

Order of Worship for at Home Use

August 16, 2020

Welcome to worship with Grace@Home!

We pray that you are healthy and well as you worship this week.

If you wish to worship via the video, click this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_VUXrlM9WDw

As we gather online it is important to remember that we are not alone. We gather with our brothers and sisters in this church and in Christ's church wherever God has placed us. We are, after all, the body of Christ and the family of God. As His people we gather for worship and we are reminded of the promise that Christ will be with us, even to the very end of the age. We are also reminded that as God's children we are a great community and even when distanced we remain God's children in communion with God and one another.

Today as we gather, I encourage you to create a comfortable space for worship where you are reminded of God's presence in your life and that He is with you in this moment. Surround yourself with the symbols of Grace. Find a place that is peaceful so that you might hear the still quiet voice of God when it speaks to you. Maybe light a candle as a reminder of God's light in the world and in your life, have your Bible with you as it is God's revelation to us in this moment.

Pastor Jim

We Gather as God's Family to Worship

Introit & Candle Lighting

“Trumpet Voluntary”

H. Purcell
Bells of Grace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRwGnx2Rllo>

Welcome

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-lhCoBSmEw>

Welcome to worship with Grace Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas. As we gather online it is important to remember that we are not alone. We gather with our brothers and sisters in this church and in Christ's church wherever God has placed us. We are, after all, the body of Christ and the family of God. As His people we gather for worship and we are reminded of the promise that Christ will be with us, even to the very end of the age. We are also reminded that as God's children we are a great community and even when distanced we remain God's children in communion with God and one another.

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Call to Worship (Psalm 133)

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNaJphvI3sc>

With the psalmist we proclaim how good it is when your people live together in unity.

With all of creation we recognize how good it is when your people honor the we have been given.

With all of heaven we are aware of how important it is to worship you, with honor, majesty and praise.

Let us worship God!

Hymn

“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”

Quarantine Quintet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGwG-EvhUNU>

Sharing the Peace of Christ

not in video

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you...

and also with you.

In this time of social distancing it is important for us to remember that in Christ we are connected to all who believe in Jesus in every time and place. As the world continues to be isolated, and many are feeling anxious, as Christians we share the peace of Christ as a way to offer hope and the joy of Christ. Again today we use the familiar words, “The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you... and also with you.”

Now, or after your time of worship, reach out via text, email, phone or video call, to someone outside of your home extending the invitation to enter into the peace of Christ with our faith community.

Praise God, that His peace is with us, always!

Prayer and The Lord’s Prayer

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1T8IWMIR2qQ>

This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. These words from Psalm 118 are written on our hearts but today we confess that it is difficult to rejoice. We are tired of being locked down. We are tired of being frightened and threatened by the Coronavirus. God heals us and conquers this pandemic. Still our fear helps us to be responsible and compassionate. In the face of a new worldwide health crisis help us to see our world with compassion, and open our eyes to new ways of doing things and being Your people in a dark and hurting world.

God, in this moment we lift before You those who have been touched by the pandemic. We pray for those frustrated with the lock down, bring them peace. We pray for those who have lost loved ones during this time and are unable to grieve in their time of isolation, God give them grace and comfort. We pray for those who cannot get services or supplies, those unable to get medical care, those who are paralyzed with fear and those who are unable to visit family and loved ones. God give us perseverance in our time of need and strengthen our faith.

God, we confess that it is hard to rejoice right now as riots and demonstrations continue across our nation and little is being done to protect the innocent or honestly discuss racism and violence. It is hard to rejoice when serious moral issues have been hijacked for political gain and people’s lives and property are hanging in the balance. God heal our land, our hearts and our souls. Give us a vision that honor’s every human being as a Child of God created in Your image regardless of wealth, skin color or nationality. God give us Your vision for humanity and let us, your people set an example for the rest of the world.

God this is Your day and we should rejoice. In this moment we give You thanks for those who serve us as teachers, caregivers, first responders, those who help provide for our needs stocking shelves and delivering supplies. God bless them with Your protection and with energy and faithfulness.

Finally, God we know this is the day You have made. Help us not to forget that You are Lord, still in charge and that no virus, election or uprising will ever unseat You. God keep us faithful so that we might be Your people in this moment in history.

We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ who taught us to pray saying,

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.

We Listen to God's Word

Hymn/Praise

“Jesus Loves Me”

not in video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C63z5hCd7bc>

Children's Message

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkAADnmKpXc>

Today we pause to give our blessing to those who are returning to school. We are honored to have with us as our liturgist Katherine Fine who is leaving us this week for Colorado Christian University. She represents for us all the students who are starting school in the next few weeks. Some will be attending school in person and others will begin school online, remotely like the children of Clark County School District. These students all need our prayers. So, for today's Children Message I would like for us, wherever you are, to pray a blessing on our students. Join me in prayer.

Special Music

“A Shield About Me”

D. Thomas/C.

Williams Rosa Gonzales and Kathy Koch

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eriLOCujQgg>

Reading of the Word

Genesis 45:1-15

Katharine Fine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pOza0clLOXE>

1 Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, “Have everyone leave my presence!” So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it.

3 Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still living?” But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come close to me.” When they had done so, he said, “I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! 5 And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. 6 For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. 7 But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 “So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. 9 Now hurry back to my father and say to him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don’t delay. 10 You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. 11 I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.’

12 “You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. 13 Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly.”

14 Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. 15 And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

Message

“ A Life Well Lived”

Pastor Dana Pope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dRQ-SZwO5w>

Please pray with me: May the words of my mouth and the mediation of our hearts be pleasing to You, for You are our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

A Question for us as we begin today is: How do we know if our lives are well lived? This week I read a quote by Annie Dillard who writes: “How we spend our days – is – of course how we spend our lives. What we do in this hour, and that one, is what we are doing.” What we do with our minutes, hours and days is what makes up our lives. How are you spending your days in this strange 2020/Covid season?

Today is our last day in our lectionary study of Genesis. As we continue to study the story of Joseph, Jacob’s favorite son, I want to spend a little time looking back at what we skipped over as we came to our text for today, because I believe that even with his circumstances, Joseph’s life was a life well lived. It is a story of reconciliation but a story of much grander scope as well.

Joseph, Jacob’s favorite, was a lot like his father when we meet him. He is entitled, arrogant and rude, a tattle tale – Jacob must have seen himself reflected in this son. Joseph’s brothers eventually had enough and they plotted to kill him, but when opportunity in the form of a caravan of Ishmaelites...presents itself...they took the cash and informed their father that his favorite son was dead.

Joseph, we read - went from favored son, to being a slave in Egypt serving Potiphar, a wealthy official and the captain of the guard. While in his servitude, Joseph actually prospered. Slavery was surely his circumstance, but Joseph began to learn from mistakes made in his own family. Arrogance and rudeness doesn't serve you well in life, no matter your station, but certainly not as a slave. Joseph began to learn humility, as he served, and he actually prospered in the house of Potiphar, he became the overseer of the household. Even, scripture tells us, Potiphar himself saw God's hand of favor in Joseph's life.

I wonder if, when we look back at our lives, are we able to see God's hand of favor and guidance? I believe that the better we are at recognizing God's work in our lives and in the world, the more able we are to trust God instead of our own abilities. It seems to be that often others see God's hand in our lives, more readily than we do. At times our hearts and minds and eyes are so preoccupied with our distressing circumstances, the darkness of the season, the state of the world, that we ourselves are unable to see clearly God's actions and plans unfold around us. This is one reason choosing to invest ourselves in community, especially the community of faith, is so important for the unfolding of our own life stories. Others at times are able to see God's hand upon us and point that out to us, helping us lift our heads out of our own chaos and stay attuned to God's presence.

At this point, Joseph was on his own... but Potiphar prospered because God's hand was upon Joseph. As Pastor Jim mentioned last week, life got tricky for Joseph in that house. Joseph was handsome ...and Potiphar's wife became interested in more than his mind and organizational skills...She, being less than honorable and less than faithful to her husband, tried day after day to seduce him...and daily, he refused. Until one day when she tried again and lied when Potiphar found her with some of his clothing. Joseph had fled from her, and she framed him for sexual assault as an act of revenge. The captain of the guard then threw Joseph in jail where the king's prisoners were kept.

Poor Joseph! Locked up in a cell... he could have looked around him, seen only darkness and a bleak future, the unfairness and hardship of it all. He could have wallowed in the circumstances and focused on all the wrongs done to him that had gotten him to this point in his story. A dark bleak dungeon. But he chose instead to look to God, see God's love for him. Joseph found favor with the chief jailer, and once again Joseph was put in charge – this time of other prisoners.

How often in these last months have we met someone in the grocery store that we haven't seen in a while, and stood there for a few minutes talking about all that is currently wrong with the world? The difficulties of our own circumstances and used phrases like hell in a handbasket (whatever exactly that means!). Friends, there is no doubt we have much to be concerned about. Friends and loved ones who are dealing with COVID, cancers, and are even dying. We grieve for so many, we long for normalcy and a return to worship and school and our economy and the world. We worry about health, our parents, our teachers, our young people, our country. These can definitely be seen as dark days. Yet. As the people of God, we know that God is at work behind the scenes doing that which we do not know and cannot yet see. We have a mighty God who loves us and puts His hands upon us, blesses us in ways that are sometimes difficult to see and believe in the moment.

How might we, with intention, change our own narrative about these days in our lives? Point out God's handiwork and work in the world? First, we look for it, see it! And second, we rest in the knowledge that he is with us and is at work! This past week you might have seen an email from the church, and opportunity to share God sightings with one another. You are invited to look intentionally for God in the world around you and take some digital photos to share. You have seen such photos in the worship videos, and I hope sometime in the near future we might find a way to view one another's God sightings in an art show or program when we can gather again.

In jail, Joseph becomes known for his dream interpretation skills, and eventually becomes known to Pharaoh who is having a series of bad dreams...and no one can tell him what they mean. (read this whole story this week, and then watch the musical... it's great, really)

Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams, and also works out a plan to mitigate the disaster that is coming. Pharaoh is so impressed he hires him on the spot, gives him his own signet ring, and makes him viceroy over all of Egypt. (So now you remember how he got from the pit of last week, to the palace of this week.)

So it is that Joseph is in charge of the great famine plan, and all of the grain for miles and miles around. Meanwhile, Jacob and his sons are starving...so Jacob sends all but the youngest to Egypt to purchase grain. When they arrive they do what all of the others who have come have done, and they go before the Egyptian viceroy who just happens to be the brother they hated and sold off long ago. But while Joseph recognizes them, they do not recognize him. This is an interesting point in our story.

After suffering all that Joseph suffered, the long and crazy road that he traveled to get to this moment, how does Joseph act? How would you or I react? First he sends for the youngest brother to join the rest, then he tests them all. In order to discern if they are as conniving as they once were, if they hated Jacob's new favorite, Joseph sets it up to look as if the youngest, Ben, stole a silver cup from him. He wants to see if they will allow Benjamin to be jailed or if they will protect him. When they pass the test and reveal themselves to be changed, Joseph reveals himself, and weeps with them. As they reconcile, Joseph tells them that there is nothing to forgive.

What an amazing perspective. To say, "as I see it, God sent me here to save many lives." Joseph says, "look at God's purposes and how they have been fulfilled by my coming to be here, in Egypt...before you. So that our family would be saved...so that many lives could be saved."

We are called, as God's people, to have a life well lived by God's standards, not those of the world. That has a lot to do with our perspective, not our prosperity. We often look at our circumstances, or even our sin... but instead we are called to look at God, to HIM for our life and breath and for our sense of a life well lived. It is a mystery of faith that God's purposes come out of deep despair and hardship...a mystery and also evidence that our God is loving and gracious and merciful.

Our challenge in the thick of it then is to spend more time looking not to cause and effect, to figure out how and why, but to step into the WHO of it all. Seeking to turn our attention to God's work, God's kingdom, His blessing, and His love... his hand of provision and protection even though there is hardship and struggle in this life.

Here's the thing, however... this story is not just about this family, Jacob, Joseph, his 11 brothers...reconciliation and prosperity...how they came to survive a famine that devastated all the land. This story is about you and me. This story is about the fulfillment of the covenant that God made with Abraham, Isaac...and then renewed with Jacob. Most of that covenant is fulfilled in the reading of this scripture. The 12 tribes of Israel are safe. They were fruitful and multiplied in Egypt in Goshen where they settled – so much so that it became an issue... which is where we go next as we look at the book of Exodus.

I will be your God and you will be my people, and I will provide for you a land of promise...

They have the first part, but this is not the land of promise... they are in the wrong place...

Our challenge today is to examine our own lives, are we living our best life? On what do we focus our time, our energy and our conversation? Do we look more to the darkness in our world, or more to the light of Christ? Are we using the skills God has given us responsibly? Not for ourselves, to get ahead and to make things happen, but as a way to participate in God's purposes in this moment?

There is no doubt that darkness and trouble will be with us in this life... but there is also no doubt that our great God is with us and is our hope our light and our salvation. May each of us look back on our lives and see a life well lived. Amen.

We Respond to the Voice of God

Presentation of our Tithes & Offerings

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVohPKcenRE>

Offering is not fundraising. In worship we offer our gratitude for what God has done in our lives. Blessed with wealth we return a portion of that wealth to the work of God's kingdom. Blessed with time, we share our time with God and in His work. Blessed with the gifts of the spirit, such as teaching, compassion or hospitality, we offer a portion of those gifts back to God for the betterment of His creation. Offering is an act of worship and an act of gratitude. So now we call for the offering. Prayerfully consider how you have been blessed and what you may return to God for the work of His Kingdom.

We are blessed with many opportunities to give of our time talents and our resources... Let us now participate in God's kingdom by returning God's tithes and our offerings to the church via mail or online giving, using text to give or the following link: <https://onrealm.org/gracepclv/-/give/now>

Offertory

“My Shepherd Will Supply My Need”

arr. M. Pooler

Dr. Lisa Elliott & Katharyne Taylor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBwLKuABz14>

Offertory Prayer

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jiO6KLduGMc>

Holy God we offer these, our gifts to You. Bless the money, the talent, the time and all that has been offered to You in this moment. Use these gifts for the work of Your kingdom. Use these gifts to bring grace to our world. Bless these gifts and use them to provide for worship, service and caretaking all for Your glory. Amen.

We Go with God to Love and Serve

Closing Hymn

“Light the Fire Again”

B. Doerksen

Rosa Gonzales & Kathy Koch

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ci_2CjkdIQ

Benediction

Pastor Dana Pope

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PU8MX-d5yUo>

Postlude

“Fugue in G Minor (The Little)”

J.S. Bach

Dr. David Dorway, Organist

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIPNVnFtzT4>

As you continue to worship this week, please keep the following people in prayer, and reach out to one another in word or deed.

In Need of Prayer

Dolores Harris (Merrill Gardens)
Alice Black (Skilled Nursing at Las Ventanas)
Gary Oiler (Hospital)

Judy Aitken, Becky Aldridge, Bill Carlston, Bernard Busswell, Bob & Joan Clark,
Carol Daniel, Ann Donithan, Rosamaria Duenas, Joice Franklin, Mary Gafford,
Terry Glaser, Mary Phillips, Pam Kodey, Lara Kolberg, Dorell Koon, Carole McKinnis,
Sherrie Miles, Pennie Everhart, Maggie O'Donnell, Alice Oiler, Dodi Palmer,
Russ & Pat Reid, Aminta & Jorge Santanilla, Marty Swartout, Mike Walsh,
Sharon Wilson, Dick Wohletz

In Memoriam:

Jack Crockett 3/18/2020
Randy Innis 3/18/2020
Clark Trapp 3/18/2020
Ruthy Stull 3/19/2020
Ted Phillips 4/1/2020
Violet Cross 4/4/2020
Bill Franklin 5/4/2020
Greg Holt 5/7/2020
Carol Mohr 5/25/2020
Louis Romero 8/8/2020
Bettye Hodgkins 8/11/2020