

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

Allen M. Fluent, Transitional Pastor

**Order of Worship for the Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Stewardship Sunday
September 26, 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)

Gathering Words:

This morning we come, giving thanks for the congregation of God's people, in which we find our spiritual encouragement and are called to the works of neighborly ministry and advocacy for the Holy Realm of God.

Let us enter into God's gates with thanksgiving and into God's courts with hymns of praise.

For we are stewards of God's blessings and bearers of God's good news.

So together we share the gifts we have received and our desire to make God's love be known.

*Hymn

"Come, All Christians, Be Committed"

#459

***Come, all Christians, be committed to the service of the Lord;
make your lives for him more fitted, tune your hearts with one accord.
Come into his courts with gladness, all your sacred vows renew,
turn away from sin and sadness, be transformed with life anew.***

***Of your time and talents give now, they are gifts from God above,
to be used by Christians freely to proclaim his wondrous love.
Come again to serve the Savior, tithes and offerings with you bring;
in your work, with Christ find favor, and with joy his praises sing.***

*Come in praise and adoration, all who on Christ's name believe;
Worship him with consecration, grace and love will you receive.
For his grace give Christ the glory, for the Spirit and the Word,
and repeat the gospel story until all his name have heard.*

Stewardship Moment:

Cliff Dziech

Morning Prayer

God we gather here with friends to share our commitment to the way of Jesus and to the fellowship that continues his teachings among us for the common good. We pray that we may be faithful stewards of your gifts and bearers of the good news of the Christ who rises up among us as we pray and work for the coming of your Holy Realm. Amen.

***Hymn**

"For Beauty of Meadows"

#28

*For beauty of meadows, for grandeur of trees,
for flowers of woodlands, for creatures of seas,
for all you created and gave us to share,
we praise you, Creator, extolling your care.*

*As stewards of beauty received at your hand,
as creatures who hear your most urgent command,
we turn from our wasteful destruction of life,
confessing our failures, confessing our strife.*

*Teach us once again to be gardeners in peace;
all nature around us is ours but on lease;
your name we would hallow in all that we do,
fulfilling our calling, creating with you.*

Epistle Lesson:

James 5:13-16

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.

Gospel Lesson

Mark 9:42-50

If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were

thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to Gehenna, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into Gehenna. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into Gehenna, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.

“One Another” Bible Verses are shared from the printout

Sermon: “Stewards of Our Life Together”

Musical Interlude

Pastoral Prayer

Generous God, we rejoice in the wonders of your love – the beauties of creation, the gifts of family and friends who care for us, the sanctuary in which we share our faith and hope, and the Sabbath, given to us as a time set aside when we can be mindful of life’s many blessings.

Today is the first Sunday of a season of stewardship, when we give thanks for all we have received and consider together what we will do for one another and our church in the year ahead. We know that you do not ask of us more than we can give or expect us to commit ourselves to more than we can do. In the next two weeks, as we hold our annual meeting and then come together on the following Sunday for the blessing of our commitments to the church, we ask you to speak to our hearts and invite us to share the resources we have been blessed to receive for the ongoing ministries you call us to accomplish in your name. We will come with gifts that differ, but none matters more or less, because we are already made one in the living Body of the risen Christ.

Today we celebrate the spiritual family of this congregation. We remember the times when someone cared, when someone prayed, when someone shared a story that inspired us, or planned a meal, or dressed a doll, or organized a food drive in your name. We remember the prayers and the good wishes, the visits and the many times of sharing in this place; and we remember also the times we have organized to help our neighbors and to reach out through the ministry of the wider church.

Each week, we offer our prayers for members of our congregation and for our friends and neighbors who are ill or recovering from illness or surgery, those in assisted living, those troubled by feelings of loneliness and depression, and all who suffer grief, and we pray for wisdom to know how we can touch their lives in helpful ways.

We thank you for the ministry of our Conference and the church's national office as they use the resources we provide to develop programs of support for victims of climate disasters and political disruptions around the world, to share the Gospel, and to engage in healing partnerships wherever suffering takes place.

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 "We Are Called To Be God's People" #580**

*We are called to be God's people, showing by our lives his 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 his own,
let us share our life together as we shall around God's throne.*

*We are called to be God's servants, working in his world today;
Taking God's own task upon us, all his sacred words obey.
Let us rise, then, to God's summons, dedicate to him our all,
that we may be faithful servants, quick to answer now his 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.*

***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