

GATHERING

Prelude

Welcome

Good morning! Grace to you and peace in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And Welcome to worship with First Presbyterian Church. Our worship is always a celebration of the boundary-breaking love we experience in Jesus to push back the darkness and heal fractured relationships. Today in that spirit of justice and reconciliation, we celebrate Juneteenth. We give thanks for the day that the last state heard the news of the emancipation of our African American brothers and sisters from slavery (remarkably, to me, in Galveston, Texas, the city where I was born). Today is also the day, after a year's work, we commission and send out our 46-person strong Casas Por Cristo Team to build three homes for unhoused and poorly housed families in Juarez, Mexico. We had a pretty terrific All-Church Picnic in Bonner Park last Sunday. Three new members joined this church family. Harry and Nancy Newcom. And Elaine Brye. – welcome them. Let us prepare our hearts to worship the living God. Would you stand for the call to worship?

Call to Worship

One: What does the Lord require of you?

**All: To do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with our God.**

One: What does God command of us?

**All: To love God with all our heart, and all our soul,
and all our mind, and all our strength,
and to love our neighbor as ourselves.**

One: God does not call us to ease or to comfort.

All: But to presence, and abundance, and grace in our struggle.

One: Let us worship the God who believes in us,
and trusts in us, and abides with us.

**All: Let us worship the God who will ask much of us,
but will be beside us every step of the way.**

Gathering Song: Gather Us In

Here in this place new light is streaming, now is the darkness vanished away.
See in this space our fears and our dreamings, brought here to you in the light of this day.

Gather us in, in the lost and forsaken, gather us in; the blind and the lame;
Call to us now, and we shall awaken; we shall arise at the sound of our name.

Here we receive new life in the waters; here we receive the bread of new birth;
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters, call us a new to be salt for the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion; give us to eat the bread that is you;
Nourish us well, and teach us to fashion lies that are holy and hearts that are true.

Not in the dark of buildings confining, not in some heaven, light years away,
Here in this place the new light is shining; now is God present, and now is the day.

Gather us in and hold us forever; gather us in and make us your own;
Gather us in, all peoples together, fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

Marty Haugen***

PRAISING

Prayer of Adoration

Lord of justice and mercy, we come to you this day seeking your healing and reconciling love. Help us to be open to your word, your presence, your compassion.

Reorient our hearts and our minds so that after we go from worship we may continue your ministry of justice, liberation, and love to and for all people.

In the name of Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen

Across the Lands

You're the Word of God the Father, from before the world began;
Every star and every planet has been fashioned by Your hand.
All creation holds together by the power of Your voice:
Let the skies declare Your glory, let the land and seas rejoice!

*Refrain: You're the Author of creation! You're the Lord of everyone!
And Your cry of love rings out across the lands.*

Yet You left the gaze of angels, came to seek and save the lost,
And exchanged the joy of heaven for the anguish of a cross.
With a prayer You fed the hungry, with a word You stilled the sea.
Yet how silently You suffered that the guilty may go free. *Refrain*

With a shout You rose victorious, wrestling victory from the grave,
And ascended into heaven, leading captives in Your wake.
Now You stand before the Father interceding for Your own.
From each tribe and tongue and nation, You are leading sinners home. *Refrain*
Stuart Townend and Keith Getty**

BELONGING

Prayer of Confession

During our time of confession, we consider our hearts and hands,
The good we have left undone, the harm we have caused,
The ways we have been complicit in tearing the fabric of community.
And at the same time, God holds love and grace for us.
Trusting in that truth, let us come before God in prayer.

Loving and merciful One,
We confess that we fail to love as you love.
We push aside those whom we believe are the least in your Kingdom.
We fear the "other", and do not hold loving space for those who are different from us.
We fail to see Christ in each other.

O Creator God, forgive us when we fear difference, when we minimize diversity, and when we forget that your image is only reflect within us when we live into the uniqueness of our identity.

Lord, give us the eyes of Jesus
to see our neighbors and the strangers we meet,
to be moved with compassion into action,
to care for one another well.

Form in us a new vision of community
in which there are no outsiders:
Where all are seen and welcomed into the family.

We pray for the sake of your Kingdom
that both is and is not yet, as we sing together, Lord, have mercy.

Song: Lord, Have Mercy

Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy.
Holy Spirit, rest upon us, lead us in the way of Your justice.
Holy Spirit, rest upon us, teach us how to serve in our weakness.

Assurance of Forgiveness

In God's Kingdom, all are loved for who they are,
not what they do;
In God's Kingdom, all are forgiven for what they do,
and don't;
In God's Kingdom, all are welcomed and fed
by God's grace and hope.
One: Forgiven, loved, sent forth—
All: We are not far from God's Kingdom!
Thanks be to God. Amen.

FORMING

Sermon: Luke 10:25-37 – Austin Graef

²⁵ On one occasion, an expert in the law stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” ²⁷ And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁸ And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”

²⁹ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰ Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion. ³⁴ He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own donkey and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ And the next day he took out two denarii^[a] and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” ³⁷ He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

I think it's possible that the parable of the Good Samaritan is one of the most famous stories in scripture. Frankly, it goes right up there with David and Goliath, or Jesus walking on water, or with Cain and Abel as one of the most well-renowned passages in the Bible, taking with it implications that permeate even into the secular world. And yet, for all of its fame, I think we still fail to properly understand what's lying in the parable. So, to fully illustrate it and where I'm going today, I'm going to need some help. Who remembers who all is in this story besides Jesus and the lawyer? There's the man who was beaten, yes. There are the robbers! Right. The priest and the Levite, sure. And the Samaritan, and finally, the innkeeper.

Ultimately our man who is traveling is just like anybody else. It doesn't give us a lot of details, but we can assume that is part of the tribes of Israel. Therefore, probably just a common man. Robbers are nothing new. There will always be those who take advantage of others goodwill. But our priest is a holy man. They're someone who is set aside to do holy work in the temple. They'd be like the equivalent of Pastor Dan here. And our Levite is someone who might not be like a priest or a pastor, but would be closer to perhaps a liturgist here in the church. The Samaritan is the tricky one though. The Samaritans were religious and cultural rivals of the people of Israel. The, to us, might be like an extremist Muslim, or the kind of person who we might be prejudicious to say “looks like a terrorist.” Yeah, that's a horrible thing to say, I know. But that's how extreme this parable is that Jesus is telling. He's saying that the people who you might trust most would leave you for dead, and that the person who you may be, wrongly or rightly, most afraid of or hateful towards, is the person who's helping you here.

But here's the deal: the question that the lawyer asks is “who is my neighbor?” And this is a fair question to ask! We find out in this particular parable that the “neighbor” to the traveller is the person you'd least expect, the Samaritan, who showed him kindness. It makes sense to say that, regardless of whatever social or political or religious background someone comes from, we should love them if they love us. There's a flaw to this though... elsewhere in scripture, we learn that we are to love even those who persecute us, who curse us, who hate us. Because it's easy to love the people who love you, anybody can do that. But we are called to love any- and everybody.

I think, when we view the parable of the Good Samaritan, we look at it from the perspective of the man traveling, saying “the Samaritan is my neighbor because they had compassion for me.” And I think that this is the wrong point of the parable: the point was to put ourselves in the shoes of the Samaritan. See, Jesus reminds us that we all too often ask the wrong question - it shouldn't be “*who* is my neighbor,” it should be about “*how do I be the good neighbor?*” The Samaritan teaches us that we are to cross boundaries in order to extend the hand of love to whoever is in need of it. The Samaritan teaches us that we are called to be neighbors to everybody, and that by doing so, that love of God is extended to every man and woman without prejudice. The Samaritan teaches us that it is our duty to go out of our way, to be interruptible, and to be gracious with what we have, not being afraid to give out of our own wallet and time to care for the people around us.

I want to tell you a story to illustrate this. When I was living in Mississippi, doing my Biblical research program, towards the end of the year we went on an excursion that included hitchhiking, backpacking, rock climbing, and a 48 hour long solo. For the hitchhiking, you've got 72 hours to get from Jackson, MS to Roswell, NM, and after all the backpacking and the solo, you've got 72 hours to get back. So, it's my friends Nick, Chloe, and me, and we're stranded on the outside of Roswell going East, and it's scorching. I mean, it's the end of May or beginning of June, and we're cooking on the side of the road. Anyway, this couple pulls up headed INTO Roswell, Roy and Vicky Fort, to do a roofing job, and I'm telling you these folks are about as Texas as they come. Anyway, they tell us (it's about 10am) that if we're still stranded on the side of the road by the time they come back, they'll get us a ride to Lubbock, which was really as far as we could hope to make it that day. Anyway, a couple hours later some folks pick us up and we're hotdogging it at 75 in a 100° on a flatbed trailer holding on for dear life, and they take us about an hour east of Roswell before they drop us off and head elsewhere. So we're waiting outside this gas station, it's about 4pm, and we head back to the high way. And what do you know, who shows up but Roy and Vicky Fort.

So this couple, they ask us a little about how and what we're doing, and we tell them about this Biblical research and leadership training program we're in, and that our hitchhiking was the sort of “practical exam” to really trust God in all that we had learned, and that He would provide for us. So this couple, they pick us up, and they take us to dinner, and I had these little steak frites, and oh man they were amazing. Deep fried and delicious, the way Texas does most things. But here's the deal - after feeding us, they take us into Lubbock and they take us to a hotel and pay for a room for the night. Then, they give us \$100 or \$120. *Then*, they say, if we're *still* stranded in Lubbock by the end of the following day, they'd let us stay in their home, and they'd take us to church the next day and find us a ride all the way back to Jackson.

Here's the thing, these weren't wealthy people. Roy and Vicky were older, working class folks, well into their 60's, with *absolutely nothing to gain* from helping us. There was nothing that any of us could offer them besides humble gratitude. But here's the other thing: Roy and I could not be more different politically. We come from different backgrounds and demographics, and probably would have been on opposite sides of a fence at a rally. In almost any other circumstance, Roy and I never would have even spoken to each other, much less become friends.

There have been countless theological seminaries, or Christian colleges or various religious institutions that have conducted experiments designed to imitate the circumstances of the Good Samaritan shortly after teaching these folks about it, and with almost 100% failure every single time. It's the religious people who have the hardest time meeting the standard that Jesus sets in this teaching, which is not to *identify* the neighbor, but to *be* the neighbor. And yet, it's simple disciples, like you folks, who seek opportunities to serve like we plan on doing in Mexico starting tomorrow morning, that seem to get it.

The lawyer asks this question, “what do I have to do to gain eternal life?” Another way to phrase it would be, “what are the minimum requirements for entry into the Kingdom of Heaven?” And all too often, that's our posture, is to do the bare minimum that's required of us. And Jesus corrects this in two ways: first, he says that we are to be generous. We don't necessarily let someone bog us down, but we give what's needed, and we give it freely. The Samaritan paid the expert to look after the man, and he paid out of his own pocket. He knew where to draw the line, saying “I'll take him as far as I can, then provide for him to be taken care of better than I can,” and he moves on, leaving the traveller in good care. The second way is by giving the lawyer a commandment: “go and *do* likewise.” He doesn't send him away saying “go and *know* who is your neighbor and who to serve.” He commands the man instead to go and *do* as the Samaritan has done, by crossing cultural, religious, and political boundaries to serve with indiscriminate generosity.

If you do this right, it will cost you something. It will always cost you something. Of course, I mean it might cost you a couple bucks, whatever. But there will be a cost on how people see you because of your choosing to love people who look, act, think, and pray differently than you. There will be a cost to the image you've spent your life building up because you decided that being the good neighbor was more important than self-service. There will be a cost to willingly extending yourself and giving to someone who has absolutely nothing to offer in return. There is always a price to

friendship with Jesus, and Jesus tells us that we are his friends if we do what he teaches us, if we take the time to let His words go from our heads into our hearts, to change our thinking and to change our actions.

This is the command - not to know your neighbor, but to *be* the good neighbor. Not to know what Christ commands, but to *go and do* likewise. So then: go and do likewise.

Song of Response: Let Us Be Known

Let us be known by our love. In every word, in every deed honor the Son.

Let our light shine in every eye. Let us be known by our love.

*Refrain: For the glory of the Father, for the glory of the Son, for the glory of
The Spirit: let us be known by our love.*

Let us be known by our joy. In every home, in every heart, sing to the Lord.

Let our life show goodness and hope. Let us be known by our joy. *Refrain*

Let us be known by our peace. In every town, in every tribe, Jesus is the King.

Let us go forth, heal and restore. Let us be known by our peace. *Refrain*

Micah Massey, Ryan Flanigan, Matt Armstrong and Nate Moore**

STEWARDING

Invitation to Offering

During the time of offering we get to see where the needs of the world meet God's calling for us to enter into the work of partnering with Christ to make things right here on earth. This week many of you will offer your hard work & a week of your life to meet a very tangible need: shelter for families in Mexico. We all get to consider the ways in which generosity becomes a rhythm in our lives, a response to what God has given. So let us listen for the Spirit's voice and respond with faithful, tangible action.

Song for Meditation: Teach Us Your Ways

Isaac Wardell, Leslie Jordan, Orlando Palmer and Paul Zach

Prayers of the People

Today is Juneteenth, the commemoration of the end of slavery in the United States.

We are a people who love a God whose good news proclaims freedom to the oppressed.

And we know that the end of slavery was not the end of racial injustice.

And so as a church we are called to both celebrate each step towards freedom and justice for all, while still acknowledging the ways in which injustice still permeates our world today.

Let us join our hearts together in prayer.

In the beginning, God created all that is seen and unseen;
every human being, unique among the rest of the Creation,
reflecting the glory and image of our expansive Creator.

And God looked upon the earth and spoke the truth
that has been spoken over humanity since the very beginning:

“This is very good.”

And yet we have not always recognized the dignity and divinity of each human being.

Our history carries the weight of slavery, of mistreatment, of lynching.

Of discrimination based on skin color.

We know that racism and every other form of
discrimination breaks your heart, Lord, and that it should break ours, too.

You who reached across the ethnic boundaries between Samaritan, Roman and Jew, who offered fresh sight to the blind and freedom to captives, help us to break down the barriers in our community and create a space that embraces the hopes and fears of oppressed people of color where we live, as well as those around the world. Enable us to see the reality of discrimination, and free us to challenge and uproot it from ourselves, our society and our world.

We pray for those we might cross the road to avoid:
those who have been excluded because of their race, their sexuality,
their gender identity, their financial status, their history.

Open our eyes, that we might not cross the road from human need.
Give us a deep love for you, that we might see your love at work in this world,
and that we might Go and do likewise.

Give us strength and courage to speak out against injustice, and to work for the transformation of unjust systems that keep many in bondage: that we may more fully live out your kingdom here on earth; through Jesus Christ your Son, who came to set us free. Amen.

Let's sing together from Amos 5: Let justice roll down.

Song: Let Justice Roll Down

Let justice roll down like a river. Let justice roll on down.
And righteousness like a mighty stream: let justice roll down like a river.
From Amos 5; Written by Benjamin Brody

SENDING

Commissioning of the Casas por Cristo Mission Team

Sending Song: Hear the Call of the Kingdom

Hear the call of the kingdom, lift your eyes to the King; Let His song rise within you as a fragrant offering
Of how God, rich in mercy, came in Christ to redeem All who trust in His unfailing grace.

Hear the call of the kingdom to be children of light With the mercy of heaven, the humility of Christ;
Walking justly before Him, loving all that is right, That the life of Christ may shine through Him.

*Refrain: King of heaven, we will answer the call. We will follow, bringing hope to the world,
Filled with passion, filled with power to proclaim Salvation in Jesus' name.*

Hear the call of the kingdom to reach out to the lost With the Father's compassion in the wonder of the cross,
Bringing peace and forgiveness and a hope yet to come: Let the nations put their trust in Him. *Refrain*
Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty and Stuart Townend**

Benediction

Now unto Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we can ask or even imagine, to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to our Savior who reigns in heaven, to him be blessing, and glory, and honor, today and from generation to generation. And all the people of God said, "Amen."

Leading in Worship This Morning:

Liturgist: Tammi Allison

Sermon: Austin Graef

Musicians: Cheyenne Brown, Emma Thackston, Saje Johns

Slide, Sound and Video Techs: Pat Scott, Gary Jones and Ron Righter

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PRAYER LIST

Ongoing Prayer Support: Victor Schlimgen, Eva and son Chaske,
Brenda Desmond, Jason Kirschner, Tom Tucker, Sheryl Tegelberg, Mary Barnett

Prayers for Health and Healing: Kelly Nicholson, Bob Maitland, Jim Kieronski, Esther Heyer

Condolences: Alice Burgess' family, the Salesky family, Gingy Heyler and family,
Jonathan Underwood and family, Esther Heyer and family, the family of Steven Arno