



Westminster Presbyterian Church  
Eugene, Oregon  
“At Home” Worship  
June 14, 2020

*(if you have a prayer request you would like added to  
the At- Home Worship service,  
please email Brooke [office@wpceugene.org](mailto:office@wpceugene.org).)*

*Gathering Around God’s Word*

*If you are worshipping with another family member or with  
children, you are invited to have different voices share and  
read the various parts of the service.*

**Call to Worship**

**Worship the Lord with gladness!  
We come into God’s presence with singing!  
For the Lord our God is good.  
God’s steadfast love endures forever.**

**Opening Hymn**

*All People That on Earth Do Dwell* #385

**Call to Confession**

**Through our Lord Jesus Christ we have obtained  
access to the grace in which we stand. With  
confidence in God’s grace, let us confess our sin.**

## Prayer of Confession

**Loving God, without your grace we are like sheep without a shepherd. Sometimes we are harassed by sin and feel helpless against its power. Sometimes, in our sin, we use our own power to harass and harm the helpless. Forgive us, O Lord, and bring us home. Restore us to your flock and fold, we pray; through Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd. Amen.**

## Assurance of Pardon

**Hear the good news of God's love: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God.**

## *The Word*

## Prayer for Illumination

**Loving God, by your Spirit open our hearts and minds this day. Speak to us with a word of life— a message that we may share with others as we seek to live Christ's love in the world. All this we ask in the name of God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us. Amen.**

## Scripture Readings

### *Old Testament Reading: Psalm 100*

**Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.  
Worship the Lord with gladness;  
come into his presence with singing.**

**Know that the Lord is God.  
It is he that made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.**

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,  
and his courts with praise.  
Give thanks to him, bless his name.

For the Lord is good;  
his steadfast love endures for ever,  
and his faithfulness to all generations.

*New Testament Reading: Romans 5:1-8*

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

**Reflection**

The Rev. Marta Z Ukropina

Our Lectionary Psalm this morning is Psalm 100 which at its heart is a Psalm of praise, thanksgiving and joy. You may be like me and are finding it hard lately to be joyful or give thanks and praise and that is exactly why we need to reflect on it. Psalm 100 is one of the most well known, memorized Psalms. In fact, one of our most familiar hymn tunes is named for this Psalm. It is called

the Old Hundredth to give nod to the Psalm (our opening hymn, *All People That on Earth Do Dwell*, is set to that tune). One of the most well known hymns set to this tune is The *Doxology*. Doxology is simply translated “saying glory” and that is what the hymn does:

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow.  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

Many churches sing the Doxology right after the Offertory as a time to give thanks and praise to God. It is often one of the first hymns that people and children memorize because they sing it week after week.

In my opinion, I have in my possession the most wonderful video of the Doxology. It is of our son, Eric, when he is no more than 5 years old. He had learned the Doxology in worship and Sunday School and wanted me to record him singing it. It is just his adorable little boy voice singing praise to God—a simple offering of adoration and joy. It is an act of worship, pure and simple and the joy is apparent in the glimmer of his eyes. I know I am biased as his mother in thinking the video is just plain wonderful, but I think that perhaps the feelings that video stirs within me are the feelings that are stirred within God when God sees us remembering to offer God our praise and worship.

Praising and worshipping God is something we are all called to do at all times. I think we all know this, but I also think we are realistic and know that sometimes we do not feel up to it. How do we praise God when we are feeling anything but joyful?

Life has its fair share of miseries and hardships—times where joy can seem distant or even impossible. Right now we seem to be living in a time where evil, fear, suffering, uncertainty and violence are the main

characters of each and every news story. In fact, I would venture to say that I am not the only one who has found that some days I just can't take one more news story. From Covid-19 to racism to unrest to violence to corruption to political division to disasters, to murder hornets (ha!) I have had enough. It is exhausting, maddening and heartbreaking. Sometimes it is more than I can take and I find myself wanting to retreat into a hole for a few days, thank you very much. Just give me a soft fleece blanket, a pillow, and a good book, maybe a pint of cookies and cream ice cream and I'll catch you next week!

But hiding from the world's problems isn't exactly helpful either. So instead, when I am feeling that way, I try to limit my endless scrolling through my phone, maybe take a walk, play a game with the kids, or offer up a quick (or long) prayer to God. When we are feeling overwhelmed and filled with fear Psalms of lament are very accessible. "*You have seen, O Lord; do not be silent*" (Psalm 35). "*Why do you hide your face?*" (Psalm 44) Now those are words I can get behind! Lament is a season we are all experiencing right now.

But actually, we are called to be joyful and give our praises to God at **all times** even when we may just feel like lamenting. And this is just what Psalm 100 calls us all to do. Let us all rejoice in God in spite of the pandemic, economic distress and uncertain futures. Let us all rejoice in God even when we are grappling with racism and political turmoil, violence and unrest. As one commentator put it, let us "grab evil by the neck and shout loud hosannas!" Because God is still God and God is with us all the time!

And maybe that is all we need today—a reminder that God is God—always has been and always will be. God has been with people throughout time and throughout disasters and suffering that we can only imagine. And

God is with us today. God is God and that alone is worthy of our praise.

Our world needs joy and our world longs for peace and hope. I got an email this week from a clothing company that I purchase items from every now and then. The subject of the email was “New Arrivals = So. Much. Joy!” Now normally, I wouldn’t even notice that subject line, but when you are knee deep in preparing a sermon about rejoicing it leapt off the screen at me. Our world is desperate for joy! Our world is seeking out a savior. Does a pair of new, well fitting yoga pants bring me joy? I would be lying if I didn’t say that, for me, there is some joy, or maybe a better word would be happiness, in new clothes. For you it might be purchasing a new car or going out to a restaurant, or harvesting that first vegetable from your garden or cutting that beautiful flower from your backyard and bringing it into your house to enjoy. These are all good things and there is nothing wrong with them giving us a jolt of joy or recognizing the endorphins they produce.

But there is a difference between things that bring temporal joy like new yoga pants and the deep, life giving, sustaining joy that we have in Christ. The joy we have as children of God cannot be taken away by anything and it is always there even when we have a hard time recognizing it. God does not want us to feel like things are hopeless and bleak. That is why he sent Jesus to live among us and take on all the sins and sufferings of this life. Jesus came to offer us a peace in God that is full of abundant, freely given grace.

For the past few weeks, I have found myself recalling the hymn: *My Life Flows on in Endless Song—How Can I Keep From Singing?* It just appears in my mind at odd times and I have started to listen to it and pray the words. My grandmother died two years ago and we were so fortunate to be able to gather as an extended family at her church home in Lancaster County, PA.

Lancaster County is a home for all of us as she lived in the same house for over 50 years. None of us live there now, but we all gathered together to worship God and give witness to the resurrection by celebrating with joy the gift of her life. *How Can I Keep from Singing?* was our opening hymn and I will never again hear it without thinking of that day—gathered together with my family surrounded by God’s love as we remembered Nana. It is a beautiful hymn to sing at a memorial service—or really to sing anytime because at its heart is a message of hope and joy.

The original title of the hymn was “Always Rejoicing” and the hymn reminds us to do just that. through lamentation, tumult, strife, and darkness, God is there with us. The peace of Christ surrounds us and sustains us throughout all the storms of life. It is because of God’s love and grace that we can live lives of joy. We can live in the midst of suffering and sadness and live lives filled with joy because we cling to the Rock of our salvation.

In fact, back to our world seeking out joy for a minute. This hymn has been adapted for the secular set. The refrain in our hymnal is: *No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that **Rock** I’m clinging, since **Christ is Lord** of heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?*

It has been adapted to: *No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that **rock** I’m clinging, since **love is lord** of heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?*

The basic message of the song is still the same—we live in a world filled with struggles and pain. There is a longing for the joy of a savior to free us from all that ails us. Love is wonderful, love is powerful, but love with a lowercase “l” is not a savior. But Love with an uppercase “L” is a gift from God. We love because God first loved us.

The Love God has for us does not end. The Love God has for us is in Christ who is a Rock to which we can cling. To quote another hymn: *all other ground is sinking sand*.

The Psalm calls us to praise and worship God with joy. Praising and worshipping God with joy is coming just as you are—mentally, physically, spiritually...filled with faith or doubts. It is resting in the promises God gives us all. It is abiding in our faith knowing that God is there even when we have a difficult time seeing God.

Praising and worshipping God with joy is recognizing the darkness that may be closing in, but knowing that the darkness doesn't have the last word—that the strifes and tumults of this life are NOT what God intends for us, God's precious creation.

Praising and worshipping God with joy is giving a space for us to hear with new ears and see with new eyes so we can go from our worship to help a world that is in desperate need, desperate for a savior, desperate for joy, peace, and hope.

Praising and worshipping God with joy reminds us of our belonging to the whole family of God. It reminds us of a Good Shepherd, of being loved and welcomed just as we are.

And with all of that, how can we keep from singing?

Amen.

### *Responding to God's Word*

#### *Affirmation of Faith—The Apostles' Creed*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,



born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

### **Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer**

Holy God, bring stillness to our hearts, empty our minds of other things and direct our thoughts to those who especially need our prayers.

When we reflect on how you have supported and cared for us in the past, we cannot fail to give you thanks. When we consider the way you give us courage and help for each new day, we are filled with a sense of gratitude and praise.

When you lift us from the pit of doubt and despair, our whole being feels renewed and refreshed. What a comfort it is, to know the love and support you bring to us through your Son and by your Spirit.

In our joy, let us not forget those this morning who know little else but sadness. In our sense of gratitude and praise, let us not forget those whose lives are filled with regrets and heartbreaks. In our feeling of support and guidance, let us not forget those who feel they have struggled against life's difficulties and disappointments alone and uncared for.

In our desire to give You praise,

do not blur our vision of the hardship in this life. The despair of the forgotten.  
The injustice in our world.  
The feelings of guilt by parents who cannot feed their children.  
The worries and fears of those in hospital.  
The isolation of the lonely.  
The deep sense of loss to those in bereavement.

You are not only the God of this world,  
you are the ruler of your heavenly Kingdom.  
Strengthen us while we live out our life on this earth, to show the compassion and the caring of Jesus. Hold before us the reality of your Kingdom, where there is no suffering, pain or regret, so that we may share it with those who are without hope filling our earth with your joy. For we ask all these things through Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us to pray:

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.

### *Sending of God's Word*

Closing Hymn:            *My Life Flows On*            #821  
                                  *How Can I Keep from Singing?*

### Charge and Benediction

May the love of God, the grace of Christ, and the Spirit's peace be with you always. Amen.