

The Presbyterian Church of Okemos
September 22, 2024
Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost



Preparation: “So the question is not whether the church is dying; it’s whether the church will have the courage and humility to become once again what God has always called it to be: a seed that willingly falls into the ground and dies so that new life can nourish the world. . . . The church we are so often bent on resuscitating is a church that operates from the center of power, wielding broad influence in the culture. . . . When people mourn the death of the church, it is often this funeral they’re attending.” – Debie Thomas, Which church is dying? September 2024 *Christian Century*

Gathering As a People of God

Prelude

Voluntary in E Minor

John Stanley

Dr. Marlene Brewbaker, organ

Lighting the Candles

Choral Introit

PCO Chancel Choir

Invitation to Our Shared Ministry

Pastor Lisa Schrott

*** Opening Sentences**

Angie Boldrey, liturgist

One: In our scripture today, Jesus asks us to let go of life “as it is” in order to create and multiply the love that is eternal. What feels like the chaos, or recklessness, of change is the breaking-open of possibility and the sprouting of new life. This is what it means to follow the change-maker Jesus and serve his purpose of more love in the world.

All: **God calls us to let the seeds of love be planted anew in us again and again. Letting go allows us release as we are broken open into new life. Let us calm our fears, and let us animate our spirits for this time of discovery.**

*** Hymn #714**

God of the Fertile Fields, vs. 1-4

[Italian Hymn]

Prayer of Confession

Pastor Lisa Schrott

One: God calls us in our lives to be like the grain of wheat which dies, which lets go of one form in order to be transformed into a new and fuller life. And yet we often fear the risk and change of new growth.

All: **Lord, we confess that we love our lives as they are. We struggle with even the idea of change. We wrestle with the thought of doing things differently. But we know that the life we cling to is only a half-life. Only you, O Lord, can give us true life in full. Forgive us for holding onto the wrong things.** *(Silent prayer)*

Teach us by your Spirit to let go of our agendas and assumptions. Help us to let go of our self-righteousness and false notions of power. Give us the strength and courage to try new things. Encourage us – and even push us – to let go of ourselves so we can fully embrace you, Holy God. We pray these things in the name of Christ Jesus.

(Silent prayer) Amen.

Promise of the Gospel and Passing of the Peace

Pastor Lisa Schrott

One: Hear the sound of love poured out. If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation. Everything old has passed away. Our story is known, our sin is forgiven, our life is made new.

All: We are a new creation! Thanks be to God! Amen.

One: Friends, believe the good news. In Jesus Christ you are forgiven. Extend this same grace to your neighbors around you. May the peace of the Lord be with you.

All: And also with you. *Please greet your fellow worshippers in ways you feel comfortable.*

* Act of Praise #581

Gloria Patri

The Word

Prayer of Illumination

Hymn #288

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Melt me; mold me; fill me; use me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Children's Message

Pastor Lisa Schrott

Scripture Reading

John 12: 20-26 (The Message)

Pastor Lisa Schrott

Sermon

Everything Changes

Anthem

Morningdance

PCO Handbell Choir

Irene Shutt, director

Responding to the Word

Minute for Service

CROP Walk

Alex Juarez & Kent Workman

Offering

Invitation

Rebecca Mattern

Offertory

PCO Chancel Choir

***Doxology #606**

***Prayer of Dedication**

Prayers of the People

Angie Boldrey, liturgist

One: Lord in your mercy

All: Hear our prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

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.

Sent Out As a People of God

Rites of Passage in Times of Change

PCO Creation Care Initiatives

PCO Green Team

PC(USA) Earth Care Congregation

Interfaith Power and Light "Cool" Congregation

Member, One Home - One Future

One: Peace and justice is God's plan for all creation. The earth and all creation are God's. God calls us to be careful, humble stewards of this earth, and to protect and restore it for its own sake, and for the future use and enjoyment of the human family.

All: As God offers all people the special gift of peace through Jesus Christ, and through Christ reconciles all to God, we are called to deal justly with one another and the earth.

One: Our worship and discipleship will celebrate God's grace and glory in creation and declare that God calls us to cherish, protect and restore this earth.

All: We will encourage and support each other in finding ways of keeping and healing the creation in response to God's call to earth-keeping, justice and community.

One: Our facilities will be managed, maintained and upgraded in a manner that respects and cherishes all creation. Our outreach will encourage public policy and community involvement that protects and restores the earth as well as oppressed and neglected people.

All: We will be mindful that our personal and collective actions can positively or negatively affect our neighborhood, region, nation and world. We will seek to achieve environmental justice through coalitions and ecumenical partnerships.

* Hymn #250

[Hymn of Promise]

* **Benediction**

Pastor Lisa Schrott

One: Go into the world knowing that the Potter God is still shaping and reshaping you as you were made to do; that the Teacher Jesus is inviting you to a change of heart, making it all so very possible; and that the Adventurous Spirit is luring you to more play and curiosity in your precious life.

All: We will go in peace and be encouraged. Amen!

Postlude

Trumpet Voluntary
Dr. Marlene Brewbaker, organist

** Please rise in body or spirit*

Ushers: Brett & Lynn Cone, Joel & Deb Major

This Morning's Fellowship Team: Thank you to David and Sandy Detrisac for supplying our snacks and to Edward Ennen and Juan Carlos Royo for taking care of the coffee.

Education Hour:

Children through 4th grade: Room 116

Middle School Youth 5th-8th grade: Middle School Room (107)

Senior High Youth and Adults: Healthy Boundaries for the Whole Church: What they are and why they are important. Pastors and Elders are required by our Book of Order to undergo boundaries training. It is helpful for the congregation to have this information too. Setting boundaries can feel like putting up a wall against others. Healthy boundaries free us to serve God and love one another through respectful relationships that honor our differing emotional and spiritual needs and limitations. Led by The Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence, Executive Presbyter and Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan. Includes lunch and goes until 1:30 p.m.: Fellowship Hall.

Next Week September 29, 2024: Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Matthew 14: 22-32

Education Hour:

Children and Middle School Youth classes continue

Senior High Youth and Adults: Healthy Boundaries in Caring Relationships. How do we care for one another while respecting our own and other's needs? How do we share information? What is the difference between a secret and a confidence? Where does gossip fit in? How are we freed to love one another more fully by setting and honoring healthy boundaries in relationships? How can our good intentions in caring for others cause harm without healthy boundaries? What does the Bible have to say about this? Led by Catherine Holdway and Rebecca Mattern.

Graphic and Opening Sentences from *Re-Shaped. A worship series about getting animated and embracing change.* Worship Design Studios. <https://www.worshipdesignstudio.com/> The Prayer of Confession is by Amy Loving, and posted on The Worship Closet: The Place for Creative Worship Ideas. <http://worshipcloset.com/baptism-of-the-lord-sunday-year-b-words-for-worship/> The liturgy for Creation Care Initiatives is adapted from the PC(USA) Earth Care pledge. It can be found in its entirety at <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/earth-care-congregations-guide-greening-presbyte> ri/

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*Rev. Dr. Lisa Schrott (she/her), Pastor/Head of Staff
Rebecca Mattern (she/her), Interim Director of Faith Formation
Dr. Marlene Brewbaker, Organist
Westin Sorrel (he/him), Chancel Choir Director
Irene Shutt, Handbell Choir Director
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