

Lancaster Theological Seminary

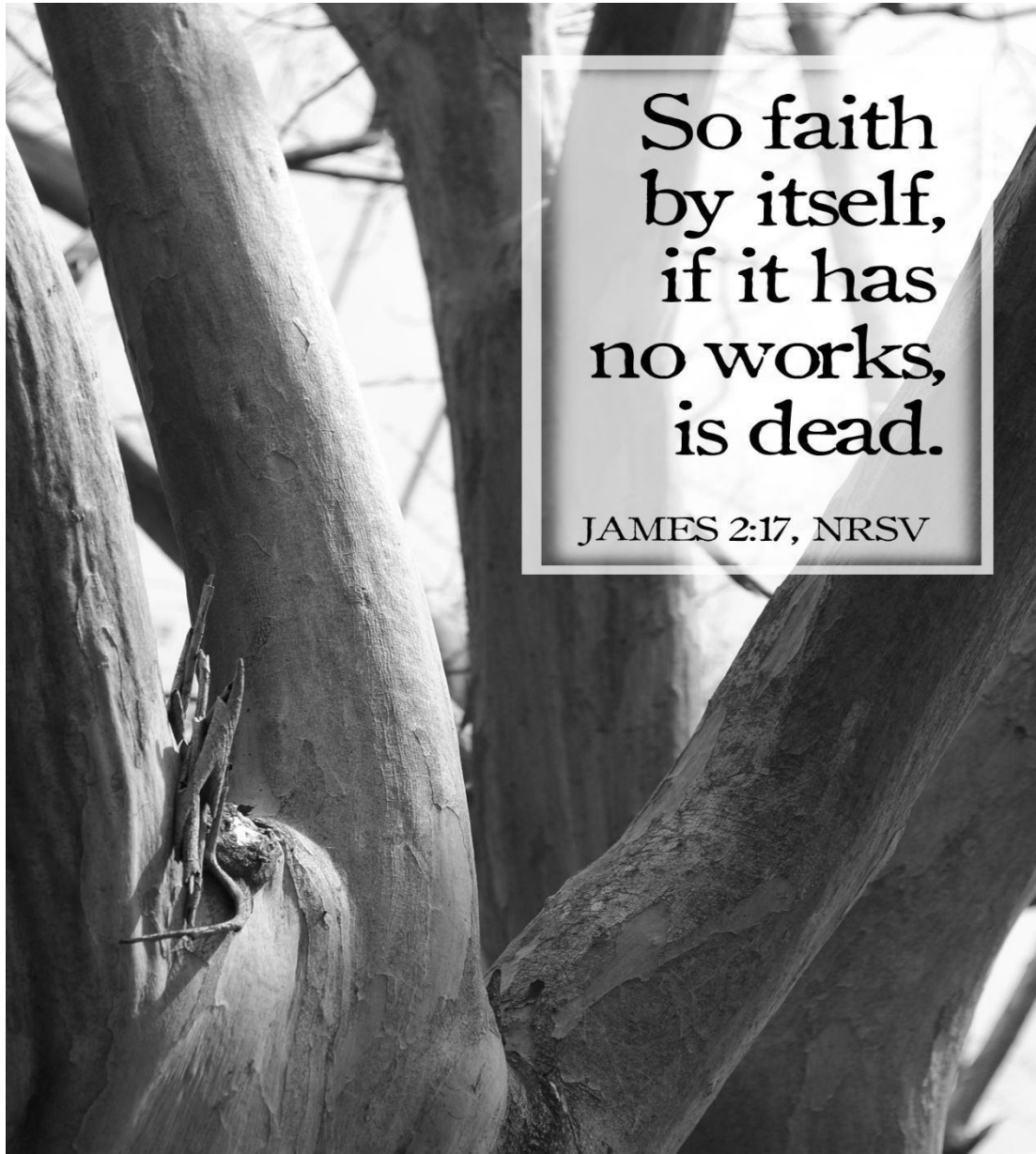
SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

September 8 and 11, 2021



*"So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."*

*~ James 2:17 (NRSV)*



This photo brings a sense of calmness as we are reminded that even the trees are provided for.

# Gathering as the Body of Christ.

CENTERING SONG

“MORNING HAS BROKEN”

UMH 145

GREETING

PRESIDER

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

STUDENT MINISTER

We long for living faith

**and so we come to worship**

hoping that our time together, our time with God

**will help to unclench our fists**

**will soften our hearts**

**will quiet our voices and open our ears.**

Revive our faith, O God

**that we might serve you with glad and joyful hearts.**

\*OPENING HYMN

“GOD OF GRACE AND GOD OF GLORY” VERSES 1 & 2

UMH 577

\*CONFESSION & WORDS OF ASSURANCE

[All are invited to turn toward the Baptismal Font.]

How glibly we say we trust you, Holy One,

And how quickly our fears silence our words.

We find you at the side of the poor,

While we cozy up to the rich and famous.

You stand behind the counter serving the hungry at the soup kitchen,

While we are stocking our freezers and pantries till they overflow.

We look down at those whose hands are dirty,

But your hand of mercy pulls them into your embracing love.

**Forgive us, O Lord, and do good to us**

**When we have trouble doing good for others.**

**Surround us with your love;**

**surround us with your grace;**

**surround us with your peace;**

**surround us with the Spirit of your Son,**

**Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.**

Be strong, do not fear!

God comes,

To fill your parched souls with living water,

To open your eyes to the grace which is yours.

**God comes,  
for no other reason than to save us.  
This is indeed good news.  
Thanks be to God. Amen!**

**\*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

**STUDENT MINISTER**

You are invited to pass the peace to each other in a way comfortable to you and your neighbor, such as hand on heart, “namaste” hands, bow, peace sign, or a non-contact way of your own choosing.

Peace be with you. **And also with you!**  
Let us share this peace with one another.

*Service of the Word*

**POEM**

**“THE INDEX”**

**RENA PRISET**

This poem illustrates the scriptural message of God not showing favoritism towards the rich but rather declaring that the meek will inherit the earth, thus people should do likewise.

In the beginning there was darkness,  
then a bunch of other stuff—and lots of people.  
Some things were said and loosely interpreted,  
or maybe things were not communicated clearly.  
Regardless—there has always been an index.  
That thing about the meek—how we  
shall inherit the earth; that was a promise  
made in a treaty at the dawn of time  
agreed upon in primordial darkness  
and documented in the spiritual record.  
The nature of the agreement was thus:  
The world will seemingly be pushed past capacity.  
A new planet will be “discovered” 31 light-years away.  
Space travel will advance rapidly,  
making the journey feasible. The ice sheets will melt.  
Things will get ugly. The only way to leave  
will be to buy a ticket. Tickets will be priced at exactly  
the amount that can be accrued  
by abandoning basic humanity.  
The index will show how you came by your fortune:

If you murdered, trafficked or exploited the vulnerable,  
stole, embezzled, poisoned, cheated, swindled,  
or otherwise subdued nature to come by wealth  
great enough to afford passage to the new earth;

if your ancestors did these things and you've done nothing  
to benefit from their crimes yet do nothing to atone  
through returning inherited wealth to the greater good

you shall be granted passage. It was agreed.  
The meek shall stay, the powerful shall leave.  
And it all shall start again.

The meek shall inherit the earth,  
and what shall we do with it,  
but set about putting aside our meekness?

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**STUDENT MINISTER**

Send your Spirit among us, O God, as we meditate on your love. Prepare our minds to hear your Word, move our hearts to embrace what we hear, and strengthen our will to follow your way. This we pray through Christ, our Savior. Amen.

**SCRIPTURE READING**

**JAMES 2:1-17**

**NRSV**

My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. For the one who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

Hear what God is saying to the people. **Thanks be to God!**

**SERMON**

**DR. DARRYL STEPHENS**

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY**

**STUDENT MINISTER**

We look to you, O God, to teach us how to be whom you created us to be. Shine your light on the path ahead. Catch us when we take a wrong turn, and by your Spirit, move us in the right direction. We are your children.

**Teach us how to live, O God.**

We yearn for your peace but are constantly at war with ourselves, our neighbors, and the nations throughout the world. We are your children.

**Teach us how to make peace, O God.**

We, your church, are easily distracted by things that don't matter. Turn our eyes to you; open our hearts to you; deepen our love of you. Bless our bishops, priests, and deacons. May we teach each other how to walk in love. We are your children.

**Teach us how to serve, O God.**

Our bodies ache, our spirits are restless, and our minds grow weary with constant worry. Lead us to a place of wholeness and make each of us agents of healing in this world. We pray for those who have asked our prayers today. We are your children.

**Teach us how to trust in your healing embrace.**

## *Service of the Table*

**OFFERTORY SONG**

**“SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD”**

**INSTRUMENTAL**

**\*THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to You, Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God. **It is right to praise You, Lord.**

God of mercy and justice, be with us  
We lift our hearts to you,  
not because we have to,  
not because we are supposed to,  
but because it's how we respond to your unconditional love,  
because it feels good to know we are loved.

As long as there have been people to tell them, our ancestors in faith have shared stories of your mercy.

**Of how you gave food to the poor, clothes to the naked, and shelter to the lost.**

As long as there have been people to tell them, our ancestors in faith have shared stories of your mercy.

**Of how you gave freedom to the enslaved, opportunity to the outcast, and peace to the war-torn.**

You acted with both mercy and justice,  
**rescuing the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, providing them with manna when they were hungry.**

And your people acted with both mercy and justice,  
**like the prophets who cried out to care for widow, orphan, and foreigner, and those who provided food, shelter, and community.**

You have shared your mercy and justice with us, not only as gifts to be received from you, but as gifts we are to share with the world. We see this gift more clearly in the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ.

On the night he was handed over to the unjust system that killed him, he protested by sharing a meal with his friends.

There, he took bread, gave thanks for God's mercy in providing it, shared God's mercy by giving it to his friends, then called them to remember the injustice of his broken body every time they ate bread.

After they ate, he took the cup, gave thanks for God's mercy in providing it, shared God's mercy by giving it to his friends, then called them to remember the injustice of his spilled blood every time they drank wine.

But that wasn't all.

God's mercy and justice burst forth when Jesus died,  
and his resurrection gave hope to all those  
who hunger for mercy and thirst for justice.

God will always equip those who seek to share mercy and justice.

Even death cannot stop God's incredible grace.

So, we ask God's Holy Spirit to be poured out on this meal, on these gifts of mercy: bread and juice, that we may remember Jesus' ministry of mercy and justice, that these gifts of mercy may become for us the body and blood of Christ, so that we may show mercy and do justice, not just for ourselves, but the transformation of the world.

**INVITATION TO THE TABLE****PRESIDER**

We have a few COVID related options for those who wish to partake. If you wish to receive from the ministers, take an empty eco-friendly cup from the stack on the aisle table and approach the minister, who will place a piece of bread in your open hand. (Or take a cup that already has a piece of gluten-free bread in it, or take one of the sealed celebration cups with the wafer on top and juice beneath; hold them out to the minister for a blessing.) A minister will pour grape juice into your cup. Eat, drink, and dispose of the cup in the waste baskets at the side aisles as you return to your seat. If you are unable to come forward, please signal the ministers and we will come to you at your seat.

Those who prefer not to partake in Communion are invited to a different kind of divine encounter through an ecumenical prayer of blessing. If this is your preference, we invite you to meet the preacher at the baptismal font.

Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here at this table where Christ is the host.

**COMMUNION SONG****“ONE BREAD, ONE BODY”****UMH 62***Going Forth as the Body of Christ***\*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION****PRESIDER**

Eternal Light, shine in our hearts.  
 Eternal Goodness, you have drawn us to your heart  
 and unite us in the sacrament of Christ's body and blood.  
 Eternal Power, be our support.

Eternal Wisdom, scatter the darkness of our ignorance.  
 Eternal Pity, have mercy upon us.  
 That with all our heart and mind and soul and strength  
 we may seek your face and be brought by your infinite  
 mercy to your holy presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**\*CLOSING SONG****“IN CHRIST THERE IS NO EAST OR WEST”****AAHH 399****\*BENEDICTION****SENDING & POSTLUDE**

*Let's take a vision of equality with us.  
Let's take the dream of safety and respect for everyone.  
Let's leave this place, knowing that we are instruments for change.  
So, let's go to work.*

*You are welcome to keep your bulletin, but if you do not wish to keep it please place  
it on the table at the entrance to the chapel as you leave.*

---

**Cover Art:** n.d. Church Art Pro . Accessed May 29, 2021. [https://www.churchart.com/subscriber/viewimages?book\\_number=59&chapter=2&image\\_type=cl%2Cph%2Ccp%2Cbc%2Cca%2Cmv%2Cwt%2Cnt%2Cpt%2Cft](https://www.churchart.com/subscriber/viewimages?book_number=59&chapter=2&image_type=cl%2Cph%2Ccp%2Cbc%2Cca%2Cmv%2Cwt%2Cnt%2Cpt%2Cft).

**Call to Worship:** Joanna. "Wednesday Worship Piece: Call to Worship." Spacious Faith: Spiritual Practices, Worship Pieces, and General Prayers of the Community: 2020. Planning for Rites and Rituals: Year B - A Resource for Episcopal Worship . New York : Church Publishing Incorporated.

**Communion Liturgy:** Hillyer, Chelsey. "A Liturgy of Holy Communion focusing on Mercy and Justice." Mounethodist. Accessed May 26, 2011. <https://spaciousfaith.com/2011/05/25/wednesday-worship-piece-call-to-worship-2/>.

**Prayers of Confession and Assurance:** Shuman, Thom. "Liturgy with communion for September 9, 2018 (Pentecost 16/Trinity 15/Proper 18/Ordinary 23 - B)." Lectionary Liturgies (blog). August 31, 2018. <https://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/search?q=james+2>.

**Prayer for Illumination:** Prayers of t221. <https://www.mounethodist.org/files/connectional+ministries/liturgical+resources+for+disasters/holy+communion+for+mercy+and+justice.pdf>.

*\*The worship planning team creates all other parts of the liturgy except where noted.*

---

**LANCASTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY WORSHIP TEAM**

Mwat Aseḏeh, Equilla Curry, Liz Fulmer, Patty Hall, Stephanie Oelrich,  
Cam Richesson, REv. Scott Siciano, Beth Taylor, Rev. Kellie Turner,  
Rev. Dr. Catherine E. Williams, Advisor

---

**THE WORSHIP TEAM SEEKS:**

*To serve the universal church of our Creator.  
To minister to the unique and diverse needs of the seminary community.  
To foster an expansive culture of worship that values difference and challenges the normative.*