

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ABERDEEN

October 22, 2023 at 10 am

“Jesus brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.” (Ephesians 2:17-18)

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP (responsive)

Here today there is love, freely available to all.
Not our human loving, fragile and intermittent,
but God’s supreme love.

**May a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth,
break forth into joyous songs of praise.**

Here today is love, higher than our loftiest hopes,
deeper than the immensities of time and space,
God’s all-encompassing love.

**Let the seas roar their praise,
and everything in them.**

**Let the rivers clap their hands
and the hills sing together their happiness.**

The joy of the living Christ Jesus be with us all
as we worship our loving and Triune God together.

Based on Psalm 98, John 15:9-17.

WELCOME

* HYMN #376: “LOVE DIVINE, ALL LOVES EXCELLING” (verses 1, 3-4)

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down,
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Nevermore Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, PASSING THE PEACE, PRAYERS FOR THE CONGREGATION

HYMN #439: "IN CHRIST THERE IS NO EAST OR WEST"

In Christ there is no east or west,
In Him no south or north;
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth.

In Christ shall true hearts everywhere
Their high communion find;
His service is the golden cord,
Close-binding humankind.

Join hands, disciples of the faith,
Whate'er your race may be.
All children of the living God
Are surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both east and west,
In Him meet south and north;
All Christly souls are one in Him
Throughout the whole wide earth.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON (unison)

**Lord, Christ is our peace.
He came proclaiming peace to those who are far off and those who are near.**

**This proclamation has reached our ears
but we confess it has not settled into our hearts.
We live in a divisive age,
and we too often succumb to the influences of divisiveness around us.**

**We know we are called to be filled with your peace,
but we allow the anxieties of the day, and our fears, to overwhelm us.
Forgive us, O Lord.**

**Forgive us for not seeking peace in Christ but in our divisions.
We draw dividing lines between "us" and "them"
and believe your blessing lies here, on "our side" of those lines.**

**Christ is our peace.
In his flesh, through his blood,
he has taken those divided by hostility and made them one.**

**Christ is our peace.
Open us and fill us with this peace.
For your mercy we pray. Amen.**

Based on Ephesians 2:11-22.

After corporate prayer we will have a few moments of silence for personal confession.

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HYMN #310: "JESUS, THE VERY THOUGHT OF THEE"

Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.

Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
Nor can the mind recall
A sweeter sound than Thy blest name,
O Savior of us all.

O hope of every contrite heart,
O joy of all the meek,
To those who fall, how kind Thou art!
How good to those who seek!

But what to those who find? Ah, this
Nor tongue nor pen can show;
The love of Jesus, what it is,
None but His loved ones know.

Jesus, our only joy be Thou,
As Thou our prize will be;
Jesus, be Thou our glory now,
And through eternity.

THE READING AND PROCLAMATION OF SCRIPTURE

Sermon: "*Gentiles, Too!*"

Acts 10

In Caesarea there lived a Roman army officer named Cornelius, who was a captain of the Italian Regiment. ² He was a devout, God-fearing man, as was everyone in his household. He gave generously to the poor and prayed regularly to God. ³ One afternoon about three o'clock, he had a vision in which he saw an angel of God coming toward him. "Cornelius!" the angel said.

⁴ Cornelius stared at him in terror. "What is it, sir?" he asked the angel.

And the angel replied, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have been received by God as an offering!" ⁵ Now send some men to Joppa, and summon a man named Simon Peter. ⁶ He is staying with Simon, a tanner who lives near the seashore."

⁷ As soon as the angel was gone, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier, one of his personal attendants. ⁸ He told them what had happened and sent them off to Joppa.

* *Please stand if you are able*

⁹ The next day as Cornelius's messengers were nearing the town, Peter went up on the flat roof to pray. It was about noon, ¹⁰ and he was hungry. But while a meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw the sky open, and something like a large sheet was let down by its four corners. ¹² In the sheet were all sorts of animals, reptiles, and birds. ¹³ Then a voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat them."

¹⁴ "No, Lord," Peter declared. "I have never eaten anything that our Jewish laws have declared impure and unclean."

¹⁵ But the voice spoke again: "Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean." ¹⁶ The same vision was repeated three times. Then the sheet was suddenly pulled up to heaven.

¹⁷ Peter was very perplexed. What could the vision mean? Just then the men sent by Cornelius found Simon's house. Standing outside the gate, ¹⁸ they asked if a man named Simon Peter was staying there.

¹⁹ Meanwhile, as Peter was puzzling over the vision, the Holy Spirit said to him, "Three men have come looking for you. ²⁰ Get up, go downstairs, and go with them without hesitation. Don't worry, for I have sent them."

²¹ So Peter went down and said, "I'm the man you are looking for. Why have you come?"

²² They said, "We were sent by Cornelius, a Roman officer. He is a devout and God-fearing man, well respected by all the Jews. A holy angel instructed him to summon you to his house so that he can hear your message." ²³ So Peter invited the men to stay for the night. The next day he went with them, accompanied by some of the brothers from Joppa.

²⁴ They arrived in Caesarea the following day. Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ As Peter entered his home, Cornelius fell at his feet and worshiped him. ²⁶ But Peter pulled him up and said, "Stand up! I'm a human being just like you!" ²⁷ So they talked together and went inside, where many others were assembled.

²⁸ Peter told them, "You know it is against our laws for a Jewish man to enter a Gentile home like this or to associate with you. But God has shown me that I should no longer think of anyone as impure or unclean. ²⁹ So I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. Now tell me why you sent for me."

³⁰ Cornelius replied, "Four days ago I was praying in my house about this same time, three o'clock in the afternoon. Suddenly, a man in dazzling clothes was standing in front of me. ³¹ He told me, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your gifts to the poor have been noticed by God! ³² Now send messengers to Joppa, and summon a man named Simon Peter. He is staying in the home of Simon, a tanner who lives near the seashore.' ³³ So I sent for you at once, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here, waiting before God to hear the message the Lord has given you."

³⁴ Then Peter replied, "I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. ³⁵ In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right. ³⁶ This is the message of Good News for the people of Israel—that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know what happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee, after John began preaching his message of baptism. ³⁸ And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

³⁹ “And we apostles are witnesses of all he did throughout Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a cross, ⁴⁰ but God raised him to life on the third day. Then God allowed him to appear, ⁴¹ not to the general public, but to us whom God had chosen in advance to be his witnesses. We were those who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² And he ordered us to preach everywhere and to testify that Jesus is the one appointed by God to be the judge of all—the living and the dead. ⁴³ He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name.”

⁴⁴ Even as Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the message. ⁴⁵ The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles, too. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in other tongues and praising God.

Then Peter asked, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone object to their being baptized, now that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did?” ⁴⁸ So he gave orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Afterward Cornelius asked him to stay with them for several days.

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S LOVE WITH OUR OFFERINGS

*The metal basket in the offering plate is for gifts to support
our deacons' provision of care, support, and financial assistance to those in need.*

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DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

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#374: “LORD, MAKE US SERVANTS OF YOUR PEACE”

Lord, make us servants of your peace:
where there is hate, may we sow love;
where there is hurt, may we forgive;
where there is strife, may we make one.

Where all is doubt, may we sow faith;
where all is gloom, may we sow hope;
where all is night, may we sow light;
where all is tears, may we sow joy.

Jesus, our Lord, may we not seek
to be consoled, but to console,
nor look to understanding hearts,
but look for hearts to understand.

May we not look for love's return,
but seek to love unselfishly,
for in our giving we receive,
and in forgiving are forgiven.

* *Please stand if you are able*

Dying, we live, and are reborn
through death's dark night to endless day;
Lord, make us servants of your peace,
to wake at last in heaven's light.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

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Office Hours: 10 am – 2 pm (Monday, Wednesday – Friday)

WEBSITE: ABERDEENPRES.ORG

CALENDAR

Tuesday, Oct 24 Tuesday Crew (9:00–11:30)

Wednesday, Oct 25 *Jesus (and the Gospels) in 3D*
Coffee and Study (1:00 pm)
Soup and Study (6:00 for a meal together; study at 6:30)

Sunday, Oct 29 Reformation Sunday
Sharing Table (before and after the service)