

Paul United Church of Christ
5312 Old Blue Rock Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45247
Allen M. Fluent, Transitional Pastor
Order of Worship for the Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost
October 24, 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 34:1-9 (adapted)

I bless you at all times, Holy One. Your praise will always be in my mouth.

Our soul boasts in you. Let us be glad in humility before our God.

O magnify the Holy One with me, and let us exalt God's name together.

I sought you, God, and you answered me, and delivered me from all my fears.

I look to you and feel radiant; my face shall never be ashamed.

This poor soul cried, and was heard by you, and I was saved from every trouble.

Your angel encamps around those who fear you, and you deliver us.

O taste and see, for our God is good. Happy are those who take refuge in you.

Hymn

"Come Down, O Love Divine"

#330 blue

***Come down, O Love Divine, seek out this soul of mine
and visit it with your own ardor glowing.***

***O Comforter, draw near, within my heart appear,
and kindle it, your holy flame bestowing.***

***O let it freely burn, till earthly passions turn
to dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
and let your glorious light shine ever on my sight,
and clothe me round, the while my path illuming***

*And so the yearning strong with which the soul will long
shall far out-pass the power of human telling;
for none can guess God's grace, till love creates a place
wherein the Holy Spirit makes a dwelling.*

Morning Prayer

Holiness beyond our dreams, we imagine you, yet know you are more deeply imbedded within our world than we can ever know. You are the sympathy and compassion that understands our deepest need. You bring light to our darkest hour and vision to our puzzled blindness. And yet, you are reflected in human love, and known to us as we experience the fellowship of those who live by your holy way. Open our eyes to you, as we sing about the Truth made known to us by grace. Amen.

*Hymn

"Open My Eyes That I May See"

#480

*Open my eyes, that I may see glimpses of truth you have for me;
place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unlock and set me free.
Silently now, on bended knee, ready I wait your will to see;
open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!*

*Open my ears, that I may hear voices of truth you send so clear;
and while the message sounds in my ear, everything false will disappear.
Silently now, on bended knee, ready I wait your will to see;
open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!*

*Open my mouth, and let me bear gladly the warm truth everywhere;
open my heart and let me prepare love with your children thus to share.
Silently now, on bended knee, ready I wait your will to see;
open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!*

Epistle Lesson:

1 Peter 2:9-10

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Gospel Lesson: Mark 10:46-52

They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

Sermon: "Sitting by the Roadside"

***Hymn** "Our Father, We Have Wandered" #371

***Our Father, we have wandered and hidden from your face;
in foolishness have squandered your legacy of grace.
But now, in exile dwelling, we rise with fear and shame,
As distant but compelling, we hear you call our name.***

***And now at length discerning the evil that we do,
behold us, Lord, returning with hope and trust in you.
In haste you come to meet us and home rejoicing bring,
in gladness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.***

***O Lord of all the living, both banished and restored,
compassionate, forgiving and ever-caring Lord,
grant now that our transgressing, our faithlessness may cease.
Stretch out your hand in blessing, in pardon, and in peace.***

Pastoral Prayer

Dear God, we remember times when we have found ourselves by the side of the road, in that place where we felt no sense of purpose, no enthusiasm for life, no feeling of having a place of belonging in the ongoing stream of life around us.

Many people are weary in our world today, God – made tired by the fragmented politics that puts up roadblocks to the resolution of common interests, made fearful by the warning signs of climate change, made lonely by social distancing over the past several months, and made to feel overwhelmed by the rapid changes taking place in the world around us.

In the midst of these troubled times, it is tempting to close ourselves off from the flow of life, to think there is little we can do, or that the gifts of love and fellowship we share have little bearing on the welfare of the world.

When such feelings enter our hearts, may we remember the one who calls each one of us by name, and reminds us that we belong to the love that is made known in Jesus. Like the son of Timaeus, who was blind and nameless on the side of life's highway, may we be refreshed in all that life has to offer by the One who calls us once more to follow him. We thank you, God, for this fellowship, where we know one another's name, and where we see and recognize each other as the holy ones of God. We thank you for those who keep contact with us in times of illness or separation, and we thank you also for those times when we feel the call to take the love of Christ into the lives of others. You do not leave us by the side of the road, and for this we give you thanks.

Bring to the life of this congregation, God, and to each of our lives, new opportunities and adventures in the pilgrimage of faith. Inspire us by your renewing Spirit, and invite us each day to follow you on the way of Christ for all the world's salvation.

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.

***Closing Hymn**

"Be Thou My Vision"

#502

*Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art –
Thou my best thought, by day or by night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.*

*Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word, I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.
Thou and thou only, first in my heart, high King of Heaven, my treasure thou art.*

*High King of heaven, my victory won, may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's
Sun!*

Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

***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