

Sharing the Peace

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Response Peace Song (see overhead)

We Receive the Word

Children's Time

Scripture Reading Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

Sermon

We Respond to the Word

Moment of Thanks

Offertory

Faithful God, you entrust us with so many gifts that are more important than all we possess. You call us to be stewards of all that you have created. We strive to fulfill your call to be generous stewards by sharing the resources you place in our hands. We know that we demonstrate our commitment to your work in this world by giving these tithes and offerings. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

We Are Sent Out to the World

Closing Song I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me (see overhead)

Benediction

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

People: **Alleluia! Amen!**

Response May the Light of God Go With You (see overhead)

First Presbyterian Church

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SLOW TO SPEAK
QUICK TO LISTEN
SLOW TO HATE
QUICK TO LOVE
SLOW TO JUDGE
QUICK TO CARE
-WFS-

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Christina Berry

Ministers - All the People

August 21, 2022

We Gather

First Reading and Meditation

The cashier appeared to be one of the most unhappy, maddest people ever. I was six people deep in the line and it seemed like she got more and more exasperated with each passing customer. She was especially incensed when one of my unmarked items needed a price check. But as she rang up my items, I felt a little tingle in my spirit. A soul nudge. I tried to bargain with Jesus and told him that the extra little bit of cash in the back side of my wallet was not meant for her. It surely should go to someone sweeter and kinder, more deserving, or at least appreciative maybe. Not someone downright mean and angry.

But God did not budge. Nor did the tingle.

The human heart is our very best compass. It rarely leads us astray. So I paid my bill and reluctantly found the backside of my wallet. I slipped her some cash as she handed me my receipt. She was caught off-guard by the gesture. She gripped the folded bill with one hand and paused. Then slid her mask down with the other hand.

Her loud, stern voice got quiet when she whispered a single word: “Why?”

To which I answered two words back: “Soul nudge.” There was another pause. A brief reckoning of sorts. When she grabbed my hand and held on, I was the one caught off-guard.

“Today’s my 75th birthday and ain’t nobody called me. Not my sister. Not none of my kids. None these people here. Nobody. Nothing. I don’t think I can remember ever being so sad. Ain’t nobody even remember it’s my birthday.”

I felt the tingle again. And looked up into the buzzing, broken ballast of the light fixture above us in this old warehouse. Like Jesus is some pie-in-the-sky that we might see if we look hard enough. The light flickered. “Somebody remembered,” I said. While I did not see Jesus, that small soul nudge told me that He saw her.

She bit her bottom lip when her eyes threatened to leak. And I noticed a deep hurt and sweet humility under the figurative and physical mask she wore underneath her chin.

We all have our masks, don’t we?

The birthday news had made its way beside me and two more customers connected. Talk is cheap and words seem too few—until they aren’t. There was a small chorus of chirping happy birthdays. She just stood there, patting her heart and taking it all in. The words penetrated. Anger dissipated. Hope manifested. The tingle became tangible.

We just never know what someone else may be navigating or battling. Things are not always as they seem. We are living in an upside down world right now. We may be tempted to return hatefulness with hate. To retaliate. To alienate. To trade out judgment for Grace. But there’s a better way.

Turns out I needed reminding – – maybe you do too?

Let’s be slow to judge. And quick to obey. Trust the Holy Spirit to lead the way. The human heart, guided by Love, will not lead you astray.

Call to Worship

Leader: Welcome home! Whether you are a lifelong member or a first time guest, or somewhere in between, welcome to this place – a home for faith.

People: We come to hear words that give us both challenge and hope, to pray and praise, to sing and be silent.

Leader: Welcome to holy hospitality, to a space that opens your heart and mind and spirit to the movement of God’s Spirit in you.

People: We come to be reminded that God’s grace is for us, and to learn how to live fully in that state of grace.

Leader: Welcome to an open space, that invites you to be open, to a generous space, that invites you to be generous.

People: We come to worship with gratitude and joy!

All: Let us worship God!

Opening Songs

In Unity We Lift Our Song (see overhead)
Servant Song (see overhead)

We Prepare our Hearts

Prayer of Confession

(sung) Healing Grace Part 1

Silence is kept

Assurance of Pardon

(sung) Healing Grace Part 2

Response

Glory to God (see overhead)