

The First Presbyterian Church *in the City of New York*

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Service for the Lord's Day

October 18, 2020 | 11:00 a.m.

The Session and members of First Church extend a sincere welcome to all persons regardless of race, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation. This includes an open invitation to membership, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, marriage, funerals, memorial services, and service as an officer of the church.

GATHERING

The peace candle represents our prayers for peace in a broken world. The congregation is asked to offer prayers of intercession for one another and for those who lead in these times of remote worship.

PRELUDE "Psaume XIX: I cieli immensi" Benedetto Marcello
Théodore Dubois, transc.

WELCOME

INTROIT "This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made" Johann Crüger
This is the day the Lord hath made; the hours are all God's own. Let heaven rejoice; let earth be glad, and praise surround the throne. Hosanna to the anointed King, to David's holy Son! Help us, O Lord; descend and bring salvation from the throne. Blest be the Lord, who comes in power with messages of grace, who comes in this accepted hour to save our sinful race. Hosanna in the highest strains the church on earth can raise! The highest heavens in which God reigns shall now resound with praise.
-Isaac Watts

Samantha Noonan, Hannah Nacheman, Arri Lawton Simon, and Andrew Martens

CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 19

**The heavens tell the glory of God.
May our worship reflect God's glory.
The firmament proclaims God's handiwork.
May we see each other as the handiwork of God.
Let our prayer and praise, our singing and proclamation
declare the love of God.
Let us worship God!**

HYMN 12 "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise" ST. DENIO

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Almighty God,

We seem to have lost the ability to see your glory.

We focus on privilege, winning and last-person-standing triumphs.

And we call these glorious.

We have forgotten that your glory is fully embodied on a cross.

We have forgotten that your cross is deeply rooted in love.

We have forgotten that your love is not for us to enjoy,

but for us to shine upon a broken and dying world.

Open our eyes to the glory all around us;

To the glory of crosses and opened graves

in hopeless situations;

to the glory of your presence and creativity

in dreary and fearful places;

Teach us to be both heralds and couriers of this glory,

so that it may be seen to cover the earth

as the waters cover the sea. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

DOXOLOGY

Traditional

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

praise him, all creatures here below;

praise him above, ye heavenly host;

praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Amen.

Inclusive

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

praise Christ, all people here below;

praise Holy Spirit evermore;

praise Triune God, whom we adore.

Amen.

OLD HUNDREDTH

SHARING SIGNS OF PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

CHILDREN'S PRAYER AND 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.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

HEARING THE WORD

FIRST LESSON

Exodus 33:12-23

Moses said to the Lord, "See, you have said to me, 'Bring up this people'; but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.' Now if I have found favor in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people." He said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." And he said to him, "If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us?"

In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth.” The Lord said to Moses, “I will do the very thing that you have asked; for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.” Moses said, “Show me your glory, I pray.” And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, ‘The Lord’; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But,” he said, “you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live.” And the Lord continued, “See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen.”

SECOND LESSON

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

SERMON

“A Sign From Above”

Dr. Greg Stovell

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

HYMN 726

“Will You Come and Follow Me”

KELVINGROVE

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

from *The Belhar Confession* – PC(USA)

We believe that God has revealed God’s self as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people; that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged that God calls the church to follow God in this; for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry; that God frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind; that God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly; that for God pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering; that God wishes to teach the church to do what is good and to seek the right; that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

OFFERTORY

“O for a Closer Walk”

Charles Villiers Stanford

Breathe on me, breath of God, fill me with life anew, that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do. Breathe on me, breath of God, until my heart is pure, until with thee I will one will, to do and to endure. Breathe on me, breath of God, till I am wholly thine, till all this earthly part of me glows with Thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, breath of God, so shall I never die, but live with thee the perfect life of thine eternity. -Edwin Hatch, alt.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

SENDING

HYMN 550

“Give Praise to the Lord”

LAUDATE DOMINUM

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“Postlude, Op. 5, No. 6”

Charles Villiers Stanford

The congregation is invited to continue worshiping through the postlude, which is offered as a thanksgiving to God.

MUSIC NOTES Born into a Venetian family of great means, Benedetto Marcello (1686-1739) composed music as an avocation rather than as a vocation, spending much of his life as a lawyer and government official. Between 1724 and 1726, eight volumes of *L'estro poetico-armonico* containing musical settings of the first 50 Psalms in paraphrase, were published. Scored mainly for solo voice and instruments, the settings were intended for secular use, the music composed to support the paraphrased text by another Venetian, Girolamo Giustiniani. 19th century French composer, Théodore Dubois, transcribed the first part of Marcello's setting of Psalm 19 for organ in 1917. • English poet and pastor Isaac Watts' paraphrase of verses from Psalm 118 (“This Is the Day...”) was published in 1719, later paired to a buoyant tune by German Lutheran musician Johann Crüger from 1647. • The music of Irish-born, English composer Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924) might not be as well-known as that of his students, Edward Elgar and Ralph Vaughan Williams, but it remains foundational to the renaissance of English church music at the end of the 19th century. “O for a Closer Walk” is one of six extended choral hymns published in 1910. The tune is from the *Scottish Psalter* of 1635, with words by poet William Cowper, written in 1769 as response to the illness of a friend. The complete hymn appears as hymn 739 in *Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal*. Composed in 1908, the d minor “Postlude” for organ has a bold, imposing theme, contrasted later by an optimistic, fluid major key theme.

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