

Order of Worship for at Home Use
March 7, 2021

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=gHLvoNWJVXo>

As the joyful people of God, we continue to worship our Risen LORD. This is our joy and our purpose. We continue to be separate, but together, as God's family in the mystery of faith.

This week, as we worship, we turn our attention, our minds and hearts over to God. We rely on Christ Jesus as He again gathers us into His presence. As the people of God we turn to the One who knows, loves, sets us on right paths, forgives, and never leaves us.

As we begin you are invited to prepare your worship space.

We will be entering into the sacrament of communion today. Please prepare your bread and juice/wine ahead of time. If you don't have one or the other, use what is on hand. A roll or crackers, water or wine - all will be fine as we celebrate the mystery and gift of communion, and gather at the table Jesus has prepared.

With love and grace, Pastor Dana



We Gather as God's Family to Worship

Introit "Draw Us to You"

**M. Burkhardt
Dr. David Dorway**

Welcome

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

Welcome to worship with us at Grace Presbyterian Church, Las Vegas. We are thrilled you are worshipping with us. We gather remotely online and in person to give glory to God. We know that God has promised to be with us even to the very end of the age. During our time of worship we celebrate that God is has promised to be with us regardless of if we are at home or in the church. In times of celebration, in times of sorrow and in times of confusion, God is with us.

Today is the 3rd Sunday of Lent. Lent is the time of the Christian year where we take stock in our lives, preparing our hearts and lives for the grace of God won at the cross and celebrated on Easter. During lent many Christians commit acts of penitence, seeking God's forgiveness, others undertake acts of devotion renewing their commitment to God. As we worship today, I invite you to create a sacred worship space in your home that is quiet and reverent. Maybe light a candle and have your Bible with you. Open your heart and allow the presence of God to fill your space and touch your heart.

Now that all is prepared, let us worship the living God who is at our side now and always.

Call to Worship

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

One Jesus said: I am the vine and you are the branches,

All We are God's people, we are here to connect with our God

One Jesus said: if you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.

All Today we seek God's guidance that we may remain connected and bear fruit in our world through good works and gracious deeds

One Jesus said it is to God's glory that we bear fruit showing ourselves to be God's disciples.

All Today we worship God, showing the world we are disciples of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Adapted from John 15:1-8

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**

Holy God, this morning we come before you hoping that we may be connected to you so that your grace flows through us as the sap in a tree flows through its branches. As we bow before you in prayer we realize that we are not worthy to be part of your kingdom. We have failed in faithfulness and in commitment. We have wandered across the lines of morality and ethics. We have injured others through what we have done and what we have left undone. We have been undisciplined and self-centered and yet, you, oh God, still listen to our prayers, and work through our broken lives to bring healing to us and grace to others. God help us be faithful and connected to you.

This morning God, we pray for our communities. We pray for our families and loved ones, we pray for our friends, our colleagues and our fellow citizens. Above all God, allow us to be part of the healing that is needed in our land. We also lift up those who are struggling financially during this challenging time. Provide for us resource and opportunity that allow us to be Your people in the days ahead.

Finally God, we pray a blessing on those who are called to serve us and others. Bless our first responders, those who protect us, those who teach our children and those who serve our country faithfully. Given them the strength and faithfulness for the task to which you have called them.

We pray this in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ 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,
for ever and ever. 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 Dana Pope

Special Music "Then He Bowed His Head and Died"

**W & G Gaither
Praise Team**

Reading of the Word John 15:1-8

Pastor Dana Pope

Message "I AM the Vine, You are the Branches"

As we begin today, take a moment, take a breath, and take your pulse.

Not the pulse in your arm or neck...or in your digital readout on your smart watch, but the pulse of your soul, your heart... that which is – underneath - deeper – way down deep - inside... where we hide the cries of our hearts, the sighs too deep for words, our deepest longings and our hopes and dreams.

Take the pulse of your soul.

What words would you use to describe the state of your soul? Your heart and faith?

What clear, precise, descriptive adjectives would you use?

Is your soul ... Broken, soaring, heavy, growing, frazzled, engaged, yawning, light, unfocused, laser driven, lethargic, rational/all head, emotional/all heart, stuck in a rut, changing swiftly... would you say that your soul is “flourishing”?

Professor/now Pastor of 5th Ave. PC in NYC Scott Black Johnston – when he encouraged taking the pulse of your soul also says, think of it this way:

Is the way I relate to the music of worship: hymns, praise songs, organ music, contemporary music; reading and studying the bible; my involvement in the church family... are those things different, or the same as a year ago, 10 years ago? How am I relating to God? What is my prayer life like? Do I feel the movement of Holy Spirit?

What do you find when you take the pulse of your soul?

Our scripture text asks it a slightly different way: Are you bearing fruit?

Jesus with His disciples, have just finished the last supper. They have left, and I imagine them walking by gardens and fields as He says: *I am the true vine, my Father is the gardener...and you are the branches.* They had finished supper, along with wine, and they would have been all too familiar with this imagery. Most of them would have been involved in growing food or making wine at some point in their lives. Many people ate mostly what they grew, and wine was a staple, not a luxury.

Vs 2 says that God/Gardener: cuts off every branch that bears no fruit in Jesus, and those that do bear fruit God prunes so that it will be more fruitful.

This idea of pruning is known to us as well. We prune our rose bushes and trees, knowing that they need it to grow well, to produce. I now realize that we have not had a lemon on a few of our lemon trees in a few years, which is most likely due to the fact that we have not pruned it.

Jesus is saying that God, the Gardener, wants for us to be fruitful. God wants for us to flourish. The way that works, in nature, and in us, is pruning. God prunes our branches that bear no fruit...taking away all of the excess...

It may be that our time of shutdown was a call to pruning...an opportunity to slow down enough to take our soul's pulse – to notice – the state of our souls. I hope that we took that opportunity, but even if we did...as we begin to come back more fully – out of isolation – it is time to pause again and take the pulse of our souls...

After difficult times - grief, and sadness, times of isolation/loneliness/separation and pain – when we look back we become aware that they were times of pruning in our lives. So while we do lament and struggle... As children of God, we see and believe that God is at work EVEN in these time. We have and hold onto HOPE – knowing that when we come to the other side we will be in a better position to flourish.

There is danger in such times for us... and that danger is cutting OURSELVES off. We decide to go it alone, or we get into a habit of existing outside of the community of faith. We cut ourselves off from God and our relationship with Jesus, or from our church family and friends... and Jesus says that we can do nothing apart from Him... we must be connected.

No branch will bear fruit if it is by itself. It must be connected.

vs. 4 says that if we remain in Jesus, He will remain in us, and without that connection, there will be no fruit.

You may already know this, but the California wine district might not have been a thing...even though grapes were growing there as early as 1683, and wine production started by the late 1700s, there were some difficulties... The climate was perfect... warmth in the valley, grasses and oak trees, moisture/fog that came in each night... and then each day the fog rolled back out and the sun warmed it all up again. Perfect!

I read that those first vintners, and the monks (sacramental wine was first after all) sent away for grapes from the old world... Europe/Italy...they sent scions – in a variety of grapes – merlot, cabernet... etc... and they planted these root/sticks and they grew. Yea!

But then they didn't grow. Their vines started to collapse. About 80% of the vines died. They had a bug (root louse) called phylloxera... and it attacked the roots and destroyed the vines.

All BUT the vines that were wild. They were healthy.

So they grafted (new) vines from the old world onto the native vines, which were resistant to the root louse...and the industry came back and has flourished.

Romans chapter 11 *says that we are to be grafted into the vine... and that is the responsibility of the Gardener.* God does that grafting of us. *Vs 7 says if you remain in me and my WORDS remain in you, ask Me and it will be given...to God's glory you will bear much fruit.*

When grafting takes place, a T is cut into the vine, the old and new are put together, and then they are wrapped. The branch by itself can't do anything, (and would have been thrown into the fire) but when they are put together, the vine provides nourishment and the branch grows.

Interestingly, when the branch is grafted into the vine, and they begin to grow, the branch thrives, and in fact, is more sturdy than ever. There is a kind of scar tissue that forms, and it is very unlikely to break at that point. It will break in other places, but not where the joint is formed.

The whole intention is that the vine provides nourishment and the branch flourishes. God desires that YOU flourish. That you produce fruit.

So, as you take the pulse of your soul today...if you happen to find that your pulse is not – exactly – flourishing... have faith that the Gardener Himself... God IS at work in you.

You may have noticed the amazing photograph of the grape vine that has been shown today. This is a photograph by the artist Ian Ely. Eddie, Noah and I stumbled into his gallery in La Jolla a few years ago. What you see in this picture are the amazing grapes... the fruit that is just beautiful... but also what you see is the great color on the leaves.

What you may not know, however, is that this is VERY RARE. The conditions have to be just right for the vine to look like this. If I remember correctly, the year this was taken there had been a lot of rain. But also, for a couple of weeks prior it had been over 100*... not a lot for those of us here in Las Vegas... but not the normal temperatures for the grapes.

The abnormal heat is what caused the leaves to be such beautiful colors.

Even when the heat is on, so to speak, in our lives, when our souls feel less than flourishing, God is capable of creating something beautiful, and desires for us to flourish.

God the gardener prunes and prepares and Jesus Himself holds tight... Never leaving or forsaking us...reminding us: *Remain in me and I remain in you and you will bear fruit.*

Friends, our challenge today is to take the pulse of our souls...and rest in the knowledge that Jesus is the vine...and we are invited to remain in His love and participate in His joy.

Amen.

We Respond to the Voice of God

Presentation of our Tithes & Offerings

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

Offering is giving of oneself in response to God's grace. As you have received God's blessings please prayerfully consider how you might give back to God, bringing blessing and grace to our world.

Let us return 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 "Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God"

**C. Mueller
Chancel Choir**

Offertory Prayer

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

Holy God we thank you for all the blessings you have poured out in our lives. Thank you for our loved ones and our relationships. Thank you for our resource and the time you have given each of us. Thank you for your grace and the gifts of second chances. Out of gratitude we give these gifts and ask that you bless them and use them for the work of our kingdom.

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Amen.

The Service of Communion Communion Liturgy

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

Today we celebrate the Lord's supper, or the sacrament of communion. In this holy event we relive the last meal of our Lord and we are united with God and with other believers in this act of grace. Regardless of where or how we gather, when we celebrate this holy moment we are bound together with our Lord and our sisters and brothers in Christ across the globe. You are welcome at this table. It is the table of faith and the table of our gracious God. As we gather at this table may we be united in grace. Let us pray:

Gracious God, bless this bread and this cup. May be to us the communion with the body and blood of Christ. Accept the gift of our lives that we may live in you and serve your kingdom. Bless us with the ability to allow your grace to flow through us like the sap of a tree brining spiritual nourishment and enabling us to bear fruit for your kingdom. In this moment may we be joined together in Christ, may your whole church be one; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Words of Institution

On the night of his arrest, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread and after giving thanks to God he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying, Take, Eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup saying: this cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.

Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the saving death of the risen Lord until he comes. The gifts of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God! Come, for all is prepared.

As you share the bread and cup, you might say: “This is the bread of heaven” and “This is the cup of the new covenant.” or “This is Christ’s body broken for you.” This is Christ’s blood shed for you.”

Meditation **“Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed”**

C. Callahan
Dr. David Dorway

We Go with God to Love and Serve

Closing Hymn **#593 “Where He Leads Me” vs 1 & 3**

Dr. Lisa Elliott

Benediction

Pastor Dana Pope

Postlude **“My Heart Imprint Your Image”**

arr. R. Hobby
Dr. David Dorway, organist

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)

Judy Aitken, Becky Aldridge, Fred & Mickie Bratschie, Bernard Buswell, Bill Carlston, Bob & Joan Clark, Carol Daniel, Ann Donithan, Rosamaria Duenas, Pennie & Wayne Everhart, Joice Franklin, Mary Gafford, Charlene Harper,

**Greta Hougnon, Pam Kodey, Christian and Lara Kolberg, Dorell Koon,
Richard Lyle, Carole McKinnis, Sherrie Miles, Don Moore, Maggie O'Donnell,
Alice Oiler, Dodi Palmer, Mary Phillips, Aminta & Jorge Santanilla, Bruce Simon,
Marty & Barbara Swartout, Mike Walsh, and 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
Audrey Mitchell 12/1/2020
Alice Black 12/23/2020 ?
Phyllis McGuire 12/29/2020
Carol Moore 12/30/2020
Andrew Davis 1/1/2021
Kay Stinson 1/3/2021
Robert "Bob" Lockhart 1/16/2021
Laverne Willman 1/11/2021
Jennifer Moore 2/12/2021
Joe Fontana 2/22/2021**