

Paul United Church of Christ
5312 Old Blue Rock Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45247
Allen M. Fluent, Transitional Pastor
Order of Worship for Tenth Sunday after Pentecost
August 1, 2021

(Although we are now holding worship in our building, we are conscious of the ongoing challenge of in-person worship while the coronavirus persists, and the need many feel to avoid the possibility of contagion. Therefore, we will be continuing the practice of sending a worship bulletin to all who are on our mailing lists for email or hard copy. Those who will be worshipping from home and who have computer access will also be receiving a recorded version of the service that will be sent out by email on Sunday afternoon and also can be seen on our Facebook page. We welcome your participation in any way that is convenient for you, and we encourage you to share our worship service with any person you know who may appreciate receiving it.)

Welcome, Announcements and Prayer Concerns

Prelude (recording begins)

Call To Worship:

This morning we begin our worship celebrating the gifts of the Spirit that live in the Body of Christ. We give thanks for our brothers and sisters in faith, for our fellowship with Christ and our love for one another and for all the gifts of wisdom, care and ministry made possible by God's presence among us. Especially today, we rejoice in the presence of those among us who have the experience and wisdom of many years of living under the guidance of the Spirit of God.

***Hymn**

"Sweet, Sweet Spirit"

#134 blue hymnal

***There's a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place, and I know that it's the Spirit of the Lord;
There are sweet expressions on each face, and I know they feel the presence of
the Lord.***

***Sweet Holy Spirit, sweet heavenly Dove, stay right here with us, filling us with
your love;***

***And for these blessings we lift our hearts in praise; without a doubt we'll know that
we have been revived when we shall leave this place.***

Responsive Scripture Reading: Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16

We are one people out of many who share our differences as gifts that build up the Body of Christ. This is the work of the Spirit among us. And here, from the Letter to the Ephesians, is a testimony to the Spirit's work:

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as we were called to the one hope of our calling, One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift....

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming.

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into the One who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

*Hymn

"Will You Let Me Be Your Servant?"

#391 blue hymnal

***Will you let me be your servant, let me be the Christ to you?
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.***

***We are pilgrims on a journey, here together on the road;
We are here to help each other walk the mile and share the load.***

***I will hold the Christ-light for you, in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.***

***I will weep when you are weeping, when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.***

***When we sing to God and heaven, we shall find such harmony,
Born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.***

Recognition of our Senior Members

Betty Elbert
Gene Fischer
Ruth Kennedy
Marian Lowrey

Homer Rinckel
Audrey Schultes
Phyllis Shea
Mary Lou Walker

Prayer (unison)

Spirit of the living God, you who have dwelt within the many generations of our faith and inspired us to follow in the pathways laid by those who have come before us, we give you thanks for those in our midst who have brought to us the wisdom that comes from many years of living and who continue to inspire us each day by their faithfulness and grace in the pilgrimage of life. May the years to come bring growing awareness and thankfulness for the gifts that are shared among us, so that, with the passing years our church may be blessed with the knowledge of lives lived long and well in the company of Christ. Amen.

*Hymn

"Blest Be the Tie That Binds"

#393 blue hymnal

**Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.**

**Before our Father's throne we pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.**

**We share our mutual woes, each other's burdens bear;
And often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.**

**From sorrow, toil and pain, and sin we shall be free;
And perfect love and friendship reign through all eternity.**

Lesson from the Hebrew Scriptures: 2 Samuel 11:26-12:10

When the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead, she made lamentation for him. When the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son.

But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord, and the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. He brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his meager fare, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him. Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was loath to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the

wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared that for the guest who had come to him."

Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. He said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die; he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and because he had no pity."

Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I anointed you king over Israel and I rescued you from the hand of Saul; I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added as much more. Why have you despised the word of the Lord to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, for you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife."

Sermon: "How to spend \$5.5 billion in Four Minutes"

From an anonymous sign, posted on the internet:

I miss the old days when billionaires' vanity projects were to build public libraries, museums and music venues!

Special Music

"Get Together

Paula Weil

Sacrament of Holy Communion

These are the words that Jesus spoke according to the testimony of the early church, recorded in the Gospel of John:

I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.... Very truly, I tell you whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.

Clearly, Jesus was not speaking of physical hunger and thirst when he spoke these words, since all of us who have received the Holy Communion continue to have physical needs. Nor did he speak of physical life, since faithful believers still encounter the reality of death. But Jesus spoke about a spiritual truth that makes the wrongs we commit and those we suffer in our desire for earthly rewards seem worthless in comparison with the eternal joy that life can bring in the companionship of Christ.

Will you take this morning the living bread of Christ, and the blood of the covenant made in heaven for you, so that you may live today in the fellowship of the Christ and in the Spirit of God's love? Will you allow it to unite you with all the other pilgrims on the way – the ones you

know and those you do not know, those who agree with you and those who disagree, those who have been good to you and those who need your forgiveness, and God's? Then come to the table where all are welcome, and remember how Jesus died on a day when earth's justice failed, but God's love prevailed in him.

On the same night on which he was betrayed, our Lord took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it, saying, "This is my life on earth laid down for you. Take and eat, and remember what I've done." In the same way also he took the cup, saying, "This is God's new promise to you that is sealed in my blood. Take and drink it, remembering who I am."

Let us pray:

God of justice, love and grace, look into us, to the depth of our souls. May these gifts of food and drink made sacred by your love be to us the body and blood of Jesus Christ who gathers us to make us one and whole. May your presence be known to us in the Body that is shaped by our expressions of your love, and may the Spirit of your presence overflow to shape our lives as we leave this place and follow our several paths.

We give you thanks for this place where we come to learn your way and to find support among those who also place their trust in you.

We pray today for members of our congregation who are ill, for those who are recovering from illness or injury, for those who cannot be with us physically but are remembered in our midst. We pray for those throughout the world who suffer from famine, drought, fire, wind and flood. We pray for those in nations made unstable by political discord and economic injustice. Insofar as it is possible for us, we pray that we may be your instruments of healing in our troubled world.

As members of the community of faith, we look toward the day of your Holy Realm, the gathering of the nations on the day of peace, at the table where all are welcome and all enjoy the abundance you have made.

And now we pray as Jesus taught us.

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.

Receive now the bread of heaven, the Body of Christ as it is shared among us.

Receive the drink poured out for the life of the world.

May the blessing of the Holy Communion of Christ be and abide with us now and forevermore. Amen.

***Closing Hymn**

“God Be With You”

#716 blue hymnal

*God be with you till we meet again, by his counsels guide, uphold you,
With his sheep securely fold you; God be with you till we meet again.*

*God be with you till we meet again, 'neath his wings protecting hide you,
Daily manna still provide you; God be with you till we meet again.*

*God be with you till we meet again; if life's perils should confound you,
God will put his arms around you; God be with you till we meet again.*

***Benediction**

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you his peace.

Postlude