



Bible & Church Music Conference
Opening Worship, Sunday, July 24, 2022

Prelude: Christians, We Have Met to Worship (*arr. Howard Helvey*)

Announcements

Introit: You Are the Salt of the Earth (*Doug Brown*)

Call to Worship

If you are filled with excitement, welcome home:

here we proclaim that the world is beautiful and God is good.

If you are nursing some heartbreak, welcome home:

here we offer comfort to those who weep and rest to those who are weary.

If you are swirling with questions, welcome home:

here we nurture belief but make space for doubt.

If you are committed to the story, welcome home:

here we trust old words while listening for new understanding.

If you are searching for hope, welcome home:

here when we worship, God is among us, and everything is possible.

Whoever you are, however you come, welcome home:

we are gathered together, gathered by God.

Hymn: *Glory to God* #401—"Gather Us In"

Call to Confession

Whenever we come into a new space
or a new experience

or even a familiar place now surrounded by new people —
we wonder.

We wonder if we will fit in.

We wonder if others will be friendly.

We wonder if they will sing our favorite hymns.

(We wonder if they will sing that one hymn
that really is the worst ever in the history of Christendom.)

We wonder if there will be room for our theology.

We wonder what we forgot to pack,
because surely we forgot something.

It is human nature to wonder —



about ourselves, our circumstances, even about our God.
I wonder, often, what God thinks about everything going on.
I wonder sometimes why God hasn't given up on us.
I wonder, with incredulity, at God's patience, persistence, and grace.
And I believe God delights in our wonder.
Let these words from the poet Mary Oliver
draw us into a time of honest prayer together:
Truly, we live with mysteries too marvelous
to be understood.

How grass can be nourishing in the
mouths of the lambs.
How rivers and stones are forever
in allegiance with gravity
while we ourselves dream of rising.
How two hands touch and the bonds will
never be broken.
How people come, from delight or the
scars of damage,
to the comfort of a poem.

Let me keep my distance, always, from those
who think they have all the answers.
Let me keep company always with those who say
"Look!" and laugh in astonishment,
and bow their heads.

Let us pray together:

Prayer of Confession

**Mighty and All-Powerful God,
We cannot help but wonder:
Who are we that you should love us?
Who are we that you should use us?
Who are we to dare come into your presence?
For there is no violence you cannot rend.
There is no injustice you cannot abolish.
There is no evil you cannot vanquish.
We know and sing of your strength.**

And yet there is no sin you cannot forgive,



**and no sinner you cannot redeem.
There is no storm you cannot quiet,**

and no wound you cannot heal.

We trust and delight in your grace.

So forgive us, O God,

**when we insist on defining the undefinable,
comprehending the incomprehensible,
and fathoming the unfathomable.**

**Forgive us when we try to make you small enough
to fit our limited understanding.**

Remind us, O God, of all you can do and dare,

**and help us to revel in your mystery,
even as we seek to reflect your love. (Silent Prayer)**

Assurance of Pardon

Response: *Glory to God* #585 “Glory to God”

Dedication of the Font

One of the many blessings of this summer at Massanetta Springs
is the arrival of new worship furnishings.

They are beautiful.

Even more beautiful, though, is the promise of God they each point to,
as we have just experienced here
in the waters of forgiveness, grace, and redemption.

Over the past 100 years,
generations upon generations have worshiped in this space.

We pray that generations upon generations
will continue to do so,

gathered around this font, table, lectern, and pulpit.

For the unending grace and unconditional belonging
that we will find in this font, O God,

We give our thanks and praise.

We dedicate this font to your glory.

(Sung: *Glory to God* #475 “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing” v. 1)

Passing of the Peace

The Peace of Christ be with you!

And also with you!



Anthem: Living Waters (*Jacob Dishman*)

Prayer for Illumination/Dedication of the Pulpit

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path
The grass withers and the flower fades,
but the word of our God shall stand forever.

And the one who was seated on the throne said,
“Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”
We are people of the Word,
shaped by the Word,
seeking to follow the Word.
And so, O God,
... For your living, breathing Word that is spoken here,
for the comfort and the guidance it offers,
for the justice and righteousness it promises,
we give our thanks and praise.

We dedicate this pulpit to your glory.

(Sung: Glory to God #455 Listen to the Word)

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 55:1-9

Matthew 5:12-16

Sermon: “Too Much Salt, Not Enough Love” *Rev. Dr. Margaret G. Kibben*

Glory to God #767 “Together We Serve”

Prayers of the People

God of grace and God of glory,
we are so overwhelmingly grateful to be where we are right now.
And yet, it is the simple truth
that we have carried so much with us.

So much has broken our hearts, just as so much has broken the world.
And everywhere we turn, it seems,
there's cancer diagnoses

and fierce arguments between family and friends,



destructive storms

and the incessant beeping of hospital monitors,

the gut-wrenching silence of an empty house
and the stripping away of human rights,

an avalanche of unpaid bills

and seemingly always the tragedy of another shooting.

Around every corner, there's another endangered species,

and another crop lost to the heat,

and, and, and.

Sometimes the best way we know to be salt of the earth, God,
is to weep.

For one another and with one another.

To cry giant, holy tears and let them hit the ground,
and pray,

pray beyond our own words
that your resurrected insistence will come here
and will not leave until everything broken
has been made whole again.

You can us to be light to the world, God,
and we want to take that seriously,
but sometimes, it seems like the only thing our light is doing
is shining attention on yet more trouble.

Your people have a rocky history,
because even when we're trying our best, we still get it wrong.
We open our doors ... but then trample each other for the best seats.
We open our mouths ... but our tired words have an edge to them.
We open our arms ... but our frightened hands are still balled up into fists.
And yet, somehow, you remain faithful to us.
Somehow, you still see potential.
Your vision is amazing.



Maybe that will be our prayer today, then, God.
That you would give us your vision.
That you would help us see the world, and everyone in it,

through your eyes.
That instead of looking for the worst,
you would help us seek the best.
That while we rightly lament the pain,
we never stop searching for the blessing.
That while we watch and wait and work for what is to come,
we celebrate what already is.

Maybe that will be our prayer every day.
That your resurrection will come and dwell within us
and inspire our love.
That love might be our first defense and not a last resort.
That love might be a bridge.
That love might, once again, be the force that changes the world
and all of us in it.

We have come away for a little while, O God.
Among all that we will practice and learn,
we pray that we will be changed by your love.
In this, as with everything when it comes to you, O God,
we believe; help our unbelief.
Amen.

Dedication of the Table

We come to this table, sometimes for a feast, as we will later this week,
and sometimes for faith.
We come to this table to receive,
and also to give.
Because this table ... it isn't ours.
We do not set the rules.
It is entrusted to us, that we might offer its wonder
to any and all who are hungry.
Mindful of this, remembering that this table is both gift and responsibility,
we take a moment now
to acknowledge this particular table and the gift that it is.
... For all the welcome we will find at this table, O God,
and for abundant feast of both food and faith it will offer,



**we give our thanks and praise.
We dedicate this table to your glory.
(Sung: *Glory to God* #537 “When at this Table” v. 5)
What faith I have, I bring to join this table
what hope I hold in Christ is taught and true
with brothers, sisters (siblings?) I will share the blessing,
the feast where God is making all things new.**

Offering

God is indeed making all things new.
God has always been making all things new —
for that is who God is and what God does.

In gratitude for that unending truth,
let us commit ourselves to sharing God’s unending love
through offering our time and energy and abilities
as well as our financial contributions
so that the ministry of this place would continue.
Baskets are placed at each door to receive our offering this evening.
Let us now offer yet more music to our God
who takes all that we have and all that we are
and makes it an instrument of the Gospel.

Glory to God #312 Take Us As We Are, O God

Benediction

Postlude: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty (*arr. Joel Raney*)



Our new worship suite was built by Rev. Dr. Erich Thompson (HR). He wrote the following about the furniture:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” Genesis 1:1-2

“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price.” Isaiah 55:1 NKJ

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matt 28 19-20 NKJ

Water, literally the foundation of life, and intimately woven into the fabric of faith. The story of water ebbs and flows through Biblical narrative; from the flood, to waters parted, to the wellspring of living waters. It is not the only metaphor which is meaning filled, but it is powerful in its compelling simplicity. We all know that without it, life as we know it ends.

Massanetta Springs stands within that metaphor. And it is fitting that as we celebrate this anniversary, we come back to the centrality of water. Though Word and Sacrament are represented with table, font and pulpit; in this place the font, the water, the springs, are especially important. It is in the claiming waters of baptism that we are received into the family of grace. But the work of the water is not complete in that moment. Throughout our lives, those waters renew our charge, form our challenge, and renew our commission. But we are not only called in to the faith, we are sent out in service. Massanetta Springs serves the Church by drawing in people of all ages; claiming them, nurturing them, feeding them, and sending them into the world strengthened for the service of God’s people.

This celebration begins at the font. Its four sides represent the Gospels, the foundation of our work together. The joy and energy of a splash are represented here, and even bear up the font bowl. The bowl is clear so that the water, the substance of the baptism can be seen.

The pulpit and lectern represent the proclaiming and teaching work of faith. While not all teaching is done from these places, they remind us our or need for continued growth in understanding of Word and world as we take on the challenge of our calling. Drawing on the water form, the pulpit and lectern indicate that they are related to, and expressions of, the claiming work of baptism.

The table reminds us that when we remember Jesus as we eat and drink at table, we are fulfilling the work of the gospels. The water form which serves as the tables base reminds us that just as baptism claims those who are unworthy, ourselves included, the table welcomes all as well. It is in the fellowship of the table that we have a foretaste of the community of heaven.

Soli Deo Gloria.



Tonight's anthem, "Living Waters," was written by Jacob Dishman. He wrote this about the piece: *As a child, Massanetta Springs was a place where I felt the tangible presence of God. In this place the Spirit of God would surround and envelop me. Through the faithful preaching of God's word, the euphoric songs of praise, the company of life-long best friends, and the restful beauty of nature, I always left Massanetta with joy in my heart and a fire to serve God with everything I had within me. Like the spring at the bottom of the hill that flows with restorative waters, God's spirit moves here in abundance.*

It is fitting, then, that to celebrate 100 years of God's work through Massanetta Springs, we would sing a song about living waters. Images of water are found throughout the Christian story. At the beginning of time, the spirit hovers silently over still waters. With spoken word, God separates the waters from the dry land. Water gives life to God's creation. In the same way, we are given life through God's son, who invites us to drink the living waters he provides that quench the thirst of those who seek it. It is these images that I hope to invoke in the introduction of this anthem, which serves as a reminder that the source of all good gifts is our God. In the following section, we hear the living waters start to flow in the piano, and the choir begins to sing a song of celebration of all that God has accomplished through generations past and is accomplishing now. The song ends as it began with the piano imitating the sound of a running stream, signifying the never-ending movement of God's spirit and the love of God that will continue to flow at Massanetta Springs for generations to come.



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God through renewal, discovery, and hospitality***



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