

GAYLORD UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
318 4th STREET, BOX 385, GAYLORD, MN, 55334
Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
August 16, 2020



MEDITATION

Marian Wright Edelman, 21st century
"Whoever said anybody has a right to give up?"

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP **"I WILL REJOICE FOR HE HAS MADE ME GLAD!"** RONALD ELLIS

THE CALL Psalm 67

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make God's face to shine upon us, that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.
Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.
Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth.
Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.
The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, has blessed us.
May God continue to bless us; let all the ends of the earth revere God.

PRELUDE SANDY WENTZLOFF

WELCOME AND NEWS OF THE CHURCH

It is a joy to see you in worship today. Masks will be required and will be supplied if you do not have one.

- ❖ **Our Worship Service will be recorded today and online access on our Website will be available by Monday 17th or Tuesday 18th.**
- ❖ **There will be no singing but some creative talking!**
- ❖ **There will be no fellowship hour before/after worship.**
- ❖ ***Offering plates will not be passed* but you can still give! You can deposit your offering in the plate located at the entrance to the sanctuary.**
- ❖ ***Our August From the Heart Offering* will be collected today. This special offering will go to our Church Nursery to help purchase new toys and furniture. Deposit your donation in the Heart basket near the Sanctuary doors.**

STATEMENT OF WELCOME

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

ONE: WHO ARE YOU?	ALL: I AM A BELOVED CHILD OF GOD!
ONE: WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?	ALL: I AM A PERSON OF WORTH TO BE VALUED!
ONE: THEN WHAT WILL YOU DO?	ALL: I WILL LIVE A LIFE OF LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE OF MYSELF AND ALL GOD'S PEOPLE!

OPENING SENTENCES

ONE: How very good and pleasant it is when kindred worship together in unity!
All: It is like a summer rain which restores the parched earth.
One: It is like a cool breeze at the shore of a lake, at the top of a mountain or through a crowded city street.
All: God meets us here.
One: We have gathered to worship the Maker of Our Days, the Restorer of Our Souls and the Breath of Our Lives.

GATHERING HYMN: (SPOKEN) *"WE GATHER TOGETHER"*

PIANO CALL:

**ALL: WE GATHER TOGETHER TO ASK FOR GOD'S BLESSING,
TO LIVE IN COMMUNITY SEEKING GOD'S WILL.**

PIANO:

**WOMEN: WE COME NOW AS SISTERS AND BROTHERS, CONFESSING
THE SINS THAT DIVIDE AND THE WRONG IN US STILL.**

PIANO:

MEN: BESIDE US, FORGIVING, ENABLING, SUSTAINING YOU CALL US O SAVIOR, TO LIFE THAT IS NEW.

PIANO:

**ALL: YOU DRAW US AWAY FROM SELF-CENTERED COMPLAINING,
YOU LEAD US AND GUIDE US IN WAYS THAT ARE TRUE.**

PIANO:

**WOMEN: ALL PRAISE TO THE SPIRIT, PROVIDER, DEFENDER. YOU OFFER US FREEDOM,
TO FOLLOW OR STRAY,**

PIANO:

MEN: EMPOWERING ALL BY THE HOPE YOU ENGENDER.

ALL: GRANT WISDOM AND COURAGE TO FOLLOW YOUR WAY.

PIANO RESPONSE:

OPENING PRAYER

ONE: Maker of Our Days, you created each of us unique beings with differing strengths and weaknesses. Help us not only to use our strengths to assist others but also to allow others to use their strengths to meet our weaknesses.

All: Restorer of Our Souls, you have seen the parched places we have made in our lives, along with the devastation thrust upon us by the action or inaction of others. Meet us in the places of our deepest pain so that our facades of self-sufficiency might fall away, and we might be drawn into right relationship with you and one another.

One: Breath of Our Lives, without you we are but a mound of clay. Fill us with your presence, invigorate our worship, set us on fire so that others might be drawn into your light and nurtured by the warmth of your loving care.

CONFESSION OF SIN

ONE: When we try to go it on our own lacking faith in divine providence,

All: Lord have mercy.

One: When we have not recognized God at work in the faith of others,

All: Christ have mercy.

One: In all that we have done and all that we have left undone,

All: Lord have mercy.

Time for personal reflection and confession.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

ONE: God calls each of us by name and cries out with tears of joy as we recognize God in our admission of need.

All: Praise be to God who welcomes us as we are, challenges us to let go of our guilt and provides a way for us to walk on together.

LECTIONARY TEXTS

Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

Thus says the Lord: Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed. And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath, and do not profane it, and hold fast my covenant these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus says the Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather others to them besides those already gathered.

Matthew 15: 21-28

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

MESSAGE

"A NEW DAY TO BE THE CHURCH"

PASTOR DENNIS

Elevator story.

A woman and her daughter who had led a very sheltered life ventured to the city for the first time. They were amazed by almost everything they saw, but especially by two shiny, silver walls that could move apart and back together again. The girl asked her mother, "What is this?"

The mother (never having seen an elevator) responded, "I have never seen anything like this in my life, I don't know what it is."

While the girl and her mother were watching wide-eyed, an old gentleman limping slightly bent over with a cane slowly walks up to the moving walls and pressed a button. The walls opened and the man walks between them into a small room. The walls closed and the girl and her mother watched, small circles of light with numbers above the wall light up.

They continued to watch the circles light up in the reverse direction. The walls opened again and a handsome 24-year-old man stepped out standing tall and dressed in a suit. The mother looked at her daughter and said, "Honey, go get your father!"

We learn new things all the time! Sometimes they are what they seem, sometimes they are not. Yet in the process our understanding of the world is enlarged.

It's a new day to be the Church. A new day to look at Jesus, especially in the scripture today.

Do you think Jesus can learn new things?

Can Jesus' mind be enlightened?

Can Jesus' focus be broadened?

I don't think anyone or any one organization, or church, has all the truth about anything.

I don't believe any church body knows all there is to know about God, and the way, the truth, and the life.

There is truth to be found in the Assembly of God church here in town, as well as the Catholic Church, Lutheran churches and even here in Gaylord UCC. But not all the truth is found in any one

place. Even in the message I bring each week, there is always more to understand in one scripture than what I proclaim in a sermon. That is because, as we say here in the United Church of Christ, "God is still speaking." The spirit is always leading the people of God into new understandings of God's word. That is why we call it the living Word of God. It always challenges us to see more.

I don't know about you but when I look in the mirror in the mornings, there is more there to see than I want to admit. My father died and now lives in my mirror. Yet I guess that the man in the mirror is really me. But I do not want to see it. I have found that it helps if I only look with one eye open at a time. I cannot open the other eye until I am comfortable with the view of who I am becoming through one eye. But I know there is more to see in that mirror. I know that when I open both eyes I will see more change that is going on that I need to accept and also see things I would like to change –like the glasses on the face of the man in the mirror! Ones that might stay up on his nose!

Jesus and the disciples were walking in the region of Tyre and Sidon. They knew their mission: to speak the loving word of God to the children of Israel in order to bring them to a greater understanding of God and God's love, God's way. A Canaanite woman with a daughter in need of spiritual healing calls on Jesus for help. A Canaanite woman, a woman outside the children of Israel. A non-Jewish person. She calls on the power of God through Jesus even though she knows who he is and who he has come to serve. Jesus explains his mission: to the children of Israel. But the woman does not give up. She pleads for him to understand that even those outside his assigned group have heard of the power of God and need that power in their lives. Even those outside have faith and believe. Even those outside are willing to receive whatever they can have from God. And Jesus' eyes were opened to a broader mission. Like Peter when Cornelius approached him to come to the gentiles, Jesus understood a broader focus for his ministry.

And I believe Jesus experienced that discovery of a greater understanding of the love of God in today's scripture. A persistent woman taught Jesus that God's love goes beyond the lost children of Israel. It goes to everyone. Especially everyone who understands, believes and calls on God's name. She believed that God could go beyond the boundaries that the Jewish faith, and even Jesus, understood.

God is still speaking like God has always been speaking even in Jesus' day and in his ministry. And I think we need to listen to that Canaanite woman in our own world today. Pastor David Lose says, "Just as the Canaanite woman teaches Jesus that God's mission and vision and compassion and mercy are bigger than what he may have initially imagined, so also might the Canaanite woman teach us the same at a time when synagogues are threatened, mosques are being fire-bombed, and new-Nazis and white supremacists march the streets: every time you draw a line between who's in and who's out, you will find the God made manifest in Jesus on the other side."

You see, God is not only like us, but God is like the people on the other side of any issue, as well. Even within the church when someone says the church should talk about how God can help us as individuals with our personal struggles in life. There is the other side that says, the church should be about social change and the role of Christians in the struggles of community life at large. Every time someone says the government needs to stay out of the work of the church, there is the other side that says the church should stay out of the work of government. Every time someone gives voice to rights, there is the voice of responsibilities.

That is why no matter who we are, we need to be willing to get together with those who are not who we are, and listen to one another. Believing that neither of us has all the truth, but that a greater truth is born/revealed when two bits of truth come together.

The image of a faceted diamond comes to mind here. A rough diamond is cut to find more beauty. A faceted diamond appears bright and beautiful. Facets allow more light to come into the diamond so that the reflected light in the diamond is brighter. But it takes all the differing facets each bringing their light, working together to bring the greatest light possible to the diamond.

It is a new day to be the church! It is a new day for the church to take seriously its role in bringing the people of God together from all walks of life, from all belief systems, from all races.

It is time to begin to respond to all comments and opinions that we hear, saying, "yes, there is truth in that, and there is truth on the other side as well." It is as the belief that the spirit in me greets the spirit in you so the ground between us is holy ground. The truth I bring added to the truth you bring brings a ground of greater understanding of truth to present to the world.

It is a new day to bring us together in search of the greater truth. Not to live in anger and fear that not everyone believes like we, as individuals, do. But to live respecting the opinions of all and working toward a world where all opinions can be shared as we also listen for the understanding that comes when we listen and work together.

Let us, like Jesus, embrace a broader understanding of our mission. Let it go beyond our past understanding of what it means to be church. Let the Spirit lead us as it persistently calls us to look again at who we are and whose we are.

Today with all the changes and new understandings we are challenged to act upon, Covid will not win; our understanding will broaden. Injustice shall not stand; our understanding will broaden. Oppression shall cease; our understanding will broaden. Healthcare will be for the common good; our understanding will broaden. All races shall live together as equal brothers and sisters. Because the church is claiming its new day. May the shiny silver doors open to a New Day. Show up, Stand up, Speak up.

Be the church in this new day:

Protect the environment. Care for the poor. Forgive often. Reject racism.

Fight for the powerless. Share earthly and spiritual resources.

Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life! Be the church!

MUSIC VIDEO

"THE CITY OF GOD"

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

PIANO RESPONSE

SANDY WENTZLOFF

OFFERTORY INVITATION

One: In times of plenty and want, God provides for our deepest needs.
Give generously out of the abundance of God's blessing
so that in these challenging times God's work might continue.

MUSIC INTERLUDE

SANDY WENTZLOFF

OFFERTORY DEDICATION

All: Holy God, you are our provider.

We dedicate to your service our lives and these offerings from your blessing and our labor. Work in us and through us to extend your love and care, here and around the world. Amen.

CLOSING OF WORSHIP

NORTH SIDE: MAY THE SENDING ONE DEFEND YOU, MAY THE SEEKING ONE AMEND YOU,

SOUTH SIDE: MAY THE KEEPING ONE BEFRIEND YOU, IN YOUR GLADNESS AND IN YOUR GRIEVING.
NORTH SIDE: MAY THE GIVEN ONE RETRIEVE YOU, MAY THE GIFTED ONE RELIEVE YOU,
SOUTH SIDE: MAY THE GIVING ONE RECEIVE YOU, IN YOUR FALLING AND YOUR RESTORING.
NORTH SIDE: MAY THE BINDING ONE UNITE YOU—MAY THE ONE BELOVED INVITE YOU—
ALL: MAY THE LOVING ONE DELIGHT YOU—THREE-IN-ONE, JOY IN LIFE UNENDING.

SENDING VIDEO "AMAZING GRACE"

SENDING

You have been reconciled with Christ.
Do the work of Christ in the world:
extend support to those in need,
speak up for those cast aside,
build bridges of reconciliation,
strengthen bonds of community,
knowing that the Maker of Our Days, the Restorer of Our Souls
and the Breath of Our Lives will be with you this day and ever more.
Amen.

Postlude

Sandy Wentzloff

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Remember in Prayer: Bill Cowell, Eunice Gasow, and Aggie Schue. We pray for others who have been ill or are home bound and those at Oak Terrace and Golden Hearts. We pray for health and healing for all people everywhere. Pray for the ministries of our church. Pray for those serving in the military and for our local and national leaders during these trying times.

If you have a prayer request or would like to receive a call from Pastor Dennis call his office at 237-2595 (leave a private voice mail) or his cell 763-258-3371.

Giving our Gifts to God:

**Tithes and Offerings can be sent to Gaylord United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 385 Gaylord, MN 55334 or
dropped by the church office on Wednesday between 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Thank you for your continued support for the ministries of this church.**

Pastor Dennis is usually in the office each Tuesday and Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. He can be reached at the office, 237-2595 (private voice mail) or his cell: 763-258-3371. E-mail: dmckee545@gmail.com • Website at listen2god.org

