
GATHERING

PRELUDE — *Meditation* - Caleb Simper

Yun Kang

CALL to WORSHIP

Nancy Powers

One: Through Moses, God said,

All: **“Let my people go.”**

One: In scripture, the law declares:

All: **“In the seventh year, you must cancel all debts.”**

One: With grace, Jesus said:

All: **“Give one coat away.”**

One: With honesty, Jesus taught:

All: **“Sell what you have, give that money to the poor.”**

One: Faith has always involved letting go, releasing, setting free, dropping our nets, giving to others, and following.

All: **So in this hour of worship, may we release that which binds us. May we worship with open, untamed, and porous hearts, so that we can walk freely with God. Let us worship God together!**

HYMN — *Be Thou My Vision*

SLANE

*Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.*

*Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true Word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tower;
raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.*

*Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;
thou mine inheritance, now and always;
thou and thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my treasure thou art.*

*High King of Heaven, my victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.*

PRAYER of CONFESSION -

Pastor Alex Lester-Abdalla

Gracious God, we admit to holding tight to that which we know and understand. We put you in a box to avoid the shades of gray that come with faith. We put worship in a box to avoid the discomfort of change. We put ourselves in boxes labeled with gender expectations and societal norms. We put others in boxes labeled “worthy” and “unworthy.” We put all that we have in a box and pray we won’t run out. So in this

moment, we confess to holding tight to fear, greed, and worldly structures. Forgive us for missing the point. Open our eyes to a new way—to a holiness found in open boxes, unclenched fists, shades of gray, and holy release.

SILENT PRAYERS *of* CONFESSION

Here each worshiper may offer silent prayers of confession.

PROMISE *of* FORGIVENESS

One: People of God, hear the good news! Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ. And Christ died for us, Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, and Christ prays for us. Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life has gone and the new life has begun. Friends, believe the good news of the Gospel:

All: **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen!**

RESPONSE *to* GOD'S GRACE — *Glory to the Father*

GLORIA PATRI

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.
Amen. Amen. Amen.*

LITURGY *of* the WORD

NEW TESTAMENT READING — *Matthew 19:16-22*

Then someone came to him and said, 'Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?' And he said to him, 'Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.' He said to him, 'Which ones?' And Jesus said, 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honour your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' The young man said to him, 'I have kept all these; what do I still lack?' Jesus said to him, 'If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

One: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM — *If Thou but Suffer God to Guide Thee* - arr. Jody Lindh; text by Georg Neumark

Chancel Choir

*If thou but suffer God to guide thee
And hope in Him through all thy ways
He'll give thee strength, whate'er betide thee,
And bear thee through the evil days.
Who trusts in God's unchanging love
Builds on the Rock that naught can move.*

*Only be still and wait His leisure
In cheerful hope, with heart content
To take whate'er thy Father's pleasure
And His discerning love hath sent,
Nor doubt our inmost wants are known
To Him who chose us for His own.*

*Sing, pray, and keep His ways unswerving,
Perform thy duties faithfully,
And trust His Word, though undeserving,
Thou yet shalt find it true for thee.
God never yet forsook in need
The soul that trusted Him indeed.*

OLD TESTAMENT READING — *Deuteronomy 15:1-11*

Every seventh year you shall grant a remission of debts. And this is the manner of the remission: every creditor shall remit the claim that is held against a neighbour, not exacting it from a neighbour who is a member of the community, because the Lord's remission has been proclaimed. From a foreigner you may exact it, but you must remit your claim on whatever any member of your community owes you. There will, however, be no one in need among you, because the Lord is sure to bless you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you as a possession to occupy, if only you will obey the Lord your God by diligently observing this entire commandment that I command you today. When the Lord your God has blessed you, as he promised you, you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you.

If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted towards your needy neighbour. You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be. Be careful that you do not entertain a mean thought, thinking, 'The seventh year, the year of remission, is near', and therefore view your needy neighbour with hostility and give nothing; your neighbour might cry to the Lord against you, and you would incur guilt. Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, 'Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbour in your land.'

The grass withers and the flower fades, but the Word of the Lord will stand forever.

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Let It Go

Pastor Rachel Rhodes

HYMN — *Faith Begins by Letting Go*

LUX PRIMA

*Faith begins by letting go, giving up what had seemed sure,
taking risks and pressing on, though the way feels less secure;
pilgrimage both right and odd,
trusting all our life to God.*

*Faith endures by holding on, keeping memory's roots alive
so that hope may bear its fruit; promise fed, our souls will thrive,
not through merit we possess
but by God's great faithfulness.*

*Faith matures by reaching out, stretching minds, enlarging hearts,
sharing struggles, living prayer, binding up the broken parts;
till we find the commonplace
ripe with witness to God's grace.*

AFFIRMATION of FAITH — written by Sarah Are

We believe that on the first day,

God released love and creativity over a void;

and that void became mountains and rivers, sunsets and starry nights.

We believe God released

God's people from the grips of slavery,

liberating us day in and day out.

We believe God laid down with death

and was released from its grip,

knowing suffering and freeing us from this fragile life.

And we believe God invites us—

day in and day out—
to release our fears,
let go of assumptions, tear down walls,
throw open the doors, and walk closer to love.
May it be so.
Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

S E N D I N G

HYMN — *I'll Praise My Maker*

OLD 113TH

*I'll praise my Maker while I've breath;
and when my voice is lost in death,
praise shall employ my nobler powers.
My days of praise shall ne'er be past
while life and thought and being last,
or immortality endures.*

*How happy they whose hopes rely
on Israel's God, who made the sky
and earth and seas with all their train;
whose truth forever stands secure,
who saves the oppressed and feeds the poor;
and none shall find God's promise vain.*

*The Lord pours eyesight on the blind;
the Lord supports the fainting mind
and sends the laboring conscience peace.
God helps the stranger in distress,
the widowed and the parentless,
and grants the prisoner sweet release.*

*I'll praise my Maker while I've breath;
and when my voice is lost in death,
praise shall employ my nobler powers.
My days of praise shall ne'er be past
while life and thought and being last,
or immortality endures.*

POSTLUDE — *Good Christians All, Rejoice and Sing - Gelobt sei Gott*

QUESTIONS *for* REFLECTION

- What is God calling you to release or let go of?
- How is God at work in your money story?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Please note all announcements for Sunday bulletins are due by noon the Tuesday before they are to be published. Please email announcements to Bulletin@MPCusa.net.*

A MONEY STORY: GOD'S AND OURS

We all have a money story, whether we recognize it or not. Perhaps we are living from a story of joyful giving and abundant resources. Or perhaps we are functioning out of a space where resources have been scarce and fear has taken hold. Whatever our story might be, where might God be speaking a new narrative into the limited ones we have told ourselves? And how might God be transforming our stewardship practices into more full expressions of who we are and what we believe? Too often, we avoid talking about money with transparency and vulnerability. We're working to reframe this. Money and possessions are among the most common topics in scripture, and Jesus talked about money more than faith and prayer. Our money story, therefore, is a spiritual story. The best stories captivate and transform us—they change how we live. This stewardship season we hope you will join us as we remember, release, reimagine, and restore our own money stories, so that we can write the one God is begging us to live into.

Much of our liturgy today is written by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

BROWN BAG & BIBLE STUDY STARTS BACK THIS WEDNESDAY!

Have you been considering joining Bible Study but haven't wanted to jump in midstream? Now is the perfect time to join us! Starting Wednesday, October 13, at noon, we'll be taking the plunge into 1 Corinthians together and we hope you'll join us! EVERYONE is welcome—this includes people who read the Bible and commentaries regularly, as well as people who don't even know what a commentary is. We are learning and growing together and we have a lot of fun doing it! Our Bible Study meets every Wednesday from noon-1:00 p.m. This fall we will be meeting over Zoom and in-person (at the same time!) in a hybrid classroom. We hope you'll carve out a part of your week to study God's word among friends. Following our Bible Study folks are also welcome to stay for our weekly prayer meeting that meets for about 15-20 minutes. **If you would like to attend Brown Bag & Bible Study (or are at least interested enough to check it out for a couple of weeks), please contact Pastor Rachel at rachelrhodes@mpcusa.net. We'd love to have you!**

