

Date June 6, 2021 Theme Spirited Characters: People of the Book of Acts RHODA

God's People Gather

Prelude

Prelude Pondering

Presbyterian minister Dennis Benson once scored an interview with John Lennon. Rev. Benson asked about Lennon's song "God," with its opening line: "God is a concept by which we measure our pain." He said Lennon told him: "I should have said, 'God is a concept by which we measure our joy.'"

Welcome

**Call to Worship (Psalm 146)*

Leader: Joy comes to those who hope in God, for God is a Keeper of promises.

People: Ours is a God of healing and help and hope!

Leader: God will keep faith with all generations.

People: Let us praise the Lord both now and forevermore!

ALL: Let us worship God!

**Opening Song* I Come With Joy To Meet My Lord

I come with joy to meet my Lord,

Forgiven, loved, and free,

In awe and wonder to recall His life laid down for me,

His life laid down for me.

I come with joy to meet my Lord,

Forgiven, loved, and free,

In awe and wonder to recall His life laid down for me,

His life laid down for me.

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, you bless us with each new day, yet we grumble as we rise. You pour out mercy upon us and we try to contain it and manage it. You show us the path of life and we wander into the thorns. You offer us deep joy and we settle for momentary pleasure. Forgive us, generous God! Help us to live fully in the light of your hope, to be open to joy, and to share that hope and joy with others, in Jesus' name.

Silence is kept

Assurance of Pardon

Friends, hear and remember the good news: Jesus is the light that brings joy in the morning and leads us by his grace. In Jesus Christ, God has destroyed the grip of darkness that crushes the spirit. Rejoice and be glad!

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

Response Glory to God

Glory to God,

Whose goodness shines on me,

And to the Son,

Whose grace has pardoned me,

And to the Spirit,

Whose love has set me free.

As it was in the beginning

Is now and ever shall be. Amen.

World without end,

Without end. Amen.

World without end,

Without end. Amen.

World without end,

Without end. Amen.

As it was in the beginning

Is now and ever shall be. Amen.

**Sharing the Peace of Christ*

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

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

Spirited Characters

Jodi Sell Perez

Scripture Reading Acts 12:6-16 John 15:10-11

Sermon The Joyful Community

Community Joy

Responding to God's Word

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Invitation

Prayer of Thanksgiving

All thanks to you, God, Giver of joy. Before the beginning of space and time you moved across the void with creating light, awakening the universe. You breathed your life into humankind and gave us all we needed to be happy. Throughout the rise and fall of nations, in times of turmoil and in times of tranquility, you have been our God. You gave us prophets and poets and artists to point us toward the splendor and beauty of your power. When humankind went astray you sent our holy friend and brother Jesus, to guide us into your encircling love and to give us lasting joy and eternal hope. At his table, we eat and are satisfied; in his presence, we rejoice. Through his mercy we learn compassion; because of his grace we are gracious. As one community, gathered at his table, we offer up our prayers for the world...for the community...for one another... for justice and peace. Send your Spirit to us now, to fill our hearts with joy and to move us to acts of mercy and love. We pray in the name of the one who taught us to pray saying:

The Lord's Prayer

Words of Institution

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Prayer After the Supper

We thank you, God, that you have met us and fed us at this table. Send us out into the world now as your people, to offer joy to the downhearted, release to the captive, food to the hungry, hope to the hurting. Let our ministry anoint the world with the oil of gladness, the joy we know in you.

Offertory bit.ly/FPCsterling

BLESSING OUR GRADUATES AND THEIR JOURNEYS

Leader: Today we take a moment to affirm the life journey of those in our community who are graduating. Graduation is a time of both closure and of new beginnings, a time of letting go and of reaching forth. And so now we celebrate you and bless your journey.

Leader: [Names of graduates], we give thanks for the journey we have had with you. Together we have lived in ways that seek to bring glory to God, and to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God. We have tried to model for you a life of faith, community, and care. For all that you have taught us and for all that we have shared
People: Thanks be to God!

Leader: We give thanks for all those who have journeyed with you: your fellow students; each teacher who encouraged you or challenged you: those who judged contests and those who taught you to practice with intensity, to compete fairly, and to win or lose with grace.
People: Thanks be to God!

Leader: We pray that you will continue to live your faith in the midst of your questions, so that you may live the life to which you are called. We celebrate the new chapter in your life that is beginning, praising God for the Spirit of Christ which lives in you. Now, we send you forth to claim a future shaped by your experiences here and expanding in ways we have yet to imagine. With God's help may you walk in the pathways of love and justice, no matter where your feet may take you.

Prayer: Source of all Life and Being, we celebrate these graduates whose lives have been so intertwined with ours. During this time of transition, whisper to us all the soft words of encouragement and comfort that we need to hear and shout with us in celebration. Inspire these graduates to embrace their new freedoms as opportunities to claim their faith in new ways. Grant them a spirit of gratitude for all they have been given, and generosity to share what they can. Give them courage as they walk into the unknown, and strength as they face new challenges. Be their vision and their wisdom so that they may claim the ways of justice and compassion, and live the life of love in all they become and all they do. In the name of Jesus we pray.

God's People are Sent

**Closing Song* There Is Joy in the Lord
There is joy in the Lord,
There is love in His Spirit.
There is hope in the
knowledge of Him.

There's a fountain that flows
Like a river from heaven,
Abounding in love to my soul.

All blessing and honor are His,
All glory and power are His.
Let all wisdom and strength
Be the Lord's in this place.
Let all glory be given to Him.

There is joy in the Lord,
There is love in His Spirit.
There is hope in the
knowledge of Him.

There's a fountain that flows
Like a river from heaven,
Abounding in love to my soul.
There is joy in the Lord!

*Benediction

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

People: Alleluia! Amen!

Postlude