



*Grounded in the grace of God, we are a
vibrant Christian community, disciples of all ages,
gathered for worship and nurture, scattered to serve and to love.*
MPC Mission Statement adopted by the Session March 31, 2008

WORSHIP for AUGUST 8, 2021
ELEVENTH SUNDAY
after PENTECOST

CALL to WORSHIP - adapted from *Psalms 92*

Pastor Alex Lester-Abdalla

One: It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High,

All: To proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night,

One: To the music of the ten-stringed lyre and the melody of the harp.

All: For you make me glad by your deeds, O Lord; I sing for joy at the works of your hands.

One: How great are your works, O Lord, how profound your thoughts!

All: You, O Lord, are exalted forever.

HYMN — *God of Grace and God of Glory*

CWM RHONDDA

*God of grace and God of glory,
on thy people pour thy power;
crown thine ancient church's story;
bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the facing of this hour, for the facing of this hour.*

*Lo! the hosts of evil round us
scorn thy Christ, assail his ways!
From the fears that long have bound us
free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the living of these days, for the living of these days.*

*Cure thy children's warring madness;
bend our pride to thy control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal, lest we miss thy kingdom's goal.*

*Save us from weak resignation
to the evils we deplore.
Let the gift of thy salvation
be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
serving thee whom we adore, serving thee whom we adore.*

PRAYER of CONFESSION

Rev. Jack McAnlis

You shower us with blessings, with chances to know your grace. Still, O Lord, we twist your promises and pray for blessings we can own. You call us to leave our selfish ways and follow your call to compassion. Still, O Lord, we choose shallow belief over transformative faith. You have told us that your love is enough, that the waters of mercy will not run dry. Still, O Lord, we choose fear instead of trust, hiding behind the illusion that we can survive on our own. Forgive us, Holy One, and by your forgiveness, offer us a chance to try again.

(Time for silent prayer and confession.)

PROMISE of FORGIVENESS

One: Hear the good news of the Gospel: Christ is our peace; those who are divided he has made one. He breaks down barriers of separation through his Word and builds us up into one body, with God. To all who repent and believe he has promised reconciliation.

All: **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.*

SCRIPTURE READING — *Mark 5:1-20*

They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain; for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; and he shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." For he had said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many." He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding; and the unclean spirits begged him, "Send us into the swine; let us enter them." So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea.

The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had happened. They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it. Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighborhood. As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. But Jesus refused, and said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you." And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

To Good To Not Be True

Pastor Lester-Abdalla

AFFIRMATION of FAITH — from the *Confession of Belhar*

We believe that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ. We believe that the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker, that the church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells. We believe that God's life-giving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity, that God's life-giving Word and Spirit will enable the church to live in a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world.

*My life flows on in endless song,
above earth's lamentation.
I hear the clear, though far off hymn
that hails a new creation.*

Refrain:

*No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I'm clinging,
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?*

*Through all the tumult and the strife,
I hear that music ringing.
It finds an echo in my soul.
How can I keep from singing?*

Refrain

*What though my joys and comforts die?
I know my Savior liveth.
What though the darkness gather round?
Songs in the night he giveth.*

Refrain

*The peace of Christ makes fresh my hearts,
a fountain ever springing!
All things are mine since I am his!
How can I keep from singing?*

Refrain

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

POSTLUDE — *By Gracious Powers*

INTERCESSOR

*By gracious powers so wonderfully sheltered,
and confidently waiting come what may,
we know that God is with us night and morning
and never fails to greet us each new day.*

*Yet is this heart by its old foe tormented,
still evil days bring burdens hard to bear;
O give our frightened souls the sure salvation
for which, O Lord, you taught us to prepare.*

*And when this cup you give is filled to brimming
with bitter suffering, hard to understand,
we take it thankfully and without trembling
out of so good and so beloved a hand.*

*Yet when again in this same world you give us
the joy we had, the brightness of your sun,
we shall remember all the days we lived through,
and our whole life shall then be yours alone.*

QUESTION *for* REFLECTION

- Where have you experienced God's power in your life?

OTHERS PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Tim Carpenter – Director of Music

Justin Hartz – Organist

Video Ministry Volunteers

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.***

STAFF UPDATE FROM THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

It is with sadness that we inform you of the following: Diane Toner has resigned from her position as Administrative Assistant so that she can dedicate herself fully to the care of her father. Since a celebration and send-off are not possible for Diane at this time, we will be collecting cards and a purse for her as we wish her well and express our gratitude for her many years of service among us. If you have any questions you are welcome to follow up with Patrick Gilbride, our Chair of Personnel. Cards can be sent to the church office, Attn: Diane Toner. Donations for the purse can be sent to the church (please do not include donations in your cards) or given online with “Diane Toner Gift” in the memo line or notes section. We hope that you will join us as we thank Diane for her dedicated service among us.

MPC PRAYER LIST

Did you know that here at MPC we maintain a regular, weekly prayer list? This list includes the names of individuals in our church, community, and wider world who are in need of prayer. Every week there are people in our church family who are praying over these names and situations. During the academic year, a faithful group meets each Wednesday at 12:15 p.m. to pray together. During the summer this list is distributed regularly so that our prayers for one another can continue. For many years, Drew Hunger has faithfully managed and distributed this Prayer List—please thank him when you have a moment! In the future, you are encouraged to send prayer concerns to our Minister of Visitation, Jack McAnlis at jackmcanlis@mpcusa.net. You are also welcome to contact Rev. McAnlis if you wish to be included in our weekly prayer meeting, which will begin again in September. Thank you for faithfully praying for our church family and for our world.

BOOKS NEEDED

Books are available again when the Food Center is open to our clients. We have more requests than we can fill for Bibles, cook books (especially ones with healthy recipes), biographies, Harry Potter and other teen series, coloring books/workbooks/activity books and crayons, and very early books on ABCs, Numbers, Colors, etc. All available Bibles and children's Bible stories are taken every time we are open. Please leave donations near the book carts which are right outside the Lounge. Please contact Susan Light at susanklight@gmail.com with any questions.

BACKPACK DRIVE!

The Deacon's are excited to announce that this year we are continuing to serve students in Morrisville, Bensalem, and Bristol by holding our annual Back-to-School Backpack Drive. The Ivin's Outreach Center will distribute the bags to students with the greatest need in these districts, to girls and boys in grades 9-12.

We are asking our "generous" congregation to put specific items in a backpack or messenger bag and place them in the bins located in the Communication Center before or after Sunday Service or at 7:30 p.m. on Monday evenings.

If you would like to make a monetary donation to this important drive, you can do so online or by sending in a check to the church office. Please include "Backpack Drive" in the memo line.

Backpacks and donations will be accepted up until Sunday, August 29. Thank you so much for your generosity and for making this back-to-school year so special for these students. If you have any questions, please contact Patti at 267-394-0776. Thanking you in advance, Patti Sheffer and Lori Newman

Please include these items in the backpack for high school students:

Single-Subject Spiral Notebooks	Dictionary/Thesaurus	#2 Pencils
2-Pocket Folders	Book covers	Black/Blue Pens
3- Ring Binders	Wire-Bound Weekly Planner	Highlighters/Markers
Loose Leaf College Ruled Paper	Sticky Notes/Flags	Colored Pencils
Colored Binder Dividers	12-inch Ruler	Pencil Sharpener/Eraser