

# SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE

July 7, 2024

## WORDS OF WELCOME

**INTROIT: #276 v.v. 1 & 4** *“Holy God, We Praise Your Name”* (Public Domain)

1 Holy God, we praise your name; Sovereign God, we bow before you;  
All on earth your scepter claim, all the heavenly hosts adore you.  
Infinite your vast domain, everlasting is your reign.

4 Holy Father, Holy Son, Holy Spirit, Three we name You;  
While in essence truly One, undivided God we claim You,  
So we gather reverently, to adore the mystery.

**CALL TO WORSHIP: AΩ\*** (Inspired by Psalm 48)

*L: Great is the Holy One who is both sovereign and near!*

**C: The earth rejoices on the holy mountain, at the heights and depths of God’s love.**

*L: We gather, we observe, we recognize,  
we ponder the wonders of the Creator’s majesty and works!*

**C: God’s name, like your praise, reaches to the ends of the earth.**

*L: The mighty deeds of power astound and amaze.  
We remember and recount from generation to generation!*

**C: Our Guide reigns forever and ever. Let us praise our God!**

**INVOCATION: AΩ\***

*L: Powerful One, we come into this gathering humbled by your presence among us, grateful for the companionship of your people, and eager to worship your name. As we tell your story anew, help us to enter your story as the objects of your attention, love, and care. Help us to know you more deeply and clearly. May we be transformed and transfixed by the mystery of you. May we be inspired by your deeds of power to be instruments of your reign in the world.*

**A: Empower us and guide us, O Holy One, to do just that. Amen.**

**HYMN: “Step By Step” (2Xs)**

CCLI Song # 696994 David (Beaker) Strasser © 1991 Kid Brothers Of St. Frank Publishing (Admin. by Brentwood-Benson Music Publishing, Inc.) Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publishing (Admin. by Brentwood-Benson Music Publishing, Inc.) For use solely with the SongSelect® Terms of Use. All rights reserved. [www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com) Reprinted and streamed under CCLI License # 11251098

**PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION & NEW LIFE: AΩ\***

*L: Gracious and Loving God, have mercy on us.*

*We confess our own forms of rebellion and stubbornness.*

*For the times we seek our own way and fail to wait for your counsel, wisdom, and insight.*

**C: Forgive us.**

*L: When we hold fast to hopes and dreams that do not include your kingdom or our neighbors.*

**C: Forgive us.**

*L: When we choose comfort over holy confrontation, doctrine over faithful discipleship and position over spiritual power.*

**C: Forgive us. Awaken in us hunger and thirst for righteousness. Amen.**

*Moment of Silence, In Confession, Listening to God &  
Reflection on God’s Forgiveness, Love, Guidance, Redemption, and Restoration of our Lives*

## **WORDS OF GRACE:ΑΩ\***

*L: Power-filled beloved, the Holy One is with you and fuels your journey. God grants you power to be the church, to be faithful, and to be active agents in the kingdom. With the help of God, you have power to make things new in your heart, in your neighborhood, and in your community. Receive the grace to try even when your way is uncertain, to hope even when circumstances seem dim, and to love even when love does not come easily. God is with you and will be with you.*

**A: All praise and thanks be to God! Hallelujah! Amen!**

## **HYMN OF PREPARATION: v. 1 "Thy Word"**

CCLI Song # 14301 Amy Grant | Michael W. Smith © 1984 Word Music, LLC (a div. of Word Music Group, Inc.) Meadowgreen Music Company (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing) For use solely with the SongSelect Terms of Use. All rights reserved. www.ccli.com CCLI License # 11251098

## **SCRIPTURE:**

New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America.. All rights reserved worldwide.

### **Mark 6:1-13**

#### **The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth**

**6** He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. **2** On the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! **3** Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. **4** Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown and among their own kin and in their own house." **5** And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. **6** And he was amazed at their unbelief.

#### **The Mission of the Twelve**

Then he went about among the villages teaching. **7** He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. **8** He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff: no bread, no bag, no money in their belts, **9** but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. **10** He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. **11** If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." **12** So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. **13** They cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

## **A TIME OF REFLECTION: *Not Passive Beneficiaries***

How many of you remember the old Doublemint gum commercials? What was the mantra proclaimed? Come on, you can say it with me; "*There are two, two, two mints in one?*" In our Gospel lesson today, there are two, two, two stories in one and both are important. The things both stories have in common is that no one can shove God's healing and good news on anyone, one must be open to it in order to receive; and that beneficiaries of God's healing and good news are called upon to share it with others. Disciples are not just passive beneficiaries; they become agents through whom God's will, healing and good news is carried to others thus manifesting God's reign here on earth as it is in heaven.

I want to focus on the second story first. Throughout the Gospel of Mark, we see how the disciples of Jesus have been traveling with him, watching and learning from him. Now, Jesus empowers them to be the vessels of healing, teaching, and carrying the good news

wherever it will be received, trusting in God's provisions and the hospitality of the townspeople. By staying in one home, it shows respect and that their ministry is not about gaining status. By accepting hospitality shows you are accepting people where they are and you have the opportunity to get to know them. Jesus, in his commissioning of them, also tells them, if the people won't receive you, don't waste your time, shake the dust off your sandals and move on.

It is interesting to note that this commissioning of the disciples came right after Jesus' rejection in his hometown. One might wonder why the timing of this commission. The disciples had been witnessing so many successes of the teacher, the teachings, the healings, the crowds, the praying, so to witness this, this must have been quite confusing. But maybe the timing was just right. I know there have been many times in my life where I have questioned my ministry and service to God. Rejection can be very disheartening but after rejection, Jesus not only carried on, but empowered others to carry that healing and gospel out into the world as well. Maybe this was important for those first disciples to embrace as well. The teacher who gave them the authority to heal and proclaim was not always successful everywhere, but that did not stop the healing and proclamation everywhere, even where he was rejected, some healing still took place. I know that message gives me the will to keep planting seeds and nurturing them knowing that the rest is out of my control. One never knows when one of those seeds planted is just lying dormant and could sprout and take deep root at any time and become another one commissioned by God to carry God's healing, love and message out into the world.

I now want to go back and focus on the first story in our Gospel lesson today. One thing I think it teaches us is that not all of God's "Good News" is focused on where we will spend eternity, but how much God cares for our well-being and is a part of our lives in the here and now. Why was Jesus rejected in his hometown. They were amazed at his teaching, yet they rejected him. Why? Maybe it had to do with the fact that it was a culture of honor and shame and there was only so much honor to go around. To give honor to one would mean taking honor away from another, so how could they give honor to this one who came from such a meager and even tainted background. Maybe it was because they could not reconcile the ordinary with the extraordinary and felt shown up somehow by comparison. Either way, the result is the same, they reject him and it limits his power to bring healing, but doesn't stop it all together, even in the place where he is rejected. David Lose, makes the same point in his reflection on this as what I did, saying, *"what if what's at stake here isn't a matter of God's ultimate purposes or our eternal destinies. After all, it's not like Jesus couldn't do anything there. I mean, I'm sure the people he healed were glad of his miraculous ministrations. What if, rather, Mark is simply inviting us to contemplate the possibility that we have actually have something to do, that we have an important role to play in the manifestation of the kingdom. To say it another way: this isn't about salvation, it's about the role each one of us is invited to play in sensing, experiencing, and making known God's will and work in the world."*

Just as the people of Jesus' hometown, though amazed, still rejected him, David asks some pointed questions for us to consider, where we might be limiting God's power to work in us. Is there some area – some regret we can't get over, some grudge we can't let go, some hurt that has come to define us, some addiction that imprisons us, some anger that has taken hold of us – that we are having difficulty entrusting to God? Similarly, is there some opportunity we feel God might be inviting us to or some challenge God may be setting for us that we find difficult to embrace or entertain.

These questions aren't about the quality of our salvation; rather, they are about the character of our Christian life. They are important to consider these or other ways we may be hindering God's power because, just as in the Gospel lesson today, it matters how we receive God into our lives. God's power and witness is not forced upon us, but definitely can be made manifest in us and through us as we open our lives to receiving it.

So, I want us to close this time reflection by proclaiming through song that we are the church together. Singing that song we learned as children acapella, We are the Church.

### **We are the Church**

Song #04065 Contributors: Avery & Marsh Text: © 1972, Hope Publishing Company. All rights reserved. Reprinted under One License #A-611234

#### ***Refrain:***

***I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together!***

***All who follow Jesus, all around the world! Yes, we're the church together!***

1. The church is not a building, the church is not a steeple,  
the church is not a resting place, the church is a people.

## **A TIME OF PRAYER - LIFTING UP PRAYER REQUESTS - THE LORD'S PRAYER**

### **COMMUNION HYMN: #342 "Be Known to Us in Breaking Bread"** (Public Domain)

1 Be known to us in breaking bread, but do not then depart;  
O Savior, stay with us, and spread your table in our heart.

2 Here share with us, in love divine, your body and your blood;  
That living bread, that heavenly wine be our immortal food.

## **THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

### **INVITATION**

#### **COMMUNION PRAYER**

Pastor: God be with you. C: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts. C: We lift them to God.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to God Most High. C: We freely give God thanks and praise.

*Pastor: We thank you God for ...*

*... So, we unite our voices with the entire family of your faithful people everywhere saying:*

**A: Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty,  
the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High.  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God!  
Hosanna in the highest!**

### **BLESSING**

### **SHARING IN THE MEAL**

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

**A: O Christ, we thank you for this feast of life. Fed by your love, and strengthened by your life; we humbly accept your call to go into this world to live with hope, and to share your joy. You commission us to feed as we have been fed, forgive as we have been forgiven, and love as we have been loved. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

## INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:

### PRAYER OF DEDICATION:

*L: O Most Bounteous God, and Creator of the universe,*

**A: all we have emanates from you and your creation. Receive these gifts we give with thanksgiving and hope for a shared future without lack, disparities, and unmet needs. Bless them, multiply them and guide their use so that what we have shared in thanksgiving and hope will become reality. Amen.**

## SUMM-IT UP:

### SENDING HYMN: "Go, My Children with My Blessing"

Song #110843 Jaroslav J. Vajda, Welsh traditional; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams  
Words - ©1983 Concordia Publishing House Reprinted and streamed under One License #A-611234.

### CHARGE & BENEDICTION: AΩ\*

May the power of God fill you and ignite a new vision in you .

May the power of God inspire you to follow the way of Jesus in the world.

Go in God's in peace and in power to love and serve God, neighbor and all of Creation.

As you do this,

May the Lord bless and keep you.

May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

May the Lord look upon you kindly and grant you the peace God alone can give.

### POSTLUDE: "God Bless America"

Song #123241 Music - © Hal Leonard Corporation Reprinted & streamed under One License #A-611234

**AΩ** indicates prayers reproduced or \* altered from *Deeds of Power: Service Prayers for the Seventh Sunday after Pentecost* written by the Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay who serves as Minister for Worship and Theology for the United Church of Christ. Copyright 2024 Justice and Local Church Ministries, Faith INFO Ministry Team, United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100. Permission granted to reproduce or adapt this material for use in services of worship or church education. All publishing rights reserved.