



Bible & Church Music Conference
Monday, July 25, 2022

Prelude: “How Can I Keep From Singing” (*arr. Howard Helvey*)

Announcements

Introit: “Sanctuary” (Thompson & Scruggs)

Call to Worship

God called Abraham to leave his homeland and father a new nation,
and called Moses to lead his people through the wilderness.

**God called Mary to give birth to Love Incarnate,
and called Paul to tell about Jesus in a way that would change our hearts.**

God called Martin Luther to teach us about grace,
and called Martin Luther King, Jr, to dream.

**God called John Calvin to show us new ways to read the bible,
and called Margaret Towner and Rachel Henderlite* to preach with alto voices.**

God called us all to this time and place together,
and God is calling us now to rejoice and be glad.

Hymn: *Glory to God* #37 “Let All Things Now Living”

Call to Confession

Now, many of you here, we haven’t gotten to know each other yet,
you and I.

I am looking forward to that changing over the next several days.

But since we don’t know each other yet,

I’m going to tell you something that will be hard for you to believe:

when I was a child, I used to get myself into trouble ...

“occasionally.”

The worst was when I was “allegedly” picking on my little brother.

He would tell my mom,

and my mom would come summon me,

calling out

“Jennifer Marie McDevitt, you better find me before I find you.”

I do not have full clarity on what, exactly,

was being threatened with those words,

but whenever my mom pulled out the Full Name Treatment,

I listened.

Among other things she would have to say,
she would instruct me to apologize to my brother.
She would be watching,
and I would usually mangle something heartfelt like this:
(mumbling) “sorry.”

“Again,” my mother would instruct me.
“Say it like you mean it.”
Because to be truly sorry,
to be genuinely repentant,
it takes more than empty words.
It takes whole-hearted feeling.
And an earnest effort to do better next time.

So friends, let us confess the truth of ourselves to God.
And let us say it like we mean it.
Let us pray together:

Prayer of Confession

**We can barely form the words of our confession, God.
For you are the God of song;
 but we do not hear the melody.
You are the God of strength;
 but we cannot lift our heads toward heaven.
You are the Word Made Flesh;
 but too many tongues are silent
 and too many bodies are wounded.
You are joy incarnate;
 but we have given in to sorrow.
You are the road home;
 but we have gotten lost along the way.
We often fail to be true to who we are, God,
 so we have no right to ask,
 but we ask you to be true to who you are,
 and forgive us once again. (Silent prayer)**

Assurance of Pardon

My mother used to say,
“You better find me before I find you.”
That was a highly motivational statement.
I would go running.
The truth of God, though,
is that God is always, always, always finding us —
oftentimes before we even realize we’ve wandered away,
or at least before we realize how deeply we long to be found.

God finds us,

and God forgives us.
No matter who we are, or what we have done.

Even when we don't deserve it or recognize it.
God calls us by name,
open wide God's arms,
and welcomes us home
with no hesitation or condition.

What grace.
What amazing, astounding grace.
It is grace that means we do not have to be afraid of losing God's love.
Ever.
And that grace — it is for you. And it is for me. It is for us all.
Friends, believe the good news of the Gospel —
in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.
Thanks be to God.

Response: *Glory to God #243* "Be Not Afraid"

Passing of Peace

The peace that we find in Jesus Christ
is like no other.
It is a peace beyond our ability to describe,
but we know it when we feel it.
And when we have an awareness of that peace,
we can recognize the importance and the beauty and the joy
of sharing it with everyone we meet.

So let us share some sign of Christ's peace with one another now:
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer for Illumination: "Lord, I Need You" (Duren)

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 12:1-6

Philippians 4:4-7

Sermon *Rev. Dr. Jill Duffield*

Hymn: *Glory to God #757* "Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples of the Lord"

Reaffirmation of Baptism

Baptism, or remembering our baptism,
is one of the most remarkable things we do.
In our first reading tonight, the prophet Isaiah proclaimed,

"With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."

We baptize because Jesus tells us to:

Go and make disciples, he says,
baptizing them in the name of the Father
and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

But we also baptize because we need it.

In a world that makes us wonder:

Who am I?

Do I belong?

Am I welcome?

Baptism is one of God's ways of answering:

You are my child.

I have called you by name and you are mine.

You belong, you are welcome,
and oh, you are so very, very loved.

Baptism celebrates what we know to be true —
that God chooses us
before we even have the capacity to choose God,
and that God stays with us always.

Just like the water in this font,
grace is poured out over our lives.
It is a gift we cannot earn

and cannot ever, ever lose.
Let us now be reminded of God's extravagant promises
for each of our lives.

Do you understand yourself to be a child of God,
recipient of God's grace?

Do you? (I do.)

Do you trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?

Do you? (I do.)

Will you make every effort to turn away from the evil and sin in this world,
and turn toward the One who is the way, the truth, and the life?

Will you? (I will.)

Will you seek to both receive God's love and share it with others,
a love that never gives up and never lets go?

Will you? (I will.)

Those are such good and holy words.

In order that you might remember them often,
and in order that you might remember this gathering often,
blue stones like these will be available in bowls at each exit
as you leave this space.

You are invited to reach in to the water and take one.

Let us pray:

This water is ordinary, O God. It came straight from the tap.
But with it, you do extraordinary things
That has always been your way with water.

You called water out of the chaos,
and brought forth life.
Through the flood,
you gave our clumsiness a graceful new beginning.
Through the Red Sea,
you led your people to freedom.
And at a wedding celebration in Cana, with six jars filled to the brim,
you reassured us that extravagance and abundance and joy
always have a place in your world.

So pour out your Spirit upon this water, and upon us.
Renew our faith, that we might trust,
again, or anew,
the promise of your kingdom.
Remind us again that in this water,
you claim us as your own
and bind us to one another as your beloved family.
May ordinary water remind us, every time,
of these promises that are trustworthy and true.
In this we place our hope,
and in this hope, we find our purpose. Amen.

Anthem: "Hope for All Nations" (Black, Cowart, & Gooch)

Offering

Hope, joy, promise, purpose — all of it is a gift from God.
And so we give back:
not out of guilt or obligation,
but out of gratitude and love.
If you would like to give back to God

in a way that continues the ministry and mission of this place,
baskets will be available at the exits,

which means as you depart tonight,
you have opportunity to give back to God,
while also picking up a stone
that reminds you of all that God has given you.
And there is something lovely about that imagery, I think,
not because we purchase or earn grace — not at all —
but because relationship, real relationship,

is always mutual.
With our offering this evening, then,
let us celebrate our God who engages in real relationship with us.

Hymn: *Glory to God* #804 “Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart”

Benediction

Postlude: “Wonderful Words of Life” (arr. Joel Raney)

Worship music provided by Dr. Ron Davis, our worship accompanist, and our Chamber Choir, directed by Greg Watkins and accompanied by Karen Peters.

**Margaret Towner was the first woman ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the UPCUSA (1956). Rachel Henderlite was the first woman ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the PCUS (1965).*



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God through renewal, discovery, and hospitality***



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