



Traditional Worship • July 29

Praying with Paul

- Prayer Concerns: Dorcas Newkirk; Kenny Williams; praises for Joan Nevill and all her years of service at Methodist Temple.
- Today's Sanctuary flowers given by Sue Anderson to the glory of God in memory of Milton H. Anderson, M.D.
- Today's choral selections are provided by the Temple Choir under the direction of Joan Nevill. Organist: Barbara Waite.
- Ushers (29): Greg & Linda Stilwell, captains; Chuck Taylor, Jacque Hardin, Nelson & Joyse Rivers
- Ushers (5): Kathy Zelle, captain; Chuck Taylor, Warren Heinsohn, Jack Buttrum, Ed Ancona, Thornton Patberg (balcony), Margo Borre (balcony)
- Greeters (29): Margo & Skip Borre, Tom Harvey, Wanda Erwin
- Greeters (5): Sue Anderson, Patricia Helm, Nancy Hughes

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC Virginia Adye and Allison Heck, piano; Don Ellington, trumpet

WELCOME

PRELUDE "Festival Alleluia" arr. by D. Miller

CALL TO WORSHIP
 Leader: Kneel at the feet of God.
People: We bow down in awe of You.
 Leader: Humble yourselves before the Lord.
People: We are servants for the One who came to serve.

CHORAL INTROIT "I Will Worship the Lord" by John Rutter

***CHIMES & SERVICES OF LIGHT**

***FIRST HYMN #89** "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**
 Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.
People: And also with you.
 Leader: Please turn to those around you and pass the peace of Christ.

SPECIAL MUSIC "Bring Joy!" by Joseph M. Martin

CALL TO PRAYER
 Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
 Leader: Let us listen for God in the silence.

LORD'S PRAYER

GIVING OFFERING "I Love To Tell The Story" arr. by C. Ore

***DOXOLOGY** *the congregation stands as the Ushers return the offering to the Altar.* #95 in Hymnal

ANTHEM "Joy in the Morning" by Natalie Sleeth

KIDZ MOMENT

SCRIPTURE READING Ephesians 3:14-21

Prayer for the Readers

14For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. 16I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, 17and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. 18I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

20Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, 21to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE TFWS #2120 "Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness (refrain)"

MESSAGE *by Pastor Andy Payton* "Praying with Paul"
 Well good morning. It certainly is a blessing and a joy to be with you on this special day. It is a bittersweet day. It is a day in which we celebrate all the great and good things that God has given to the life of this congregation through the Ministry of Joan Nevill. And so we celebrate, but also we admit that we are going to miss her. I know one of the great blessings that I've had the last five years- I can't believe I've been here five years now Joan, and I'm starting my sixth year now- but one of the great blessings I have had is simply watching Joan every Sunday morning direct the choir. I have a different view than you do. Of course, I sit over there and I get to see her face. Every Sunday I got to see her face, and the joy, friends, the joy that radiated from her every single Sunday, it truly is a gift. It is truly a gift. One of the things Joan that you taught me more than anything else is that in the end, it's not what we do that's important, but it's how we do it. It's the spirit in which it is done. So thank you Joan. Thank you for teaching me about joy.

Today I'm going to try to the best of my ability to share with you some ways that you might also cultivate the gift of joy within your life. Barb, are we going to do a little organ back and forth today? I was at a church not too long ago where they did that; the pastor got up and he preached and then the organ player played. Yeah. That one. That would probably catch me off guard. Yes. Wow.

Let's turn to God in a time of prayer. Would you pray with me? God of Life, God of joy help us to be present to you today even as you are here present with us. We ask this through Christ. Amen.

So how do we cultivate joy? How do we cultivate gratitude? How do we cultivate a sense of celebration within our lives? I think the first step. Is to really come to terms with the lens that we're looking at our lives through. There's really three ways that we can look at the world- three lenses that we used to look at the world. One lens we might use to look at the world is that it's a fearful place. It's a scary place. We might have had a lot of tough things happen to us as a result of those difficult events of our lives. It's shaped the lens that we see the world that we see our lives. And certainly if we see the world as a scary place, it's hard to have joy. If we're afraid all the time, it's hard to have joy. Another lens we might use to see our lives and to see the world is sort of like a series of coincidences, right? I mean as we look at our lives we think we have good days of good luck or bad luck, good things and bad things, and again it's hard to cultivate joy when we look at our lives through that lens of a series of coincidences.

As a people of faith though, the lens that we choose to use to see our lives and to look at the world is what we call faith. And as we as a people of faith look at the world, what we choose to see is God working through the unfolding of our lives. The very one who raised Christ from the dead is the very one working in our midst and it is when we choose that lens- when we choose faith- that we are able to cultivate a sense of joy. I think underlying the Book of Ephesians- the book we just read from- is this idea that when we see the world, what we see is the world in front of us, yes, but also hidden behind it is the presence of a living God. And as we look at the Book of Ephesians, the Letter of Ephesians, what we find is that the theme, the trust, the hope that we have as Christians is that the very one who raised Christ from the dead has promised to reconcile all things; and in the fullness of time make all things new. There's this verse in Ephesians 1 that says the mystery of God has been made known to us in Jesus Christ, and that God's plan is that in the end, God's going to make all things new. Wow. What hope we have as Christians.

It is for this reason that Paul prays; that's our scripture this morning. For this reason, Paul prays. Now a lot of different things might come to our minds when we hear the word prayer. It could be written prayer, like the Lord's Prayer or a "Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep sort of prayer- that might be a prayer. That's a good prayer. It might be a conversational prayer which we we talked to God and we share with God the different requests we have. It could be breath prayer like we learned earlier in the worship service. But for me, when I use the term prayer, what I've come to realize is that prayer is so much more than simply just the words that we use. Prayer is so much more than the thoughts that we think. Prayer, hear me want to say this, prayer is about the stance that we take. It's about the stance that we take toward the world in which we're living. The stance is based upon the one whom we put our trust. So prayer is a stance that we take towards the lives in which we are living, and it's based upon the one in whom we have put our trust upon. It's an attitude of living. Prayer is an attitude of our living. When we're praying, we have a joyful, a hopeful, a faithful stance towards the life that we're living.

The three words I came to my mind as I thought about prayer this week, Praying with Paul, were: abundance, appreciation, and acceptance. Abundance, appreciation, and acceptance. Prayer first is about seeing the abundance of the gifts that God has given to us. There is a verse in our scripture lesson for this morning that just popped out to me this week as I read it. Paul says, "Now to the one who was able to do more than we think or imagine to that one be the glory." To the one who's able to do more than we can ever think or imagine to that one be the glory. It's as if from all the of eternity, God has been working in such a way that God has been putting together things within this world so as to present them as gifts to us, and to say 'See, I just have something to give you. I just have something that I want for you. If you could see it, if you just could wrap it, if you could just celebrate it. Here it is.'

The image that comes to my mind is like a birthday. Today's not only a special day -Joan because you're retiring- but it's also a special day because it's my daughter's fourth birthday. That wasn't planned, it just happened. Paige turns 4 today, and yesterday we were eating cake and we were celebrating her birthday. I got a picture of when we were singing Happy Birthday to her. I was holding her up. It's one of those pictures is kind of hard to see because we had to crop it a little bit. Off the screen is the cake, and we had just lit the candles on the cake. I was holding Paige out, and we were singing happy birthday. We were enjoying the moment, and we were so caught up in the moment that after we got done singing Happy Birthday, the wind had blown the candles out already. It was like God was so excited that God blew the candles out for us.

But here's the thing about that birthday, and the weeks and the months leading up to that birthday, I have to confess Leslie, my wife, and Linda, my mother in law, worked so hard to make it this special and perfect day that they wanted it to be- a day that reflects our love to Paige. We conspired and we went to the store and we got the gifts that Paige wanted. We'd asked her again and again we said Paige what do you want for your birthday? What do you want Paige? And her response always was presents and cake. That's not the answer we're looking for. More specifics please. Presents. Cake. And so we went out, and finally we figured out what gift we thought she would want, a piglet "Peppa Pig". We presented to her those gifts to her yesterday and each time she unwrapped it you could just see the joy on her face as we were really showing our love to Paige for being Paige. I think that's a powerful metaphor for the way God works in our lives. Except for it started a lot longer than two months ago or a month ago or a few weeks ago. From all of eternity, God's been working to give you and I gifts. Gifts just for you and just for me. Those those gifts me us exactly where we are on our terms exactly where we are at, and we're the only ones that can get the certain gifts that God gives to us. And the tragedy is, so much of the time we're so busy trying to live someone else's lives or trying to be someone else that we miss the gifts that God is working to give to us.

The first word when it comes to prayer friends is abundance. God is able to work abundantly more than we ever think or imagine. The second word appreciation. If you look at that verse, it says, 'God is able to do more than we ever think or imagine. To that God be glory.' Now I looked up the Greek on that word, and the Greek on the word for glory in that text is the same word from which we get the word doxology. You want to know what a Doxology is? We just sang a Doxology; we just sing it Doxology a few moments ago. The Doxology is a word of praise to God for the gifts that we are about to receive. We are called to be, and I'm going to make up a word here- I don't know if it's really a word- I'm going to make up a word because I just make up words sometimes, we're called to be a Dox- a- logical people. That's a cool word. You know so much of the time we're so caught up in being a theological people to get our beliefs right, to get our thoughts right, to get our thinking right when it comes to God; and I think sometimes we get so caught up in our theology that we forget the doxology. We're not called just to be a theological people, we're called to be a dox-a-logical people that has learned the gift of appreciation. We see the gifts that God has given to us, and we choose to appreciate the gifts that God has given to us.

The person that comes to my mind is a lady by the name of June Barn's. I know most of you probably know June. Some of you may not know June, but June is one of the longtime saints of Methodist Temple. She was one of the ones that are sort of here from the beginning, and I didn't really know June that well. She moved to Florida a couple of years after I got here, but then one thing I remember about June was that she sat to my right and she always smiled. She oozed joy. She oozed a sense of gratitude in who she was. She didn't really even have to say much about it, it just kind of was who she was. Well I learned something about June. A couple of weeks ago she passed away, and I met with her family and I learned about her story. I learned at the age of 40 that she lost her husband in a work accident. This was the late 1950s and the early 1960s where single parenting wasn't the norm. At the age of 40, she lost her husband; but it didn't stop her. It didn't stop her spirit. She continued to be dox- a- logical person in who she was so much so that when her daughters got to telling me about her who she was, they said every morning she would get up and read her devotion and then she would look at the girls at the breakfast table and she would say, 'girls this is the day that the Lord has made. Let us be joyous and be glad in it.' And then she would ask the girls, 'what are we going to do with this beautiful day that God has given to us?' And then they told me that it didn't matter if it was snowing or raining or it was like Evansville heat -you know about that- she appreciated the life that she was given, and I know that that's such a basic choice. But it's a choice that so much of the time we fail to make, and I challenge you to make that choice to see the abundance and to appreciate the gifts.

The last word when it comes to prayer, is that I believe prayer is about acceptance. This is probably the more challenging part of prayer. To choose a stance of acceptance means this: that we accept the reality that there are times when life takes us to places we'd sooner not go, and even in the midst of those places we would soon not go, we can choose to trust in God's capacity to make it beautiful anyway. Life will take us to places we'd sooner not go, but we must choose to trust that God can make something beautiful out of it anyway. Now to be clear, it's not that we believe in this sort of fatalistic understanding of God, that God causes all things in our lives to happen, that God is the cause of some of the rough things in our lives that happen, but we trust that in the midst of those things that we know don't really even reflect the will of God in our lives, we know that God is working anyway. God is working in such a way that God will bring something beautiful out of it despite what we find ourselves in. I think it's interesting that the Letter of Ephesians depicts Paul as writing these passages while he's in prison. And early on in Chapter 3, he says, 'while I'm in prison, I write you these things'. And it's in the midst of prison that Paul says, 'now to the one who's able to do more than we can ever think or imagine, to that one to that God be the glory.'

You see we're not praying until we're able to trust that God can make something beautiful out of us even when we're in a place that we'd sooner not be in. Hear me when I say this: We've got to find the capacity to trust the work of God in the unfolding of our lives. We have to find that capacity. Until we get there, we're just going to be angry and frustrated and bitter. Once we find that capacity to trust that God is working through the unfolding of our lives, it's them we're able to see the abundance of the gifts that we've been given and appreciate what's being given to us.

I'll tell one more story then I'll stop. Two months ago we were sitting in the staff chapel and we were going through our prayer concerns- the prayer concerns that you write out every Sunday morning- we as a staff were there praying. I forget what the discussion was. And I forget how it even got brought up, but in the midst of our conversation, Joan begin to tell us a story about when she was a kid. And she specifically told us a story about a prayer that she was taught as a child. And as she told that story, I picked up on it really quickly because I was at a time in my life where I was praying to teach my daughter Paige how to pray- the 4 year old I just mentioned. I was wanting to teach her how to pray, I wanted to teach her at least some prayer, but my daughter Paige has a speech delay, so prayers hard for her not to the point we can do the Lord's Prayer. Well here's the prayer that Joan learned when she was a child. It was the prayer of Paul, wasn't it? Abba. Father. Amen. But with a German accent, which I can't do. Right? It was like Abba. Father. Amen. Something like that. And that's been the prayer that I've been teaching my family and our kids ever since. So thank you for that gift, Joan. That's the practice to me. In the midst of all circumstances, all situations, all times that we choose that prayerful stance in which we are able to say, Abba Father Amen. I know you're with me. I know you're with me. I know you have gifts that you can't wait to show me, and so I pray a Abba Father Amen. Interpretation: God I see you. Amen.

CELEBRATION OF MINISTRY Joan Nevill

***LAST HYMN #68** "When In Our Music"

***CHIMES & SERVICE OF LIGHT**

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE "Grand Processional on Lobe Den Herren (excerpt)" by M. Shaw