

First Presbyterian Church, Port Townsend, WA

Sunday, April 28, 2024

Welcome!

We strive to welcome everyone without regard to ability, race, religious background or perspective, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

In that spirit, we begin our gathering by acknowledging the first residents and stewards of this land. We acknowledge that the land we now use for worship and service in Port Townsend is on the traditional homeland of the S'Klallam and the Chemakum Peoples. We commit to uplifting indigenous voices long silenced, and we pledge to honor, in word and in deed, the Creator, the original stewards of this land, and the creation they hold dear. Peace be with you!

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

Leaders reads plain text **Congregation reads bold text**

PRELUDE & WELCOME

CENTERING SILENCE & OPENING PRAYER

✠ GATHERING SONG

#611 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

READING FROM SCRIPTURE

John 15:1-8

¹ "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vineyard keeper.

² He removes any of my branches that don't produce fruit, and he trims any branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit. ³ You are already trimmed because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. A branch can't produce fruit by itself, but must remain in the vine. Likewise, you can't produce fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the

branches. If you remain in me and I in you, then you will produce much fruit. Without me, you can't do anything. ⁶ If you don't remain in me, you will be like a branch that is thrown out and dries up. Those branches are gathered up, thrown into a fire, and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified when you produce much fruit and in this way prove that you are my disciples.

HONESTY WITH GOD

Gracious God, our hearts are restless until they find their home in you.

Forgive our pursuit of things that separate us from you.

We pursue success, realizing it will never be enough. We desire more possessions and convenience, knowing they are empty and damaging. We trust in violence, seeing all around us that it leads to more violence. We turn toward the world and hope we will find peace. Instead we find ourselves cut off from you, struggling, and alone.

Time for Silent, Personal Confession

Forgive us, we pray. **Reconnect us to your life giving vine, and to our authentic, whole selves.**

Redeemed, may we pursue connection with others.

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

Hear the promise of Scripture: If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. When we ask for grace, we receive it.

Friends, *trust* in the good news of the Gospel. **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!**

RESPONSE TO PARDON

Oh, How Good It Is

¹ *Oh how good it is when the family of God
Dwells together in spirit in faith and unity.
Where the bonds of peace,
Of acceptance and love
Are the fruit of His presence here among us.*

REFRAIN: *So with one voice we'll sing to the Lord
And with one heart we'll live out His[†] word
Till the whole earth sees the Redeemer has come
For He[†] dwells in the presence of His people.*

² *Oh how good it is on this journey we share
To rejoice with the happy
And weep with those who mourn.
For the weak find strength the afflicted find grace
When we offer the blessing of belonging.* REFRAIN

³ *Oh how good it is to embrace His[†] command
To prefer one another, forgive as He[†] forgives.
When we live as one we all share in the love
Of the Son with the Father[†] and the Spirit.* REFRAIN

SHARING THE PEACE OF JESUS CHRIST

With caring for ourselves and our neighbor in view, we greet and welcome our fellow pilgrims this morning with a bow of the head, a word of peace, a 'namaste.' Please save close contact for other settings.

May the Peace of Jesus Christ be with you! **And also with you!**

ENCOUNTER WITH THE WORD

Musical Invitation to the Word

READING FROM SCRIPTURE

Acts 8:26-40

²⁶ An angel from the Lord spoke to Philip, "At noon, take the road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.)²⁷ So he did. Meanwhile, an Ethiopian man was on his way home from Jerusalem, where he had come to worship. He was a eunuch and an official responsible for the entire treasury of Candace. (Candace is the title given to the Ethiopian queen.)²⁸ He was reading the prophet Isaiah while sitting in his carriage.²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, "Approach this carriage and stay with it."

³⁰ Running up to the carriage, Philip heard the man reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you really understand what you are reading?"

³¹ The man replied, "Without someone to guide me, how could I?" Then he invited Philip to climb up and sit with him.

³² This was the passage of scripture he was reading:
*Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent*

so he didn't open his mouth.

³³ *In his humiliation justice was taken away from him.
Who can tell the story of his descendants
because his life was taken from the earth?*

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, about whom does the prophet say this? Is he talking about himself or someone else?"³⁵ Starting with that passage, Philip proclaimed the good news about Jesus to him.

³⁶ As they went down the road, they came to some water. The eunuch said, "Look! Water! What would keep me from being baptized?"³⁸ He ordered that the carriage halt. Both Philip and the eunuch went down to the water, where Philip baptized him.³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Lord's Spirit suddenly took Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing.⁴⁰ Philip found himself in Azotus. He traveled through that area, preaching the good news in all the cities until he reached Caesarea.

Silent Reflection

The Gift of the Living Word in the written Word **Thanks be to God.**

SPECIAL MUSIC "You Raise Me" - Susanne Skadron & Johnny Mac Bryant**READING FROM SCRIPTURE**

1 John 4:7-21

⁷ Dear friends, let's love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. ⁸ The person who doesn't love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how the love of God is revealed to us: God has sent his only Son into the world so that we can live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: it is not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son as the sacrifice that deals with our sins.

¹¹ Dear friends, if God loved us this way, we also ought to love each other. ¹² No one has ever seen God. If we love each other, God remains in us and his love is made perfect in us.

¹³ This is how we know we remain in him and he remains in us, because he has given us a measure of his Spirit. ¹⁴ We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the savior of the world. ¹⁵ If any of us confess that Jesus is God's Son, God remains in us and we remain in God.

¹⁶ We have known and have believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who remain in love remain in God and God remains in them. ¹⁷ This is how love has been perfected in us, so that we can have confidence on the Judgment Day, because we are exactly the same as God is in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear expects punishment. The person who is afraid has not been made perfect in love. ¹⁹ We love because God first loved us. ²⁰ Those who say, "I love God" and hate their brothers or sisters are liars. After all, those who don't love their brothers or sisters whom they have seen can hardly love God whom they have not seen! ²¹ This commandment we have from him: Those who claim to love God ought to love their brother and sister also.

MESSAGE

Pastor Paul

RESPONDING TO THE WORD**LIVING STORIES** - Stewardship 2024 - FPCPT International Mission Support**WE WORSHIP WITH OUR GIVING**

Dear friends, if God loved us this way, we also ought to love each other. 1 John 4:11

Offertory**Doxology and Prayer of Dedication**

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ, all people here below:
praise Holy Spirit evermore; praise Triune God, whom we adore.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

We invite you to breathe deeply and offer your prayers to God.

*When the leader prays "Lord in your mercy," you are invited to respond, "**hear our prayer.**"*

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

Your kin-dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.

For the kin-dom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

SENDING OUT INTO THE WORLD**WORSHIP IN SONG**

#300 We Are One in the Spirit (They'll Know We Are Christians by our Love)

CHARGE, BENEDICTION & POSTLUDE

