

Joint Worship Service

*Covenant Presbyterian Church,
Saint Andrews United Presbyterian*

Butler, Pennsylvania



July 30, 2017

The Rev. Merry Meloy, Saint Andrews
The Rev. Dr. James E. Swanson, Covenant

Saint Andrews United Presbyterian Church

July 30, 2017 8th Sunday after Pentecost 10:30 AM

THE CHURCH IN PREPARATION

PRELUDE

The Lighting of the Candles
Announcements
Exchange of Greetings

INTROIT # 455

*“All Creatures of Our God and King”
(Presby Hymnal)*

**All creatures of our God and King,
Lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Thou burning sun with golden beam,
Thou silver moon with softer gleam
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: As the weak gain their strength;
 as the poor eat and are satisfied,

People: **God’s love abides in us.**

Leader: As the stranger finds a friend;
 as peace breaks in where violence rules,

People: **God’s love abides in us.**

Leader: Come, let us bless the Lord,
 in whom we find refuge and strength.

All: **We gather together to worship God
 and to lift our voices in praise and adoration.**

THE OPENING PRAYER *(In Unison)*

**Heavenly Father, Creator God: we praise you for the day
that you have made. We stand in awe and admiration of
your handiwork, and we bow in humble reverence of
your holiness and power.**

Help us to see how your providence shapes our lives and how your plans are brought to completion through the unity of your church here on earth: one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of us all, who is over all and through all and in all. Amen.

* THE OPENING HYMN # 559

*“We Gather Together”
(Presby Hymnal)*

Ushers will collect prayer requests.
Please pass them to the side aisles.

*The people will rise in body or spirit

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God: our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear.

Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be reborn; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image, through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

A TIME FOR SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Pastor: Friends, hear and believe the Good News! Our past is finished and gone. In Christ everyone is being made new.

People: **Praise God! In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!**

THE CONGREGATION SINGS IN RESPONSE *“Gloria Patri”*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

THE CHURCH IN PROCLAMATION

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (in unison)

Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that as the Scriptures are read and your Word is proclaimed, we may receive with open hearts what you say to us today. Amen.

EPISTLE READING Romans 8: 26-39

Liturgist: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SPECIAL MUSIC ~ Duet "*Hold Thou My Hand*"
words and music by C.S. Biggs

Deanna Golden and Leanne Heaton
accompanied by Chuck Davey

*The night comes on, my weary eyelids close;
The time draws near when I must seek repose;
O kneel to Thee, O Father of us all,
And pray that Thou wilt hear my pleading call.*

*Hold Thou my hand, dear Lord, hold Thou my hand;
I do not ask to see, nor understand;
Only that Thou wilt be constantly near to me,
Holding my hand dear Lord, holding my hand.*

*My life goes on, some days are good, some ill;
O Father, let Thy loving presence fill
Both day and night; O hold me so I cannot fall,
For Thou art Life and Strength, and All in All.*

*Hold Thou my hand, dear Lord, hold Thou my hand;
And when temptations come, help me to stand --
Constantly near to Thee, all shall be well with me
Holding Thy hand dear Lord, hold Thy hand.*

GOSPEL READING Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52

Liturgist: The Gospel of our Lord.

All: **Glory to you, O Christ.**

*RESPONSE ~ Hymn # 321, vs. 1 (*Presby Hymnal*)

**Holy Spirit, truth divine,
Dawn upon this soul of mine;
Word of God, and inward light,
Wake my spirit, clear my sight.**

SERMON “ *GREAT OAKS FROM LITTLE ACORNS* ”

Pastor Jim Swanson, Covenant

HYMN (on back cover) “*This Is My Song*”

*Penned in 1934 by Lloyd Stone to the tune of Jean Sibelius'
Finlandia, sometimes called "A Song of Peace."*

THE CHURCH RESPONDS

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (*In Unison*)

We believe in God the Father, infinite in wisdom, power and love, whose mercy is over all his works, and whose will is ever directed to his children's good.

We believe in Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of man, the gift of the Father's unfailing grace, the ground of our hope, and the promise of our deliverance from sin and death.

We believe in the Holy Spirit as God's divine presence in our lives, whereby we are kept in perpetual remembrance of the truth of Christ, and find strength and help in time of need.

Glory be to the immortal and all-wise God, in whom we have had our birth, in whose care we are constantly kept, and unto whom we shall return when our days on earth are ended.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

THE OFFERTORY INVITATION

God calls us into community. God calls us to share our resources so that others may know Christ's grace and love. May our offerings honor the one who gives us all we have.

Please sign and pass the Friendship Registers
located near the center aisle. Thank you!

PRESENTATION OF TITHES & OFFERINGS

THE OFFERTORY

Chuck Davey

*THE CONGREGATION SINGS IN RESPONSE

#428 "We Give Thee But Thine Own"

**We give Thee but Thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.**

*THE UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

O God, accept our offerings, and use us to bring life and health and hope to your world. Make us generous and faithful stewards of your mysteries, doing your will and proclaiming your word; through Christ we pray. Amen.

THE CHURCH GOES FORTH TO SERVE

*CLOSING HYMN #538 *“Lord, Dismiss Us With Thy Blessing”*

*THE BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

Adagio Graun

Lars Morrison, Alto Recorder
Beverly Antis, Piano

Joint Worship Today



A warm Saint Andrews welcome to our brothers and sisters from Covenant! We're so glad you're here this morning.

Everyone's invited to a time of fellowship after worship in the Memorial Room. Please come!

Prayer Requests can be made by using the purple prayer request cards found in the pew racks. Pass your requests to the center aisle during the Opening Hymn. They will be distributed to our Prayer Team to be included in this week's prayers.

Restrooms: From the front of the sanctuary, use the left entrance (by the piano) and follow the hallway to the right. The restrooms are down the hall on the left. From the rear of the sanctuary, turn left and go downstairs. The restrooms are at the end of the hallway.

Child Care: The Church Nursery is available for children through kindergarten age. To find the nursery, please go to the left front entrance of the sanctuary and follow the hallway to the right. The nursery is on the left. If your child would like to be rocked during worship, a rocking chair is available on the left side of the sanctuary.

Pastor Merry Away

This past month, Pastor Merry took several weeks of unpaid family leave to spend some time with her mother. She is taking one more week from **Monday, July 31st, to Monday August 7th**.



While she's away, Rev. Jim Swanson will be available in case of emergencies. If you have a pastoral need or concern, please call Danielle at our church office or Rev. Swanson at 724-712-1407.

Next Sunday, August 6th, Rev. Jim Campbell, will be leading us in worship. Please welcome him!



**The Flowers today
are given by**

Dave and Carol Landis

In Memory of:

Alex and Clara Miller



Thomas Butler (July 31), Beth (Butler) Flick (July 31)

Paul Perry (August 3)

Adalee Elizabeth Froilan (Happy 5th Birthday August 4)

Wedding Anniversary

Meghan and Rob Covert ~ August 1

August First Sunday Mission Offering

Last fall, a Pennsylvania game warden contacted Catholic Charities' Butler County Outreach about a family who was found living in a tent in the woods. The family included a middle-age couple, their four adult children, and four grandchildren. The youngest was just 18 months old. The grandchildren believed they were on a camping trip. The grandmother was the sole provider. Her job was a five mile walk from where they were living. The folks at Catholic Charities immediately went to work. They provided food, diapers, temporary housing, and case management. Through collaboration with the Butler Redevelopment Authority, they found the family a permanent home in the City of Butler. The family still lives in Butler and the grandmother now works nearby.

This August, Saint Andrews' First Sunday Mission Offering goes to Catholic Charities here in Butler. The office on New Castle Street is the first point of contact for homeless assistance in Butler County. The agency provides emergency shelter, rent and mortgage assistance to help prevent homelessness, and temporary housing through programs such as Safe Harbor. Catholic Charities also provides assistance with food, clothing, utilities, and life-skills training to help clients learn how to manage a household and prepare for employment. Your gifts can help individuals and families get back on their feet. To make a donation, simply use one of the "First Sunday Mission" envelopes in the pew racks or put "Catholic Charities" on the memo line of your check. Thank you!

Golf Outing Saturday, August 19

Grab your clubs and warm up that swing! The Saint Andrews Summer Golf Outing is scheduled for Saturday, August 19, at Krendale Golf Course. Tee time is set for 11:10 am. The cost is \$22 for 18 holes and a cart. To join us, just sign up in the narthex. We've got a great group going and would love to include you! If you have questions or would like more information, please see Chuck King.

Covenant Church Announcements

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Cupboard Planning Meeting

Area Church Volunteer Coordinators

Tomorrow, Monday, July 31, 2017

@ 10:30 am ~ Assembly Room

*(finalizing plans for the Covenant Cupboard 'Thank You' Dinner
scheduled August 29th @ 6:00pm ~ Fellowship Hall)*

Worship & Music Committee Meeting

This Wednesday, August 2, 2017

@ 1:00 pm ~ Assembly Room

Next Sunday, August 6 @ 10 am Worship

Celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion
Communion is "come forward"

Ordination and Installation Service

Newly Elected Church Officers, Class of 2019



Pastor Swanson's Family Vacation:

August 7 – August 14

**on Sunday, August 13
@ 10 am Worship**

Guest Minister will be:

Rev. Dr. William A. Jamieson (Rev. J.)

"Worship Without Walls"

Sunday, August 27th

End-of-Summer

*Outdoor Worship Service
& Picnic at Alameda Park*

*Arranged by
The Hill Presbyterian Church*



—An event for all

Butler Area Presbyterian Churches—

"100,000 Diapers in 100 Days"

Pregnancy & Parenting Support Group

Diaper Drive through September 3rd



Our local mission project for this summer is **assisting Catholic Charities in collecting diapers** (infant to age 2) and wipes for the Pregnancy and Parenting Support program here in Butler. Our diaper drive is from June 11th until September 3rd.

Baskets for donations are at both entry ways to the church sanctuary.

Thank you for supporting this project!



The pearl of great price--
What is that pearl?
Honor or accolades?
Being president, CEO of everything?
Portfolios or oil wells?
Or could it be a kind word,
Or just dinner with friends?
Neighbor serving neighbor?
Opening others to God's love?

Lord, help us pay the great price.
Let us find the real treasure in our lives.
Amen.

The Center for Liturgy at Saint Louis University

What Do These Parables Mean ?

“These disturbing little tales tell us, among other things, that we cannot possess the treasure for ourselves. We cannot own and control the Gospel of God. It comes as a great and wondrous gift. Here we are gathered in the field. ‘We do not presume to come to this your table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own goodness, but in your manifold mercy ...’ That’s the way we are always invited to the field of great treasure. We didn’t have to buy the field... because Christ bought it for us!”

www.preacherrhetorica.com/proper-12a

Commentary on Today's Gospel

By David J. Lose

There's something sneaky about the parables this week. And I mean that quite literally – in each parable (except perhaps the last), there seems to be some element of surprise or stealth. A quick overview to explain what I mean:

- While most of us grew up reading the parable of the mustard seed somewhat simplistically – “big things often have small beginnings” – the truth is that mustard was a weed, uncontrollable, invasive, undesirable.
- So different from our cultural associations, leaven in the biblical world was a sign of impurity, and kneading it into the flour irreparably tainted the loaves.
- Rushing out to buy a field because you know it's worth far more than the seller is aware, while perhaps shrewd, could also be considered dubious, if not dishonest.
- There is a surprising joyfulness in the one who sells all to buy a precious pearl, though few around the buyer would likely have understood his actions.

This quick succession of provocative parables suggests two things to me: First, the Gospel of God's coming kingdom is threatening before it is comforting, because it invites no half measures. The Gospel makes a claim on your whole life, not just part. It invades your whole world and reality and can't be contained only to your spiritual, Sunday self. Not only that, but it taints the reality we've grown to accept, challenges the views we've lived by, and again and again calls into question assumptions that have guided much of our lives in the world.

All of which means that the Gospel of the kingdom that Jesus proclaims and lives is truly good news only to those who are not finally satisfied with what this life has to offer.

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Commentary, continued

For those who are content, selling everything to possess a single pearl, no matter how valuable, seems a little crazy. How can anything be so precious as to give up everything else to possess it? But to those who are dissatisfied – with the status quo, with what they have been able to secure on their own, with the values, stereotypes, or prejudices of the culture – then Jesus' Gospel, while still disruptive and even upsetting, nevertheless feels true, real, and something worth buying at any cost.

Which is perhaps why the church has always grown most quickly in those places where life is most fragile, if not threatened. When you can set yourself up with the comforts of the world and fortify the illusion that you are master of the universe, of what value are Jesus' promises?

The Gospel, as Paul says, appears foolish in the eyes of the world and so has little value to the self-contented, the self-made man or woman of the age, and the powerful. But to those who are perishing – whether by illness or disappointment or poverty or dissatisfaction with the inequities of the world or spiritual discontent – Jesus' promises are still good news, indeed the best news we've heard and worth sacrificing all to embrace.

These parables say a second thing as well: faith is about seeing – seeing something others do not, seeing something that the world does not acknowledge and perhaps does not want you to see – and because of that sight being able to act differently, investing in a future at which others scoff. Faith, it turns out, is not about embracing doctrinal statements but is about whole-hearted embrace of a promise. Faith, you see, is not about knowledge but about trust, the kind of trust that leads you do act and speak differently, as if you've been invited into a secret that not everyone knows.

Let us never lose sight of the promise that God's disruptive, life-changing, and ultimately life-giving kingdom is coming.

→

Commentary, continued

It will take some patience, trust, and perseverance to await it, and when it comes it will likely not be what we expect and perhaps not what we even wanted. But to those who recognize there is something more out there than the world has yet offered, to those who are willing to acknowledge the deep ache in their hearts for a sense of true joy, then it will come as more than we could have imagined and will invade, take over, and transform our lives. Even here, even now.

Indeed, perhaps church is the place where we remind each other of God's promises and point to places in our lives and the world where we catch glimpses of its presence. You have seen these glimpses in your community – the person who overcomes addiction or prejudice in order to cope with (and change) a challenging reality; the kid who befriends the friendless; the one who finds joy in sacrifice; those who are stunningly generous; the person who sees and stands with the marginalized; those who in the face of illness or fear radiate confidence and offer courage to others; the ones who use their power or popularity to uplift others and not “lord it over” them.

These parables give us a chance to make the kingdom that Jesus preaches a tad more concrete by pointing us to those whose actions are inexplicable according to the logic of the world but very much in tune with the parabolic promises of the kingdom.

“The people who heard Jesus’ parables first heard them not as homely and comforting but as subversive; for Jesus speaks of a kingdom that is invasive, unstoppable, a nuisance, urgent, shocking, and abundant. If you want to see what the kingdom is – ‘Listen! Look!’ says Jesus!”

-- Christopher Burkett
PreacherRhetorica

A Song of Peace

1. This is my song, O God of all the nations,
A song of peace for lands a-far and mine;
This is my home, the country where my heart is;
Here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine.
But other hearts in other lands are beating
With hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.

2. My country's skies are bluer than the ocean
And sunlight beams on cloverleaf and pine.
But other lands have sunlight too and clover,
And skies are everywhere as blue as mine.
O hear my song, thou God of all the nations,
A song of peace for their land and for mine.

3. This is my song, O God of all the nations
A song of peace, for your land and for mine;
Forgive our deafness to your peaceful calling
When fear and anger fill our waking lives,
When in our wars we kill your precious children
And black explosions rip your deep blue skies.

4. This is my prayer, O Lord of all earth's kingdoms;
Thy kingdom come, on earth thy will be done;
Let hearts be lifted up till all shall serve you
And hearts united learn to live as one.
O hear our prayer, thou God of all the nations;
Myself I give thee, let thy will be done.

Sung to the Tune: FINLANDIA (*Jean Sibelius*)