

MCCC Sanctuary Worship Order 2021
October 17, 2021

Gathering Music **I Know Whom I Have Believed**
Jan Green

Roger C. Wilson

Welcome

Welcome to the Mantua Center Christian Church

- **We are a community seeking** to have open minds, open hearts, and open arms, building community in a fragmented world.
- We want to **welcome** everyone who is in the house today and everyone online. We are grateful for all the many ways you can join us for worship on this Lord's Day.
- **Announcements** will be on one sheet at the back of the sanctuary.
 - The after church study group will meet in the fellowship hall immediately after church. Will be having a Seder meal.
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- In worship today
- Let's prepare our hearts and minds for worship with our Opening Scripture Reading...

Opening Scripture

Psalm 51:10-12

- ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
 and put a new and right spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Do not cast me away from your presence,
 and do not take your holy spirit from me.
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,

and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Let's sing together Weave

***Response - Weave**

Weave, weave, weave us together,
Weave us together, in unity and love.
Weave, weave, weave us together,
weave us together, together in love.

***Call to Worship**

Katie Baird

ONE: Awe-inspiring God, we gather together to praise you for
your

tender compassion and care of all people.

**ALL: Come, all who seek the Lord God, offer your
prayers.**

ONE: Listening God, we gather to revere and honor your
supportive

concern for people who cry to you for help.

**ALL: Come, all who seek the Lord God, offer your
praise.**

ONE: People of every nation are called to gather together to
worship God,

in thankfulness for God's loving mercies.

**ALL: Come, all who seek the Lord God, offer your
worship.**

Amen.

— written by Joan Stott

***Opening Hymn**

We Call Ourselves Disciples #357

We call ourselves disciples, as pilgrims on the way.
We seek the truth in wisdom, and beauty in each day.

As women, men, and children, we serve Christ's path to clear.
 In joyful expectation we see God's reign draw near.

Offering of Praise

Katie Baird

This is a Do-it-yourself church. With God's help, we are called to love and serve the people around us. So when Dottie and Becky and Sandy decide that we need to spread kindness and smiles, Dottie and Becky and Sandi asked us all to help, and they create a smile team. And when the Meekers saw hunger in our own neighborhood, they created kids weekend meals to help out. That's how it works. This church and this world is yours, is mine, to make better, more loving. So let us listen...to the world around us and to our own hearts...let us see the needs, and let us serve, let us invite others in, and let us do it together, ourselves. Let us pray. God of abundance, we thank you for the chance to co create this church and this world. Open our eyes and ears to recognize the need. And our hearts to find a way to help. Amen.

Children's Moment

Ally Bozeka

Pastoral Prayer

Nora Brant

Communion

Meditation

Pete Pruszynski

Communion Hymn **In Remembrance of Me** **#403**

In remembrance of Me eat this bread.
 In remembrance of Me drink this wine.
 In remembrance of Me pray for the time
 when God's own will is done.

Take eat and be comforted, drink and remember too.
 That this is my body and precious blood
 shed for you, shed for you.
 In remembrance of Me search for truth.
 In remembrance of Me always love.
 In remembrance of Me don't look above,
 but in your heart, look for God.
 Do this in remembrance of Me

Prayer & Lord's Prayer
Pruszynski
 Words of Institution
Distribution

Pete

Nora Brant

Scripture Reading **Matthew 18:21-22**

“Then Peter came up and saide to Him, ‘Lord, how many times shall my brother sin against me and I still forgive him? Up to seven times?’
 Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven’”

Sermon
Nora Brant

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Then Peter came up and said to Him, “Lord, how many times shall my brother sin against me and I still forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.” The Word of God, for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

Let us pray- May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, Oh Lord, our strength and our Redeemer. Amen

Oh Brother! An expression of surprise, often said with disgust or disdain. Oh Brother! Why not Oh Sister? Perhaps because sisters don't ask you to play hide and seek and put you in a dresser drawer with only the slightest opening crack and then go off and do whatever they wanted to do without interruption. Oh Brother!

Or when the guy for whom you have been waiting for weeks to call and ask you to Homecoming finally calls sisters don't hang up quickly and say "He just asked if you were here, he didn't ask to talk to you." Oh Brother!

The Bible has precious little to say about sisters compared to brothers but it is filled with stories about the conflicts of siblings. The story from the first two brothers is not exactly one of brotherly love. Adam and Eve first had two sons, Cain, a farmer, and Abel, a shepherd. Both made sacrifices to God, but God favored Abel's sacrifice over Cain's and told Cain that if he strives to do well his will also be accepted by God. If he strives to do well? In response in a fit of jealousy, Cain then killed Abel and proceeded to sass talk to God by asking "Am I my brother's keeper? Oh Brother! Really God was just asking him to strive to do well- and shouldn't we all strive to do well?"

A couple of weeks ago we heard about Esau losing his birthright and blessing to his twin brother, Jacob, with the conniving help of his mother, Rebecca. Taking advantage of the visual infirmities of his father, Isaac's old age and stealing what was rightfully Esau's is downright despicable. Oh Brother!

And let's not forget Joseph, sold for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites and taken to Egypt. Eleven brothers, jealous of an article of clothing, and not one of them spoke up convincingly enough to stop this cruel scheme. How tragic to be ganged up on by the very ones who should be protecting and mentoring you! Oh Brother!

I just spent the last week with my two older sisters. Both of them have moved states away from the family farm and have their children and grandchildren nearby and have made a new circle of friends in their homes there. My house is big enough for them to both come stay at the same time and we try to do that a couple times a year. I call it Brant's Bed and make your own Breakfast!" I love this sister time. I'm always happy to see Mare even though I got the only spanking I remember getting for throwing a pair of those kids rounded end scissors at her and couldn't understand why I was being punished when I missed her. I'm not about to tell you Mare and I didn't have some hair pulling bouts growing up but we've grown out of that stage and much to what would have been my parents surprise, I'm sure, we have become close friends.

How does it happen that we can be friends despite all the bickering and name calling of our youth? How did Easu move forward from the manipulating deceit of his mother and brother even after twenty years of Jacob's absence to seek a relationship with him? How did Joseph, recognizing his brothers begging for food at the palace not say "Too bad, so sad, you should have planned ahead!"?

What is the common denominator in these stories? Quite simply, it is forgiveness. It is the act of forgiveness that is a gift we give not only to those who have wronged us, but one we give to ourselves. Forgiveness is freeing. Forgiveness is healing. Forgiveness opens the door for a renewed relationship.

After hearing that Esau planned to kill him after their father's death and escaping in fear and wandering far from his family for years, are we like Jacob? Do we sometimes chose to isolate ourselves instead of risking reconciliation? Rather than offer an apology, we cower in silence, trying to preserve our power and self-esteem. Are you like the

four year old me, holding onto the grudge of undeserved punishment because the scissors missed their mark rather than really looking at ourselves and taking responsibility? What does it take for us to move from old ways that are self-destructive and risk the opportunities for renewed relationships?

The story tells us that Jacob, traveling back home with his family, learns that his brother is headed his way with 400 men. Considering the circumstances of his leaving so many years before, he is understandably fearful. No drones to check out how heavily armed these men are, no cell phones to call for his own support team. And when Jacob is met with love and forgiveness in his brother's embrace how does he respond? With yet another act of deceit! "Go on ahead," he tells Esau, "I'll catch up." and then because of his own deceitful nature is unable to trust Esau and proceeds to take off in another direction.

How like Jacob are we? Heading off in our own direction after promising to work together in our relationships at home, at work, and in our community and in the world?

What happens when we have no trust and no hope? Are we like Jacob, defining our present and future only by the mistakes of our past? Is God telling us simply to strive to do well? Perhaps that calls us to be like Esau- reaching out for reconciliation with a hopeful embrace? And sometimes that means embracing ourselves.

As Esau said to Jacob in Genesis 33:12 Let us start on our journey together, and may it lead us to trust, hope and peace. Oh Brother; let it be so! Amen

Closing Hymn A Mighty Fortress is Our God #65, v.2
Did we in our own strength confide,

our striving would be losing,
but there is one who takes our side,
the One of God's own choosing.
You ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is he;
with mighty power to save victorious o'er the grave,
Christ will prevail triumphant!

***Benediction**

Nora Brant

Departing Music
Jan Green

Enter His Courts With Praise

Adam Mason