



SEPTEMBER 27, 2020

17TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

GATHERING PRAYER:

Begin this Sunday's worship with a time of silence. Our lives are far noisier than wind, fire, or earthquake. In a great paradox, God speaks to us in sheer silence. Use this chance to listen as you pray.

Loving God, Wind, flood, fire, earthquake, and storm: each event reminds us of how little we are. Arguments at work, grumbling at home, disfunction in our systems of government: each event reminds us of how little we control and how much we fear. Help us, Lord, that we might listen for your voice in the least likely of places. And help us, Lord, that we might hear.

PASTORAL WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY:

- In condemning and censuring others, we are thrusting ourselves into God's place, taking his scepter into our hands, and presuming to exercise one of His sole prerogatives. - *J.R. Miller*
- When we look down on others with haughty judgment, we invoke the same compassionless treatment from God toward our infirmities. What a terrifying response from the living God! Belligerent people are told they can expect to be handled by God, not according to His tender compassion, but with severity matching their contempt of others. Such words should sober even the most hardened heart and result in a fresh realization that self-righteousness tops God's list of man's most despised iniquities (Prov. 6:16-19). - *Jerry Wragg*
- If anyone is still alive there is hope for change and growth. God isn't finished with any of us yet. - *Anonymous*
- We are all recovering from something—and there is grace for that.

- *Will Starkweather*

PRAISE SONG: *Son of God, Eternal Savior, verses 1-3*
(music at end of bulletin)

CALL TO WORSHIP:

One: Gather 'round, you elders of the people,

All: you who are willing to be witnesses to God's activity in the world.

One: Gather 'round, you protesters,

All: crying out for the powerless, making your voices heard.

One: Gather 'round, you fearful ones,

All: living in the tension between frustration and hope.

One: Gather 'round, you leaders of the people,

All: anxious and exasperated and needing to be led yourselves.

One: God is here.

All: God is listening.

One: God will provide.

All: Let us worship God.

OUR CONFESSION PRAYER:

One: As we gather to praise God, we need to remember that we are people who often resist God's way for us. But God is eager to forgive us, and to strengthen us for discipleship. Let us confess our sins to God, saying,

All: We admit how difficult it is for us to trust you, Living God. The temptations, the desires, the calls of the world flood into our lives, but we do not believe you can part them and lead us into faithfulness. Our bitterness toward those who have hurt us is like a feast we cannot leave, despite your invitation to the table of grace and healing. Our grudges fit comfortably into our hands, and if we let them go, we wonder if you will fill that emptiness with hope.

Forgive us and have mercy on us. You are the God who brought our ancestors into freedom -- set us free from our pain. You are the God who is with us in every moment -- open our eyes to your presence. You are the God of our future. In life, in death, you are with us, in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Silence is kept

ASSURANCE OF PARDON:

One: God has claimed us and will not let us go. There is no one, there is no thing that can keep God from forgiving us, loving us, and healing us.

**All: Loved, we can love the unlovable;
graced, we can be a blessing to others;
forgiven, we can forgive those who have hurt us.
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

CONFESSION RESPONSE: *Jesus Friend of Sinners*

THE LESSONS:

Romans 14:1-12

Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. And don't jump all over them every time they do or say something you don't agree with—even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently.

²⁻⁴ For instance, a person who has been around for a while might well be convinced that he can eat anything on the table, while another, with a different background, might assume he should only be a vegetarian and eat accordingly. But since both are guests at Christ's table, wouldn't it be terribly rude if they fell to criticizing what the other ate or didn't eat? God, after all, invited them both to the table. Do you have any business crossing people off the guest list or interfering with God's welcome? If there are corrections to be made or manners to be learned, God can handle that without your help.

⁵ Or, say, one person thinks that some days should be set aside as holy and another thinks that each day is pretty much like any other. There are good reasons either way. So, each person is free to follow the convictions of conscience.

⁶⁻⁹ What's important in all this is that if you keep a holy day, keep it for *God's* sake; if you eat meat, eat it to the glory of God and thank God for prime rib; if you're a vegetarian, eat vegetables to the glory of God and thank God for broccoli. None of us are permitted to insist on our own way in these matters. It's *God* we are answerable to—all the way from life to death and everything in between—not each other. That's why Jesus lived and died and then lived again: so that he could be our Master across the entire range of life and death, and free us from the petty tyrannies of each other.

¹⁰⁻¹² So where does that leave you when you criticize a brother? And where does that leave you when you condescend to a sister? I'd say it leaves you looking pretty silly—or worse. Eventually, we're all going to end up kneeling side by side in the place of judgment, facing God. Your critical and condescending ways aren't going to improve your position there one bit. Read it for yourself in Scripture:

“As I live and breathe,” God says,
“every knee will bow before me;
Every tongue will tell the honest truth
that I and only I am God.”

So tend to your knitting. You've got your hands full just taking care of your own life before God.

Acts 9:1-22

9 ¹⁻² All this time Saul was breathing down the necks of the Master's disciples, out for the kill. He went to the Chief Priest and got arrest warrants to take to the meeting

places in Damascus so that if he found anyone there belonging to the Way, whether men or women, he could arrest them and bring them to Jerusalem.

3-4 He set off. When he got to the outskirts of Damascus, he was suddenly dazed by a blinding flash of light. As he fell to the ground, he heard a voice: “Saul, Saul, why are you out to get me?”

5-6 He said, “Who are you, Master?”

“I am Jesus, the One you’re hunting down. I want you to get up and enter the city. In the city you’ll be told what to do next.”

7-9 His companions stood there dumbstruck—they could hear the sound, but couldn’t see anyone—while Saul, picking himself up off the ground, found himself stone-blind. They had to take him by the hand and lead him into Damascus. He continued blind for three days. He ate nothing, drank nothing.

10 There was a disciple in Damascus by the name of Ananias. The Master spoke to him in a vision: “Ananias.”

“Yes, Master?” he answered.

11-12 “Get up and go over to Straight Avenue. Ask at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus. His name is Saul. He’s there praying. He has just had a dream in which he saw a man named Ananias enter the house and lay hands on him so he could see again.”

13-14 Ananias protested, “Master, you can’t be serious. Everybody’s talking about this man and the terrible things he’s been doing, his reign of terror against your people in Jerusalem! And now he’s shown up here with papers from the Chief Priest that give him license to do the same to us.”

15-16 But the Master said, “Don’t argue. Go! I have picked him as my personal representative to non-Jews and kings and Jews. And now I’m about to show him what he’s in for—the hard suffering that goes with this job.”

17-19 So Ananias went and found the house, placed his hands on blind Saul, and said, “Brother Saul, the Master sent me, the same Jesus you saw on your way here. He sent me so you could see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” No sooner were the words out of his mouth than something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes—he could see again! He got to his feet, was baptized, and sat down with them to a hearty meal.

19-21 Saul spent a few days getting acquainted with the Damascus disciples, but then went right to work, wasting no time, preaching in the meeting places that this Jesus was the Son of God. They were caught off guard by this and, not at all sure they could trust him, they kept saying, “Isn’t this the man who wreaked havoc in Jerusalem among the believers? And didn’t he come here to do the same thing—arrest us and drag us off to jail in Jerusalem for sentencing by the high priests?”

22 But their suspicions didn’t slow Saul down for even a minute. His momentum was up now and he plowed straight into the opposition, disarming the Damascus Jews and trying to show them that this Jesus was the Messiah.

MESSAGE: *“To Whom Do You Answer?”*

MESSAGE RESPONSE: *God of the Movements and Martyrs*
(music at end of bulletin)

THE PRAYERS

THE 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, forever and ever. Amen.

THE SENDING OUT:

Leader: We are sent forth from this place to be light, hope, and strength to others, that others may know that there is indeed a way through which the challenges of life can be met, and peace and strength and new life can abound. May we forget ourselves long enough and thoroughly enough to be this kind of witness to our neighbor. Always and ever in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

THE SENDING SONG: *In Mission Together* (music at end of bulletin)

THE DISMISSAL:

Leader: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**



A young couple moved into a new neighborhood. The next morning while they were eating breakfast, the young woman saw her neighbor hanging the washing outside.

"That laundry is not very clean; she doesn't know how to wash correctly. Perhaps she needs better laundry soap." Her husband looked on, remaining silent. Every time her neighbor hung her washing out to dry, the young woman made the same comments.

A month later, the woman was surprised to see a nice clean wash on the line and said to her husband,

"Look, she's finally learned how to wash correctly. I wonder who taught her this?"

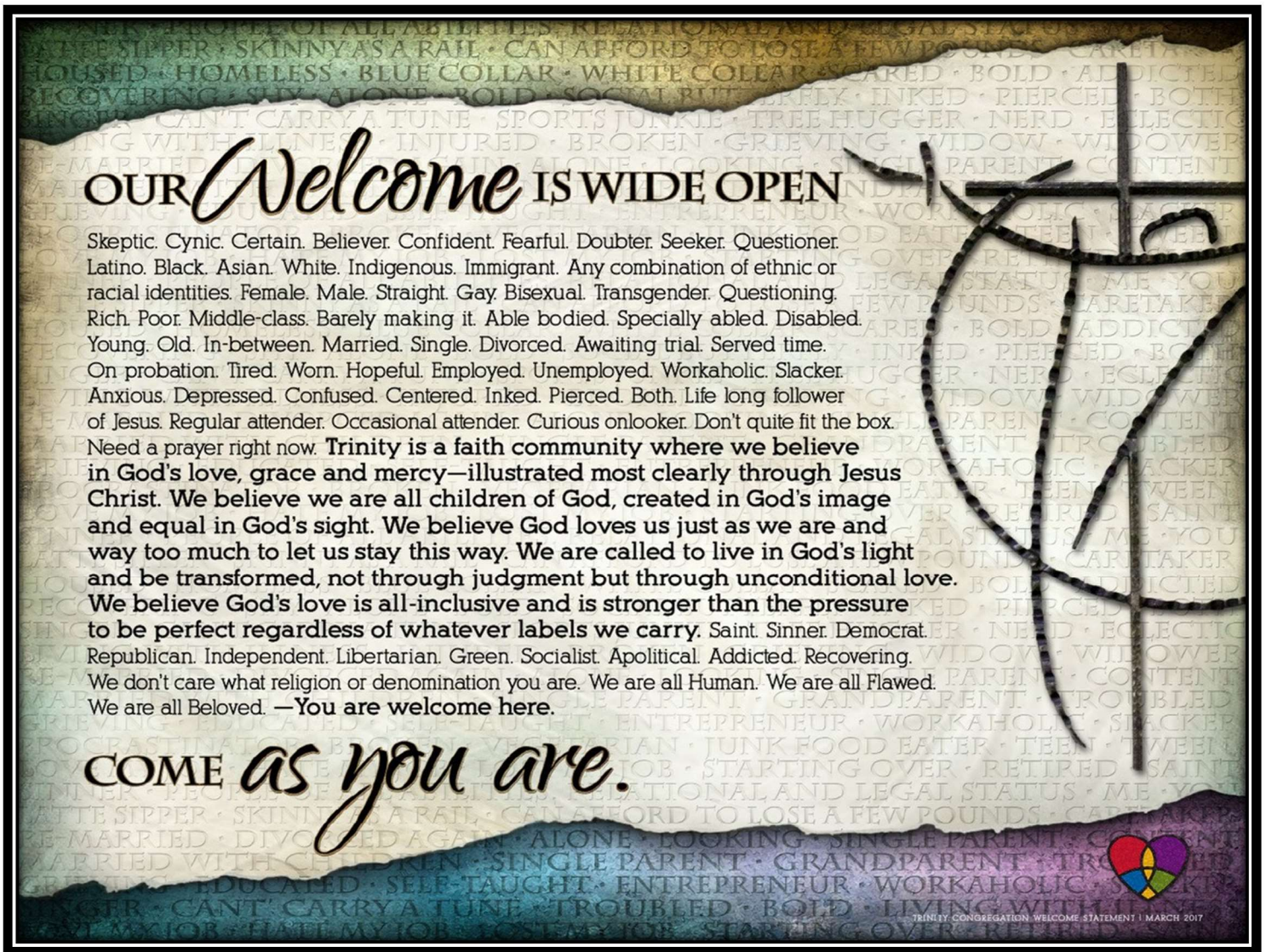
The husband replied, "I got up early this morning and cleaned our windows."

And so it is with life... What we see when watching others depends on the clarity of the window through which we look. So don't be too quick to judge others, especially if your perspective of life is clouded by anger, jealousy, negativity or unfulfilled desires.

"Judging a person does not define who they are. It defines who you are."

— Jonathan Kestenbaum





Permission to podcast/stream and reprint the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE with license #A-714192 and CCLI with license #230769 and by licensed permission from Convergence Music Project. All rights reserved.

Son of God, Eternal Savior. Words by Somerset C. Lowry. Tune: In Babilone, arr. by Julius Rontgen. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE with license #A-714192. All rights reserved.

Jesus, Friend of Sinners. Words and Music by Matthew Hall and Mark West. ©2011 My Refuge Music/Internal Combustion Music. Reprinted with permission under CCLI with license #230769. All Rights Reserved.

God of the Movements and Martyrs. Words and music by David LaMotte. ©2019 Dryad Publishing, Inc. Reprinted with permission under license with Convergence Music Project. All rights reserved.

In Mission Together (We Come from the Mountains). Words: Verses S. T. Kimbrough, Jr./Refrain Jorge Lockward. Tune: Composer S.T. Kimbrough, Jr./arr. Jorge Lockward. Words ©2004 S.T. Kimbrough, Jr. admin. by General Board of Global Missions. Tune ©2004, General Board of Global Ministries. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE with license #A-714192. All rights reserved.

Son of God, Eternal Savior *Verses 1-3*

655



1 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, source of life and truth and grace,
 2 As you, Lord, have lived for oth - ers, so may we for oth - ers live.
 3 Come, O Christ, and reign a - mong us, King of love and Prince of peace;
 4 Son of God, e - ter - nal Sav - ior, source of life and truth and grace,



Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us hal - lows all our hu - man race,
 Free - ly have your gifts been grant - ed; free - ly may your ser - vants give.
 hush the storm of strife and pas - sion, bid its cru - el dis - cords cease.
 Word made flesh, whose birth a - mong us hal - lows all our hu - man race:



you our head, who, throned in glo - ry, for your own will ev - er plead:
 Yours the gold and yours the sil - ver, yours the wealth of land and sea;
 By your pa - tient years of toil - ing, by your si - lent hours of pain,
 by your pray - ing, by your will - ing that your peo - ple should be one,



fill us with your love and pit - y, heal our wrong, and help our need.
 we but stew - ards of your boun - ty held in sol - emn trust will be.
 quench our fe - vered thirst of plea - sure, stem our self - ish greed of gain.
 grant, oh, grant our hope's fru - i - tion: here on earth your will be done.



God of the Movements and Martyrs

1. God of the move-ments and mar-tyrs, God of the pow-er-less
 2. Now it's our turn to do jus-tice, hum-bly we rise to the
 3. God of the cir-cle that holds us, God of the ones pushed a-

child, God of the hurt and the hope-less and un-rec-on-
 day, give us the strength and the wis-dom to walk in your
 way, we will reach out to our neigh-bors, in your name we'll

ciled, - God of the just and the faith-ful,
 way. - Gath-er the loaves and the fish-es,
 say: No mat-ter your creed or your coun-try, no

God of the night and the day, - God of the whole of cre-
 share un-til all have been fed, - walk in com-pas-sion and
 mat-ter the hue of your skin, your age, who you love, or the

a-tion, in your name we pray; -
 mer-cy, by love we'll be led, -
 bod-y your soul was born in, no

Man-y have fol-lowed the sav-ior -
 stand-ing in cir-cles sur-round-ing,
 mat-ter the plac-es you're bro-ken, no

in-to the face of the storm, - strength-ened by long gen-er-
 all hold-ing hands while we pray, when pow-ers bear down on the
 mat-ter the things you have done, - lay down that weight on the

a-tions, by love they were formed. In base-ments of tall stee-pled
 help-less, we'll stand in the way. - God of the worn and the
 al-tar, a new day's be-gun. - You are a child of the

church-es, in shad-ows of fenc-es and walls, in
 wound-ed, - let us be healed by the truth, when
 mak-er, - you are be-lov-ed and known, -

al-leys and hall-ways of pow-er, they an-swered your call.
 door-ways are blocked, we will low-er our friends through the roof.
 join us in work of the kin-dom, we wel-come you home. *(Repeat last line v.3)*

In Mission Together

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'In Mission Together'. It consists of nine staves of music in a 4/4 time signature, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The music features a mix of quarter, eighth, and half notes, with some rests and dynamic markings like 'f' (forte) and 'mf' (mezzo-forte). The lyrics are: 'We come from the mountains, the valleys and Though diff-'rent in cul- ture and modes of our In Christ we're u- nit- ed, all bar- ri- ers plains, the ci- ties and farm- lands a- wait- ing the dress, though strange seems our lan- guage we bold- ly con- fall; there's no fa- vored gen- der, one fam- 'ly for rains. Our cul- tures are ma- ny, our tongues e- ven fess that we are u- nit- ed; one peo- ple, one all; op- pressed, rich, and need- y, the weak and the more; our co- lours the rain- bow from God's art- ful store. voice. We're God's own cre- a- tion, by God's sa- cred choice. strong; one fam- 'ly, one peo- ple, to God all be- long. In mis- sion to- geth- er we all join our hands, in mis- sion to- geth- er through- out ma- ny lands. With our hearts u- nit- ed our voic- es we raise to God our Cre- a- tor in glo- ri- ous praise.'

We come from the mountains, the valleys and
Though diff-'rent in cul- ture and modes of our
In Christ we're u- nit- ed, all bar- ri- ers
plains, the ci- ties and farm- lands a- wait- ing the
dress, though strange seems our lan- guage we bold- ly con-
fall; there's no fa- vored gen- der, one fam- 'ly for
rains. Our cul- tures are ma- ny, our tongues e- ven
fess that we are u- nit- ed; one peo- ple, one
all; op- pressed, rich, and need- y, the weak and the
more; our co- lours the rain- bow from God's art- ful store.
voice. We're God's own cre- a- tion, by God's sa- cred choice.
strong; one fam- 'ly, one peo- ple, to God all be- long.
In mis- sion to- geth- er we all join our hands, in
mis- sion to- geth- er through- out ma- ny lands. With
our hearts u- nit- ed our voic- es we raise to
God our Cre- a- tor in glo- ri- ous praise.