

## GATHERING

### PRELUDE

#### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

*The Confession of 1967*

In Jesus Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself.

**Jesus Christ is God with humankind.**

He is the eternal Son of the Father, who became human and lived among us to fulfill the work of reconciliation.

**He is present in the church by the power of the Holy Spirit to continue and complete his mission.**

This work of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is the foundation of all confessional statements about God, humanity, and the world.

**Therefore, the church calls all people to be reconciled to God and to one another.**

Let us worship God.

#### \*PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of mercy: Help us to forgive, as you have forgiven us. Help us to trust you, even when hope is failing. Help us to take up our cross daily and follow you in your redeeming works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

### WELCOME

#### \*HYMN #474

PUER NOBIS NASCITUR

*O Splendor of God's Glory Bright*

#### \*CALL TO CONFESSION

#### \*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Almighty God, you love us, but we have not loved you. You call, but we have not listened. We walk away from neighbors in need, wrapped in our own concerns. We condone evil, prejudice, warfare, and greed. God of grace, help us to admit our sin, so that as you come to us in mercy, we may repent, turn to you, and receive forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.**

#### \*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

#### CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

*The Confession of 1967*

In each time and place, there are particular problems and crises through which God calls the church to act. The church, guided by the Spirit, humbled by its own complicity and instructed by all attainable knowledge, seeks to discern the will of God and learn how to obey in these concrete situations.

**God has created the peoples of the earth to be one universal family. The church is called to bring all people to receive and uphold one another as persons in all relationships of life.**

Christians who exclude, dominate, or patronize others, however subtly, resist the Spirit of God and bring contempt on the faith which they profess.

**God's reconciliation in Jesus Christ is the ground of the peace, justice, and freedom among nations which all powers of government are called to serve and defend. The church, in its own life, is called to practice the forgiveness of enemies and to commend to the nations as practical politics the search for cooperation and peace.**

This search requires that the nations pursue fresh and responsible relations across every line of conflict, even at risk to national security, to reduce areas of strife and to broaden international understanding.

**Although nations may serve God's purposes in history, the church which identifies the sovereignty of any one nation or any one way of life with the cause of God denies the Lordship of Christ and betrays its calling.**

The reconciliation of humankind through Jesus Christ makes it plain that enslaving poverty in a world of abundance is an intolerable violation of God's good creation.

**Because Jesus identified himself with the needy and exploited, the cause of the world's poor is the cause of his disciples.**

A church that is indifferent to poverty, or evades responsibility in economic affairs, or is open to one social class only, or expects gratitude for its beneficence makes a mockery of reconciliation and offers no acceptable worship to God.

#### \*PASSING THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

## THE WORD

#### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Gracious God, we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from your mouth. Make us hungry for this heavenly food, that it may nourish us today in the ways of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, the bread of heaven. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Exodus 14:19-31 (p. 60 Old Testament)

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 103: 1-2, 8-13

**Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.**

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all the benefits of the Lord.

**The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and of great kindness.**

The Lord will not always accuse us, nor remain angry forever.

**The Lord has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.**

For as the heavens are high above the earth, so is God's mercy great upon the God-fearing.

**As far as the east is from the west, so far has the Lord removed our sins from us.**

As a father cares for his children, so does the Lord care for the God-fearing.

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 18:21-35 (p. 20 New Testament)

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

\*HYMN #347

DETROIT

*Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive*

\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

(see insert)

### RESPONSE TO THE WORD

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Lord, in your mercy:

**Hear our prayer.**

OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Jay Althouse

*African Alleluia*

\*DOXOLOGY

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below,**

**Praise God above ye heavenly host, Creator, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

\*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

\*LORD'S PRAYER

(see insert)

### SENDING

\*HYMN #281

CWM RHONDDA

*Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*

\*CHARGE AND BLESSING

POSTLUDE



ORDER OF WORSHIP  
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
September 24, 2017  
Presbyterian Church in Needham