

SEPTEMBER 27, 2020
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

****Please maintain social distance of at least 6 feet and
keep your mask on at all times while on MPC property.***

PRELUDE — *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound*

Mark Shockey

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| <i>Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!</i> | <i>'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved.</i> | <i>The Lord has promised good to me; his word my hope secures.</i> |
| <i>I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.</i> | <i>How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!</i> | <i>He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.</i> |

CALL to WORSHIP — from *Psalms 96*

Molly Ramsey

One: O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.

All: Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.

One: Declare God's glory among the nations! Declare God's marvelous works among the peoples.

All: For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised! Let us worship God together!

PRAYER of CONFESSION

Pastor Lester-Abdalla

Gracious God, each week when we gather to confess our sins, we also hear of your marvelous grace. We sing songs proclaiming your amazing grace, how sweet the sound. And yet, too often we believe your grace might be so sweet that we are undeserving of it. Too often we assume it's too good to be true or that it's meant for someone else. Forgive us, O God. Fill our hearts with the truth of your forgiving love. Remind us again of the good news of the Gospel. Sing to us again of your promise: that nothing we could ever do will ever separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Empower us to go out into the world to share that same grace with others.

(Time for silent prayer and confession.)

PROMISE of FORGIVENESS

One: Hear the good news of God's love for us: whether it is in a rush of wind or the quiet whisper of the Spirit, God will say again and again, "You are my beloved. Nothing you could ever do will separate you from my love." And so, friends, let us rest in the assurance of God's love and proclaim the good news of the Gospel:

All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen!

RESPONSE to GOD'S GRACE — *Glory to the Father*

GLORIA PATRI

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.
Amen. Amen. Amen.*

SCRIPTURE READING — **John 7:53 - 8:11**

Then each of them went home, while Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him.

Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.'

One: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

MEDITATION

Pastor Rhodes

AFFIRMATION of FAITH - from *A Brief Statement of Faith*

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal. With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

MUSICAL MEDITATION — *God, How Can We Forgive*

LEONI

*God, how can we forgive when bonds of love are torn?
How can we rise and start anew, our trust reborn?
When human loving fails and every hope is gone,
your love gives strength beyond our own to face the dawn.
When we have missed the mark, and tears of anguish flow,
how can you still release our guilt, the debt we owe?
The ocean depth of grace surpasses all our needs.
A priest who shares our human pain, Christ intercedes.
Who dares to throw the stone to damn another's sin,
when you, while knowing all our past, forgive again?
No more we play the judge, for by your grace we live.
As you, O God, forgive our sin, may we forgive.*

POSTLUDE — *God of Grace and God of Glory*

QUESTIONS for REFLECTION at HOME

- How have you experienced the gift of God's grace?
- Where might God be calling you to extend grace?

OTHERS PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Tim Carpenter – Director of Music

Photos provided by: Luisa Herrera-Gonzalez, Nancy Kernan,
Damon Miller & Rachel Rhodes