

25th Sunday after Pentecost
November 19, 2023
WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

* Indicates the congregation is to stand.

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Lighting of the Candles

CALL TO WORSHIP

ONE: We lift our eyes and raise our hearts
and are met by the Holy One in worship.

**All: We stretch out our arms and open our hands
in the hope of finding mercy.**

ONE: In our stretching, we are met by the kind eyes
and warm hands of companions on the way.

**All : May we be aware of the signs of love
that are always with us.**

*HYMN#315, Holy, Holy, Holy

PRAYER OF APPROACH/CONFESSION:

One: Source of All Goodness, you pour through us, in us, and around us. We pause to feel the power of life within.

May we become aware of our own potential and may our imaginations be sparked against the flint of your belief in us
until our world overflows with possibilities

**All: When it comes to the love of God – there is no end.
Gifted by this love, the sky is the limit to what we
can become.**

One: We joyfully receive your abundant gifts, O God,
and we look for ways to invest them in order to increase the realm of love on Earth. But when our circumstance and limitations rise up against us, we allow them to cloud our vision for possibilities.

All: Sometimes we think too little of ourselves. We become weighed down with doubt and insecurity and we bury our preciousness under a diminished self-worth.

One: We can allow indifference to have its way in us growing numb to the world's needs,
neglecting our baptismal vocation,
and withholding our resources.

All: Despite the abundance of your love, a mindset of scarcity can creep into our community and we can give in to the thought that there is not enough to go around.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

One: God wants only good things for us. Wherever we are and whoever we are, God is with us.

All: God has destined us to be free and generous. Let us live in God's forgiveness and power.

*HYMN#356, Seek Ye First (1, 3, 2, 1)

WE LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD

Prayer for Illumination

One: Amazing God, when we are perplexed and challenged by scripture, open our hearts and minds to your abundant possibilities. Help us listen for your voice and give us courage to be bold in our response. Amen.

RESPONSIVE PSALM: #847, Psalm 123

SCRIPTURE LESSON: 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11

GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 25:14–30

One: This is the Word of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

*HYMN#357, Tell Me the Stories (1, 3, 4)

SERMON:

WE OFFER OUR GIFTS TO GOD

Our offering for God's work in the World

Offertory Hymn#501, Doxology

Offertory Prayer

One: May God bless these gifts that they might be used to share the good news of God's love. For we ask this in Jesus name, amen.

Minute for Mission

*HYMN#508, Just as I am (1, 4)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

One: Holy Homemaker, your cupboard is always full and you fill us with good things. Your love never ends. We give you thanks for this constant providing for us. Help us to see that it's not our job to protect your name, your grace, your Good News, but to live in your bounty with sisters and brothers of all kinds of understandings and needs. God in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

One: We call on your life-giving courage and wisdom so we may live so all will have enough. When we experience circumstances of oppression and violation of dignity, grant us the energy to risk speaking and acting in what we believe to be your loving hope. God in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

One: All we long for is to share the gift of life, to share the light we've been given in ways that bring life and glory to you. Continue to show your abundant love to those in our community who are sick, are depressed, who mourn losses, who seek new hope in family life, who are looking for work, or who are preparing for a life change. God in our mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

One: Give us the courage to respond with your gifts as we pray for lives affected by war or natural disaster, for children longing to have more education, for parents wishing for a place to get medicine or care for their families. As children turn to a mother who watches over them, let us turn to God saying...

All: Our Father who art in heaven...

WE GO INTO GOD'S WORLD

*HYMN#337, Blessed Assurance, Chorus 2x at end.

*Commissioning

One: Friends, go well, with and within the currents of Spirit.

All: Amen.

One: Be of good courage,

All: and gentle of heart.

One: Be of wise mind,

All: and open to new instruction.

One: Be of vision,

All: not ignoring the obvious and pressing.

One: Be of simple faith,

All: yet radically open to questions and doubts.

One: Be free;

All: a generous healing and freedom for others.