

Learning to TRUST



November 25 • Traditional Worship

Our Pastors:

- Lead Pastor Andy Payton leadpastor@methodisttemple.church
- Associate Pastor JillAnn Knonenborg associatepastor@methodisttemple.church

Sunday Morning Volunteers:

- Ushers (25): Eric Eades, captain; Chuck Taylor, Ronnie Pursley, John Oberhelman, Thornton Patberg (balcony), Margo Borre (balcony)
- Greeters (25): Tom Harvey, Janet Kissel, Carla Bolin

**An usher remains in the Narthex during worship. Please reach out to them with any questions or special needs you may have. They are happy to assist!*

Additional Information:

- Today's Sanctuary flowers given by Phil & Cathy Huestis to the glory of God in honor of Miriam's birthday.
- Today's choral selections are provided by the Temple Choir under the direction of Don Travis. Organist: Barbara Waite.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

WELCOME

PRELUDE

"Crown Him With Many Crowns" by M. Burkhardt

CALL TO WORSHIP

- Leader: What right do we have to invoke God's name on what we say and do here?
- People: **In Christ, we have been called to be God's people and been given God's Spirit.**
- Leader: Do we have the courage to worship in spirit and truth, knowing that it may change our hearts?
- People: **We have come to seek, to find, and to be found.**

CHORAL INTROIT

"Surely the Presence of the Lord" by Lanny Wolfe

*CHIMES & SERVICES OF LIGHT

*FIRST HYMN UMH #327

"Crown Him With Many Crowns"

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

- Leader: I see Christ in you.
- All: **And also in you.**
- Leader: Please turn to those around you and celebrate the presence of Christ.

RECEIVING NEW MEMBERS

Kaylynn Carver, Jacob McCalister

CALL TO PRAYER

- Leader: The Lord be with you.
- People: **And also with you.**
- Leader: Let us listen for God in the silence.

PASTORAL PRAYER

All: Beloved Christ, where we are worn and tired, restore our passion. Where we have turned hardhearted, show us forgiveness. Where we feel hurt and wounded, let us experience Your healing presence. In the silent spaces of our hearts, come close. And now, hear us as we pray, each in our own hearts and our own ways...

GIVING OFFERING

"Christ, The Life Of All The Living" by F. Peeters

*DOXOLOGY the congregation stands as the Ushers return the offering to the Altar.

#94 in Hymnal

ANTHEM

"Ever Faithful, Ever Sure" by Larry Shackley

KIDZ MOMENT

Noisy Offering

SCRIPTURE READING

John 6.28-34

²⁸ Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" ²⁹ Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." ³⁰ So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing?" ³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" ³² Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴ They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE TFWs #2176

"Make Me a Servant"

MESSAGE by Pastor Andy Payton

The End

Good morning friends. I trust you all have had a Happy Thanksgiving, and I trust you all are filled. Let's just say it that way- you all are filled. I have some bad news and I have some good news as we get started. The bad news is my birthday is over. The good news is I plan on having another one the same time next year. I've got some bad news and some good news for you. Bad news is Jesus promises us in the Gospel of John that we will have trouble. He promises us that we will have trouble. That's the bad news. The good news is He says take heart, I've overcome the world. Bad news. Good news. Bad news is by a large we live in a world that has lost its way. Good news is we can always choose to find our way home again. Today is Christ the King Sunday. It is the last Sunday of the Christian year. Pastor and Andy's interpretation of what today means is this, in the end Jesus wins. In the end the love of God wins. That's my interpretation. Or maybe another way to say it is, God has already won and we just need to come to realize it.

As we get started, let us pray. Would you pray with me? Take the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts today, O God, and make them to be acceptable in your sight. For indeed you are our rock and redeemer. Amen.

So it all started on Tuesday this past week. I was sent on assignment. I was to take Ella, our youngest, to her 18 month checkup at the pediatrician. That was my assignment, and so away we went to the pediatrician over on Virginia Street, Dr. Boyle's Office. The two of us entered into the office and all was going well we got the iPad; we checked in. That's the way we check in now at the pediatrician. We all get our own iPad. It's kind of cool; I like it. It is fun. I know you and I know your game. In any case, the nurse finally says oh well let's put her on the table and check her out. At which point, oh my goodness. Let's just say Ella has a set of lungs on her and everyone in the doctor's office knew that she was going to the table. And we set her on the table and we measured her. It was fine. The nurse leaves. Guess what. Ella goes back to normal. Baa baa baa baa baa. Let's get on the table, play a stuffed animal. Now we found the chair that spins around. Let's sit on the chair and spin around. We're having a good time.

We played with a stuffed animal and we were just having a good old time and then the nurse comes in the room at which point Ella completely shifts gears. She walks over to me, sits on my lap, and puts on her best poker face. She's looking at that nurse. The nurse says How are you doing today Ella? Nothing. The nurse tries to crack a joke. Can you show me where your nose is, Ella? Nothing. Are you happy today Ella? Nothing. I know you- that's the look. I know you and I know your game. In any case, the nurse finally says oh well let's put her on the table and check her out. At which point, oh my goodness. Let's just say Ella has a set of lungs on her and everyone in the doctor's office knew that she was going to the table. And we set her on the table and we measured her. It was fine. The nurse leaves. Guess what. Ella goes back to normal. Baa baa baa baa baa. Let's get on the table, play a stuffed animal. Now we found the chair that spins around. Let's sit on the chair and spin around. We're having a good time.

Next phase: Dr. Boyle's shows up again. Ella gets a look on her face, comes and sits down on my lap. puts her best poker face on, and says I know your game. I know what you're up to. Dr. Boyles tries to crack a joke. Nothing. Dr. Boyles ask her a question. Nothing. He says to me, 'does she talk?' I say like oh yes, she talks except for when you're in the room. She doesn't talk. She watches. Dr. Boyle says well let's check her out. We check her out. Nurse walks in with the shots. Dun dun dun dun. At which point I'm thinking now I know why I've been sent on assignment to the doctor's office. Thanks a lot Leslie, this is great. We get the shots. She cries, but the thing that happened was as the nurse left she uttered these words: I think she's on us. I think she's onto us. I got to thinking about that. I think she's on to us. And as I thought about it, it occurred to me it really reminded me of our scripture lesson for today. We get the sense that Jesus is onto the game that Pilot's playing.

In some ways the, same way that Ella was on to the games the doctor was playing, our calling as Christians is to wake up to the game that is being played. Our text begins with Jesus being hauled off to Pilot's headquarters. By the time John 18 arrives, Jesus has been arrested. He's getting ready to be basically executed and He's standing trial. Translation Jesus is at the place where the Tenth Legion of the Roman Army was housed when pilot was in town. It was like a fortress that was catty corner from the Jewish Temple. Pilot would bring his army into town and they would house them at what was called 'the headquarters'. So Jesus is there with the Tenth Legion of the Roman Army standing interrogation in front of Pilot. Pilot asks Him the question 'Are you the king of the Jews?' at which point I can only imagine Jesus has got His look on His face and He could see the game that Pilot's playing. Jesus' response is 'Pilot who put you up to this? Who told you so?' He goes on to say to Pilot, 'You don't get it do you? My kingdom is not from this world. Instead my kingdom is from God and this is the reason why I was born- to testify to the infinite love of God. Everyone who listens to my voice, everyone who listens to my voice hears this truth.' You have two games being played in this moment. You have the Pilot game and you have the one that Jesus calls us to.

The way I've come to think about it is, I think about something that Thomas Keating once said. He said that at our core, we have three basic needs and drives. We have a need for security. We want to feel safe. We have a need for affection. We want to feel loved. We have a need for power and control. We want to feel like we're free to make choices. Now the game the pilot plays basically answers those needs in this way. The game of Pilot says we find security through force and sometimes violence. What makes us feel safe? Well security through force. That's symbolized in the fact that Jesus is taken of all places to where? The headquarters. And what's at the headquarters? The Tenth Legion of the Roman Army. The game of Pilot says, we find affection through the approval of other people. I think about the question the Pilot asked Jesus, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' And what was Jesus response? 'Who put you up to this?' At the end of the story Pilot has Jesus executed not because he finds anything wrong with Jesus but he's afraid of what the people are going to say. The game of Pilot says that we find affection through the approval of other people- power and control. Freedom. The game of Pilot says that freedom is having the capacity to do whatever we want, say whatever we want, do whatever we want, consume whatever we want. And here's the interesting thing about freedom when it's proposed in this way. Freedom in this way always comes at the expense of other people's freedom. That's the sneaky thing about sin. You see when it starts with us, it always comes at the expense of someone else.

'Are you the king of the Jews?' Pilot asked. In other words, are you running against me? Are you gonna take my power away from me? This is the game pilot. The game of Jesus the Kingdom of God is quite the opposite. Security. Security comes from the infinite love of God. Security comes from this idea that I mentioned earlier that yes we'll have troubles in this world, but take heart. Christ has overcome the world. Translation, out of the ashes of our lives, the promise is this: new life will always come. The promise is this: out of the biggest mistakes that we make, we'll learn our biggest lesson. The promise is this: even when we stumble and fall, the love and grace of God is more. It doesn't come through force. Security doesn't come through force. It doesn't come through violence. It doesn't come through any of these things. It comes from a place much deeper than this. Affection is not about the approval of other people. Affection comes from understanding that we are already approved of by God. Let me say we're not trying to earn the approval of God. We've already got the approval of God, and it's from that approval that we move into the world. Power and control. Freedom. It's not about doing whatever we want. Instead the freedom we've been given is about setting other people free. In so many words, in so many ways in this moment in which Jesus is interrogated by Pilot, what we find is the supreme example of waking up to the game that the world is playing and grounding ourselves in a different playbook.

Say it another way, in this story what we find is a challenge to find our way back home. What is our true home? Our true home is not a place we grew up. Our true home is not a house. Our true home is not even various people within our lives. Our true home is in the presence of the Living God. My kingdom is not from this world. I think of a story I read this past week. It comes from a friar by the name of Gregory Boyle who wrote a wonderful book called Tattoos on the Heart which is rarely interesting in the title of a book if you ask me. Gregory Boyle's ministry is working with gang offenders in Los Angeles. That's his ministry. He tells a story of the time in which he met one of the gang members. He says to this person, 'What's your name?' And the gang member says, 'My name is Sniper.' He said, 'That's not your name. That's a gang name. What's your real name?' He says, 'Gonzalez.' He said, 'That sounds like a last name. I'm curious about what your first name is. What's your first name?' 'Well,' the gang member says, 'when I was in trouble my mom always called me Napoleon.' Father Boyle says, 'Napoleon. That's what your mom called you when you were in trouble. What did your mom call you when you were happy?' At which point Napoleon you could tell went to a place that he had not been in a long time and he traveled back in time past all the mistakes and all the moments and all this stuff he had done. And he recalled the name his mother gave him when she was happy with him. He looked at Father Boyle and he says, 'She called me Napatos.' At which point Father Boyle looked at him and says, 'That's your name.'

This story we read today in my opinion is about going back to that place where we find our true selves, who we really are. We move past the game of Pilot. We move past the games of this world. We move past all that stuff and hear me when I say this, underneath all that stuff this world has put upon us, underneath all that stuff, there is a place within us where God dwells and calls us by name and says to you're my beloved and I'm happy with you. As we find our way back to that place, it feels like the best way I can describe it is going home, and the more and more we're able to go back to that place, the thing I've noticed is the person we used to be seems like a stranger to us. That occurred to me this last week as I was going to preach at the Rescue Mission. We have a pattern here at Methodist Temple. Every month we take one of the Mondays for devotions, and so it came down to it was my month and I was able to speak at the rescue mission. I sat down and I thought What am I going to tell these people at the Rescue Mission? I mean what I'm going to say? I thought to myself, 'I'll just say what I know. I'll tell them my story. I sat down and I started typing my story out. How my late teens and early 20s, I lost my way; and when I say I lost my way I really lost my way- drugs and violence and trouble. As I wrote that story, I began to cry sitting in my office. I thought to myself that person is a stranger to me. I'll don't even know them anymore. About that moment I came to the realization, I'm so grateful that I'm alive and that voice from within me, that presence that says you are secure Andy, you are approved of, my powers within you, I'm with you- that presence was with me as I sat there in that office. Funny thing is, I went to the Rescue Mission and it turns out that we'd been canceled for the night. But maybe I was the one that needed to hear the message. Maybe you're the one that needs to hear that message too. There's a lot of things the world says about us- a lot of things the world says we should be and become and do and a lot of games this world plays, but underneath it all here's what you need to hear: there is a presence within each of us that's more real than this silly stuff that we see. It's the infinite love of God. Today as we end the Christian year- this is the last Sunday in the Christian year- hear this, that love that's already within you is what wins. That's the bad news is we have a tendency to lose our ways from that love, but the good news is we can always find our way home to it again. Amen.

*LAST HYMN UMH #61

"Come, Thou Almighty King"

*CHIMES & SERVICE OF LIGHT

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

"Praise, My Soul, The King Of Heaven" by K. Kosche