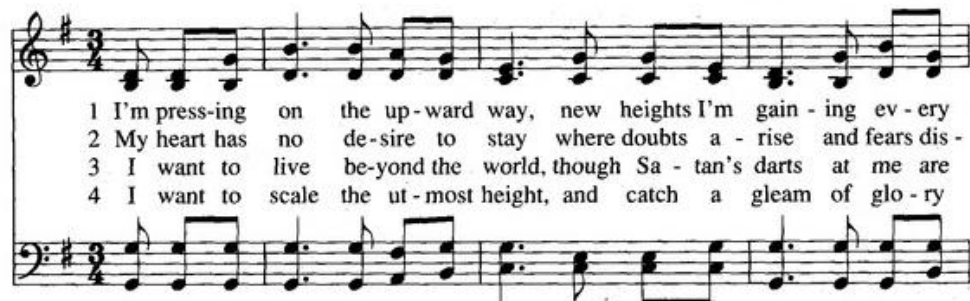


I'm Pressing on the Upward Way (Higher Ground)

Johnson Oatman, Jr., 1892; alt.



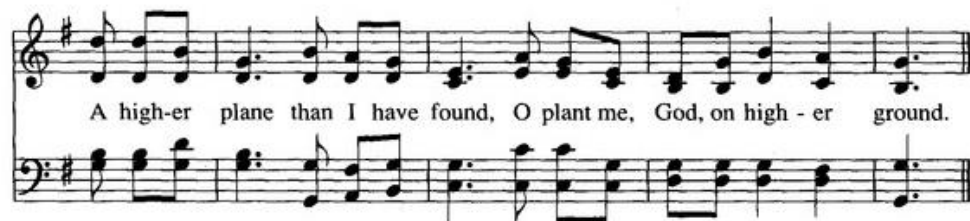
1 I'm press-ing on the up-ward way, new heights I'm gain-ing ev-ery
2 My heart has no de-sire to stay where doubts a-rise and fears dis-
3 I want to live be-yond the world, though Sa-tan's darts at me are
4 I want to scale the ut-most height, and catch a gleam of glo-ry



day; Still pray-ing as I'm on-ward bound, "O plant me,
may; Though some may dwell where these a-bound, my prayer, my
hurled; For faith has caught a joy-ful sound, the song of
bright; But still I'll pray till heaven I've found, "God, lead me



Refrain
God, on high-er ground."
aim is high-er ground. O lift me up, and I shall be by faith in heaven e-ter-nal-ly,
saints on high-er ground.
on to high-er ground."



A high-er plane than I have found, O plant me, God, on high-er ground.

Johnson Oatman, Jr., wrote hymns while in the insurance business in Mount Holly, New Jersey. Words for more than 5,000 gospel songs are credited to him. Iowa-born Charles Gabriel taught singing schools and compiled many collections of gospel and Sunday School songs.

Tune: HIGHER GROUND L.M. with refrain
Charles H. Gabriel, 1898

July 9, 2023
Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS JOYS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Gary Knisely

PRELUDE

Mr. Cody Eckenrode

(Please stand in body and/or spirit)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Preacher: Beloved, we are called to love one another, because love is from God.

All people: God's love is poured in us from our birth.

Preacher: We are called to extend the love of God to all people.

All people: God's loved is taught to us through the witness of God's faithful people.

Preacher: We are called to proclaim God's love in all that we say and do.

All people: In all creation, in all our relationships, may God's love be made known.

HYMN

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Hymnal, #272

CALL TO CONFESSION

Preacher: God is gracious and merciful and knows our needs even before they reach our lips. Still, we engage in confession, admitting to God all that rests uneasily in our hearts. Confident of God's love, let us make our confession, first in silent prayers.

(Silence for personal confession)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All people: Holy God, we ask for your help, your power, your Spirit, so that we can amend our lives and grow more each day into the image of Christ. We confess that we fear what is different. We confess that it's easier to lock the doors of our community than to receive those who don't look like we look, love like we love, or vote the way we vote. We confess that we have not lived out your call to share in abundant life and unconditional love. We believe that you have the power to turn us around to a more inclusive way of living, so we ask you to do that. We ask you to give us the courage to change. We ask that you give us the energy, intelligence, imagination, and love to be your people in all we say and do. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Preacher: Friends in Christ, trust in this truth: the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting, in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

All people: Alleluia! Amen.

PRAISE HYMN

Gloria Patri

Hymnal, #493

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Liturgist: Since we have peace with God through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Spirit, let us stand and share peace with one another.

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

JESUS SAID, “LET THE CHILDREN COME”

Peg Gingerich

HYMN

Lord, I Want to be a Christian

Bulletin Insert

OLD TESTAMENT READING – Ruth 1:19:2-23

EPISTLE – Romans 7:15-25a

GOSPEL READING – Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

SERMON

Mr. Gary Knisely

PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD’S PRAYER (using “sins”)

All: 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, piano

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

OFFERING INVITATION

Liturgist: And now, not because we have to, but because we are grateful, let us return to God what is ours to share. Let us joyfully commit to offering our time, our skills, and our financial resources and do so with a song and prayer. Please stand in spirit and body, as you are able.

(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: Still-Speaking Creator God, you call us to join in your work of love in the world, and you equip us with all we need to follow your lead. Now make us generous of hand, heart, and mind, as you are. As we return to you a portion of your gifts, we pray you would receive them as a sign of our gratitude for your unending love and guide us as we offer our whole selves in your service, seeking your abundant life for all. Amen.

HYMN

Higher Ground

Bulletin, Page 4

COMMISSION AND BLESSING

Preacher: Friends of Christ, go into the world with the message of God’s love. Bear fruit of hope and joy, peace and justice, with all that you meet. In the name of the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

All: Amen.

POSTLUDE

References

- Call to Confession, Prayer of Confession, Assurance of Pardon were written by Beth Neel. <https://holdfasttowhatisgood.com/liturgy/prayer-of-confession/>
- Call to Worship written by Nancy Townley from: <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/2749/worship-connection-may-9-2021>
- Offering Invitation and Prayer of Dedication from Liturgy Link webpage. <https://www.liturgylink.net/category/offering-and-dedication/>