

July 30, 2023
Nineth Sunday after Pentecost

*like a mantle upon our heads,
a shawl upon our shoulders,
a hand, to hold our hand.*

Liturgist: May your love, be like a seed, taking root and growing strong.

We continue in prayer, as Jesus taught us:

All people: 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Mr. Cody Eckenrode

(An Offering Collection Box is located on the table in the back of sanctuary, by the exit door)

OFFERING INVITATION

Liturgist: Faithful people of God, the Lord gives us repeated opportunities to share from our bounty for the ministries of the church. In the sharing of our time, talent, and finances, Christ's redeeming love is made more readily known in the world. So, let us joyfully take this God-given opportunity to share and then, dedicate our offerings with a song and prayer.

(Please stand in body and/or spirit)

DOXOLOGY *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow* Hymnal, #258

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God, all creatures here below.

Praise God above ye heavenly hosts.

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

All people: Lord, receive our gifts and the entirety of our lives. Cause all of these blessings to work for you in this world which you have placed in our care for safekeeping. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

HYMN

Here, I Am Lord

Bulletin Insert

BENEDICTION

Pastor: May it be so! Go and live the words you've just sung!

All people: Here I Am, Lord. May it be so! Amen and Amen!

POSTLUDE

GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tom Brenner

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Tom Brenner

PRELUDE

Mr. Cody Eckenrode

(Please stand in body and/or spirit)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: God whispers to each of us: "You are my beloved, created in love for love."

Congregation: My spirit answers:

"Here I am, Lord.

Speak to me anew."

Liturgist: God breathes on us - the Holy Spirit, knitting many members into one body, the body of Christ.

All people:

Together, we answer:

"Here we are Lord.

Come, Holy Spirit. Come."

Pastor: God has yet, more vision for the people. Who will work with God to extend God's kingdom into our hurting world?

All people:

Together, we answer:

"Here we are Lord.

Empower us for your kingdom work."

Liturgist: God calls the small and helps them do great things.

God calls the weak and reveals their hidden gifts.

God calls the rejected and opens their eyes to their worth.

All people:

Together, we present ourselves:

"Here we are Lord,

humble and waiting."

Pastor: Then let us gather, old and young, small and great,

to dream God's dreams, receive God's power, and do God's deeds.

All people:

Together, we plead:

"Here we are Lord.

Shine the light of your love on us.

Kindle your Spirit within us.

Work your redeeming will in us,

that all the world may be one

through the power of your love.

Amen."

HYMN

Holy Spirit, Truth Divine

Hymnal, #188

CALL TO CONFESSION

Rev. Laura C. Baker

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All people: Holy Spirit – Truth Divine, you know all too well what lurks deep within us. We have not faithfully used the powerful gifts of love and service you give to the church. We are quick to find fault and spread gossip. We undermine the fellowship of believers. We have left strangers and seekers among us feeling like outsiders. We have not done our best to carry the good news of Jesus Christ beyond these walls. Renew a right spirit within us that we may carry Christ's love and mercy from this place to our community and to the world beyond. We pray in the name of Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Father, one God, now and forever. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS (Romans 8:38-39)

Pastor: Let us remember the promises of Romans, chapter 8, verses 38 and 39. *"And we know that all things work together for good to those that love God, to those who are the called according to God's purpose."*

Congregation: **God is working everything for good, even though at the moment, life's circumstances make "good again" seem an impossibility. However, just because we can't yet see it, doesn't mean that God isn't working.**

Pastor: So then, "If God is for us, who can be against us?"

Congregation: **"I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other thing in creation, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."**

All people: Amen!

PRAISE HYMN

Gloria Patri

Hymnal, #493

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Pastor: Is there any news greater than this? Nothing can separate us God's love and peace. Placing our trust in God's "good" future for each of us, let us turn and share peace with one another using the words: "The peace of Christ be with you..."

Congregation: **"And, also with you."**

(The congregation may be seated, as the children & youth come forward)

JESUS SAID, "LET THE CHILDREN COME"

HYMN

My Hope is Built on Nothing Less

Bulletin Insert

GOSPEL READING – Matthew 13:31-33, 42-52

Tom Brenner

OLD TESTAMENT READING – 1 Samuel 2:1-11

Rev. Laura C. Baker

SERMON

Rev. Laura C. Baker

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER (using "sins")

All people: For all the blessings of this life, we give thanks to You, Creator God. For families, friends, colleagues, neighbors, and strangers, who nurture us, that the love of God may grow within. That Your love, your Holy Word, like a seed, may grow to produce in us - good fruit.

Liturgist: May your love be like a seed, taking root and growing strong.

All people: For the leaders of various nations and cities, that they may lead with strong hearts and gentle hands and generous spirits, with compassion and mercy, with wisdom and grace. May they reflect your will guiding all their actions and decisions.

Liturgist: May your love be like a seed, taking root and growing strong.

All people: For those who serve in harm's way, those who live in dangerous places, those who live in areas of war and strife, those who live in fear, those who worry about employment, bills, food, and struggle just to find dignity in life.

Liturgist: May your grace bring peace and safety to all people, one to another.

May your love be like a seed, taking root and growing strong.

All people: For those who suffer from any illness or dis-ease— of mind, body, or spirit. Restore these, and all those we carry in our hearts, to fullness of health— health as only you, O God, can bring.

Liturgist: May your mercy shower each of us with healing mercy and love.

May your love be like a seed, taking root and growing strong.

All people: For those who are dying, and for those who have died. Send forth your comforting love. Give solace to those who mourn. Console those who grieve. May your grace surround us

References

- The Call to Worship was written by David Inglis. It was posted on the *Henrietta United Church of Christ* website. <http://www.henriettaucc.org/PastorsPage/CallsToWorship.shtml>. It was accessed and adapted for today's worship service by Pastor Laura Baker on Monday, July 24, 2023.
- The Confession liturgy was written by Nancy Townley and posted on *Ministry Matters* for: Worship Connection: July 30, 2023. It was accessed and adapted by Pastor Laura on July 24, 2023.
- The Prayer of the People was written by Terri and posted on *RevGalBlogPals*. <http://revgalblogpals.blogspot.ca/>.
- All other liturgy was written by Pastor Laura Baker.