

Home Service for September 27, 2026

Welcome and Announcements

You may also find listening to some of your favorite hymns helpful in worship.

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.”

Call to Worship:

The apostle Paul calls us to “let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.” What is the mind of Jesus?: The mind of Jesus is to love God, neighbor, self, and all creation.

Paul reminds us that “it is God who is at work in you.” How is God at work in us?: God enables us through grace to love God, neighbor, self, and all creation.

Paul exhorts us to “work on your own salvation with fear and trembling.” How do we work on our own salvation?: We cooperate with grace to love God, neighbor, self, and all creation.

Beloved, we gather to worship God who, through Jesus, shows us how to love and enables us to love as Christ loves us.: We gather to learn how to live in full accord through our love of God, neighbor, self, and all creation.

Opening Prayer:

Guiding God, you led our ancestors in faith through the wilderness as a pillar of cloud by day and a fiery pillar by night. You quenched their thirst and shared manna to satisfy their hunger. We often wish we could see you now in such celestial wonders. Yet we know you are near. We feel your Spirit presence, sustaining us along life’s journey. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

We long to quiet the noise and distraction of daily life, to hear more clearly your call on our lives. Still our souls, that we may hear with clarity the wonders of your love guiding us on. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

Jesus, in human form, humbled himself before God. God, who is at work in you, invites you to humble self-awareness. Spirit nudges your will in ways that lead to goodness. None of us are alone in this walk of faith. So, hear and believe: In the name of Jesus Christ you are forgiven.

Read Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16

My people, hear my teaching;

listen to the words of my mouth.

² I will open my mouth with a parable;

I will utter hidden things, things from of old—

³ things we have heard and known,
things our ancestors have told us.

⁴ We will not hide them from their descendants;
we will tell the next generation

the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,
his power, and the wonders he has done.

¹² He did miracles in the sight of their ancestors
in the land of Egypt, in the region of Zoan.

¹³ He divided the sea and led them through;
he made the water stand up like a wall.

¹⁴ He guided them with the cloud by day
and with light from the fire all night.

¹⁵ He split the rocks in the wilderness
and gave them water as abundant as the seas;

¹⁶ he brought streams out of a rocky crag
and made water flow down like rivers.

Prayers of the People:

Open our hearts this morning, O Lord. Help us to listen closely to the words of encouragement that you offer to us. Let us internalize those words so that they become the very fiber of our being and frame our thoughts and actions. Make us mindful of all those this day who live in places of fear and greed, of oppression and hate, of poverty and hopelessness. Enable us to be those who will work for peace and hope for all your people. We lift so many people in our prayers this morning. Many of our loved ones' face situations of ill health and mourning, of loneliness and fear, and of alienation and sorrow. Bring them comfort and peace. Our hearts cry out for people all around our world who are endangered by systems of hatred and fear. Touch the hearts of these dear ones, O Lord. Make us those who bring messages and actions of hope and faith. Give us courage and strengthen us to truly be your witnesses this day and all our days. AMEN.

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever and ever. AMEN

Read the Old Testament Lesson: Exodus 17:1-7

The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ² So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink."

Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?"

³ But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"

⁴ Then Moses cried out to the Lord, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me."

⁵ The Lord answered Moses, "Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the place Massah^[a] and Meribah^[b] because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the Lord saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

Read the Epistle Lesson: Philippians 2:1-13

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature^[a] God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.
¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my
presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation
with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order
to fulfill his good purpose.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Matthew 21:23-32

Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. “By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave you this authority?”

²⁴ Jesus replied, “I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ²⁵ John’s baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?”

They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’” ²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin’—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet.”

²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”

Then he said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸ “What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’

²⁹ “‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

³⁰ “Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go.

³¹ “Which of the two did what his father wanted?”

“The first,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

Message

I am again using the Epistle lesson for the bases for today’s sermon. It provides an excellent example of divine teaching conflicting with worldly wisdom. The wisdom of God is foolishness in the eyes of the world. This is known as a paradox. A paradox is a statement that seems contrary to common sense. Our world would not think that humility creates joy. Who can be humble and happy? This is the truth God would have us learn and enjoy today.

We find the apostle Paul still in Rome, still in prison and in chains. Even in this situation God’s word went out to unbelievers. Though Paul was bound, God’s word was still being freely preached. So, Paul’s message from God to the Philippians was to be like Christ, to have the attitude of Christ which means to be humble. Think about it, Jesus humbled himself and became obedient; even obedient to death, death on a cross!

Face the facts that there has never been any man who has ever lived more powerful than Jesus. At the same time, there has never been any man humbler than Jesus. By faith we learn, know, and believe in the power of the humility of our Savior. This is a paradox. The creator of the heavens and the earth lived and died and rose again to save his creation, but still Jesus’ disciples struggled with power and service. They argued who was the greatest among them. Jesus knew their thoughts. He taught them by example. Remember, in the upper room, Jesus stripped down, knelt down and washed his disciples’ feet. The humility of Jesus brought and brings joy to the world.

Jesus’ humility was and is the powerful strength to save mankind. Christ became poor so that we would become rich. The eternal, saving power of Jesus is clearly seen in the humility of his death on the cross. Scripture tells us that by his wounds we are healed! What a paradox; wounds that heal. Willingly and humbly, Jesus did his Father’s will for us, we who did not do our heavenly Father’s will. Jesus was innocent, but we are not, through Christ’s actions and forgiveness we now are.

Jesus is always under attack from those who feel he was nothing more than a good teacher. Even the Muslims admit that Jesus was a prophet. But Jesus was much

more, far more. By his life, death and resurrection we learn that this humility brings salvation and thus, great joy. At times this truth can be really hard to grasp. By faith through grace we know, believe, and can confess this divine truth that flies in the face of all human reasoning and common sense. We believe by God's grace and power as he opens our eyes to see the truth. Jesus found joy in enduring the cross, and he did that for us!

Remember that Paul is in Rome, in prison, and in chains. Paul is alone but not lonely. For he knew that God's purpose was higher and greater for him than he could even imagine. Paul knew that God was with him, always and at all of times. Paul continues to still preach to his visitors, especially the unbelieving authorities. In all of this Paul's encouragement and faith would echo in his words and in his actions. Paul wanted his believing visitors to hear and to see his joy in the midst of his humiliation. The faith that united these believers to God also united them to one another. True Christian faith does away with all pride and ambition and selfishness. Believers would and can live lives of humility.

As believers we grow to love and appreciate the humble sacrificial living of Christ, our Savior. We have come to realize that the life of Jesus serves as an example for our daily living in this world. In a boastful, proud, and selfish society, the joy of humility needs to shine even more brightly. Jesus reminds us that the world is to see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven. The world is not to praise us or our good deeds. May this humble, joyful light of Christ always shine in each of us and through us to others.

Remember, the Scriptures tell us how the light of Christ is to shine in us and through us. It takes a mature faith to understand how humility brings joy. When we wonder, we are to fix our eyes on Jesus to be reminded of his example. May we remember Jesus' willing sacrifice for us and may our response be our faith-filled privilege and opportunity and joy to walk in his example. Intertwined with all of this is the teaching of the unity of believers. These early Christians had the unity of faith that came from the singular truth that Christ had lived, suffered, died, and rose again so that they too would live with him forever in heaven. That basic truth has not changed. God's word is always the truth.

The more that we read our Bibles we discover that Scripture teaches many paradoxes. There is strength in weakness. The first will be last and the last will be first. There is joy in humility. Humanly thinking and worldly wisdom consider all of this, but foolish. God tells us this is his truth. Humility creates and completes joy. Believers discover this truth in Jesus and with humble joy display this truth to others. So may we always live a life worthy of the calling we are given. May we be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Amen.

Benediction:

*Go into your lives, listening for the call of God.
Go into your communities with Christ-like humbleness.
Give ear to the whispers and shouts of the Holy Spirit.
Go in peace and stay in courage. Amen.*