



*The Session and members of First Presbyterian Church Fargo extend a sincere welcome to you. We are grateful for your presence today! We welcome all persons regardless of race, nationality, disability, gender or sexual orientation. This includes an open invitation to membership, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, marriage, funerals, memorial services and to serve as an officer of the church.*

*Everyone is invited for coffee and fellowship in the Gathering Space after worship.*

*We recycle! If you are not taking your bulletin, please drop it in the blue bin at the door as you leave.*

*\*Please rise in body or spirit.*

## **We Gather in Christ**

**September 11, 2022: 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Gracious God, when our spirits lift at the beauty of the day, you are Lord; and when chaos threatens to overwhelm and we dread the next news cycle -- still, you are Lord. Always you are creating, redeeming, sustaining. Speak your mercy into this place until we discover the courage to open our eyes, unclench our hands, and move toward our neighbor in need, until all the world rises and moves with the rhythm of your grace; for we long to honor the name of Jesus, by whose breath we pray. Amen.

### **PRELUDE**

*Music by the Max Johnk Trio*

### **WELCOME & CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH**

The Rev. Mary Jo E. Holtey

### **\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

The heavens are telling the glory of God;

**the skies proclaim the Creator's handiwork.**

They have no speech, they use no words,

**yet their witness goes out through all the earth.**

Let us join the chorus of creation; let us raise our voices in resounding praise.

**May the words of our mouths and the songs of our hearts be pleasing to the Lord!**

### **HYMN 702**

*Christ Be Beside Me*

Christ be beside me, Christ be before me, Christ be behind me, King of my heart;

Christ be within me, Christ be below me, Christ be above me never to part.

Christ on my right hand, Christ on my left hand, Christ all around me shield in the strife;

Christ in my sleeping, Christ in my sitting, Christ in my rising, Light of my life.

Christ be in all hearts thinking about me; Christ be on all tongues telling of me.

Christ be the vision in eyes that see me; in ears that hear me Christ ever be.

### **\*CALL TO CONFESSION**

We all need someone to watch over us and notice when we are missing or hurting. Sometimes we forget that we are not meant to be alone.

### **\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**O Lord, you love and care for us, the sheep of your fold. You provide for us and nurture us with the food of your presence and the waters of your grace. Still, O Lord, we wander astray, as if we did not need your love. Still, O Lord, we wander astray, as if we could live this life on our own. Forgive us, Lord, and call us back with a gentle word and a reminder of your promises. For we fear we cannot find our way home without the sound of your voice to guide us.**

### **\*DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

You are precious to God. You are worthy of God's attention. God notices when you are sad or sick or lonely. And Jesus proves the lengths to which God is willing to go to bring you back. One: Friends, believe in the Good News of the Gospel. All: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Amen.

### **\*PASSING OF THE PEACE**

#### **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

Penny Andrist

#### **BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS**

*I invite our students to come forward with their backpacks, parents and grandparents come forward with your students. Students can either wear their packs or place them on the ground and put their hands on them. Adults, place your hands lightly on your student. The congregation may come forward to place your hands lightly on the person in front of you.*

Loving God, today, we ask for your blessing to be upon these students as they begin another school year. These backpacks that they carry will go with them to and from school every day. They will contain crayons, rulers, scissors, glue sticks, pencils, calculators, work to be done, work that's been returned, books to read, and information to study.

Some days, so much stuff will fill these backpacks that our students may find that their backs get sore or it difficult to walk. Other days, they will be light and nearly empty. But every day, these backpacks will represent the effort they must give in order to do great learning. These backpacks represent the time and energy being poured into their lives through parents and teachers and their community.

As they carry these backpacks, may they be reminded of your love which surrounds them and may they remember how much this congregation cares for them and supports them. Grant them your courage to tackle each day with awe and wonder at what new things about your creation they might learn and give them your wisdom so they can treat each person they meet along the way with kindness.

We pray in the name of Jesus who we all seek to follow day by day. Amen.

# The Word

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Brian McClure, Reader

Sovereign God, let your Word rule in our hearts and your Spirit govern our lives until at last we see the fulfillment of your realm of justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## FIRST READING

Psalm 34:1-8

I will bless the Lord at all times;  
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.  
My soul makes its boast in the Lord;  
let the humble hear and be glad.  
O magnify the Lord with me,  
and let us exalt his name together.  
I sought the Lord, and he answered me,  
and delivered me from all my fears.  
Look to him, and be radiant;  
so your faces shall never be ashamed.  
This poor soul cried, and was heard by the Lord,  
and was saved from every trouble.  
The angel of the Lord encamps  
around those who fear him, and delivers them.  
O taste and see that the Lord is good;  
happy are those who take refuge in him.

May God bless the reading and hearing of this portion of the holy Word.

## SECOND READING

Luke 18:15-17

People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. But Jesus called for them and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.'

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

## SERMON

Backyard Fences

The Rev. Sarah M. Bigwood

## \*HYMN 300

*We Are One in the Spirit*

We are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord;  
we are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord,  
and we pray that all unity may one day be restored:

Refrain: And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love;  
yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will walk with each other; we will walk hand in hand;  
we will walk with each other; we will walk hand in hand,  
and together we'll spread the news that God is in our land: (refrain)

We will work with each other; we will work side by side;  
we will work with each other; we will work side by side,  
and we'll guard human dignity and save human pride; (refrain)

All praise to the Father, from whom all things come,  
and all praise to Christ Jesus, God's only Son,  
and all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one: (refrain)

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

### **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.**

## **Responding to the Word**

**OFFERING**    *Use the QR code to access the secure giving portal on our website!*

### **OFFERTORY**

*The Max Johnk Trio*

### **\*RESPONSE 717**

*For the Life that You Have Given*



**For the life that you have given, for the love in Christ made known,  
with these fruits of time and labor, with these gifts that are your own:  
here we offer, Lord, our praises; heart and mind and strength we bring;  
give us grace to love and serve you, living what we pray and sing.**

### **\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

## **Bearing the Word into the World**

### **\*HYMN 372**

*O for a World*

O for a world where everyone respects each other's ways,  
where love is lived and all is done with justice and with praise.

O for a world where goods are shared and misery relieved,  
where truth is spoken, children spared, equality achieved.

We welcome one world family and struggle with each choice  
that opens us to unity and gives our vision voice.

The poor are rich; the weak are strong; the foolish ones are wise.  
Tell all who mourn: outcasts belong, who perishes will rise.

O for a world preparing for God's glorious reign of peace,  
where time and tears will be no more, and all but love will cease.

### **\*BENEDICTION AND TABLE GRACE**

### **POSTLUDE**

*The Max Johnk Trio*