

Westminster Presbyterian Church

September 19th, 2021 | 10:00am

Live Streaming | In Person

Prayers by Rev. Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org



Prelude

Steve Johnson

Welcome

Rev Barbara Macfie

*Call to Worship

Dee Austin & congregation

Here in this space,
We wear our hearts on our sleeves.
There is no use in filters or walls.
This space is an authentic space.

This space is a brave space.
For when it comes to God,
We are always invited to bring our full selves into the room.

So come into this space with your hurt and your joy,
Your prayers and your dreams.
All of God's children are welcome here.

Let us worship Holy God.

*Song of Praise

"Be Still My Soul"

Glory to God # 819

Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side.
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain.
Leave to thy God to order and provide,

Who through all changes faithful will remain.

Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake
to guide the future surely as the past.

Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake;

All now mysterious shall be bright at last.

Be still, my soul:

the waves and winds still know

his voice who ruled them while he dwelt below.

Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on

when we shall be forever with the Lord;

when disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,

Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.

Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past

all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

Call to Confession

Dee Austin

When we gather together we are quick to wave and say hello, to pass the peace,
to comment on the weather, to make small talk and show hospitality;
but how often do we go below the surface? How often do we sit next to the same
people, week after week, oblivious to the things they might be carrying?
Family of faith, I believe God wants deeper connection for us than that,

so listen now to our prayer of confession and then join me in silent prayer following. Let us listen. Let us pray:

Prayer of Confession | Truth Telling

Dee Austin & congregation

I've been meaning to ask...

How are you?
What has your year been like?
Did you know that I have been thinking of you?

I have been meaning to ask...

Is your mom okay?
Did your sister find a job?
Did you ever think we'd still be here?

I've been meaning to ask...

Did it get easier?
Did the grief subside?
Were you ever able to sleep at night?

I've been meaning to ask but I haven't—

Because it's hard.
Because I want to say the right thing.
Because I'm not sure what you need.

I've been meaning to ask, so I'm sorry for my silence.

Forgive me. Show me where it hurts.

Let's start again.

Family of faith, we could all use some practice in asking where it hurts.
Take a moment of silent prayer to think of the people in your world,
in your lives, who may need you to reach out and ask. Give their names to God.
Pause for silent prayer.

Trusting that God hears all things, we say together: Amen.

Words of forgiveness*Dee Austin & congregation*

Family of faith, in the journey to love and care for one another, we are bound to make mistakes. Fortunately for us, we worship a God who showed us how to love, and who extends grace to us when we fail to do so for others.

So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:

We are seen. We are heard. We are loved. We are forgiven.

Thanks be to God for this endless grace. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination*Dee Austin*

Holy God,

Today we will read stories of those who have known hurt—
people who have carried shame,
who have lived with grief and chronic illness,
who have felt alone and ignored,
who have seen the depths of suffering.

As we listen, we will be reminded of
the hurt we have carried during these fragile days—
memories and regrets co-mingling in our chests.

And as we listen, we will be reminded
that our neighbors, our siblings in faith,
also come to this space carrying burdens.
So dust off our ears and stretch open the
canvases of our hearts so that in our pain,
we might lean into one another as we lean into you.

Pull us close.

We are listening.

Amen.

Children's Message "All Are Welcome In God's Kingdom" *Rev. Barbara Macfie*

Scripture Reading

Mark 9:33-37

Rev. Barbara Macfie

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." Then he took a little child and put the child among them; and taking the child in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Scripture Reading 1 Samuel 1:1-18 (Hannah's Pain)

Dee Austin

There was a certain man of Ramathim a Zuphite from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham son of Elihu son of Tohu son of Zuph, an Ephraimite.

He had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah and the name of the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

Now this man used to go up year by year from his town to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas were priests of the Lord.

On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters; but to Hannah he gave double portion, because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb. Her rival used to provoke her severely, to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb.

So it went on year after year; as often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. Her husband Elkanah said to her, "Hannah why do you weep? Why do you not eat? Why is your heart sad? Am I not more than ten sons?"

After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah rose and presented herself before the Lord. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord, and wept bitterly, She made this vow: "Oh lord of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine or intoxicants , and no razor shall touch his head."

As she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth, Hannah was praying silently; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she was drunk, so Eli said to her, "How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Put away your wine.

"But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman deeply troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord. Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation all this time."

Then Eli answered, "Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him." And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your sight." then the woman went to her quarters, ate and drank with her husband and her countenance was sad no longer.

This is the Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon "Be Open To Faith"

Rev. Barbara Macfie

***Affirmation of Faith**

Dee Austin & congregation

On my best days,

**I believe that God is there—standing in the sun with me,
laughing a contagious laugh and cheering me on.**

On my hardest days,

**I believe that God is there—standing in the rain with me,
holding me up and sharing in my grief.**

No matter where I go—
in joy or in loss,
in pain or in love,
in heartache or in gratitude—
I believe that God is there,
leaning in, noticing where it hurts,
and carrying me through it.

And so, I believe we are called
to care for each other
as God cares for us.
On your best days in the sun
and on your worst days in the rain,
I will do my best
to be there for you too. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Dee Austin

Family of faith, it does not take long to look around the world and point out places of pain and suffering. This year has been hard for so many, but I do not believe that that pain will be the last word. Each week in our worship service you are invited to give to the mission and ministry of this church. When you give, you are not only supporting this congregation, but you are offering care to the broader community—leaning in, asking the hard questions, choosing connection, choosing generosity. It is these small acts of care, connection, and love that in time, can help heal the hurt in the world. So friends, I've been meaning to ask... will you give your offering now? Let us give with grateful hearts.

Prayer of the People | Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

Rev. Barbara Macfie

Holy God,
I know, I know, that you hear our prayers.
You are the God of hospital rooms and graveside services.
You are the God who felt a touch in a crowd.
You are the God who sees and knows all pain—
infertility and illness, despair and death.

You are the God of the hurt and the healing, so I know —
I know, you must hear us today.
So with open hearts and open palms, gracious God,
we come to you with our joy and our pain.
With joy, we give you thanks for all the blessings in our lives...
For friends and neighbors, for sunny days, for beautiful birds, and butterflies, for
family get-togethers, for the sound of children laughing, for doctors, nurses, and
other frontline workers, for time to connect with one another, for time alone, for
hope, for peace, for grace, for love.

We have so much to be thankful for, and we know that you are part of all of that.
And yet in that same breath, we also carry pain. Like Hannah in the temple, who
brought you her prayer, we desperately need your ears, your grace, your healing
touch. So today we lift up to you all the hurt and pain we carry.
For those who suffer from Covid and other illnesses; for empty sanctuaries that
long to be filled, for parents who seek answers on how to guide their children,
for those affected by natural disasters, for all who grieve, for all who are sick, for
the children . . . We lift these things to you.
Holy God, we know, we know, that you are listening.
We know, we know, that you are here,
For you are the God of hospital rooms and graveside services.
Be among us. Hold our hurt.
Heal our wounds.
Draw us closer to one another, and closer to you.
For Holy Communion: Pour out a double portion of your Spirit on this bread and
cup, so that these
ordinary things might tether our hearts to you.
With the hope of people who dream,
we pray to you the prayer you taught us, saying...

The Lord's Prayer

***Closing Song**

“Rebuilding Starts with Weeping”

Rebuilding starts with weeping, with tears that fall like rain,
With full and honest grieving for years of loss and pain,
For suffering and sorrow that never had to be.
Rebuilding starts with weeping for all who are not free.

Rebuilding starts with praying, with hopes allowed a voice,
With visions for our country, with reason to rejoice.
We offer up our spirits, our hearts and minds and hands.
Rebuilding starts with praying for strength to heal our land.

Rebuilding starts with loving, with care for every soul,
With yearning in compassion that all may yet be whole,
That enemy and neighbor may know a better day.
Rebuilding starts with loving, for love will show the way.

(Tune: Aurelia – The Church’s One Foundation)

***Benediction**

Rev. Barbara Macfie

Family of faith,
as you leave this place, may God grant you
the curiosity to counter assumptions,
the vulnerability to befriend,
the bravery to speak your truth,
the wisdom to listen,
the strength to ask for help,
the resiliency to chose love, even when it’s hard,
and the awareness of the Holy Spirit always beside you.
In the name of the Great Connector—Love itself,
go in peace.

Postlude

Steve Johnson

Thank you to those involved in worship today:

Ushers: Lois Ann Rayner & Ginie Hindall

Liturgist: Dee Austin

Musicians: Steve Johnson & Choir

Preacher: Rev. Barbara Macfie

Remember in Prayer

Pray for all those

touched recently by violence and natural disasters, the healing of national hostility and mistrust, efforts to feed the poor and provide shelter for the homeless in our area, and the following people:

Rev. Innocent Mabuza, Bishop of some churches in Swaziland and friend of **John Hawkins**, is seriously ill.

Jay Carlson, **Clare MacDonald's son-in-law**, and father of 2 young daughters, suffered a blood clot in his head. He has been released from hospital and is slowly recovering with the help of neuro physical therapy.

Ed Carter (102) is under hospice care in the skilled nursing unit at The Moorings. He is comfortable and appreciates our prayers .

Linda Book continues her battle with multiple myeloma cancer.

Chuck Burton, extended family of **Lois Rayner**, is dealing with issues related to cancer.

Pauline Cottingham is doing well, despite the general decline in her health.

Peter Culin, **Sue Culin's brother-in-law**, is undergoing chemotherapy.

Carol Geiger cousin of **Charlotte Jacobs** and **John Still**, is struggling to heal and recover mobility following a fall that left her with 100 stitches to her face, a concussion and cracked bones on the left side of her face.

Rob Harkins, son of Bob and Claudene Harkins, is fighting a serious, resistant foot infection. Bob and Claudene have returned to Florida to support him.

Bill Hrin fell on August 25th, fractured his knee- cap, he is ambulating with difficulty, using a walker.

Sandra Hrin - all went well with surgery and she is resting comfortably. She is dealing with some back pain also

Lib Macnab is back in the hospital dealing with congestive heart failure. Hopefully she will be home sometime this week.

Lacey Meade, Betty Pratt's daughter, completed her last round of chemotherapy.

Betty Pratt is feeling better, though she has some memory issues.

Greg Solt, friend of Karen and Glenn Dixon, is battling pancreatic and liver cancer.

Janet Waugaman, Sally Waugaman's daughter, continues to lose mobility due to Multiple System Atrophy.

John Witmer is recovering at home following heart surgery, and is working to regain his strength and energy.

Our church has a prayer chain of members who will pray for any person you ask. Contact Leslie Marsh by phone at 302-542-9927 or email at cmarshjr@verizon.net

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