



*October 6, 2024*  
*Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ*

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*Sunday Meditation*

Those who choose, even on a small scale, to love in the midst of hatred and fear are the people who offer true hope to our world.

**Henri Nouwen**

**Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ**

**October 6, 2024**

**Joint Service**

**Greenfield 10:00am**

**20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost / Hardness of Heart**

**World Communion Sunday**

*Community News*

*Prayer List and Prayers of the People*

*Prelude/Lighting of the Candles*

\* *Call to Worship*

Inspired by Psalm 26

The Holy One dwells within and beyond the congregation and makes a home among us.

**Prove us, and try us; Holy One, test our hearts and minds.**

The glory of the Sovereign One abides with us, illuminating our journey, energizing our gathering, and warming our spirits.

**Prove us, and try us; Holy One, test our hearts and minds.**

Bless the Name of Names, the God of Truth, and the Giver of Life with songs of praise, prayers of hope, and moments of connection.

**Prove us, and try us; Holy One, test our hearts and minds.**

\* *Invocation*

Majestic God, your realm encompasses the universe, the earth, and our community. All creation declares your glory. May we unite with our kin around the world in celebrating you and the connections we share. As we gather in your name, may we remember those we join in faith, hope, and worship on every continent representing every tradition. May we declare in spirit and in truth...one bread, one body...the church striving to one as you, Sustainer, Redeemer, and Spirit are one. Amen.

*Children's Message / Congregation Conversation*

\* *Opening Children's Hymn*

*"Jesus Loves Me"*

**CH #185**

## *Prayer of Transformation and New Life*

**Holy One, we come to this gathering, the table, and your presence mindful that this day particularly celebrates our human connectedness. The reality lies far from the idea and your vision of beloved community. You call us to remember the poor, the marginalized, the immigrant, the isolated and abandoned. You command us to love our neighbor and have blessed us to live in an era in which we may know our neighbors from across the world to amazing degrees. Yet, we cling to our echo chambers and isolationist tendencies. We place our desires and comforts over the good of the world. We demonize difference rather than dignify diversity. Forgive us and have mercy on us while propelling us to new life. Extend your grace to transform our attitude and actions and infuse us with openness, curiosity, and love.**

## *Words of Grace*

Beloved, God's grace and power reside in you in mutual support of a transformed life. As 1 Corinthians 10:13 assures, "No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and [God] will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing [God] will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it." Allow the testing to strengthen you, to build your endurance, and to do a new thing in you and through you for the glory of God. Amen.

## *Old Testament Reading*

**Genesis 2:18-24 NRSV**

<sup>18</sup> Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." <sup>19</sup> So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air and brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all cattle and to the birds of the air and to every animal of the field, but for the man<sup>[a]</sup> there was not found a helper as his partner. <sup>21</sup> So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> And the rib that

the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
this one shall be called Woman,  
for out of Man this one was taken.”

<sup>24</sup> Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

\* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

Mark 10:2-16 NRSV

*Gloria Tibi (Glory be to Thee, O Lord.)*

TH #497

<sup>2</sup> Some, testing him, asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” <sup>3</sup> He answered them, “What did Moses command you?” <sup>4</sup> They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her.” <sup>5</sup> But Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. <sup>6</sup> But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ <sup>7</sup> ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, <sup>8</sup> and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. <sup>9</sup> Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

<sup>10</sup> Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. <sup>11</sup> He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, <sup>12</sup> and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

### *Jesus Blesses Little Children*

<sup>13</sup> People were bringing children to him in order that he might touch them, and the disciples spoke sternly to them. <sup>14</sup> But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. <sup>15</sup> Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” <sup>16</sup> And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

\* *Gloria Patri*

\* *Meditation Hymn*      “*My Faith Looks Up to Thee*”      CH #539

*Today's Message*



*Words of Invitation*

Faith communities around the Earth gather to observe World Communion Sunday. Some call it Holy Communion, others refer to it as the Great Thanksgiving (Eucharist) or Lord's Supper. Some place elements on an altar. In the Protestant tradition, we approach the Table. Every language and tongue, every tribe and nation, every continent and hemisphere represented as the Body of Christ accepts the invitation to unity around a meal prepared by the One who entered a body, the human condition, and the brokenness of the world. Let us join together in the name of Jesus the Christ to commune as one.

\* *Communion Hymn*      “*In Remembrance*”      CH #461

*Holy Communion Litany*

God be with you.

**The Holy One is with us.**

May our hardened hearts be softened.

**We lift them up to the Holy One with thanksgiving and in hopeful expectation.**

*Words of Thanksgiving*

Gracious God, you are holy, and you make us holy. We declare glory and honor due to your precious name. Like generations before us and the heavenly chorus beyond us, we cry, Holy, holy, holy, God of power and might. All realms are filled with your glory. Redeem us, restore us, renew us. Blessed by your Holy Name.

### *Words of Remembrance*

**We join in remembrance of your incarnation. Your humble beginnings affirm that the strength of God is perfected in weakness. The years of obscurity left unrecorded and unknown to us, remind us that good things benefit from preparation and patience. The record of your baptism reminds us of our own baptism as we entered the waters of life and community with you. Recalling your ministry encourages us to engage in the work of healing, teaching, and presence. Revisiting your passion challenges us to expand our capacity to love generously, sacrificially, and relentlessly.**

### *Words of Institution*

For it was the night of betrayal when Jesus enjoyed a meal with his community of faithful disciples. Imperfect people committed to follow his way encircled that table. The one who would deny him was at the table. The one who would betray him was at the table. Many who would flee in fear of the risk to their own lives sat at that table. All were welcomed. All were known. All were loved.

All were nourished as Jesus took the bread, gave thanks for it, and broke it. As he offered the bread to the gathered, he declared, "This is my body. Take and eat in remembrance of me."

After supper, Jesus took the cup, gave thanks, and blessed it. As he offered the cup to the gathered, he declared, "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood. Take and drink in remembrance of me."

Ministering in the name of Jesus, we offer bread and cup as we proclaim Christ lived, Christ died, Christ rose, and Christ lives again.

### *\* 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 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.**

Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

**Blessed are those who are called to his table.**

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you.

**But only speak the Word and I shall be healed.**

These are the gifts of God for the People of God.

**Amen. Thanks be to God.**

### *Sharing of the Elements*

### **Pew Communion**

Receive the gifts of God for the people of God

### *Words of Prayer*

**Communal God, we give you thanks that as you shared in life and death, you lead us into the resurrected life. At this table, we acknowledge your abiding presence among us. You offered us bread and cup, which we receive in remembrance and expectation of your movement in human history. Form us as your faithful community and shape us as servants and stewards of your realm. By your Holy Spirit, may your covenant reign within our hearts and manifest in the witness of our lives now and forever. Amen.**



### *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 thank you for our abundance and the privilege to share in the flourishing of our community and the world. Bless these gifts and be glorified by our generosity and trust in your provision, sufficiency, and renewing power. Amen.**

\* *Closing Hymn*

*“Jesus Loves Even Me”*

CH #495

\* *Benediction*

May the Holy One be an ever-present companion and partner as you encounter the tests of life. May your softened heart break over the pains, pangs, and problems of the world.

May the strength of the Spirit fill you, the power of the Spirit embolden you, and the leading of the Spirit guide you as co-creators of the kingdom of God...now and forever. Go in abundant hope, peace and love. Amen.

\* *Three-Fold Amen*

TH # 558

\* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*

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*Hardness of Heart: Service Prayers for World Communion Sunday, the Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost Year B was written by the Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay who serves as Minister for Worship and Theology for the United Church of Christ.*