



MIDTOWN
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Reflection

One of the signs that an object is functioning as an idol is that fear becomes one of the chief characteristics of life. When we center our lives on the idol, we become dependent on it. If our counterfeit God is threatened in anyway, our response is complete panic. We do not say, "what a shame, how difficult," but rather "this is the end! There's no hope!"

This may be a reason why so many people now respond to U.S. political trends in such an extreme way. When either party wins an election, a certain percentage of the losing side talks openly about leaving the country. They become agitated and fearful for the future. They have put the kind of hope in their political leaders and policies that once was reserved for God and the work of the gospel. When their political leaders are out of power, they experience a death. They believe that if their policies and people are not in power, everything will fall apart. They refuse to admit how much agreement they actually have with the other party, and instead focus on the points of disagreement. The points of contention overshadow everything else, and a poisonous environment is created.

Another sign of idolatry in our politics is that opponents are not considered to be simply mistaken, but to be evil. After the last presidential election, my 84-year-old mother observed, "it used to be that whoever was elected as your president, even if he wasn't the one you voted for, he was still your president. That doesn't seem to be the case any longer." After each election, there is now a significant number of people who see the incoming president lacking moral legitimacy. The increasing political polarization and bitterness we see in U.S. politics today is a sign that we have made political activism into a form of religion.

--Tim Keller, from Counterfeit Gods (2011)

Distancing & Safety Plan

So we can more safely meet together for worship we ask you to help us observe the following:

1. We will space out the chairs as much as we can.
2. Wear masks so we can sing.
3. Communion will involve coming forward without crowding, and picking up a cup and wafer from the altar rail in front of the pulpit. The separate table of cups will have grape juice if you prefer that. The wafers are gluten free.
4. Try to go outside for visiting with each other after the service.
5. We will disinfect surfaces in the sanctuary and bathrooms before the service.

Evening Worship

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost

11.08.2020

Welcome to Worship at Midtown! We are really glad to have you with us for worship today. Whether you have been a Christian for many years, or are trying to sort out what the Christian faith is all about, or are just here as a favor to your friend, we're happy to have you. The Word

Call to Worship

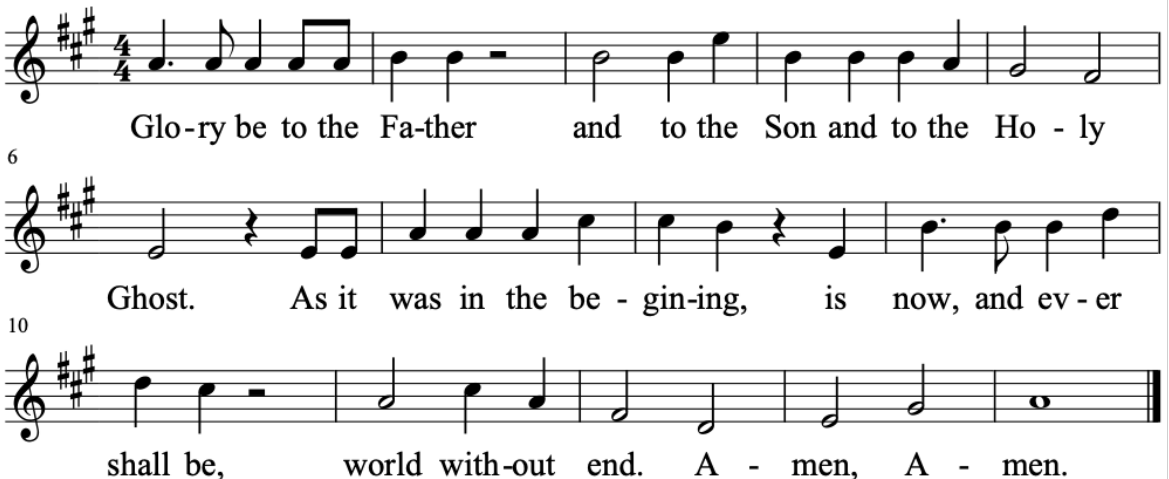
Psalm 118:8-9

It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes.

Worship begins with God's call to us to worship him. As always, God initiates with us, such as we are, and invites us to be with him out of sheer mercy.

The Gloria Patri

Music: Charles Meineke



The musical score is written on three staves in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are: Glo-ry be to the Fa-ther and to the Son and to the Ho - ly Ghost. As it was in the be - gin-ning, is now, and ev - er shall be, world with-out end. A - men, A - men.

6

10

Praise the Savior, Now and Ever

Lyrics: William Moore; Music: Bruce Benedict



The image shows three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some notes beamed together. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second staff continues the melody with similar note values. The third staff concludes the piece with a double bar line.

Praise the Sav-ior now and ev-er; praise him, all be - neath the skies;
pros-trate ly-ing, suf-fring, dy-ing on the cross, a sac - ri - fice.
Vic-t'ry gain-ing, life ob - tain -ing now in - glo-ry he doth rise.

Man's work faileth, Christ's availeth;
He is all our righteousness;
He, our Savior, has forever set us free from dire distress.
Through his merit we inherit light and peace and happiness.

Sin's bond severed, we're delivered;
Christ has bruised the serpent's head;
Death no longer is the stronger hell itself is captive led.
Christ has risen from death's prison; o'er the tomb he light has shed.

For his favor, praise forever
Unto God the Father sing;
Praise the Savior, praise him ever, Son of God, our Lord and King.
Praise the Spirit; through Christ's merit he doth us salvation bring.

Prayer of Invocation

Call to Confession of Sin

Isaiah 64:6-7

We have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

We confess our sins as a group and individually because we need to. We come to worship God even though we are morally broken, in certain hope that he is merciful to people like us, and able to change us by his grace.

Confession of Sin

[Pray aloud together]

Lord,

I worry because I forget your wisdom.

I resent because I forget your mercy.

I covet because I forget your beauty.

I sin because I forget your holiness.

I fear because I forget your sovereignty.

You always remember me. Help me to remember you.

Amen.

(You are invited to confess your sins silently at this time.)

Trisagion

Music: Fernando Ortega

Ho - - - ly - God. Ho - ly and migh - ty.

Ho - - - - - ly, Im - mor - tal one. Have

mer - cy, have mer - - cy on us.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Isaiah 63:16

You, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.

Minister: May the peace of Christ be with you!

All: And also with you!

The Love of God

Music & Lyrics: Fredrick Martin Lehman



The love of God is great-er far - than tongue or pen can ev-er



tell. It goes be - yond the high-est star, - and reach-es to the low-est



hell. The guilt-y pair, bowed down with care. - God gave his Son - to



win. His err-ing child, he re-con - ciled, - and par-doned from - his

Refrain



sin. O love of God, how rich and pure - how mea-sure - less - and



strong. It shall for-ev - er-more en - dure the saints' and an - gels' song.

When years of time shall pass away,
And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall;
When men, who here, refuse to pray,
On rocks and hills and mountains call;
God's love, so sure, shall still endure, All measureless and strong;
Redeeming grace to Adam's race, The saints' and angels' song.
[Refrain]

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made;
Were ev'ry stalk on earth a quill, And ev'ry man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole
Tho' stretched from sky to sky. [Refrain]

The Prayers of the People

[Led by William Price]

[Pray the bold portions aloud together]

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

Most gracious God,
you have promised to reveal your glory among all nations,

Hear us as we pray for your church.

**Bless all the ministers of your word and
sacraments, and unite all Christians in
the bonds of holy faith,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

(Pray silently for the Church.). Amen.

The prayers of the people enable us to join our minds and hearts in one voice to God, like we do when we sing. Be careful about merely repeating the words without engaging your whole self in prayer.

Lord God of our fathers,
you have promised to take care of our every need,
**Give us peaceful times and fruitful seasons.
Grant all in authority over us
wisdom and strength to do your will
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**
(Pray silently for our world.). Amen.

Most merciful Father,
comfort all who believe the good news of your grace.
**We pray for all who are distressed:
the poor,
the homeless,
the sick,
the bereaved,
and those afflicted in body and mind.
Comfort and relieve them according to your will,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**
(Pray silently for all who suffer.). Amen.

And now, as our Savior taught us, let us humbly pray:
**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.**

Old Testament Reading

[Reader: Stephanie Bowyer]

Daniel 3:13-18

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Reading

Luke 20:20-26

Reader: The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

People: **Praise be to you, O Christ.**

Father Long Before Creation

Music: Andrew Osenga; Lyrics: Chinese Hymn

Verse



Fa-ther, long be - fore cre - a - tion - Thou hadst cho-sen us - in love, -



and that love so - deep, so mov-ing, - draws us close to Christ a-bove. -

Chorus



Still it keeps us, still it keeps us - firm-ly fixed in Christ a-lone. - And the



world will sing his love, and we'll all join hands, eve - ry



wo-man, eve - ry man to sing - his love, - to sing his love. -

Though the world may change its fashion,
Yet our God is e'er the same;
His compassion and his covenant
Through all ages will remain.
God's own children, God's own children
Must forever praise His name. [Chorus]

God's compassion is my story,
Is my boasting all the day;
Mercy free and never failing
Moves my will, directs my way.
God so loved us, God so loved us
That His only Son He gave. [Chorus]

Loving Father now before Thee
We will ever praise Thy love,
And our songs will sound unceasing
'Til we reach our home above,
Giving glory, giving glory
To our God and to the Lamb;
Giving glory, giving glory
To our God and to the Lamb. [Chorus]

New Testament Reading

Romans 13:1-7

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷ Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

Minister: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Charles Garland

Sermons are God's appointed means to communicate his Good News to a particular group of people in a particular local context. Sermons, by design, aren't impressive, so that God will get credit when he uses them in your life, rather than the preacher.

The Table

Confession of Faith

--The Heidelberg Catechism, Question #1

We use the ancient creeds to reinforce our confidence in God's grace, and to highlight our connection to his people around the world who worship him with these same words every Lord's Day.

Minister: What is your only comfort in life and death?

People: **That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with His precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, all things must work together for my salvation. Therefore, by His Holy Spirit He also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for Him.**

Invitation and Prayer

[Communion, also called The Lord's Supper or the Eucharist, is the family meal of Christians. We invite all committed followers of Jesus Christ to partake of this sacrament: those who are baptized members of a congregation which proclaims the gospel, who are at peace with God and with their neighbor, and who seek strength to live more faithfully for Christ. If you are not a Christian, or if you are not prepared to share in this meal, we encourage you to spend this time in prayer.]

The Sursum Corda (Lift Up Your Hearts)

Minister: Lift up your hearts.

All: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Minister: Let us give thanks to our Lord God.

All: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

The Sursum Corda and the Mystery of Faith are used by Christians the world over to prepare their hearts and minds for Holy Communion.

The Words of Institution

The Mystery of Faith

Minister: Therefore, let us proclaim the mystery of faith.

All: **Christ has died. Christ is risen.
Christ will come again!**

Minister: Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

All: **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!**

Minister: The gifts of God for the people of God.

The Giving of the Bread and Cup

[As you are ready please come forward to receive the bread and the cup. We are using individual cups and wafers as a concession to the virus. The red cups have wine and the grape juice is white/gold.]

Beneath the Cross of Jesus

Lyrics: Elizabeth C. Clephane; Music: Christopher Miner

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Beneath the Cross of Jesus'. It consists of four staves of music in 6/8 time, with lyrics written below each staff. The melody is written on a treble clef staff. The lyrics are: 'Be - neath the cross of Je - sus, I - fain would take my stand; the sha - dow of a migh - ty rock with - in a wear - y land; a home with - in a wild - er - ness, a rest up - on the way from the burn - ing of the noon - tide heat, and the bur - den of the day'.

Be - neath the cross of Je - sus, I - fain would take my stand; the
sha - dow of a migh - ty rock with - in a wear - y land; a
home with - in a wild - er - ness, a rest up - on the way from the
burn - ing of the noon - tide heat, and the bur - den of the day

Upon the cross of Jesus, mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of one who suffered there for me;
And from my stricken heart with tears, two wonders I confess;
The wonders of redeeming love and my unworthiness.

I take, O cross, thy shadow for my abiding place:
I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of His face;
Content to let the world go by to know no gain nor loss,
My sinful self, my only shame, my glory, all the cross.

We Will Feast In the House of Zion

Lyrics and Music: Sandra McCracken and Joshua Moore

The musical score is written on five staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are: "We will feast in the house of Zi - on! We will sing with our hearts re-stored. He has done great things, we will say to - ge - ther, We will feast and weep no more. 1. We will not be burned by the fire: He is the Lord our God. We are not consumed by the flood. Up-held, pro- tect - ed, ga - thered up." The score includes a key signature change to 2/4 time for the phrase "We will not be" and a return to 4/4 time for the final phrase.

We will feast in the house of Zi - on! We will sing with our
hearts re-stored. He has done great things, we will say to - ge - ther,
We will feast and weep no more. 1. We will not be
burned by the fire: He is the Lord our God. We are not con-
sumed by the flood. Up-held, pro- tect - ed, ga - thered up.

In the dark of night, before the dawn, My soul, be not afraid.
For the promised morning, oh how long?
Oh God of Jacob, be my strength!

Every vow we've broken and betrayed, You are the Faithful one.
And from the garden to the grave, Bind us together, bring shalom!

Benediction

Notes

Offering: We have placed an offering box at the back of the sanctuary that you can use as you enter or leave. (Note that the Midtown box is separate from the Vineyard ones—ours cleverly says “Midtown”!) You can also give online at our website www.mpctucson.org.

Email List: We send out the bulletin and announcements every week before worship and would love to include you. You can email Charles (charles@mpctucson.org) to get on the list.

Monday Soccer in the Mall: Monday evenings at 5:00 a group is meeting on the U of A mall to play soccer. We won't be playing in December. Everyone is welcome.

Website Church Photo Directory: Nancy Price has been keeping our photo directory up to date, which helps immensely with new people and getting to know each other. If you have edits (better pictures) or need to be added let her know (nancylynnprice@msn.com). The password on the website page is “dryheat”.

Hymn Sing: Esther Lewis & Morgan Zylstra and are hosting a weekly hymn sing at our apartment for young adults starting this Thursday night. Anyone who wants to participate should contact us for the address and gate code at 575.520.0239.

Blanket Drive: Bikers For Christ is having a blanket/sleeping bag drive for the homeless. If you didn't bring them today, you can contact Tim Davis (tdavisua74@gmail.com; 520.481.9894) and he will come pick them up from you or you can deliver the items to the park on the 14th @ 9am.

Pastor: Charles Garland
Music Director: Sarah Lewis
RUF Staff: Dan & Brittany Smith
RUF Interns: Noah Hamstra & Rebekah Taylor

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A congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America

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