

Order of Worship for at Home Use

October 25, 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=qOxZJixY0bo>

Welcome to worship with Grace Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas! We are so glad that you are choosing to worship with us. We believe that whenever we gather for worship, whether it be in the sanctuary or at home, God is with us. We are the family of God, united in Christ, and so we are called to God's throne room together as we worship.

As you know, churches are now allowed to meet with up to 250 people using up to 50% of their building's capacity as long as they continue to follow social distancing protocols. As a result, we have increased our attendance capacity to 130 for those who would like to attend at the Central Campus. At present we are NOT requiring reservations, so come if you are able. We are also opening worship at the West Campus on November 8th at 10:30 am. with a 50 person capacity. We will continue to offer online worship as well.

As you worship at home, create a comfortable space. Surround yourself with the symbols of our faith. Maybe light a candle to signify God's light in our world, read along in your Bible as it is God's revealed word to us. Above all, open your heart to the very real presence of God as we gather in worship.

Pastor Dana

We Gather as God's Family to Worship

Prelude/Candle Lighting "Down in My Heart" G. Cooke
Kathy Koch & Savannah Scarlett
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Hrh28x-dUk>

Welcome Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fc_EwdRkL0

Welcome to worship with Grace Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas

God Himself has promised that He will be with us always, to the very end of the age. When it comes to corporate worship Jesus said that when two or more are gathered in His name, He is present. Because we know God is with us, we also know that worship can happen anywhere. When you take a moment and focus on God and His grace in your life, you worship. So if you are worshipping with us online or at a different time, it is ok. This is worship. Our focus is on God and we gather in spirit knowing God is with us. Take a moment and prepare your heart for the presence of God. surround yourself with the symbols of God. maybe light a candle, have His word at your side. Quiet your soul and let us begin worship.

Call to Worship Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ots1PkWziJQ>

One: This is the day the Lord has made,
All: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
One: Today we celebrate Reformation Sunday.
All: With Christians from across the globe let us profess our faith.
One: We are reformed and always reforming according to the Word of God.
All: Let us worship God!

Hymn "Sing Unto the Lord" J. Hamlin
Kathy Koch & Delinda Layne-Larson
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZt7HUjmRgM>

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=55KCmLzY0sk>

Holy God, these are uncertain times. We hear the drumbeat of war and hostility in China, Taiwan, India, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Iran, and in smaller conflicts among villages, towns, states and even in our homes. We feel the tension of hostility in our homes, among our friends and families as the pandemic and its consequences continues to dominate our lives. We are frustrated with injustice and unrest wondering where has common sense gone in our country, a country founded on a vision of freedom and a constitution that is supposed to protect the innocent, provide power to all people and govern fairly through the rule of law. These are uncertain times, and it is scary. And now we are in the midst of an election. Maybe God, it is a divine comedy that this election would be held during the Halloween season as things are scary, the world is unsafe and the personalities in the media and the candidates for office seem like costumed characters rather than candidates and journalists.

God remind us that you are in control and that all things work together for your glory. Remind us that you are with us no matter the trial. Remind us that we are held in the palm of your hand.

God in this moment we lift those who are paralyzed with fear. Please bring peace. We pray for the places in our world where violence is tearing at the fabric of our world. Please bring peace. We pray for those who are hungry, poor, unemployed, homeless and challenged by the economics of this moment. Please bring resources and hope. We pray for the children of our world who have been kept home these many months. Please protect them, keep them healthy and learning. We pray for the ill and those quarantined. God bring healing. Let us see your miracles in hospital rooms and bedsides. Let us be reminded of your miracles of healing both in the gifts of modern medicine and the miraculous power of your Holy Spirit.

2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, **2** in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. **3** All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. **4** But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **5** made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. **6** And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, **7** in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. **8** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— **9** not by works, so that no one can boast. **10** For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Message

“A Gift from God”

Pastor Dana Pope

Do you remember that old commercial?

A little old lady is eating a hamburger, and asks: Where’s the beef?

The question I feel needs to be asked today as we begin is:

Where’s the grace?

In the last months we have experienced hardships not seen in many years... not in many of our lifetimes, and probably never all at the same time: pandemic / COVID, quarantine / separation and isolation, fires, floods, hurricanes, job loss, business closures, disruption of plans, civil unrest, political upheaval and a general unwillingness to come together with people that have a different point of view...

It seems our world is largely a grace-less place these days.

Where’s the grace?

I wonder if this feels true for you – at least partially – and where you find yourself most of the time these days?

In grace, feeling it, living it, grateful for it...

or out of it...looking for it? Longing for it...

Another way to ask that question (from Ephesians) is to say:

Do you feel more dead or more alive?

It feels strange to talk about death in this context in these difficult days. Doesn't it? By doing so – we do not discount the life and death issues around us that so many are dealing with...but we also put into that context the very REAL life and death issue of salvation for our souls, faith and the grace made possible through Jesus the Christ.

The author of Ephesians, Paul, doesn't hesitate. Right after telling the people of Ephesus in ch 1 that he is praying for them, specifically in part that the *eyes of their hearts might be enlightened...and that they would know the hope to which they are called...* He now in chapter 2 reminds them of one of the great truths of our faith: *we were dead in trespasses and sins, but...Because of His great love for us, God, Who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ...He has saved us by His amazing grace.*

This statement is foundational to us as God's people and was one of the first confessions of faith of the early church.

Yet, the theology of Grace remains somewhat a mystery to us.

How can we be saved, know and love Christ, yet still feel (and often act) as if we are much more dead than alive? Why is it so difficult for us to find grace? Why do we live as if we are still *children of wrath*?

Where's the grace?

You have probably heard this...The Paradox of our Time... it is credited to many different people but it says it this way:

We have taller buildings but shorter tempers; wider freeways but narrower viewpoints; we spend more but have less; we buy more but enjoy it less; we have bigger houses and smaller families; more conveniences, yet less time; we have more degrees but less sense; more knowledge but less judgment; more experts, yet more problems; we have more gadgets but less satisfaction; more medicine, yet less wellness; we take more vitamins but see fewer results. We drink too much; spend too recklessly; laugh too little; drive too fast, get too angry quickly; stay up too late; get up too tired; read too seldom; watch TV too much and pray too seldom. We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values; we talk too much; love too seldom, and lie too often. We've learned how to make a living but not a life; we've added years to life not life to years.

In these strange times, and really all the time, we exist but sometimes fail to really live... in fact, it truly is our nature... after all, Ephesians was written to the church in Ephesus a long long time ago... and they needed to hear these same words!

Much too often we live without leaning into the hope to which we have been called...live without opening and accepting God's gift of Grace – choosing instead to live *in the passions of our flesh...following the desires of flesh and senses...and living in our nature as children of wrath...*

We are called by our loving God to step away from all of that. God Who is rich in mercy...and we are asked to live into...accept the gift of GRACE...

Note here: accept is NOT the same as –

Work harder to find, do more to practice, run faster to escape your past or get on the straight and narrow, or make a list and prioritize your life...accepting is not making it happen.

Volumes and volumes of books have been written on the subject of God's grace.

In fact Grace is one of the main issues which spurred on the reformation. When Luther nailed the 95 Theses to the door in Whittenburg in 1517 one of his major objections was to the idea that grace was tied to indulgences; that grace could be bought or paid for; that grace was only available through the sacraments if they were done well by the priest and received with the right spirit...and only through the Church... capital C...

At the time of the reformation the thought was that if you participated in the sacraments given through and by the church you would be made better, as if it were a medicine to take... to be made well even...

But when we read the scripture we see that grace is NOT about our actions at ALL!

Grace is the free gift from God – given/offered to us - that exchanges our lives of death and sin and searching with life in Christ...riches...kindness... and salvation... and it has nothing to do with anything we could ever do. We can never earn salvation, pay for the love of God, be good enough to merit mercy or grace... no matter how hard we try or how long we search for a way.

So... where's the grace? Why is it that we don't seem to find much of it these days? Even within our own hearts and lives?

Maybe in part, it is due to our humanity...our reluctance to receive something for nothing, and our suspicion that a gift might just be too good to be true.

The challenge is for each one of us to ACCEPT God's gift of grace...and live our lives as if we have accepted it – with HOPE in Christ Jesus.

Jesus says, come to ME all you who are weak and heavy laden... don't try to do it all yourself... be made alive in Christ!

I wonder... what would this world would look like if Christian people were truly able to live into the freedom of a life in Christ...the grace freely given... which saves us.

How much easier would it be to relate to difficult hurting people? How much better would our own outlook and mental health be? We might worry less, strive less, try to control everything...less. We might pray more, play and sit with God and others more. We might love more extravagantly and show more kindness...the list goes on...

When we are alive in Christ, we are able to receive God's gift of grace, AND able to share that grace with others. The scripture today says that we then *become God's handiwork... created in Christ Jesus to do good works...* the good works are an outpouring of being alive and receiving God's gift of grace. An automatic reaction to God's Grace within us.

Today, as we celebrate Reformation Sunday, we stand on the shoulders of the reformers... Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and others... who fought to remind the church of this truth...Grace is a gift.

It is by scripture alone, faith alone, and grace alone...that we are saved. There is not one thing we could ever do will earn our salvation, pay our way into a place in the heavenly realms... it is a free gift that flows out of God's great love for us...and God's grace is passed through us to the world.

Friends: You are invited to hold onto the faith in the LORD our God. Wait for His glory to come.

Come alive and share in the incomparable riches of grace...Accept the Gift from God that is Grace and LIFE...and by doing so be freed to be God's handiwork...sharing His love and grace and kindness with the world. Accept this Gift from God...and come alive!

Meanwhile, give grace, kindness and love to yourself. Your family. To those that don't agree with you or are unkind to you. Give grace to those who are having trouble finding it or have never known it. Come alive with the knowledge of God's great love for you, with faith in Christ Jesus Who has been raised from the dead and who calls to you sit with Him in the heavenly realms.

We Respond to the Voice of God

Presentation of our Tithes & Offerings

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=npX0SUjVXzE>

As God's people we respond to His Word and His Grace with our offerings. We offer not only our money, but even moreso, we offer ourselves to the work of God in our world and in our community.

...Let us now continue to worship and 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> . In addition, take some time to dedicate your life, time and talents, to God's service and listen for how God might be leading you today.

We Go with God to Love and Serve

Closing Hymn "You Are My All in All" D. Jernigan
Kathy Koch & Delinda Layne-Larson
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwPlpNw8_fk

Benediction Pastor Dana Pope
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BohjUjjAAHg>

And now, may our Lord bless you and keep you.
May our Lord make His face shine upon you.
May our Lord be gracious to you and give you peace.

Postlude "The Heart of Worship" M. Redman
Kathy Koch & Savannah Scarlett
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTdibkS2N7I>

**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)

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

Priscilla Taylor 7/4/2020

Louis Romero 8/8/2020

Bettye Hodgkins 8/11/2020

Gary Oiler 8/23/2020

Donna Gibson 9/14/2020