

Date January 31, 2021

Theme Authority and community

## God's People Gather

### Prelude

#### Prelude Pondering

So how can we get about the business together of diminishing the things that rob us, our neighbors, and communities of life? And how can we be truly counter-cultural and not let all decision-making processes and discussions get reduced to political conversations held on the binary (us vs. them) terms of a culture that feeds on the outrageous and where ideological purity (to the left or right) and gaining airtime via social media or the press is more important than actually making a concrete difference? These are questions I'd love to have a congregation wrestle with, both knowing that God is unequivocally for them in love and that God also loves passionately and deeply people who look and act and believe very differently from them.

--David Lose

#### Call to Worship

Leader: God comes into a world filled with uncertainty.

**People: We come seeking God's wisdom.**

Leader: Jesus embraces the wounded and broken.

**People: We come seeking the healing embrace of Jesus.**

Leader: God knocks down the walls of division and strife.

**People: We come to join hands as one community in the Holy Spirit.**

Leader: God is the light of our lives.

**People: God is the one who makes all things new.**

**All: Let us worship God!**

#### Opening Song

*Morning Has Broken*

Morning has broken  
like the first morning,  
Blackbird has spoken  
like the first bird,

Praise for the singing!  
Praise for the morning!  
Praise for the springing  
Fresh from the Word!

Mine is the sunlight!

Mine is the morning  
Born of the one light  
Eden saw play!

Praise with elation,  
Praise every morning,  
God's re-creation  
of the new day!

### **Call to Confession**

There are so many voices around us, and it is sometimes hard to know which expert or authority to believe. But we know that we can always trust in the voice of Jesus, whose authority comes from God and whose ways are always good. We know that we can always trust in the grace of God, whose mercy is endless. So in faith, we confess our sins together.

### **Prayer of Confession**

O God, forgive us, when we in our pride presume to know more than you do. We want to put ourselves in charge, assuming an authority that we cannot ever hold. We think we know best, especially where others are concerned, and so we place our comfort ahead of your call to humbly help the needy. We act in disregard of others around us, forgetting that in Christ, we are one body, and when one suffers, all suffer. Forgive us! Give us a spirit of lovingkindness, of peace, and of humble service, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Silence is kept*

### **Assurance of Pardon**

Leader: Beloved children of God, let your spirit rest in the Spirit of the living God. In Jesus Christ, we are loved and forgiven.

**People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God. Amen.**

### **Sharing the Peace of Christ**

#### **Response**

*Peace Song*

Peace I leave with you my friends  
Shalom my peace in all you do  
Peace I leave with you my friends  
I give to you so you can give to others too.

## God's Word is Proclaimed

### Children's Time

#### Scripture Reading

The first reading for today is from the book of Deuteronomy, a part of the Torah, or the five books of law from the Hebrew Scriptures. You probably remember that Deuteronomy is where we find the ten commandments, and the instructions for acceptable worship, and a whole host of other laws and requirements. This section of the book often carries the heading "Public Authority and Leadership" or something similar. In the voice of Moses, we hear God's promise of a prophet, one who will speak to the Israelites with all the authority of God. This prophet, like all prophets of God, is charged with bringing a word from God to the people. A prophet is not a fortune teller or a magic 8-ball – in fact, just before this reading, Moses warns the people not to rely on soothsayers, or to practice child sacrifice – to stay away from the death-dealing practices of their neighbors. These verses describe a prophet who can speak not with predictions of the future but with the authority of God. Let's listen for God's word to us in Deuteronomy 18:15-20:

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. This is what you requested of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: "If I hear the voice of the Lord my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die." Then the Lord replied to me: "They are right in what they have said. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die."

#### Mark 1:21-28

They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching--with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

Sermon

Rev. Eric Heinekamp

### Responding to God's Word

#### Offering

If you are able, please continue to send in your offering and pledge. If you are enrolled in electronic funds transfer, there is no need to do anything different. If you would like to give online using Paypal, click this link: [bit.ly/FPCsterling](https://bit.ly/FPCsterling)

#### Prayer of Dedication

Holy God, we are so blessed to be your people! Let these gifts be visible signs of your love that creates community, builds up others, and blesses us in the giving. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

#### Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

#### God's People are Sent

#### Closing Song

*Great is the Lord*

Great is the Lord, He is holy and just;  
By His power we trust in His love.  
Great is the Lord, He is faithful and true;  
By His mercy He proves He is love.

Great is the Lord, and worthy of glory!  
Great is the Lord and worthy of praise.  
Great is the Lord, now lift up your voice,  
Now lift up your voice:  
Great is the Lord!  
Great is the Lord!

Great is the Lord, He is holy and just;  
By His power we trust in His love.  
Great is the Lord, He is faithful and true;  
By His mercy He proves He is love.

Great are You Lord, and worthy of glory!  
Great are You Lord, and worthy of praise.  
Great are You Lord, I lift up my voice,  
I lift up my voice:

Great are You, Lord!  
Great are You, Lord!

**Benediction**

Leader:....and let all God's people say...

**People: Alleluia! Amen!**