



*September 24, 2023*  
*Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ*

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*Sunday Morning Meditation*

Don't ever expect the world to shine for you. God calls you to shine for the world. The world is a dark place, and God has put us where we are to be lights. That's the challenge for the whole church.

– Colin Smith  
*Unlocking the Bible Story (2002)*

Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ  
Mt Hope 8:30am                      Greenfield 9:50am  
17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost / 'Made Equal'

September 24, 2023  
Grace 11:00am

*Community News*

*Prayer List and Prayers of the People*

*Prelude/Lighting of the Candles*

\* *Call to Worship*

Inspired by Psalm 145:1-8

Bless the name of the Holy and Sovereign One forever and ever!

**Great is our God and greatly to be praised.**

Bless the name of the Holy and Sovereign One forever and ever!

**This generation will tell the next generation so they may tell  
the next generation of the Holy One's magnificent and  
mighty acts.**

Bless the name of the Holy and Sovereign One forever and ever!

**We declare the abundant goodness, gracious righteousness,  
and holy love of our God. Praise the Holy One!**

\* *Invocation*

Mighty God, we enter your presence with thanksgiving and hope.  
You have formed us as your people. You join us on the journey of  
life through valleys, upon mountains, and on the plains. We set our  
attention and seek your wisdom, encouragement, and grace. Reveal  
your will and display your glory among your people as we worship  
your holy name. Amen.

\* *Opening Hymn*    "*Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken*"

*Mt Hope* VH #162

*Greenfield* CH #400

*Grace* VH #162

## *Prayer of Transformation and New Life*

**God of abundance, forgive us for embracing a worldview that capitalizes on scarcity. Help us to know that you have given us enough for our journey. You have created us wonderfully and uniquely. Forgive us for comparing ourselves with our neighbor when we are called to love them. Help us to embrace how you have made us as individuals who may bring our singular gifts to our common life.**

## *Words of Grace*

Beloved, you are enough. God loves you as you are and for who you are. We, collectively, have enough and may share in a common life where all may flourish and live in harmony as our Creator intended and designed. You are forgiven and free to embrace the life that is uniquely yours. Amen.

## *Old Testament Reading*

**Jonah 3:10 – 4:11 NIV**

<sup>10</sup> When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

### *Jonah's Anger at the Lord's Compassion*

**4** But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. <sup>2</sup> He prayed to the LORD, "Isn't this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. <sup>3</sup> Now, LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."

<sup>4</sup> But the LORD replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

<sup>5</sup> Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. <sup>6</sup> Then the LORD God provided a leafy plant<sup>[a]</sup> and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the

plant. <sup>7</sup> But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. <sup>8</sup> When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

<sup>9</sup> But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

"It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead."

<sup>10</sup> But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. <sup>11</sup> And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?"

\* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

**Matthew 20:1-16 NIV**

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

**TH #497**

*The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard*

**20** "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. <sup>2</sup> He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

<sup>3</sup> "About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. <sup>4</sup> He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' <sup>5</sup> So they went.

"He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. <sup>6</sup> About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?'

<sup>7</sup> "'Because no one has hired us,' they answered.

"He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'

<sup>8</sup> "When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.'

<sup>9</sup>“The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. <sup>10</sup>So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. <sup>11</sup>When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. <sup>12</sup>‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’

<sup>13</sup>“But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius?’ <sup>14</sup>Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. <sup>15</sup>Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’

<sup>16</sup>“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

\* *Gloria Patri*

*Children's Message / Congregation Conversation*

\* *Meditation Hymn*      “*God Will Take Care of You*”

*Mt Hope* VH #281

*Greenfield* CH #692

*Grace* VH #281

*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

**Dear God, please receive our gifts for the glory of your name and the blessing of your people. May we be dedicated stewards of your abundance and use these gifts for the benefit of your kingdom. Amen.**

\* *Closing Hymn*

**“God Be With You”**

*Mt Hope* VH #502

*Greenfield FHP* #177

*Grace* VH #502

\* *Benediction*

May the love of God assure you, the hope of God guide you, and the peace of God sustain you as you go receiving and extending God's grace in the world.

\* *Three-Fold Amen*

TH # 558

\* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*