

St Paul United Church of Christ  
5312 Old Blue Rock Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45247  
Allen M. Fluent, Transitional Pastor  
**Order of Worship for Third Sunday after Pentecost**  
**June 13, 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 (Psalm 92:1-4)**

It is good to give thanks to the Holy One, to sing praises to your name, O Most High.

***To declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night.***

To the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.

***For you, O God, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy.***

**\*Hymn**

**"I Sing the Almighty Power of God"**

**#31 (blue)**

***I sing the mighty power of God that made the mountains rise,  
that spread the flowing seas abroad and built the lofty skies.  
I sing the wisdom that ordained the sun to rule the day;  
The moon shines full at God's command and all the stars obey.***

***I sing the goodness of the Lord that filled the earth with food;  
God formed the creatures with the word and then pronounced them good.  
Lord, how your wonders are displayed where're I turn my eye,  
If I survey the ground I tread or gaze upon the sky.***

***There's not a plant or flower below but makes your glories known,  
and clouds arise and tempests blow by order from your throne;  
while all that borrows life from you is ever in your care,  
and everywhere that I may be, you, God, are present there.***

### Opening Meditation:

Let's imagine with Jesus the Realm of God:

*With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade. (Mark 4:30-32)*

A mustard plant is not a welcome resident in most gardens. From its tiny seed, it grows invasively and crowds out the grains or vegetables that the gardener has planted. The Realm of God may also feel like an unwelcome intrusion into the garden of worldly values we have planted for ourselves. It is born in quiet conversations among those who feel a calling to grow toward the heavens, and become a place of shelter for the songbirds of God. "How impractical," say those who cling to earthly things. But, "O, what joy!" say those who listen for God to speak to them in the wind.

### Opening Prayer (unison)

We have come here this morning, God, some seeking answers for our spiritual questions, some seeking support for our spiritual needs, some seeking comfort and healing for our hurts. Disrupt us, God. Cause us to think and feel and want beyond our desires for personal welfare. Engage us in the work of your Realm, so that we may pursue the Spirit's calling to prepare for the day of Peace.

### Hymn

#### "We Are Called to Be God's People"

#580 (blue)

*We are called to be God's people, showing by our lives God's grace,  
one in heart and one in spirit, sign of hope for all the race.*

*Let us show how God has changed us, and remade us as God's own,  
let us share our life together as we shall around God's throne.*

*We are called to be God's servants, working in God's world today;*

*Taking God's own task upon us, all God's sacred words obey.*

*Let us rise, then, to God's summons, dedicate to God our all,  
that we may be faithful servants, quick to answer now God's call.*

*We are called to be God's prophets, speaking for the truth and right,  
standing firm for godly justice, bringing evil things to light,*

*Let us seek the courage needed, our high calling to fulfill,  
that the world may know the blessing of the doing of God's will.*

## Lesson from the Hebrew Scriptures: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

*The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, "I have come to sacrifice to the Lord." Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." Samuel did what the Lord commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is now before the Lord." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen any of these." Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.*

### Sermon

Pastor Allen

In our story for today, the Prophet and final Judge of Israel, Samuel, who announced God's choice of Saul as Israel's first king, is told by God that Saul has failed in his calling. In fact, God says he is sorry for naming Saul to be king. Can God make mistakes, or is the prophet shifting the blame?

Samuel is then sent by God to anoint a new king. This is not the election of the new king by the tribal elders. That will come later, but this is the divine fore-ordaining of the one who is chosen by God. Samuel must do it secretly, because the act would be seen as sedition by Saul, who still reigns as the nation's leader. Christians reading this story may recall that the word "Messiah" means the anointed one, and that the comparable Greek word is "Christ," and that one of the titles for Jesus is "Son of David," and that David is the one who will be anointed by Samuel that day, following his discernment of the will and choice of God.

The ritual of anointing is seldom practiced in the church today, except occasionally as a rite of healing. But the discernment of gifts that God approves for ministry to the world is still important. The Apostle Paul spoke about the gifts of the Spirit, and how they are shared in the church's fellowship. What are the unique gifts that you bring to the community of Christ? What does it mean for you to use them faithfully?

### **Musical Interlude**

Jake Rizer

### **Pastoral Prayer**

Dear God, your people in this place are a tiny mustard seed of work and prayer in the garden you have planted. Our gifts seem so small when measured against the awesome needs of the world today. It takes great faith to be confident about what we can accomplish in your name. It is so tempting to let the opportunities go by, imagining that there is little we can do to affect the kindness, the generosity and the fairness of our society.

Still, here we are, with whatever skills and tools and positions of influence in the world we are gifted to bring, and we are gathered in this place as people chosen to play our part, as bearers of the word of your salvation in our hearts, as witnesses of what you can do, and as actors in the ministry of grace and reconciliation wherever pride, indifference and greed stand as obstacles to your holy will.

As members of the fellowship of Christ, we pray today for those in our fellowship and throughout the church to be filled with the knowledge of the Spirit of God, encouraging our daily lives and labors. For those who are sick, for those recovering, for those facing grief, for those dealing with financial insecurity, and for those who worry about the future, may the troubles of this present time become as nothing in comparison to the joy that is revealed to us.

As Jesus has taught us, let us pray:

### **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.**

**\*Closing Hymn #590**

**“Rise Up, O Saints of God!**

**#590 (blue)**

*Rise up, O saints of God! From vain ambitions turn;  
Christ rose triumphant that your hearts with nobler zeal might burn.*

*Speak out, O saints of God! Despair engulfs earth's frame;  
as heirs of God's baptismal grace, God's word of hope proclaim.*

*Rise up, O saints of God! God's kingdom task embrace;  
redress sin's cruel consequence; give justice larger place.*

*Give heed, O saints of God! Creation cries in pain;  
stretch forth your hand of healing now, with love the weak sustain.*

*Commit your hearts to seek the paths which Christ has trod;  
and quickened by the Spirit's power, rise up, O saints of God.*

**\*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**