

# FPC Interactive Worship Bulletin for May 21st, 2023

## GATHERING

### Prelude

#### Welcome

Welcome to worship with FPC! We are glad you are here this morning.

If you are new here, we invite you to fill out a welcome card or email [secretary@fpcmissoula.org](mailto:secretary@fpcmissoula.org) with your information so we can get connected with you.

This is the day that the Lord has made: let us rejoice and be glad in it!  
Let us prepare our hearts and minds to worship and encounter our living God.

#### Call to Worship

One: Come, bless the Lord, in whom we find our refuge and safety.

**All: You are our God; all the good things come from You alone.**

One: Come, bless the Lord, who surrounds us with abundance.

**All: You are our God; our lives are in Your hands.**

One: Come, bless the Lord, who guides us on the path to life abundant,  
whose presence strengthens and sustains us.

**All: You are our God; we will not be shaken.**

One: Let's worship God together!

#### Gathering Song: Alpha and Omega

You are Alpha and Omega. We worship You, our Lord. You are worthy to be praised.

You are Alpha and Omega. We worship You, our Lord. You are worthy to be praised.

We give You all the glory. We worship You, our Lord. You are worthy to be praised.

We give You all the glory. We worship You, our Lord. You are worthy to be praised.

Erasmus Mutanbira\*\*

## PRAISING

#### Prayer of Adoration

Great are you God, author of our stories and holder of our dreams!

Your goodness knows no limit;

Your faithfulness toward us is boundless!

We are mindful that your creativity and resurrection promises are all around us,  
strengthening and sustaining us.

We've come together to celebrate you,

and to offer you our praise and thanks.

We've come to remember your mighty acts,

and to retell the story of your goodness

throughout history and in our own lives.

Move among us now as we worship together;  
may your Spirit guide, challenge, remind, quicken and empower us  
as we spend this time in your presence.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### How Firm a Foundation

How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!

What more can he say than to you he has said, to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

"Fear not, I am with you, O be not dismayed, for I am your God, and I will give you aid;

I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,

upheld by my gracious, omnipotent hand.

"When through the deep waters I call you to go, the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;

For I will be with you, your troubles to bless, and sanctify to you your deepest distress.

When through fiery trials, your pathway shall lie, my grace all-sufficient shall be your supply.

The flame shall not hurt you, I only design your dross to consume, and your gold to refine.

“The soul that on Jesus still leans for repose, I will not, I will not desert to its foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake!”

John Rippon\*\*

### **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**

#### **Kids on the Steps: Bibles, Babies & Grads!**

**Babies:** Rowan Adair, Holden Graef, Helena Hekman, Emerson Wright

**Grads:** Luke Allison, Eric Armstrong, Maddy Boller,  
Cooper Bailey, Alden Hellem, Eric Wright

#### **Prayer of Confession & Assurance of Forgiveness**

God's mercy is deeper than the depths of the sea, and God's grace is wider than the whole of the earth. Trusting in that mercy and that grace, let us make our confession, before God and each other, first in silent prayer.

Holy God, we open our hearts to you this day, and offer the truth of our lives:

The fear that stifles us,  
The prejudice that blinds us,  
The ignorance that hobbles us,  
The doubt that plagues us.  
Help us, we pray, that we will  
Find courage in unlikely place,  
See the world with new and gracious eyes,  
Move to those places where love is needed,  
Have faith that you are with us.  
This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Friends, Hear and hold on to the Good News: Friends, hear this Good News: the love of God is beyond measure, and you are included in that love. Know that you are forgiven and thus freed to love and serve. Alleluia! Amen.

#### **His Mercy is More**

What love could remember no wrongs we have done?  
Omniscient, all-knowing, He counts not their sum.  
Thrown into a sea without bottom or shore,  
Our sins, they are many; His mercy is more.

*Refrain: Praise the Lord! His mercy is more!  
Stronger than darkness, new every morn:  
Our sins, they are many; His mercy is more.*

What patience would wait as we constantly roam?  
What Father, so tender, is calling us home?  
He welcomes the weakest, the vilest, the poor.  
Our sins, they are many; His mercy is more. *Refrain*

What riches of kindness He lavished on us.  
His blood was the payment, His life was the cost.  
We stood 'neath a debt we could never afford.  
Our sins, they are many; His mercy is more. *Refrain*  
Matt Boswell and Matt Papa\*\*

## **FORMING**

### **Sermon: Romans 6:1-14**

#### Leaving the Old Country (for Good)

-It was on the Saturday night before Easter fourteen years ago.

- My older son Caz was a three-and-a-half year old version of himself.
- Tracey was putting him to bed when I heard him say this: 'Mommy, it's a good thing Jesus died.'
- I had to peek around the doorway to see where this would go.
- 'Yes, it is,' she said. 'Why do *you* think it's a good thing?'
- 'If he hadn't died, he wouldn't have taken away our sins,' said Caz.
- There was a pause. Then, 'But *Mommy*, what's a *sin*?'
- Tracey looked over to me, hopefully, offering a prompt: 'Daddy?'
- But I demurred, lobbing that ball back into her court.
- So Tracey launched into telling Caz how 'sin' comes from an archer's term for missing the mark, for being off-target. How Jesus' extraordinary life and love gives us the bull's-eye to shoot for. It's what we were created for. To love God. To love neighbor. To love ourselves. To love the earth. Sin means we shoot wide of what we're here for. We miss the mark of what brings God honor and gives us the most life.
- She summed all this up with flourish. And she looked hopefully at Cazden, asking his little face to validate her three years of theological education.
- And Caz responded: 'Mommy, all this talking is making my bottom itch.'

Now that's when I finally jumped in. 'Caz,' I said, 'sin is when you do something wrong.'  
But here's the thing. Tracey had it right. Sin is not just doing something *wrong*. Not just offending the moral sensibilities of polite society or your fussy great aunt. It's more serious than that. Sin is our rebellion against God. Sin is our fundamental preference for false gods. Sin is our turning away from the Way, the Truth, the Life that is most Real and Right and Good. Sin is dishonoring God in thought, word or deed, missing the mark of what it means to be truly human, missing the mark of *Jesus'* faithfulness.

That's why Cazden had it right, too! It's a good thing that Jesus died to take away our Sin. That our rebellious nature does not turn God away. It's a good thing that God embraces our broken state with unconditional love.

-But here's the question that comes up. (which Paul addresses in his letter to the Roman Christians.) If our Sin doesn't turn God away from us, why *not* sin? If his grace is really that big, why not just live it up?

Can't you just hear a child asking that question?

'If you're going to always love and accept me anyway, why *not* rebel?'

As you can imagine, Paul's answer, like a good parent's, is that sin injures not just God, but *us*.

-I'm going to be reading from Romans 6.1-14 (from the Message).

As I do, imagine two countries. Divided by the River of Life and Death. One country is ruled by a drug dealer named Sin. Sin is attractive and manipulative. He soothes you with false promises of freedom. A so-called freedom that shackles you in selfish immaturity. Sin is subtle. He plays the friend. He whispers that what he has to sell will make you strong and secure, desirable and complete. Sin tells you little lies about what matters that make you afraid. Lies that lead to Sin's false ways: narcissism, consumerism and compromise. Sin invites you to live out an addiction to emptiness, to build a house of cards.

The other country is governed by the True Ruler of all, whose name is Grace. And Grace promises you freedom, too. But the freedom promised by Grace is not the so-called freedom to chase after power and pleasure and popularity, to do whatever you want. No the freedom given by Grace calls for allegiance to his Way – for humility, courage, compassion, generosity and self-sacrifice – all on behalf of living for love.

At the first word of your defection from Sin, Grace dives into the River of Death and Life, comes to you where you are in Sin's country, overcomes Sin's enslavement, grasps hold of you, and rescues you from the seduction of wrongdoing. He takes you into the River of Death and Life and pulls you through the water like a lifeguard, throwing you up to safety on the green banks of his own country for a forever new life. Free *from* Sin's dominion. Free *for* honoring the Lord whose name is Grace.

-This from Romans 6:

**6 1-3** So what do we do? Keep on sinning so God can keep on forgiving? I should hope not! If we've left the country where sin is sovereign, how can we still live in our old house there? Or didn't you realize we packed up and left there for good? That is what happened in baptism. When we went under the water, we left the old country of sin behind; when we came up out of the water, we entered into the new country of grace—a new life in a new land!

**3-5** That's what baptism into the life of Jesus means. When we are lowered into the water, it is like the burial of Jesus; when we are raised up out of the water, it is like the resurrection of Jesus. Each of us is raised into a light-filled world by our Father so that we can see where we're going in our new grace-sovereign country.

**6-11** Could it be any clearer? Our old way of life was nailed to the cross with Christ, a decisive end to that sin-miserable life—no longer at sin's every beck and call! What we believe is this: If we get included in Christ's sin-conquering death, we also get included in his life-saving resurrection.... When Jesus died, he took sin down with him.... From now on, think of it this way: Sin speaks a dead language that means nothing to you; God speaks your mother tongue, and you hang on every word. You are dead to sin and alive to God. That's what Jesus did.

**12-14** That means you must not give sin a vote in the way you conduct your lives. Don't give it the time of day. Don't even run little errands that are connected with that old way of life. Throw yourselves wholeheartedly and full-time—remember, you've been raised from the dead!—into God's way of doing things. Sin can't tell you how to live. After all, you're not living under that old tyranny any longer. You're living in the freedom of God.

This is the word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.* Let's pray....

Lord God, we pray that by the power of the Holy Spirit you might open this Word to us, that we might once again today be set free from the power of Sin to journey forward in the land of grace and joyful obedience, so that we might be part of the good news in a world that desperately needs good news. Amen.

-Paul articulates a truth that all humans struggle with this side of Christ's kingdom come, whether they know it or not. Some of us living in the land enslaved to Sin, having never experienced the gift of freedom. Others of us having come through the River, still hearing echoes of Sin's tempting voice calling to us, still seeking to manipulate us, to pedal the very drugs of choice we have escaped.

Sometimes I think it's harder to see how our own rebellious nature flirts with Sin than to see it in others. What are the sins you experience in others? Maybe in the news? Maybe in the way others consume the news?

Terry McGonigal has been one of our congregation's teachers from Whitworth U. He teaches the Temptations of Jesus as thematic representations of the ways Sin enslaves us to rebellion against God. The devil is the splitter, who tears us apart from God. He tempts Jesus as he tempts us, with 1. Turning stones into bread: consumerism; feeding my appetite; filling myself with stuff. 2. Jumping from the pinnacle of the Temple: narcissism; fanning my fame; bowing to the applause of others. 3. Taking all kingdoms of world (without suffering way of the cross): compromise; cutting corners, sacrificing integrity and faithfulness for cheap, empty power.

Consumerism. Narcissism. Compromise. (or) Pleasure. Popularity. Power. Which one of these calls to you from the Land of Sin, lulling you to slavery?!!

-I think there is something underneath even these desires. And that's Fear. Sin is about fear. The fear of not having enough, of being unfulfilled. The fear of being disregarded. The fear of powerless exploitation by others. That is, the fear of having to suffer. And so we aim to plug the holes in our heart. We feed our longings or numb them. We fan our fame. We cut the corners. We hurt others before they can hurt us. Or we hurt those who have hurt us.

-Some years ago, I listened to a podcast called Invisibilia. It was about fear. One man, named Jason, was divorced. His wife had left him for a taller, more attractive man who made more money. And he began to have panic attacks.

One night, he realized though tears both how afraid he was and what he was afraid of. (And there's a lot to say for this act of courageous reflection – for exploring what you're really afraid of.) What Jason determined was that his real fear was rejection. His selfworth was predicated on what others thought of him. This led him to consider an element of the Russian equivalent of Navy Seal training. Rejection therapy. The aim is to get over the power the approval of others has to destroy you. And so Jason started working to be rejected once a day. He began requesting rides to places that made no sense. He started asking strangers for their email addresses. Etc.

Getting rejected. It turned the old logic on its head. Being rejected, not receiving the applause of others, was his goal. To be rejected made him a success. And Jason described this experiment as the opening to a new world. It was an upside-down reality like standing on your head underwater. But reality all the same. This new way granted him freedom from his fear. From the tyranny of what others thought.

What's more, it turned out to be far harder to be rejected than Jason had thought. He found out that, surprisingly, people often said Yes. To sharing meals. To drives. To doing his laundry. To building relationship with a stranger. And here's the insight. It turned out that the story he was telling himself about the way the world is and about the power of rejection was, actually, not fully true.

Fear, Jason decided, requires time and energy and thought. It requires developing a story in your head. And in his experiment, the new story became that he was free from rejection. This led him to a new freedom: the freedom to experience relationship.

What's the take-home here? Not to become creepy rejection seekers (unless that helps!). But this: *We are free to disobey our fear!*

-Do you hear that in the truth Paul is sharing? That we have been *set free* to disobey our fear? We are too-often living with a false story in our heads. False fears enslave us to Sin. But the TRUE Story is that our sin has been defeated. Our Sin has been overcome. Christ has absorbed the power of Sin and taken it to death in his body on the cross. Christ has been resurrected. And we who will receive the gift are 'in Christ.'

So we have died to Sin. In our baptisms we go under the water to die and rise out of the water to new life. We have been set free to disobey our fear. To reject the voice of Sin. To live in easy relationship with the risen Christ. To listen to the One who speaks our *mother tongue*. To trust in his love to meet our deepest, most human needs.

-The promise of this passage is Exodus. Just as God freed his people from slavery in Egypt, led them through the Red Sea, and guided them on a journey of building trust toward the Promised Land, Christ has set us free from slavery to Sin. We have come through the waters of baptism for this journey from grace to good.

-What about you again? What temptations and habits whisper to you from the other bank of the river?

Maybe: complaining, a critical spirit, bullying, undervaluing your voice, judgmentalism, worry, disrespect, arrogance, greed, unchecked anger, entitlement, violence, lust, distrust, gossip, grudge-holding, ingratitude, pride, self-pity, self-righteousness, despair?

Really, it might be more helpful to think: what is your fear? Is it rejection, grief, missing out, insignificance, obscurity, powerlessness, unpopularity, failure...? And how does your fear lead you to discount the gift of Grace, to dishonor God, to distrust God's goodness, to rebel against the Word and Way of Christ?

Jane Bahls will be ordained to be an elder not today but in a couple weeks. At our incoming officer orientation this week she shared a story about a young woman she mentors who called her to say that she is twenty-six years old, has been a Christian now for some years, but she just keeps struggling with sin.

Jane replied gently, with some humorous version of, 'Really? You're twenty-six and still haven't stopped sinning?' She told her young friend that she'd be under construction for a very long time. Jane said that she herself is more than forty years older and herself still under construction. 'According to Scripture,' she said, 'we have been made holy, we are being made holy, and we shall be made holy when we see Christ face to face. So go easy on yourself. Confess your failings, thank God for the assurance of forgiveness, and remember that you're still under construction.'

Friends, we are not alone in this struggle. The Holy Spirit of God is alive in us, building us up to obey and grow in joyful obedience to Christ.

*Tell yourself the True story. Trust it to be true. You have been rescued from the land of Sin for a new Land ruled by Grace. You have died to Sin and been raised to a new life. You have come through the waters of baptism (or you can!). So consider yourself cut off from the old life and set free for the new. Sin now speaks a dead language to you. Do not give Sin a vote in your decisions. Do not go on errands across the river. But stride freely forward, hand in hand with Christ. Go easy on yourself and others as you journey from grace to goodness.*

Amen.

### Song of Response: Living Hope

How great the cha - sm that lay be - tween us. How high the  
Who could im - ag - ine so great a mer - cy? What heart could  
4  
moun - tain I could not climb. In des - per - a - tion I turned to  
fath - om suchbound-less grace? The God of ag - es stepped down from  
7  
heav - en andspoke your name in - to the night. Then through the  
glo - ry to wear my sin and bear my shame. The cross has  
10  
dark - ness your lov - ing kind - ness tore through the shad - ows of my soul. The work is  
14 spo - ken; I am for - giv - en. The King of kings calls me his own. Beau - ti - ful

fin - ished, the end is writ - ten. Je - sus Christ, my liv - ing hope.  
Sav - ior, I'm yours for - ev - er. Je - sus Christ, my liv - ing hope.

18 *Refrain*  
Hal - le - lu - jah, praise the One who set me free! Hal - le - lu - jah, death has  
lost its grip on me! You have bro - ken ev - 'ry chain. There's sal - va - tion in your name. Je - sus  
Christ, my liv - ing hope! Then came the morn - ing that sealed the prom - ise, your bur - ied  
bod - y be - gan to breathe. Out of the si - lence, the Roar - ing Li - on de - clared the  
grave has no claim on me. Je - sus, yours is the vic - to - ry!

*To refrain*

Phil Wickham and Brian Johnson\*\*

## **STEWARDING**

### **Invitation to Offering**

From Ephesians 2, on grace and works ...

You were dead through the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world... <sup>4</sup> but God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us <sup>5</sup> *even* when we were dead through our trespasses, made us *alive* together with Christ...<sup>8</sup> For by *grace* you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the *gift* of God—<sup>9</sup> not the result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are *his* workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works ...

Brothers and sisters, in Christ we have received not only mercy, not only forgiveness, freeing us from what we deserved as sinners; we have received grace, the surprise of his embrace, the gift of his unfailing love. We have been remade. Re-created, for good works. For sacrifice. For self-giving.

Let us make our offering a response to grace. An act of practiced generosity to propel God's mission to love God and neighbor, to seek justice and peace, and proclaim good news.

Amen.

### **O God, We Call**

O God, we call. O God, we call.

From deep inside we yearn, from deep inside we yearn,  
from deep inside we yearn for You.

Linnea Good\*\*\*

### **Prayers of the People**

You are a God who makes a way when there is no way, who creates paths in the desert and through the storm. You carry our burdens and lift our spirits, and so we bring to you our needs and our pain.

We pray this day for those who are ill, in body, mind, or spirit.

May your healing presence surround and fill them, may your comfort enfold them.

Guide the hands and minds of doctors and nurses and all who care for others, that they may understand and so treat people toward wholeness.

We pray this day for all those who find the news too much to bear—people living with stories they have not been able to tell, with hearts burdened by trauma, with lives upended by choices made by others.

Shield their hearts, O God.

Give them hope, and help, and a listening ear.

Give us courage to hold their stories, their feelings, and their prayers,

to be a friend to those who feel alone.

Help us set you always before us, and sustain us in your righteousness.

Let our hearts be glad, our spirits rejoice, and our bodies rest in hope,  
for you do not abandon us to our sin or let your chosen ones dwell in the pit.

In Christ you show us the path of life;  
you welcome us into the joy of your presence;  
you invite us into communion with you.

For all this and more, we gratefully pray in the name of Jesus Christ, saying together:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name.**

**Your kingdom come, Your 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 Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

## SENDING

### **Ordination and Installation of Officers**

To be ordained/installed as Deacons: Ruth Card, Jane DeMarois, Jan Hanson\*,  
Cathy Johnson\*, Jennifer Chabotte, Kristi Jacobsen, Dan McCaffery,  
Ally Hanson, Diane Wells-Cherry, Sean Barry

To be ordained/installed as Elders: Jane Bahls\*, Jess Coulter\*,  
Noah Hill, Joy McKay, Audrey Peterson

*\*will be ordained/installed at a later date*

### **Questions of Congregation**

Do we, the members of the church, accept these brothers and sisters  
as ruling elders or deacons, chosen by God through the voice of this congregation  
to lead us in the way of Jesus Christ?

If so, say: We do.

Do we agree to pray for them, to encourage them, to respect their decisions,  
and to follow as they guide us, serving Jesus Christ, who alone is Head of the Church?

If so, say: We do.

### **Sending Song: Here I Am, Lord**

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry  
All who dwell in dark and sin, my hand will save  
I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright  
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?

*Refrain: Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard You calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord, if You lead me. I will hold Your people in my heart*

I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain.  
I have wept for love of them, they turn away.  
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.  
I will speak my words to them. Whom shall I send? *Refrain*

I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame  
I will set a feast for them, my hand will save  
Finest bread I will provide 'til their hearts be satisfied  
I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send? *Refrain*

Dan L. Schutte © 1981, OCP Publications\*\*\*

### Benediction (The Holiness of the Church from Book of Order, F-1.0302b)

Holiness is God's gift to the Church in Jesus Christ. Through the love of Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God takes away the sin of the world....

Because in Christ the Church is holy, the Church...strive[s] to lead lives worthy of the Gospel we proclaim. In gratitude for Christ's work of redemption, we rely upon the work of God's Spirit through Scripture and the means of grace (W-1.0106) to form every believer and every community for this holy living.

We confess the persistence of sin in our corporate and individual lives.

At the same time, we also confess that we are forgiven by Christ and called again and yet again to strive for the purity, righteousness, and truth revealed to us in Jesus Christ and promised to all people in God's new creation.

...

Forgiven and called *again and yet again* to strive for holiness! May the grace of our Lord Jesus and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.

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Leading in Worship This Morning:

Liturgist: Tracey Cravy  
Kids on the Steps: Austin Graef  
Sermon: Dan Cravy  
Musicians: Beaux Dunning, Emma Thackston,  
Joselyn Thomsen, Noah Hill  
Sound, Slide and Video Techs: Pat Scott,  
Zane Reneau and Ron Righter  
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FPC Ministry Staff:

Pastor: Dan Cravy  
Worship Director: Emma Thackston  
Children, Youth and Family Director: Austin Graef  
Church Operations Manager: Becky Kress  
Program Support Administrator: Jo Ruby  
Church Secretary: Haleigh Adair  
Facilities Steward: Carl Miller  
Parish Associates: Rev. Janet Malone and Rev. Bob Schurr  
Preaching Pastor, Blackfoot Church of the Potomac: Natalie Mauer