what his father wanted?”

“The first,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

* *Gloria Patri*

Children's Message / Congregation Conversation

* *Meditation Hymn* “O for a Heart to Praise My God” CH #650

Today's Message

Communion – See Insert

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hades; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic/Christian church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Statement

Offertory (MH)

* Doxology

TH # 551

* Offertory Prayer

Holy One, we ask that you bless these offerings and tithes so they can multiply to be a blessing for our community, our mission, and worldwide. Accept our offerings and tithes, O God, as a testimony of your goodness in our lives. Amen!

* *Closing Hymn*

“Rock of Ages”

CH #342

* *Benediction*

God’s love surround you,
Jesus, peace engulf you.
And the Holy Spirit accompany you,
As you go forth into the World,
to love and service all God’s people.

* *Three-Fold Amen*

TH # 558

* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*

Going Ahead in God’s Leading: Service Prayers for the Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost (Celebrating Communion Sunday and Hispanic/Latine Heritage Month) was written by the Rev. Persida Rivera-Mendez, retired UCC pastor.