



*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 29, 2021
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY
after PENTECOST

CALL to WORSHIP

Rev. Greg Klimovitz

One: We gather to worship in the presence of God,
All: **As if we stood on God's holy hill.**
One: We gather to worship as children of God,
All: **As if we were standing in the waters of grace.**
One: We gather to worship the living God,
All: **For God is here among us.**

HYMN — *Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart!*

MARION

*Rejoice, ye pure in heart! Rejoice, give thanks and sing!
Your festal banner wave on high, the cross of Christ your King.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks and sing!*

*With voice as full and strong as ocean's surging praise,
send forth the sturdy hymns of old, the psalms of ancient days.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks and sing!*

*Yes, on through life's long path, still chanting as ye go,
from youth to age, by night and day, in gladness and in woe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks and sing!*

*At last the march shall end; the wearied ones shall rest;
the pilgrims find their home at last, Jerusalem the blest.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks and sing!*

*Then on, ye pure in heart! Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!
Your festal banner wave on high, the cross of Christ your King.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice, give thanks and sing!*

PRAYER of CONFESSION -

Pastor Alex Lester-Abdalla

**You tell us, O Lord, who may abide in your presence, who may dwell on your holy hill:
those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right, and who speak the truth from their heart.
And yet, O Lord, we do not walk blamelessly. So often we stumble on the path of faith.
The truth makes us nervous, and we pretend not to know what is right. Have mercy, O
God. Convict us by your wisdom, cleanse us by your grace, challenge us by your presence,
and, by your forgiveness, free us to try again.**

(Time for silent prayer and confession.)

PROMISE of FORGIVENESS

One: The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. I declare to you, in the name of
Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. 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.*

SCRIPTURE READING — *Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23*

Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” He said to them, “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.’ You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”

Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.”

For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Loosening Our Grip

Rev. Klimovitz

SOLO — *Prayer of St. Francis* - by F. William Thomas

Lord make me an instrument of Your peace.

Where there is hatred let me sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon.

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light.

Where there is sadness, joy.

*O Divine master grant that I may
Not so much seek to be consoled as to console,
To be understood, as to understand,
To be loved as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

-attributed to St. Francis of Assisi

AFFIRMATION of FAITH — from *A Brief Statement of Faith*

Pastor Rachel Rhodes

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal. With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

*Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;
wean it from earth; through all its pulses move;
stoop to my weaknesses, mighty as though art,
and make me love thee as I ought to love.*

*I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies,
no sudden rending of the veil of clay,
no angel visitant, no opening skies;
but take the dimness of my soul away.*

*Hast thou not bid us love thee, God and King;
all, all thine own, soul, heart, and strength, and mind?
I see thy cross, there teach my heart to cling.
O let me seek thee, and O let me find!*

*Teach me to feel that thou art always nigh.
Teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,
to check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh.
Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.*

*Teach me to love thee as thine angels love,
one holy passion filling all my frame;
the baptism of the heaven-descended Dove,
my heart an altar, and thy love the flame.*

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 — *O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go*

ST. MARGARET

*O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
that in thine ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be.*

*O Light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
my heart restores its borrowed ray,
that in thy sunshine's blaze its day may brighter, fairer be.*

*O Joy that sleekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
and feel the promise is not vain that morn shall tearless be.*

*O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
and from the ground there blossoms red life that shall endless be.*

QUESTION *for* REFLECTION

- What is something you once held tightly that the Spirit has invited you to hold loosely so you can love God and neighbor faithfully?

OTHERS PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Tim Carpenter – Director of Music

Justin Hartz – Organist

James Moyer – Soloist

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.***

TODAY WE WELCOME REV. GREG KLIMOVITZ

As the Associate Presbyterian of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, Greg encourages church leaders in the development of collaborative and holistic ministry efforts, exploration of intentional and creative mediums to tell the story of congregations and related ministries, stewardship of available grant resources as means to fund and sustain new and existing ministry initiatives, and contextualized expressions of church work and witness within the twenty-first century.

Ordained in 2015, Greg is passionate about the Reformed theological tradition and the faithful work and witness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). A graduate of Biblical Theological Seminary in Hatfield, PA, Greg's studies emphasized equipping the next generation of Christian leaders with the ability to embrace diversity, converse theologically, think critically, and live intentionally as we bear witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ in our varied congregations and communities.

Born and raised in the suburbs of Baltimore, Maryland, Greg has nearly twenty years of ministry experience related to youth and young adults, local and international mission partnerships, thoughtful preaching, teaching, and writing, creative use of social media and technology, and the development of ecumenical networks. Greg is married and has four young children, including twins.

GROUNDING IN GRACE PICNIC - YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND FOREVER

It's time to get back together again! Join us on Sunday, September 19 following worship, for our annual *Grounded in Grace* picnic held this year in the Memorial Gardens. Limited seating on the paved area will be provided for those with mobility issues. Everyone else is invited to please bring their own chairs or blankets and spread out on the grass. A boxed lunch will be provided. Please RSVP by emailing the church office at office@mpcusa.net or by calling 215-295-4191. A rain date is set for the following Sunday, September 26.

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, Rev. 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.

MPC WILL BE AT YARDLEY'S HARVEST DAY, BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The Communications & Evangelism Committee is looking for a few volunteers to greet visitors who stop by the MPC booth at Yardley's Harvest Day on Saturday, September 18. We also need volunteers to help set up and break down our booth. Shifts are 1 1/2 hours beginning at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 5:30 p.m.. You may sign up through the Sign-Up Genius link located in the weekly MPC emails or contact Damon Miller at damonmiller@mpcusa.net for available times and any questions you may have. Yardley's Harvest Day is rain or shine and is one of the biggest events MPC attends to spread the word, "No matter who you are or where you are on your journey of faith, please know that you are welcome at MPC!" to others in our area. We hope you can join us!