

Paul United Church of Christ  
5312 Old Blue Rock Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45247

Allen M. Fluent, Transitional Pastor

**Order of Worship for the Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost  
World Communion Sunday  
October 3, 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)

“Fairest Lord Jesus”

Chester Imhausen

**Call to Worship: Genesis 1:26-28**

Let us remember our creation by the hand of God:

*Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness, and let them take responsible care of the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”*

***So God created all of us in God’s own image, in the image of God we were created; male and female, God created us.***

***God blessed us, and God said to us, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and take responsibility for the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air and every living thing that moves upon the earth.***

So humankind was fashioned – one people who share a sacred likeness, and are given the common mission to care for what God has made.

\*Hymn #600

“In Christ There Is No East or West”

***In Christ there is no east or west, in him no pride of birth;  
the chosen family God has blessed now spans the whole wide earth.***

*For God in Christ has made us one from every land and race;  
has reconciled us through his Son and met us all with grace.*

*It is by grace we are assured that we belong to him;  
the love we share in Christ our Lord, the Spirit's work within.*

*So brothers, sisters, praise his name who died to set us free  
from sin, division, hate and shame, from spite and enmity!*

*In Christ there is no east or west – he breaks all barriers down;  
by Christ redeemed, by Christ possessed, in Christ we live as one.*

Stewardship Moment

Paula Weil

Morning Prayer

God of all creation, our thoughts turn today to the complementary unity of everything that is – the creation in its mysterious harmony that fits us to one another and evokes the spiritual center of all that is. We confess this morning the false independence that causes us to forget how each of us depends upon the other in this fragile and beautiful world. We pray that we may resist the fragmentation we so often see, and replace it with the works of Christ that bring us together as one.

\*Hymn #21

“This Is My Father’s World”

*This is my Father’s world, and to my listening ears  
all nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.  
This is my Father’s world: I rest me in the thought  
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas – God’s hands the wonders wrought.*

*This is our Father’s world: O let us not forget  
that though the wrong is great and strong, God is the ruler yet.  
God trusts us with the world, to keep it clean and fair –  
all earth and trees, all skies and seas, all creatures everywhere.*

*This is my Father’s world: God shines in all that’s fair;  
in the rustling grass I hear God pass, God speaks to me everywhere.  
This is my Father’s world: why should my heart be sad?  
The Lord is King, let heaven ring! God reigns; let earth be glad.*

**Epistle Lesson:** Ephesians 3:14-19

*For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

**Gospel Lesson:** Mark 10:13-16

*People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.*

**Sermon:** "The Imagination and the Mystery of God"

**Special Music** "Because He Lives" Chester Imhausen

**\*Hymn #698** "Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ"

***Let us talents and tongues employ, reaching out with a shout of joy  
bread is broken, the wine is poured, Christ is spoken and seen and heard.***

***Ref: Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around: loaves abound.***

***Christ is able to make us one, at the table he set the tone,  
teaching people to live and bless, love in word and in deed express. R.***

***Jesus calls us in, sends us out bearing fruit in a world of doubt,  
gives us love to tell, bread to share: God (Immanuel) everywhere! R.***

Sacrament of Holy Communion

We come now to the meal that means that Christ is known among us – the holy feast to which all are invited and no one is kept away. The meal reminds us that we share in that creative moment when God’s imagination fashioned us, and made us to be one, and never divided; because God’s careful making of creation means that each of us is a reflection of God’s glory and precious in God’s sight. There is no partiality, no tribal pride, no room for warfare in the humanity of God; and the love of neighbor is a passion identical to our love for the One who made us all.

So let us celebrate this day, which is a festival of the people of every nation who are one in Christ; and let us enjoy the meal that is prepared for us to share. We receive the meal in anticipation of the day when none of us are excluded from the table – not those in lands besieged by famine, nor those who have been driven from their homes by political disorder, nor those whom poverty has rendered homeless – and may we who are fed this day unite in prayer and action so that God’s table of the harvest may be finally shared throughout the world. So may we become the Body of Christ as we receive the bread and the cup from God’s own hands.

This bread is the body!

**Thanks be to God!**

This cup is the new covenant made by Christ’s blood.

**May the holy love, incarnate in Jesus, revealed by his life and teachings, confirmed by his death and resurrection, and placed in our hearts as a pure gift of grace, be our work and our calling in all parts of the world.**

Let us pray:

It is right and good that we give thanks to you, our Holy God, for you have shown us how the gift of life is shared among all people. You have called us to be members of the one world family, where all the gifts of every different kind are welcomed at the banquet feast of your holy Realm. May your ways be learned among us day by day until all your people live together in a just and righteous world of holy peace.

We pray for all who suffer: for those in our fellowship who are sick or in recovery from illness; for those who are suffering personal needs; for the grieving and the sorrowful; and for those struggling with the many complex decisions of our lives.

We pray for those in other lands and in other communities in our own land whose lives have been disrupted by natural disasters or by epidemic illness or by political or economic oppression and poverty – for the people of Haiti, the people of Afghanistan, the people of Israel and Palestine, and the troubled religious communities of the Middle East. And wherever the ministries of the church reach out, through our own congregation, and through the partnerships we share around the world, we pray that we may be instruments of your peace and bearers of your love.

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 #552**

**“We All Are One in Mission”**

***We all are one in mission, we all are one in call,  
our varied gifts united by Christ the Lord of all.  
A single great commission compels us from above  
to plan and work together that all may know Christ’s love.***

***We all are called for service to witness in God’s name.  
Our ministries are different, our purpose is the same:  
To touch the lives of others by God’s surprising grace,  
So every folk and nation may feel God’s warm embrace.***

***We all behold one vision, a stark reality:  
The author of salvation was nailed upon a tree.  
Yet resurrected Justice gives rise that we may share  
free reconciliation and hope amid despair.***

***Now let us be united and let our song be heard.  
Now let us be a vessel for God’s redeeming Word.  
We all are one in mission, we all are one in call,  
our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all.***

**Prayer to Open the Congregational Meeting**

Holy God, now our worship is ended, and we pray that our thoughts and prayers have been acceptable in your sight. We gather now for the sacred work of organizing the life of this congregation for the year ahead. We thank you for all who have come forward to serve as leaders and servants of your fellowship in the current year; and we thank you for those who have agreed to serve in the year to come. We pray that the work we do in this place may be done as a witness to your love. May we be guided in the Spirit of Christ. Amen.

Postlude

“With Trumpets and Horns”

Chester Imhausen