

SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

August 30, 2023 and September 2, 2023



*“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church,
and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.”*

Matthew 16:18



“Stacked Rocks in Close-up Photography”

By Irfan Rahat

Gathering as the Body of Christ.

CENTERING SONG “MY LIFE FLOWS ON IN ENDLESS SONG” NCH 476 (v. 1 & 2)

GREETING PRESIDER

*CALL TO WORSHIP STUDENT MINISTER

A new day is dawning in God’s Good Creation.

It is our great joy to bask in that morning light.

We have been gathered by God’s loving hand to share it together.

We will respond in praise, raising our voices in worship and song. With a God of such great love and majesty, how can we keep from singing?

*OPENING HYMN “WE HAVE COME INTO THIS HOUSE” vs. 1,3 AAHH 174

*CONFESSION & WORDS OF ASSURANCE

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

Presider: We confess, O God, that we take too much at face value.
We’re skeptical of anything we can't perceive with our senses.
And yet we believe!

S. Minister: Our minds want plausible explanations, but our spirits want hope.
Set us free to experience your mystery and mercy, your ways in our world. Keep our need to understand from interfering with your power in us.

All: Help us to believe in your wondrous ways without rejecting the capacity for reason with which you created us. Overwhelm us, that we may know that you are God. In your power beyond all imagination we pray, Amen.

Presider: Here is the good news: It is not up to us.
God has not wavered in keeping the covenant of grace,
of hope, of mercy, of life.

**All: By God's grace, we are forgiven;
by God's healing, we are made whole;
by God's constant love, we are restored to life.
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. Be mindful that some of our siblings may prefer non-contact ways of passing the peace, so kindly ask before hugging or shaking hands.

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

Service of the Word

POEM [SAT. ONLY]

“DARK TESTAMENT 8”

PAULI MURRAY

Pauli Murray reflects on the power of hope when the world gave them plenty of reasons not to have hope.

Hope is a crushed stalk
Between clenched fingers.
Hope is a bird's wing
Broken by a stone.
Hope is a word in a tuneless ditty --
A word whispered with the wind,
A dream of forty acres and a mule,
A cabin of one's own and a moment to rest,
A name and place for one's children
And children's children at last ...
Hope is a song in a weary throat.

*Give me a song of hope
And a world where I can sing it.
Give me a song of faith
And a people to believe in it.
Give me a song of kindness
And a country where I can live it.
Give me a song of hope and love
And a brown girl's heart to hear it.*

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

STUDENT MINISTER

Eternal God, open our minds to hear your word,
our hearts to love your word,
and our lives to be obedient to your word.
through the power of your Spirit,
and the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING**MATTHEW 16:13-20****NRSV**

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 16, verses 13 through 20.

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

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

SERMON**REV. DR. MELVIN BABER****PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY****STUDENT MINISTER**

Lord Jesus, You are One who walks beside your people.

So we pray for people who walk for justice.

You are One who raises up those who are bent low.

So we pray for those held down by the grindings of life and the indifference of the world.

You are One who feeds the hungry.

So we pray for all who long for bread and the means to provide it.

You are One who celebrates the small and the insignificant.

So we pray for the children and for those who are never noticed.

You are the One who says 'Follow me'.

So we pray for courage and faith in our hearts

That we may take up the cross and find it leads to life. Amen.

Service of the Table

OFFERTORY SONG

INSTRUMENTAL

***THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

God is with you.

And also with you.

Let us open our hearts.

We open our hearts to God and one another.

Let us give thanks.

We thank God with joy.

Holy God, our loving Creator,
we thank you for your steadfast love for your whole creation.
Your breath gives us life;
your word brings new life out of death.
You call us from separation and sin
to a joyful life of communion with you and all your creatures.
With all people and all creation, we praise you:

Holy, holy, holy God.

the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of God!

Hosanna in the highest.

Holy God, we see and touch your Word in Jesus Christ,
we offer you our praise, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:
Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.

Holy God, pour your Spirit upon us,
that we may know Christ in the breaking of bread,
and that in word and deed we may be channels
of your love, peace, and justice in the world.

**All praise to you, Eternal God,
in Jesus Christ, who lives among us,
and the Holy Spirit, who binds us together in love. Amen.**

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread,
gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and
said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in
remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Holy God, pour your Spirit upon these gifts - and upon us - that we may know Christ in the breaking of bread, and that in word and deed we may be channels of your love, peace, and justice in the world. **Amen.**

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 cup from the stack on the aisle table and approach the minister, who will place a piece of bread in your open hand. All bread is gluten free.

Or you may 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 interfaith prayer of blessing. If this is your preference, we invite you to meet the minister 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

INSTRUMENTAL

Going Forth as the Body of Christ

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

PRESIDER

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***CLOSING SONG**

“WE WOULD BE BUILDING”

NCH 607 (v. 1&2)

***BENEDICTION**

SENDING & POSTLUDE

We go forth in God’s continuing presence, with the power to love and the strength to serve.

Cover Art: “Stacked Rocks in Close-up Photography” By Irfan Rahat <https://www.pexels.com/photo/stacked-rocks-in-close-up-photography-11114272/> [retrieved June 7, 2023]

Confession: Rev. Janice Ladd, Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, <https://www.resurrectionmcc.org/bulletins/20080309.pdf>.

Words of Assurance: Thom M. Schuman, “Lectionary Liturgies,” <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/2023/06/liturg-y-wcommunion-for-june-11-2023.html>

Poem: Murray, Pauli, and Elizabeth Alexander. 2018. *Dark Testament: And Other Poems*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 13. Excerpted from larger poem.

Prayer for Illumination: Flora Litt and Wayne Irwin, “A Prayer for Illumination,” in *Voices United* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1979), 92-93.

Prayers of the Community: “Who Do You Say I Am?” at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2012/09/prayer-who-do-you-say-that-i-am.html>

Communion Liturgy: Ruth C. Duck, “Great Thanksgiving” from *Worship for the Whole People of God: Vital Worship in the 21st Century*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013), 195-196, and “The Great Thanksgiving,” from *The United Methodist Hymnal*, (Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), 9-11.

Sending: Adapted from the *Book of Worship*, UCC, 116-17.

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

LANCASTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY WORSHIP TEAM

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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.