

The Downtown Presbyterian Church
Third Sunday after Pentecost
Pride Service



Photo courtesy of enfleshed.com

Gathering in God's Name

*Please rise in body or in spirit.

⊕ Enfleshed.com

⊕ ⊕ More Light PC(USA)

WELCOME

OPENING VOLUNTARY

Prelude on For the Beauty of the Earth

John Carter, arr.

(Please meditate quietly during the Opening Voluntary.)

*CALL TO WORSHIP ⊕

We gather, remembering the story of Jesus casting demons out of a man,
that he may be free from suffering.

We rage against systems of violence

that have attempted to cast out the “demon” of queerness.

We know the true demons that must be cast out are those of colonialism,
of endless extraction,

and of all death-dealing ways.

We know that queerness, itself, extends the healing hand of the Living Christ—
a path towards liberation and authentic ways of being,

a path towards cooperation and abundant life.

Come, beloveds of every sexuality and gender identity — Queer your Spirits!

Cast out the Demons of Oppression!

Bless the Earth with God's wily and subversive love!

*HYMN 430

Come Sing, O Church in Joy!

*CALL TO CONFESSION ⊕ ⊕

In a world heavy with suffering, we are right to seek and safeguard joy —
but do we know what true joy is? Together, let us lament the times we've missed the mark, and
recommit to cultivating joy for all God's people.

*CONFESSION ⊕ ⊕

Holy God, sometimes we conflate joy with mere pleasure; peace with the blocking out of pain and
protest, and your church becomes oppression's lair - where the most vulnerable are robbed of joy.

We lament the wounds that are opened again and again

when we prioritize the comfort of the privileged

over the safety and belonging of the oppressed.

We resist empty promises that “all are welcome”

that come with strings attached.

Sometimes we over-individualize joy, forgetting

that my joy is your joy, your struggle is my struggle.

We confess our tendency to fight only for our own communities,

only for the most “respectable” of our number.

We lament the things we've done

in our attempts to gain a seat at the table

Jesus calls us to flip.

(silent prayer)

O Lord forgive us and strengthen us, that we may have the power
to live as you have called us to live;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON** ^{† †}

Kin in Christ,
the joy that endures is this:
that Jesus came that all may enjoy abundant life,
and that God's rebellious Spirit frees us
to pursue nothing less than full equity, justice, and joy
for all of Creation.

***PASSING OF THE PEACE** ^{† †}

Emboldened by this truth, let us embrace one another
in peace — not an easy peace, not a halfhearted peace,
but the disruptive peace of Jesus, in whom we are one.
May the peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

***COMMUNAL RESPONSE TO THE PEACE (Gloria Patri HYMN 579)**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

SACRED CONNECTION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

**For the wonder and love of our young people, we give You thanks, O God. Help us to remain
open to what they teach us and faithful in what we share with them. Together, let us become
the church you have in mind. Amen.**

Encountering the Living Word of God

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

First Lesson Galatians 5:1, 13-26
Holy Wisdom, holy Word.
Thanks be to God!

Second Lesson Luke 8:26-39
The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Sermon We are Expressions of God's Love
Family Values Summer Sermon Series, Week 1

Rev. Zach Sasser

Responding to God's Word and Call

*HYMN 218 New Songs of Celebration Render

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (from DPC Values)

As followers of the way of Jesus, we believe that God's love is for everyone and that Christ's ministry of proclamation is our ministry of proclamation. Through God's love, we welcome and embrace everyone. No exceptions. We serve God by serving our neighbors. We affirm that everyone has been formed in the image of God, who creates; therefore, we create in partnership with God. We believe that *every* person is a beloved child of God.

Our welcome extends to everyone, regardless of economic circumstances, faith background, racial or ethnic identity, immigration status, sexual orientation or gender identity, or political party affiliation. God's radically inclusive and transformative love is for everyone. With love and grace, we are called as a community to grow together as a voice for justice and peace, each as we are, with our unique human stories of joy and struggle.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & INVITATIONS

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER^{† †}

Holy and Living God, we come to you to pray for all people. Deliver us from fear of others. May we be a people who keep each other safe. May we open ourselves to the queerness of your world.

God in your queerness,

Hear our prayer.

(The prayers of the congregation are given voice.)

With Christ we pray the words shared with us long ago...

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors;

and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

COLLECTION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS^{† †}

Beloved of God, in a world that often tries to steal our joy, diminish our light, and silence our truth, giving becomes an act of resistance. Every gift we bring — whether financial, spiritual, or embodied — is a declaration that we are still here, still loving, still hoping, still rejoicing. We give today not out of guilt or fear, but out of joy—the deep, defiant kind of joy that knows God delights in who we are. Our offering is a song of praise. A protest. A prayer. A proclamation that love will have the final word. Let us give, then, with glad and generous hearts, sowing seeds of justice, beauty, and liberation.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Laudate Dominum

W. A. Mozart
Mary Sallee, arr.

***DOXOLOGY (Hymn 591)**

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all people here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore.
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.*

***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION^{† ‡}**

Holy One, We bring these gifts with joyful hearts, trusting in your abundance. Bless what we offer — money, time, talents, and authenticity—and let it multiply into healing for the hurting, hope for the weary, and freedom for the oppressed. Make us a people who give with courage, who live with audacity, and who find joy — not as escape, but as the very anchor of our faith. In the name of the Liberating Christ, whose love never fails, Amen.

***HYMN 386 O for a World**

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

WORSHIP NOTES - Today's service is an attempt to reconcile our faith in God, who welcomes all, with historical and present condemnations toward LGBTQ+ people made by those who claim to follow the way of Jesus. Some of our liturgy comes from *Enfleshed.com*, which is written by faithful members of the LGBTQ+ community. Other portions come from *More Light*, an affiliate group of PC(USA) congregations, and is written by allies and LGBTQ+ members as well. We should note that the term “queer” has had a variety of meanings and contextual applications since its origin in the 16th century CE. We are using it as an affirmation of the “strangeness” or “separateness” of God, but also an affirmation of those in the LGBTQ+ community as equally created in the image of God.