



St. Andrews-Covenant

Presbyterian Church | PC (USA)

Welcome to Worship! | July 31, 2022

It is good you are here! Please silence all electronic devices.

GATHERING

Prelude *Largo from Sonata in c minor (BWV526)*

J. S. Bach

Welcome

*Call to Worship

Leader: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.

People: You shall love the Lord our God, and your neighbor as yourself.

Leader: The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it;

People: the world, and those who live in it.

Leader: O praise the Lord with me,

People: let us exalt God's name together.

Gathering Prayer

*Hymn No. 409 *God is Here*

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image; through Jesus Christ the light of the world. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

*Sung Response No. 581 *Glory Be to the Father*

*Sharing the Peace of Christ

Leader: The Peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

WORD

Scripture Reading: Acts 2:42-47

Sermon: *"Life Together: 'The devoted themselves...to the breaking of bread...'"*

Rev. Dr. Robert Bayley

*Hymn No. 770 *I'm Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table*

*Affirmation of Faith: Apostle's Creed (hymnal, p. 35)

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

THANKSGIVING

Offering

Offertory *Come unto Him (Messiah)*

G. F. Handel

*Doxology No. 606

*Prayer of Dedication

Communion

(All are invited to the Table of our Lord. The distribution of the elements will be shared by intinction, the dipping of bread into a common cup. The congregation will receive communion using the center aisle. Please return using the side aisles. Pre-packaged elements and gluten-free bread are available if preferred.)

*Choral Invitation No. 507 *Come to the Table of Grace (verses 1 and 2)*

Invitation to the Table

Prayer over the Table

Words of Institution

Sharing of Bread and Cup Together

Communion Music *Communion I*

Alexandre Guilmant

Closing Prayer

SENDING

*Hymn No. 295 *Go to the World!*

*Blessing

*Choral Benediction

*Dismissal

We stand while the bell is rung three times, remembering that God, Creator, Redeemer and Renewer of Life goes with us. Go in Peace!

Postlude *Trumpet Processional*

Alfred J. Fedak

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Worship Leaders

Interim Head Pastor, Rev. Dr. Robert Bayley
Parish Associate, Rev. Dr. Gary Smith
Director of Music, Cindy Litzinger

Organist/Pianist, Sara Bryant
Soloist, Abigale Hawkins
Lay Reader, Ann Danchak

LIFE TOGETHER

St. Andrews-Covenant Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, North Carolina
Sunday 31 July 2022 Rev. Dr. Robert Bayley, Interim Pastor

Scripture: Acts 2:42-47

Text: *“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, (life together – The Message), to **the breaking of bread** and to prayer.”* Acts 2:42

Devoted: to be steadfast, to attend to constantly, to persevere.

Breaking of bread: literally, to break a loaf of bread; table fellowship.

“SACPC needs for now to focus not on getting bigger but on getting better, getting well.”

Holy Cow congregational survey facilitator Emily Swanson.

Q: What will help us get better, get well at SACPC? **A:** Commit to breaking bread together.

“Not until the fellowship has been nourished and strengthened with the **bread of eternal life** does it come together to receive from God **earthly bread for this temporal life**. Giving thanks and asking God’s blessing, the Christian family receives its **bread** from the hand of the Lord. Ever since Jesus Christ sat at table with his disciples, the table fellowship of his community has been blessed by his presence. *“And it came to pass as he sat at meat with them, he took **bread**, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him.”* Luke 24:30-31

“The Scriptures speak of three kinds of table fellowship that Jesus keeps with his own: daily fellowship at table, the table fellowship of the Lord’s Supper, and the final table fellowship in the kingdom of God. But in all three the only thing that counts is that *“their eyes were opened, and they knew him.”* Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) *Life Together: A Discussion of Christian Fellowship*, written in 1938 for the Confessing Church in hostile Nazi Germany.

A PORTRAIT OF THE FIRST (AND ONLY) PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CORINTH

This ‘table fellowship,’ this ‘breaking of bread’ together involved people who were:

- **FILING LAWSUITS AGAINST EACH OTHER: 1 Corinthians 6:1-11**

“...one brother goes to law against another – and this in front of unbelievers!”

- **ENGAGING IN SEXUAL IMMORALITY: 1 Corinthians 5:1**

“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, ...”

- **EXHIBITING SELFISHNESS – 1 Corinthians 11:20**

“When you come together it is not the Lord’s Supper you eat, for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk.”

- **CAUSING DIVISION – 1 Corinthians 1:10-12**

“I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another with what you say and that there be no divisions (schismata, schisms) among you, ... My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, ‘I follow Paul; another, ‘I follow Apollos’; another,, ‘I follow Cephas’; still another, ‘I follow Christ.’”

But this ‘table fellowship,’ this ‘breaking of bread’ together involved the same people who were:

- **MADE HOLY BY JESUS: 1 Corinthians 1:2**

“To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified (consecrated, made holy) in Christ Jesus...”

- **WERE COLLECTIVELY GOD’S TEMPLE: 1 Corinthians 3:16-17**

“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?...God’s temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.”

- **INDIVIDUALLY GOD’S TEMPLE: 1 Corinthians 6:19**

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body.”

- **EXHIBITERS OF EVERY GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: 1 Corinthians 1:7**

“You do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.”

- **A GIVING CONGREGATION: 2 Corinthians 8:10**

“Last year you were the first, not only to give but also to have the desire to do so.”

A MEMORABLE MEAL: BREAKFAST WITH JESUS: JOHN 21:1-14

Q: Reflecting back over your entire life, what would you say was your most memorable meal?

TABLE FELLOWSHIP

**Daily table fellowship at table: this morning after church – Sunday brunch.
The table fellowship of the Lord’s Supper – in our worship service this morning.
The final table fellowship in the kingdom of God – yet to come.**

GOD’S PROMISE TO FIRST CHURCH CORINTH – AND TO US: 1 Corinthians 1:8-9

*“He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. **God is faithful**, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

Sermon response hymn: #39 “Great is Thy Faithfulness”

Now that the 2022 General Assembly has ended – the first-ever hybrid assembly – the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will try to live into the commitments made and the work ahead. Ruth Santana-Grace and Shavon Starling-Louis, the new co-moderators, stood for election using the theme “Unbounded We Thrive,” and the assembly spoke its mind on issues affecting the church and the world.



GENERAL ASSEMBLY 225 ROUNDUP

Israel/Palestine. The assembly voted 266-116 to approve one of the most controversial items before it — INT-02, declaring that the PC(USA) recognize the laws, policies and practices of the Israeli government regarding the Palestinian people “fulfill the international legal definition of apartheid.” Some have criticized the PC(USA) stance towards Israel as antisemitic, saying it hurts interfaith relations. Others say the assembly spoke courageously in supporting human rights for the Palestinian people.

Climate change. Voting 340-41, the assembly directed PC(USA) entities to divest from five oil and gas companies it concluded are not moving quickly enough to try to slow global warming — Chevron, ExxonMobil, Marathon Petroleum, Phillips 66, and Valero Energy. The vote reflected continued support for the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI)’s strategy of corporate engagement and selective divestment. Action on another item, ENV-09, also affirmed “that working in the fossil fuel industry is a necessity for many” and assured Presbyterians that “divestment is not a condemnation or judgment of their choice of employment.”

Litany of repentance. One of the assembly’s most powerful emotional moments came when White Presbyterians recited a litany of repentance from RGJ-08, offering an apology to African Americans for the sin of slavery and its legacy. One assembly committee focused exclusively on issues of race and gender justice — including violence against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, disparities experienced by Black women and girls, and racial disparities in health care. Other concerns: confronting White supremacy in the PC(USA) and working for reparative justice.

Gun violence. With recent mass shootings still echoing, the assembly approved VIOL-07, declaring 2022-2032 a “Decade to End Gun Violence” — asking the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to develop tools for faith-based advocacy against gun violence and for studying “the intersection of white supremacy culture, Christian nationalism, and gender with gun violence.” It also approved VIOL-11,

directing MRTI to begin a process of corporate engagement with Walmart, Dick's Sporting Goods, and Kroger, three publicly-traded companies included in the investment portfolios of either the Board of Pensions or Presbyterian Foundation, and which sell guns not classified as semi-automatic and assault-based weapons. (Those weapons previously mentioned are already on the divestment list.)

Family leave. The assembly approved a proposed amendment to the PC(USA) constitution to say a minister's terms of call shall include at least 12 weeks of paid family medical leave (covering the birth, fostering or adoption of a child; care for ill or disabled family members; and healing following a loss or tragic event). To take effect, the proposed change needs approval from a majority of the presbyteries.

Immigration. The assembly voted 340-25 to declare the PC(USA) a "sanctuary and accompaniment church" — saying the denomination stands with immigrants and asylum-seekers and is committed to working for justice in U.S. immigration policy. That work often involves Presbyterians accompanying immigrants by offering housing and legal assistance, going with them to immigration hearings and other appointments and trying to get people released from detention.

Restructuring. Supporting recommendations from a special committee, the assembly voted to create a commission with the power to act and the responsibility for unifying the PMA and the Office of the General Assembly — basically, to restructure the top level of the PC(USA). Citing financial stress on congregations and presbyteries, the assembly also created a team to develop experimental models as alternatives to the current per capita funding system.

Reproductive justice. In the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*, the assembly approved a resolution on reproductive justice — saying the PC(USA) rejects "attempts at all levels of government to reduce, limit, or eliminate access to contraceptive and abortion care."

LGBTQIA+ equity. The assembly created a new LGBTQIA+ Equity Advocacy Committee as a permanent committee of the General Assembly — equivalent in access and accountability to the Advocacy Committee for Women and Gender Justice and the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee.

Per capita. The assembly set the new General Assembly per capita assessment at \$9.85 per member for 2023 and \$9.80 per member for 2024. That compares to the current per capita rate of \$8.98 per member.

2024 General Assembly. Presented with four options, the assembly opted for a hybrid approach again for the 2024 assembly — choosing Plan Omega with online committee meetings and in-person plenary sessions in Salt Lake City, Utah.