

Order of Service for the Lord's Day

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time ~ August 3, 2008
Ten O'clock, A.M.

Pastor: Rev. Dr. James E. Swanson Liturgist: Orville Nicholas
Organist & Choir Director: Beverly Antis



Our Service of Worship begins with the music of the organ. During the Prelude, kindly pass your written prayer requests to the center so they may be placed into the basket as it is passed. Your requests will be included in the Pastoral Prayer and also forwarded to our Prayer Cordon for special attention.



THE PRELUDE *Variations on "Simple Gifts"* Robert Lau

*THE RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Enter with me the sacred space.
Bring with you what is yours –

People: **A burdened heart, a joyous song,
a wearied spirit, a seeking mind.**

Leader: Bring the gift of yourself to the Lord's Table.
It is an honorable gift.

People: **We will bow down and worship God.
Holy is the Lord of Hosts, and to him be praise
and adoration, now and for all ages to come.**

*THE OPENING HYMN 469 *Morning Has Broken* BUNESSAN

THE PSALM OF THE DAY Psalm 17:1-7, 15 (*Pew Bible p. 479*)

THE CALL TO CONFESSION

THE PUBLIC CONFESSION OF SIN

Gracious God: our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. We have not always loved with the love of Christ; we have not been working for justice nor battling evil in our day; we have gone along with evil and warfare, prejudice and greed.

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 transformed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image each day; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

A TIME FOR SILENT CONFESSION

THE DECLARATION OF PARDON

Pastor: ... Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

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

*THE GLORIA PATRI 579

GLORIA PATRI

*THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

*from "The New Creed," The United Church of Canada
Section IX. The Holy Scriptures*

We believe that the great moments of God's revelation and communication of Himself to men and women are recorded and interpreted in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

We believe that, while God uttered His Word in many portions progressively, the whole is sufficient to declare His mind and will for our salvation. To Israel He made Himself known as a holy and righteous God and a Savior; the fullness of truth and grace came by Jesus Christ. The writings were collected and preserved by the Church.

We believe that the theme of all Holy Scripture is the redemptive purpose and working of God, and that herein lies its unity.

We believe that in Holy Scripture God claims the complete allegiance of our mind and heart; that the full persuasion of the truth and authority of the Word of God contained in the Scripture is the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts; and that, using Holy Scripture, the Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us for our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

So we acknowledge in Holy Scripture the true witness to God's Word and the sure guide to Christian faith and conduct.

*THE GREETINGS OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP

THE SHARING OF JOYS, CONCERNS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Genesis 32:22-31 (*Pew Bible p. 29*)

Liturgist: This is the word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God!**

SPECIAL MUSIC *The Lord Is My Shepherd* Abraham Kaplan
Dr. Colleen Gray, Soprano

THE EPISTLE LESSON Romans 9:1-5 (*Pew Bible p. 149*)

Liturgist: Here ends the reading of the Epistle. All: **Praise be to you, O Lord.**

*THE GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 14:13-21 (*Pew Bible p. 15*)

Pastor: The Gospel of our Lord. All: **Glory to You, O Christ.**

**Behold the goodness of our Lord, How blest it is to be
A company of God's beloved, In holy unity.**

THE SERMON

“ *ENOUGH TO SHARE* ”

Dr. Swanson

THE PASTORAL PRAYER

THE PRESENTATION OF TITHES, OFFERINGS, AND GIFTS

SPECIAL OFFERTORY MUSIC

The Lord Is My Light

Frances Allitsen

Dr. Colleen Gray, Soprano

*THE DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow:

Praise Him all creatures here below:

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host:

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

*THE UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Use us, O God of miracles, and the offerings we have brought, to bring
life and health and hope to your world. Make us generous and faithful
stewards of your mysteries, as we share the bounty which you have
granted unto us. Through Christ we pray. Amen.**

THE COMMUNION HYMN 329

Break Thou the Bread of Life

BREAD OF LIFE

THE INVITATION & PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*Friends, this is the joyful feast of the whole people of God! Believers will come
from east and west, and from north and south, to sit at table in the kingdom of God.
This is the Lord's table. Our Savior invites all those who trust Him to share the
feast which He has prepared.*

Pastor: Lift up your hearts!

People: **We lift them to the Lord!**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Pastor: It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you honor and praise, O God.
You formed us in your image to love and serve you, but we forgot your
promises and abandoned your commandments. In your mercy, you did
not reject us but still claimed us as your own.

People: **Around this table we gather: awed by the example of Christ,
remembering His sacrifice, confessing our role in His continuing
passion.**

Pastor: Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with choirs of angels and
with all the faithful of every time and place, who forever sing the glory
of your name, saying:

People: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Pastor: You are holy, O God of majesty, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord... Accept this, our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, as a living and holy offering of ourselves, that our lives may proclaim the One crucified and risen.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All: **Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER (using "debts" and "debtors")

THE CONSECRATION OF THE ELEMENTS

THE COMMUNION (*those who are able, come forward*)

A TIME FOR SILENT REFLECTION

*THE UNISON PRAYER FOLLOWING COMMUNION

O God, who called us from death to life: we give ourselves to You, and with the church through all ages, we praise You for Your saving love in Jesus Christ, who makes us new and strong, who brings us life eternal.

By the nourishment we have received at this table, help us to have courage; to hold on to what is good; to return no one evil for evil; to strengthen the fainthearted and support the weak; to aid the suffering; to honor all persons; and to love and serve You only, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*THE CLOSING HYMN 269 *O God of Bethel, by Whose Hand* DUNDEE

*THE BENEDICTION

*THE CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE *Let There Be Peace on Earth*
Words and Music by Jill Jackson and Sy Miller, Circa 1955

**Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on Earth, the peace that was meant to be.
With God as our Father, brothers all are we,
Let me walk with my brother, in perfect harmony.**

**Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now.
With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow,
To take each moment, and live each moment, in peace, eternally.
Let there be Peace on Earth, and let it begin with me.**

*THE TIME OF SILENCE

*THE CHARGE AND DISMISSAL

Pastor: May the bread and the cup which you have now received
Strengthen and preserve you unto life everlasting.
Go out into the world in peace;
Have courage; Hold onto what is good;
Return no one evil for evil;
Strengthen the fainthearted;

Support the weak; Help the suffering;
Honor all persons; Love and serve the Lord,
Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.
And whatever you do, whether by speech or action,
Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,
Giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17)

People: **Thanks be to God! Alleluia, Amen!**

THE POSTLUDE

Voluntary in C

William Boyce

Those who are able, please stand.

**GRACE AND PEACE TO ALL THIS DAY
who have come to worship.**

We want to get to know you, especially if you are a visitor!

Please introduce yourself to others sitting nearby during the passing of the peace. Following the worship, everyone is invited to share a time of coffee, tea and fellowship downstairs in the Assembly Room. (exit at the rear of the sanctuary, go down the stairs and past the Library to the entrance near the Sallman painting of Christ knocking at the door.)

YOU WERE GREETED TODAY by Donna Hobaugh.

THE FLOWERS IN THE SANCTUARY

are given to the glory of God in honor and in celebration of the August 2nd wedding of Roger and Nancy Rettig.

FELLOWSHIP HOUR follows this worship service downstairs in the Assembly Room. Everyone is cordially invited to attend. Hosting today's Fellowship Hour are Cherie White and Jane Hall.

MUSICAL GUEST - A warm welcome to Dr. Colleen Gray who is making her first appearance at Covenant Church today. We thank her for her powerful, beautiful and angelic voice that provided the special music during this morning's worship service. Dr. Gray is on the faculty of Slippery Rock University where she teaches Opera in the Music Department. (Michael Desnoyers was a student of Dr. Gray's.)



UPCOMING COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

Fellowship & Outreach Sunday, August 10, 11:20 a.m. (Connell)
Worship & Music Tuesday, August 12, 6 p.m. (Connell)

In The Life of Our Church

Recent Prayer Concerns:

- Eleanor Ritts Hospitalized at Butler Memorial following a mild stroke, Room 5119
- Gladys Strobel At home, not able to travel
- Beverly McClaine..... Recently hospitalized, but now at home again

For Continued Prayer:

Julie & Bud Bruno; Marion Campbell; Marian and Fred Curran; Mary Elizabeth Goehring; Joan Moore; Brenda Keith; Dr. Thomas Stover (Mary Lee's brother in Texas); Gladys Strobel; Vernon Swanson; Bill Wilson

Birthdays this week:

Paul Baxter Hoffman (August 3), C. Andrew Schlicht (August 4), Lester Dunmire (August 7)



Congratulations!

to Nancy Hitchcock and Roger Rettig who were married yesterday, August 2nd at Covenant Church in a small, family ceremony. Pastor Jim and Pastor Michael Harvey (Roger's pastor) shared the privilege of officiating.

God has brought Nancy and Roger together for His designed purpose. May their union be a joyous blessing to family and friends. We wish Nancy and Roger much well-deserved happiness as they share their lives, their love of serving (and singing) and their Christian faith.

Congratulations!

Dr. John Prichard, Covenant Church member and Elder, was recently selected as District 26 (Beaver, Butler, Lawrence) Adjutant of the Year by the American Legion Post in Butler and honored last Saturday at the American Legion State Convention.

The Post Adjutant is responsible for membership work, recording minutes, maintaining non-financial records of the Post and other duties as may be assigned by the American Legion Post Commander. Dr. Prichard is a U.S. Army Vietnam-era veteran and a retired social studies teacher from the Butler School District. Congratulations John on your well-deserved achievement!

Covenant Cupboard Community Food Bank
 August Food Item Needed: spaghetti or spaghetti sauce
(Baskets for donations are at the front entrance on E. Jefferson St.)

Dear Covenant Congregation,

We will dearly miss you! Thank you for being a loving church family for us to be a part of. Thank you all for the gifts. They will be put to good use!

Always,
Michael and Steph Desnoyers

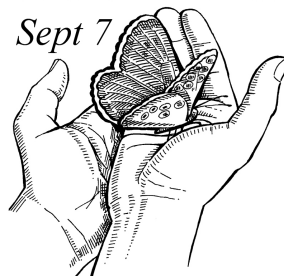
To our Friends of Covenant Church,

Nancy so much appreciated your kindness in sending her your wishes for restored health. She has been in hospitals and rehab for almost fifteen weeks. At first it was doubtful if she would have health again. She has had a stint, catheter, trachea, and ventilator hooked to her. But by the Grace of God and a very skilled medical staff, she has improved to the point where she can almost walk on her own. Nancy has so many fond memories of Covenant!

Sincerely,
Tim and Nancy Pohmer

Community Memorial Butterfly Release

*V.N.A. Memorial
Sept 7*

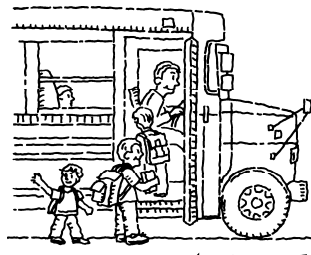


A very special event, sponsored by VNA Hospice and the Succop Conservancy will be held on Sunday, Sept. 7, 2008 just south of Butler off Route 8.

For a \$25 donation, you receive a live Monarch butterfly to release, and the name of your loved ones will be read during the ceremony of music and poetry from 1-2 pm.

Open House at the Conservancy continues from 2-4 pm.
Please register no later than August 15 by calling (724) 431-3372.

Back-To-School Party



Saturday, August 23rd

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Children ages 2 - 10

(Fellowship Hall)

- ☆snacks
- ☆school supplies
- ☆a visit from the "Dairy Princess"
- ☆drawings to win bookbags & lunchboxes and more!

218th General Assembly approved new social creed, the first in a century

SAN JOSE, June 27, 2008 — By a 5-to-1 margin, the 218th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved “A Social Creed for the 21st Century,” exactly 100 years after the “Social Creed of 1908” spoke to the harshness of industrial life at the turn of the last century. Commissioners defeated a alternate motion that would have sent the 2008 creed to churches for study before the 2010 Assembly.

According to its language, the creed provides “a message of hope for a fearful time” by “offering a vision of a society that shares more and consumes less, seeks compassion over suspicion and equality over domination, and finds security in joined hands rather than massed arms.” It calls for equal pay for comparable work, protection from dangerous working conditions, criminal rehabilitation through restorative justice, an end to the death penalty, tax and budget policies that reduce disparities between rich and poor, affordable housing, sustainable use of resources and just immigration policies.

Acting on overtures presented by the Social Justice Issues Committee, the Assembly also approved:

- “On Addressing the Tragedy of Gun Violence,” which commends people, churches and organizations that are working to end firearm tragedies and calls on legislators to, among other things, close the gun show loophole on firearm purchases that remains in 35 states.
- A call for Presbyterians to work toward universal access to safe, decent, accessible, affordable and permanent housing. An amendment urged Presbyterians who are able to forego one meal per week as an act of worship and humility, with the value of the meal going to feed people in need.
- Commissioners’ resolutions — one that deem it dangerous for families and the community in general when police officers work in collaboration with federal immigration authorities, and another that calls torture and cruel and inhumane treatment against prisoners “immoral, unwise and un-American.”
- A call to study energy sources, their advantages and disadvantages and the impacts each source has on human communities, all species and ecological systems.
- Studies on pay equity and just compensation and the status of women in the church and a 10-year effort to transform the church with regard gender, race and class.
- Creation of a resolution team to study the church’s policies on public education, especially desegregation, affirmative action, faith-based initiatives, home-schooling, charter schools and the No Child Left Behind law.

BACKGROUND

to the New Social Creed Adopted by the 218th General Assembly

The Social Creed of the Churches, endorsed in 1908 by the Federal Council of Churches, was their pledge to work together for a better, fairer and more faithful United States. One hundred years ago, the explosion of industry and its impact on U.S. society called for a new focus of the churches' ministry. Those in the churches sensitive to the human costs of industrialization saw in those costs a challenge to the fullness of the Gospel, which is both personal and communal in dimension. The Social Gospel movement, evangelical at its heart, inspired by Jesus' preaching of "the kingdom of God," was acutely aware of the brutalities of new working conditions, the social tensions of assimilating millions of immigrants and the loss of communal values in fast-growing cities.

More than 100 years ago, workers caught in the machinery of early industrialization were ground down by 12-hour shifts and seven-day workweeks. Families were broken by absent or exhausted parents. Workers with disabilities were summarily dismissed and devalued. Retired workers were left without pensions. Children worked when they should have been at school or at play. At the same time, enormous wealth was generated. That wealth, however, was distributed to a relative few, primarily the owners of industry.

Responding to this changing situation, the churches saw the need to work across denominational lines in pursuit of social change. At the formation of the Federal Council of Churches in 1908, the denominations put in place social principles that were to guide the Council's work in the succeeding years. The "social creed" was introduced by Methodist Frank Mason North, who had earlier written the great Social Gospel hymn, "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life." From North's report on "The Church and Modern Industry" was lifted up a section of 14 principles and policies that were unanimously put into a short statement, the *Social Creed*, that was repeatedly affirmed, expanded and adopted by various denominations in future years. It was to be a concise and practical summary of what a "Christ-like God" willed for those seeking "to reduce the hardships and uphold the dignity of labor."

Through the *Social Creed*, the churches declared that they would stand together and work toward addressing the needs of all workers. As a result of their commitment, they were able to influence our country in profoundly positive ways. The churches' pledge of support for "the toilers of America" helped to abolish child labor and bring about worker safety, retirement security, health care, unemployment compensation, and more. In that prophetic witness, the churches' leaders anticipated Social Security, the social protections of the New Deal and more recent health and environmental protections. For these reasons, they deserve our thanks for their brave witness and our celebration of it by making a new commitment in the 21st century. It is also highly appropriate that the National Council of Churches, successor to the Federal Council, claim this heritage.

Similar economic problems persist today: injustice in the workplace, growing social inequities, and the intolerably high percentage of people living of poverty in the United States and in other nations. The majority of people around the world do not have access to adequate health care. Workers worldwide continue to earn low wages, fear occupational hazards and the loss of employment or other penalties when they need or use time to care for family members. These and many other problems call to the Christian conscience and to the moral imperative in every human heart.

However, in the 21st century we are also confronting complex new issues that reach beyond economics and call for unprecedented global cooperation and new governance structures. Some challenges seem greater, as the costs and consequences of war and the persistence of racism meet massive environmental degradation. Global warming threatens our very existence. We recognize more clearly divisions of wealth etched along lines of race and gender. The majority of people seem resigned to accept the present shape of our global market system and fail to see that any alternatives may exist. Divisions between the rich and the poor grow wider by the day. In too many places, corruption in politics rises steadily and government competence declines. Based on enduring Christian principles, we seek to address these and other challenges in a coherent and hope-filled way.

Language chosen for the creed may be perceived as too optimistic by some, but is intended to express the gospel conviction that real freedom and power in life consist in sharing, rather than in an abundance of things. The Gospel stories witness to Jesus' prophetic challenge to the established social and economic order.

Here, then, is the text of the new Social Creed adopted by the 218th General Assembly of the PC(USA), the first revision by the church in a century!

A Social Creed for the 21st Century (2008)

Remembering the prophetic Social Creed of the Churches of 1908, we respond to God's call to transform our social order toward justice and peace, and address the 21st century's great challenges of globalization and sustainability. Hearing also concerns of churches and peoples around our globe, we pledge ourselves to specific practices of personal and social responsibility that reflect our Triune God's gracious will for all creation. We rejoice in the Biblical vision where all "shall long enjoy the work of their hands" and "not labor in vain or bear children for calamity" (Isaiah 65: 22-23).

In faith, we celebrate the full humanity of each woman, man, and child, all created in God's image, by working for:

- ❖ Employment for all, at a family-sustaining living wage.
- ❖ Protection of workers from dangerous occupational conditions, injuries, and death.
- ❖ Full civil, political and economic rights for all people, protected by new governance structures.

- ❖ Abolition of forced labor, human trafficking, and the exploitation of children.
- ❖ The rights of workers to organize, and to share in workplace decisions and productivity gains.
- ❖ Adequate time and resources to care for families without fear of work penalties.
- ❖ High quality public education for all, free from racial, gender, or economic disparity.
- ❖ A fair, de-racialized criminal justice system, based on restorative justice and rehabilitation.

In the love taught by Jesus, despite the world's sufferings and evils, we honor the deep connections within our human family and seek to awaken a new spirit of cooperation by working for:

- ❖ Abatement of poverty and enactment of policies benefiting the most vulnerable.
- ❖ Universal healthcare.
- ❖ Safe, affordable housing, served by adequate public transportation.
- ❖ An effective program of social security during sickness, disability and old age.
- ❖ Tax and budget policies that reduce disparities between rich and poor, strengthen democracy, and provide greater opportunity for everyone within the common good.
- ❖ Just immigration policies that protect family unity, safeguard workers' rights, require employer accountability, and foster international cooperation.
- ❖ Public service as a high vocation, with integrity in voting, campaign finance and lobbying.

In hope sustained by the Holy Spirit, we pledge to keep and heal the environment, recognizing our responsibility for its health and our interdependence with Creation and one another, by working for:

- ❖ Adoption of simpler lifestyles for those who have enough.
- ❖ Access for all to healthy food, clean water and air, with wise and equitable land stewardship.
- ❖ Sustainable use of all resources and promotion of alternative energy sources.
- ❖ Equitable global trade that protects local economies, initiatives, cultures and livelihoods.
- ❖ Peacemaking through international cooperation and rule of law, mutual security rather than unilateral force, nuclear disarmament and a strengthened United Nations.
- ❖ Redirection of military spending to more peaceful and productive uses.
- ❖ Relationships of mutuality among the world's churches and faith communities.

With all those who labor and are heavy-laden, we commit ourselves to a culture of peace and freedom that embraces non-violent initiatives, human dignity and greater equality, with a deeper spirituality of inward growth and outward action. By these means, we witness to our hope in the God who makes all things new, whom we know in Jesus Christ.

August 3, 2008

“Food, and the sharing of it, are powerful in many ways, in feeding our bodies, but also, symbolically, in feeding our spirits.”

“I have a problem with miracles that 'mesmerize' us and lead us to leave everything up to God. Miracles let us off the hook. They appeal to the part of us that is all too happy to let God feed the crowd, save the world, do it all.”

-- The opinions of homiletician Barbara Brown Taylor, quoted in "Table of Plenty," edited by Kate Huey, *Weekly Seeds*, i.ucc.org

The Reverend Dr. James E. Swanson, Pastor

Home Phone: (724) 752-8383

Church Office: (724) 287-7731

Website: <http://covenantbutler.org>