



July 30, 2023
Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ

www.greenfieldcharge.org
greenfieldchargeucc@gmail.com

Facebook: Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ

Pastor
Mrs. Wendy Farber

farberhome@atlanticbb.net

Pianist
Sylvia Olewinski (MH)

Audio Tech
Jeff Farber (Greenfield)

Organist
Gary McIntyre (Grace)

Sunday Morning Meditation

Do you count it a great faith to believe what God has said? It seems to me, I repeat, a little faith, and, if alone, worthy of reproach. To believe what he has not said is faith indeed, and blessed. For that comes of believing in Him.

– George MacDonald
“The Higher Faith” sermon (19th century)

Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ
Mt Hope 8:30am Greenfield 9:50am
9th Sunday after Pentecost / 'For Righteousness'

July 30, 2023
Grace 11:00am

Community News

Prayer List and Prayers of the People

Prelude/Lighting of the Candles

* *Call to Worship*

O Creator of the Cosmos, who knows what the kingdom of God is like, but also remembers what it was like before.

Before creation and kingdoms, before mustard seeds and fine pearls, before yeast and bakers to make bread.

So, you know what it is like to long for them, to imagine them into being,

And it is from this longing for your kingdom and for you that we enter our worship.

Yes, come, let us praise and pray to our God of promise.

Let us rejoice in the Good News together—how nothing can separate us from the presence of God. Amen.

* *Invocation*

O Spirit, who helps us in our struggles, and teaches us how to pray when we don't know what to say or how to feel, we call on you from a sigh too deep for words. Within that sigh, we wonder, we question, and we hope that all things do, indeed, work together for your good. And in this experience of being here together, in this time set apart to be side by side in community, we are reminded how connected we already are. Let us open ourselves to your presence here. Let us seek first, the kingdom of God, and in our searching, may we be found by you, Beloved, the One who searches for us first. Amen.

* *Opening Hymn* "*Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*"

Mt Hope VH #273

Greenfield CH #682

Grace VH #273

Prayer of Transformation and New Life

We call upon our ancestor, Solomon, who knew to ask God for the wisdom to discern between what is in the spirit of God, and what is not. Like Solomon, we admit that we don't always know how to make our way through life—in its nuances, violence, chaos, and unexpected burdens. We also admit that in our struggles, we've made the wrong choice, hurt others, and clung to our shame. Forgive us, O God of Wisdom, and teach us your ways of repair. Amen.

Words of Grace

If God is for us, then who could be against us? Even in all that we've done, and all that we've left undone, nothing can separate us from the love of God. May we let this sink in, all the way to our marrow. And may such faith hold us up to move in the world with accountability, love, tenderness, and forgiveness. Amen.

Old Testament Reading

1 Kings 3:5-12 NIV

⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."

⁶ Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

⁷ "Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. ⁸ Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. ⁹ So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

¹⁰ The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. ¹¹ So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, ¹² I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast

³¹ He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. ³² Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

³³ He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

The Parable of the Net

⁴⁷ “Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸ When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹ This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ “Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked.

“Yes,” they replied.

⁵² He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

Children's Message / Congregation Conversation

* *Meditation Hymn* *“My Faith Has Found a Resting Place”*

Mt Hope VH #183

Greenfield CH #528

Grace VH #183

Today's Message

* *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 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.**

Sung Response

“Hear Our Prayer, O Lord”

TH # 501

The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Statement

Offertory (MH)

* Doxology

TH # 551

* Offertory Prayer

Like the net that was thrown into the sea and brought in fish of every kind, we celebrate the multitude and diversity of gifts that have been shared here today. May God bless these treasures with the abundance of Christ's love and passion to embody justice in our world. Amen.

* *Closing Hymn*

"My Faith Looks Up to Thee"

Mt Hope VH #248

Greenfield CH #539

Grace VH #248

* *Benediction*

May the Kingdom of Abundance and Multiplicity be with you. May it be among you. May it live and move and have its dwelling within you. And may we take the love we've found, our inseparable bond with the Creator, and bring it into fullness out in our world. Amen.

* *Three-Fold Amen*

TH # 558

* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*

"For Righteousness: Service Prayers for the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost was written by The Rev. Dr. Elyse Berry serves as the Associate for Advocacy and Leadership Development for the Council of Health and Human Service Ministries of the United Church of Christ. Learn more at chsm.org.