

**The Presbyterian Church of Okemos**  
**July 2, 2023**  
**Fifth Sunday After Pentecost**



**Preparation:** “We cannot eliminate hunger, but we can feed each other. We cannot eliminate loneliness, but we can hold each other. We cannot eliminate pain, but we can live a life of compassion. Ultimately, we are small living things awakened in the stream, not gods who carve out rivers. Like human fish, we are asked to experience meaning in the life that moves through the gill of our heart. There is nothing to do and nowhere to go. Accepting this, we can do everything and go anywhere.”

Excerpt from *Accepting This* by Mark Nepo

**Prelude** *Nocturne in D Flat Major Op. 27 No. 2* Frederic Chopin  
Gail Lytle Lira, pianist

**Invitation to our Shared Ministry** Pastor Rebekah Anderson

**Call to Worship** Keith Camann, Liturgist

One: Since the beginning, God has been relentlessly pursuing us in love.

**All: Though our faithfulness ebbs and flows, God’s love endures forever.**

One: Taking on flesh like ours, God became one with humanity in the person of Jesus Christ.

**All: God lived and moved and ministered in the margins of power.**

One: God incarnate was not what we expected. We did not recognize God in Jesus. Still, we struggle to recognize God with us.

**All: And yet, God continues to dwell in our midst. Let us proclaim our thanks through worship.**

\* **Hymn #338** *O Beautiful, For Spacious Skies*, vs, 1-3  
[Materna]

**Prayer of Confession** Keith Camann, Liturgist

One: Before we speak, God knows our needs, yet our words open our hearts to God's grace. Let us prepare ourselves for God's healing by sharing what separates us from God and one another. Let us pray:

**All: God of Compassion, we have so much still to learn. By your grace, we have come to know love more deeply – its mess, its complexity, its stubborn and tender truths transform us more each day. Through fires that refine and valleys of death, you have guided us. You draw us into the heart of Wisdom, saving us from the lies of destruction. Turning us towards hope that liberates. But still, O God, we struggle to trust in you. We confess that our loyalties are often elsewhere and our priorities are not your own. Search our hearts, O God. Forgive us from the harm we have done as we seek to harm no more. Amen.**

**Promise of the Gospel** Keith Camann, Liturgist

One: God does not abandon us to the systems that destroy. God does not bind us to our regrets. God says, come and follow! Know forgiveness and sin no more.

**All: Thanks be to God who leads us on paths of resurrection. Alleluia. Amen.**

**Passing of the Peace**

Keith Camann, Liturgist

One: As a forgiven people, let us greet each other, sharing the peace of Christ. The peace of Christ be with you.

All: **And also with you.** *Please greet your fellow worshippers in ways you feel comfortable.*

\* Act of Praise #581

*Gloria Patri*

**Children's Sermon**

Pastor Rebekah Anderson

**Prayer of Illumination**

Pastor Rebekah Anderson

God, you guide us down difficult paths to see those who are suffering and know that we are a community. Fill us with your Spirit as we hear your word this day, that we may be justice seekers and peacemakers, sharing your life among those who are forgotten, weak, or persecuted, and revealing to all your glory, even when it's hard. Help us to feed one another. Help us to hold one another. And let some word of this be yours. Amen.

**Scriptures**

Mark 5:1-20

Pastor Rebekah Anderson

**Sermon**

*Helping is Hard*

Pastor Rebekah Anderson

**Bread for the Journey** Celebrating the Ministry of Dr. Colleen Chester

**Offering**

Pastor Rebekah Anderson

**Invitation**

**Offertory**

*Brother James' Air*

arr: Larry Shackley

\*Doxology #606

\*Prayer of Dedication

**Holy Communion**

Pastor Rebekah Anderson

**Invitation**

**The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**The Lord's Prayer "...forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors..."**

**Breaking of the Bread**

**Communion Prayer**

\* Hymn #766

*The Church of Christ Cannot be Bound, vs. 1-4*

[McKee]

\* **Benediction**

Pastor Rebekah Anderson

**Postlude**

*Amazing Grace*  
Gail Lytle Lira, pianist

arr: Jack Schrader

*\* Please rise in body or spirit*

**This Morning's Fellowship Team:**

**Ushers:** *Jane Paterson, Tom Schaberg, Jill Tribell*

**Adult Education:** There will be no adult education this week.

**Next Week's Scripture:** Genesis 28: 10-19a

**Next Week's Adult Education:** Pastor Lisa will begin a 4-week Bible study on the last book of the New Testament, the book of Revelation. Why has this book received so much attention in the media and yet many of us don't understand what is actually written in the scripture? Week 1 will examine how the book of Revelation has been understood throughout history from the early days of the church, through the Reformation to the current day.

The Call to Worship, Prayer of Confession, and Promise of the Gospel are adapted from Ordinary Worship Settings at *Enfleshed*. Available online at <https://enfleshed.com/liturgy/ordinaryworshipsettings/>  
The Prayer of Illumination is adapted from *Feasting on the Word Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A*, Volume 1, Westminster John Knox Press, 2013

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*Dr. Colleen Chester, Choir Director*  
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