

# Worship Service “Neighborly”

Pentecost 4, Year C, 3rd July, 2022

Galatians 6:7-16 NRSV / Luke 10:1-11, 16-20 NRSV

## Prelude

### Opening Music (Video) [God is My Everything](#)

performed by the Chicago Mass Choir, written by Percy Gray Jr.,  
CCLI SONG # 5137200, 2007 Slickey Music (Admin. by Music Services, Inc.)  
Saved Children's Music (Admin by Percy Gray) (Admin. by Percy Gray Jr.) ,  
posted to YouTube by newhavenvideos, used and reported under  
CCLI Streaming License# 20261246

## Welcome Guests / Announcements

### Pass the Peace

### Opening Hymn (Lyric video) [Come, We That Love the Lord](#) 14

written by Isaac Watts and Robert Lowry, performed by  
The Celebration Choir, posted to YouTube by Extended Life Worship

## Call to Worship *[Responsive]*

One: Sing praises to our Lord:

**All: who heals us and makes us whole.**

One: Sing praises to our Lord, faithful children of God:

**All: whose joy rises in our lives each and every day.**

One: Sing praises to our Lord, faithful children of God;

give thanks to God's holy name:

**All: God's Kingdom is near to us;**

**God's peace resides in our hearts.**

## Invocation

God with us, you send us into the world as your agents of restoration and change. You speak to us in the stillness of our rest and the chaos of a frenzied world. You guide us in troubling times, and you move us to dance in celebration. We give thanks for your presence among us. Make us receptive to your Spirit within us as we worship you, Holy and Living God. Amen.

## **Epistle Reading – Galatians 6:7-16 NRSV**

Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow.

If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit.

So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.

So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.

See what large letters I make when I am writing in my own hand!

It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised—only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

Even the circumcised do not themselves obey the law, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast about your flesh.

May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything!

As for those who will follow this rule—peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God

### **A Time of Prayer**

#### **Joys and Concerns**

#### **Pastoral Prayer**

God of all grace and mercy, you have made an amazing and beautiful world – diverse and teeming with the bounty and beauty of your artful hand. You have made us mortals in your own image, and given us such a marvelous variety of gifts by which to praise and serve you, and to serve the common good. Hear our varied expressions of thanksgiving, as we look to you for care and guidance to use every skill and art with which you've blessed us for the blessing of humanity.

We seek new ways, O Lord, to reach into the lives of others who are searching for meaning in their lives and to discover their own giftedness, and to give them encouragement, love, and peace on that journey. We look to you to guide us as partners with Christ as we minister to those who are hurting, lonely, sick, grieving, or in any danger. May our openness to your Spirit at work within us as your people be a sign of your ministries at work within us, your church. Make of this community a home of peace and empowerment for

those who are struggling to find their future, and a place of compassion and justice for those who need it most.

Hear our prayers, O God, for those whose lives are closely linked with our own, whose names cross our hearts and our lips so often, and whose needs are many. Help us to entrust them to your care, as we offer up our own needs and our hearts' desires to you in silence...

As Jesus prayed that all who follow him might be one, reshape us as your faithful disciples, and knit us tightly with all those who profess Christ into his one body. May our unity and our diversity proclaim his name to all the world, as we glorify you together, offering our varied gifts for your use. For we pray in his name and in his spirit.

## **Hymn (Lyric Video)**

## **[Oh, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing](#)**

written by Charles Wesley and Carl G. Glaser, performed by Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, CA, posted to YouTube by Martijn de Groot

## **Gospel Reading**

## **Luke 10:1-11, 16-20 NRSV**

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go.

He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.

Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves.

Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road.

Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!"

And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you.

Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house.

Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you;

cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you."

But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say,

"Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near."

'Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and

whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.'

The seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!'

He said to them, 'I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning.

See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you.

Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.'

## **Message – Neighborly**

Evangelism is a term that often evokes specific images in our minds. When you hear that word, what do you think of? We might imagine missionaries in far off lands, seeking to "save the souls" of indigenous peoples. Or we might envision sidewalk preachers, standing in the public square seeking to get our attention and save us from the fires of hell. Other images might include the old time tent revival or various groups going door to door like the Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses. We all can define that term in many different ways. But what does it really mean? Evangelism is originally derived from the Greek word *euangelion* which literally translates as "zealous advocacy for good news." Over time in the Christian context it has come to mean "the spreading of the Christian gospel by preaching or personal witness," which is probably the definition we more associate with that word.

There is certainly a sense of that view of evangelism in our gospel lesson this morning. Jesus dispatches the seventy across the countryside to share the good news that the kin-dom of God has come near. But that wasn't all that was included in the job. They also were to heal the sick, and wish peace on those who welcomed them and offered them hospitality. In fact, they were to rely on that hospitality, carrying no food or provision of their own. They are going to prepare the way for Jesus. Their mission is holistic – preaching, teaching, and healing – and all are to carry the same authority as Jesus, a priesthood of all believers.

That's a phrase we may have heard before somewhere. Having that authority bestows the power to cure and remove demons, bestow peace and announce the kin-dom of God. It also, however, means having the courage and freedom to go forth in vulnerability and intentional poverty, to travel lightly, and rely on the hospitality of others. It means a nonviolent response to rejection at the hands of others. All of these actions are done to prepare others to receive Jesus.

When the apostles see the power of God manifested in their ministry, they are not to rejoice over their apostolic role, but rather humbly be glad that they have received the knowledge and promise of the good news themselves. Everything in the apostolic mission, in other words, subverts the systems of power and privilege and self-focus in the world. The

peace the apostles are to offer is more than a greeting or demeanor. Peace is representative of the kin-dom of God, the salvation that is shalom, a peace that ensures the well-being of the other.

When I draw a mental picture of what these initial missionaries journey looked like, I can't help thinking of what a neighborhood used to be in the not too distant past. When someone new moved into the neighborhood, everyone would bring them housewarming gifts, often in the form of food, and welcome them and invite them to visit. When someone would stop by the house for something, they'd always be invited in and offered food or refreshments and to "sit for a spell." When neighbors faced difficulties, the community would rally to bring casseroles or whatever they could to try to make the struggle easier. It was a community, much like those first followers of the Christian movement. These initial apostles came to share that a new community and way of living was possible, the kin-dom of God at hand. One that was based on sharing shalom for each other and not just getting the most you could for yourself in the systems of power that meted out what crumbs were available.

Sadly it seems like those days of yore are a distant dream. We've become a transient society of bubbles and loops. Our residence often becomes our personal bubble that insulates us from the outside. When we need anything, we leave that bubble and venture forth in big loops to get what we need. We often commute to another town or community for our work, if we don't already work remotely from home. If we need to shop, we loop out of our community to the mall or shopping center. If we want to socialize, we loop away neighborhoods or towns away to restaurants or bars. If we seek spiritual help, we shop around for what suits our current needs and loop out to find that. We may be acquainted with our nearest neighbors enough to say hello, but does it really get much beyond that?

How much is the community in which we live the focus of our daily lives? For a variety of reasons, it may seem difficult to stay community focused. Because of this transient shift in our outlook, much of what was available locally has been lost to the bigger store down the road. We have been tempted by the allure of what's bigger and perceived as better. We light the big, well-lit grocery store with everything we'd possibly need over the small, local shop that has mainly the basics. Why go to smaller, more expensive local shops when the big mall has everything - on sale. And while the economic benefit is certainly there with larger, chain stores, there is a loss as well.

When our lives are looped outside of our communities, how do we connect with those in our neighborhoods? How can we recover our sense of "being neighborly" when we often don't know anything about our neighbors, and rarely interact with them? How can we find a real community? Those are the questions to consider.

We are here this morning in our church community, which has its own boundaries. For the early church and many centuries after, the church community was synonymous with the physical community. How do we recapture that in today's society? How do we make a meaningful connection with and incorporate the outside community with the one inside this building? Like those early evangelists, we are called to share our witness with the world

outside? Are we meeting that calling, or like our own personal bubbles, do we let these walls insulate us from the rest of the world? Are we really the neighbors we are called to be, as a church, and as individuals? I hope and pray as we leave here and journey through the weeks and months, we find ways to break down the barriers that keep us from being in community with others and seek new means to connect with the neighborhoods we find ourselves in. May it be so, Amen.

## **A Call to Serve**

The generous life responds to the call to mutuality and burden sharing. The generous life recognizes the abundance of creation and trusts the generosity of the Giver of every good and perfect gift. The generous life follows the steps of Jesus in meeting needs, spreading hope, and sharing love.

## **A Time for Reflection - *Musical Interlude***

### **The Prayer of Thanksgiving)**

In the offering of our gifts, as well as the living of our days, may we not grow weary of doing what is right, but commit to speaking up for the voiceless, healing the broken, feeding the hungry, and all those mercies which are such a part of your heart and hopes for all your children. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

### **Hymn (Lyric Video)**

### **[Here I Am, Lord](#) 395**

words and music by Daniel Shutte, performed by the Choir of Hexham Abbey and congregation, posted to YouTube by donhenri01

### **BENEDICTION (resources)**

Go forth from this place refreshed and empowered to do the ministry to which God calls you:  
Travel lightly, for you carry within you all that you need.  
Notice God's presence in simple, everyday experiences in the neighborhood.  
Whenever opportunity arises, labor for the good of all.  
And the blessing and joy of God, our Creator, Healer, and Life-Giver go with you today and always. **Amen.**