



TUPC VISION STATEMENT

*We are a diverse community of disciples of Jesus Christ **GROWING** together. With the always present power of the Holy Spirit, we share our lives, care for one another, worship, pray, study God's word, and serve both inside and outside the walls of the church.*

*We invite you to come and **GROW** with us.*

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



September 6th, 2020

Interim Pastor – Rev. Lindsey Carnes

Liturgist – Waldo Bronson

Special Music – Helen Sanders

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

One: Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth!
All: Worship God with gladness; Come into God's presence with singing.
One: Know that the Lord is God.
All: It is God that made us, and we belong to God.
One: We are God's people;
All: We are the sheep of God's pasture.
One: Enter God's gates with thanksgiving;
All: Enter God's courts with praise!
One: Give thanks to God, bless God's name;
All: For the Lord is good.
One: God's steadfast love endures forever;
All: God's faithfulness to all generations.

Opening Hymn PH#285 **God, You Spin the Whirling Planets**

*1 God You spin the whirling planets, fill the seas and spread the plain
Mold the mountains fashion blossoms, call forth sunshine wind and rain
We created in your image, would a true reflection be
Of Your justice grace and mercy and the truth that makes us free*

*2 You have called us to be faithful in our life and ministry
We respond in grateful worship joined in one community
When we blur Your gracious image, focus us and make us whole
Healed and strengthened as Your people, we move onward toward Your goal*

*3 God Your will is still creating, calling us to life made new
Now reveal to us fresh vistas where there's work to dare and do
Keep us clear of all distortion, fashion us with loving care
Thus new creatures in Your image, we'll proclaim Christ everywhere*

Prayer for Illumination

Almighty God, by your Holy Spirit, illumine the sacred page. We pray, that our minds may be open to receive your Word, our hearts taught to love it, and our wills strengthened to obey it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading of Scripture:

Psalm 8:1-9

1 O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. 2 Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger. 3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; 4 what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? 5 Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. 6 You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, 7 all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. 9 O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Genesis 1:1-8

1 In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, 2 the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. 3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. 6 And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." 7 So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. 8 God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

One: *The Word of the Lord*

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon: "Move Mountains: God Is On the Move"

In this beginning chapter of Genesis we see God creating a new world, because we might need to hear about God creating a new world. In this world that we have today we don't really know what our next step is.

We're in a world where we are filled with fear, anger and anxiety or we feel trapped and isolated by our own homes. It feels chaotic, a place where we do not know which step is up and which step is down. Our living rooms have become our office spaces. Our spouses and pets have become our co-workers. We've become school teachers and nurses. And teachers and nurses have become tech service people. We live in a world where our new fashion statement is a mask.

We pray constantly for grocery store clerks and service people, along with medical staff and first responders. It's a world where the everyday event feels like preparing to climb Mt Everest. It seems like this pandemic has made our normal routines more annoying. The things that were already stressful in our lives have not only become amplified but sometimes catastrophic.

We live in a world where we worry not only about the ones we love. We worry about our next steps and whether or not we'll make it. We want to know where God is and what God is doing. Where is God in this story? And when we ask these much needed questions, we can turn to scripture. Because when we look at scripture it gives us a constant reminder. In the Hebrew scriptures, the Old Testament, it always reminds us to look back and remember our past and see what God has done. We know the stories of the prophets who reminded the people, "remember when God took us out of the land of Egypt? Remember the promise to Abraham? Remember when God brought us to the Promised Land?"

When we remember, we can't go any further back than the story of the beginning in Genesis 1 where the story starts. This is the first account of when God created this world. For in the beginning there was actually no world. It was formless and void and covered in darkness. Other translations call this dark formless void chaos. And we think that God's first action in Genesis is when God says, "let there be light." And there was light. But if we look at our passage, the first action comes from somewhere else; it comes from the wind of God. The NRSV translation says, the "wind of God swept over the waters." The Hebrew word used here is "ruah," which also means wind, breath, spirit.

So the first action that God takes isn't just blowing out the candles on some birthday cake. It isn't just giving the formless void a light breeze. What God is doing is giving God's breath, giving God's Spirit unto the chaos. Much like how God is preparing the void for change, preparing the chaos to change into something that bears life. Something more is going on in this moment. It is breath that breathes volume into the words "let there be light." It is the breath that paves the way for the work of God to continue, to start. It's this word that will bring life into a lifeless void.

It is the Spirit of God that not only prepares a world, but also prepares us to bring life and to change into this world. That breath of God, that moment for change, means that our stories are not ending, but actually just beginning. Anything can happen. Even when we live in a world of chaos, whether that chaos is in ourselves or out in the world, God is breathing that new life into us. God is preparing us to move--with God, with God's Spirit, with God's breath--into a world that looks a little bit different.

When I look at all the chaos the pandemic has brought, I still see churches reaching out and feeding the hungry with meals served in to go boxes. I still see churches coming together virtually and reaching out to each other through the phone lines, and computer cables, and old fashioned handwritten cards. I see us reaching out to people we haven't talked to in years. I see the world adapting. I see the world changing.

And we must change too. We must adapt too. We must follow the Spirit. And even despite the challenges of social distancing, despite the virus, God is still bringing life into the world. God is still breathing his Spirit into us. But it's up to us whether we notice it or not and follow God's Spirit into the world.

We might be sitting in our houses not knowing what to do in this chaos. We might wonder, what is our next step? Our next step comes from remembering-- that God gave us his Spirit. The Spirit breathes into us and breathes life into a world of chaos. God's Spirit brings us from this meaninglessness and shows us that we are able to pursue life. We are able to cultivate life in our lives, in ourselves, in one another. We are to bring light into the midst of darkness and show that the darkness cannot overcome it.

But how do we do that? How am I, as one person, going to be able to do this? I'm only one person and I'm stuck in my house, I'm stuck in my office space, I'm stuck not able to do anything. I invite you to be creative. When God breathed the first breath upon the chaos, God could have done anything. God had a clean slate that offered endless opportunity.

What's your next step? Maybe it's simple--write that letter, bake that cookie, make that phone call, go for that walk, sign up for that online class, pick up your dusty Bible, have that hard conversation. Follow that small tug on your heart telling you to love on someone. That tug on your heart may just be the Spirit of God. The same Spirit that created the world can create something new in this world for you as well. The same Spirit that created the world can create something new for your neighbor. It doesn't matter what happened yesterday or the day before, God has given us a clean slate. God has given us a new opportunity to do something new.

Our God is on the move in Genesis. Even when we are stuck in our homes, we can be on the move. We can allow ourselves to be on the move with God.

Hymn PH#272 ***God of the Sparrow***

*1 God of the sparrow God of the whale God of the swirling stars
How does the creature say Awe? How does the creature say Praise?*

*2 God of the earthquake God of the storm God of the trumpet blast
How does the creature cry Woe? How does the creature cry Save?*

*3 God of the rainbow God of the cross God of the empty grave
How does the creature say Grace? How does the creature say Thanks?*

*4 God of the hungry God of the sick God of the prodigal
How does the creature say Care? How does the creature say Life?*

*5 God of the neighbor God of the foe God of the pruning hook
How does the creature say Love? How does the creature say Peace?*

*6 God of the ages God near at hand God of the loving heart
How do your children say Joy? How do your children say Home?*

Introduction to the Offering:

We are thankful for the blessings that the Lord bestows upon us all. I pray for our congregation today, that we may give with gladness and sincerity. No one ever gives a present to someone with reluctance, and we should never give God what already belongs to him with reluctance either. May God bless these tithes and offerings this day.

Offering

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Generous Father, thank you that all things were created through you and for you, you are before all things, and in you all things exist. The Bible says that we should bring our tithes and offerings into your storehouse and that you will respond by opening the windows of heaven and sending down blessing upon blessing. Accept the gifts we place before you now. May the peace of God reign in our lives; may the love of God surround us; may the Spirit of God empower us; and may the joy of God uphold us. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Holy One, as we center ourselves for prayer, remind us that you are as close to us as our very breath, even in these times when you may feel so far away to so many of us; in these times when many of us find it so hard to breathe. You are there with us.

So we begin our time of prayer with three deep breaths. As we breathe in, may we breathe in your peace. As we breathe out, may we breathe out your love.

We lift up prayers of healing for the United States, after months of civil unrest over police brutality and attacks on innocent black lives. We pray especially for Jacob Blake, a black man, who was shot multiple times by police in Wisconsin, and for his children, who witnessed the traumatic assault on their father's life. We pray, also, for the lives of the protestors who were killed and injured by a white teen with an assault weapon during related protests in Kenosha, Wisconsin. God of Justice, help each of us do our part as we seek to redeem the soul of the United States as it faces the sin of racism.

We continue to pray for the Middle East, where turmoil seems ceaseless. We especially pray for those affected by the airstrikes in the southern Gaza Strip, after 11 straight days of bombing. Our hearts are still with Beirut, Lebanon, where explosion survivors are trying to pick up the pieces and rebuild their lives. God of Reconciliation, guide us into new ways of hope and peace.

During this seemingly never-ending global Coronavirus pandemic, we lift prayers for all who are affected, and pray for children who are starting a new school year, for the many stresses on families, and for wisdom for our leaders as they try to determine a way forward. We pray specifically for Spain, as the surge in cases has made it the new epicenter of the virus, and for

Brazil, where new cases and deaths continue to rise. God of Grace, help each of us to do our part as we continually seek to slow the spread.

We pray for the Earth, as we face ramifications of climate change and natural disasters in so many parts of the world. We see over one million acres of California, burning with wildfires; we see flash floods killing dozens in Afghanistan as they were sleeping. We pray for those in the path of Hurricane Laura, as it has made landfall at the border of Texas and Louisiana, where over 500,000 people evacuated, the storm bringing with it punishing winds and torrential rains. And all of these evacuations in each of these cases are more challenging due to the coronavirus.

Breathing in smoke from wildfires, or from explosions, makes it hard to breathe. Seeing the lives of innocent people cut short due to prejudice makes it hard to breathe. Experiencing the fear and loss of a global pandemic is making it hard to breathe.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit that, even now, with tensions high everywhere we turn, we may breathe in Your peace, and breathe out Your love. Help us to breathe, so that we may do the work of healing that is so desperately needed, and that we may find some joy along the way. And we pray as you taught us to prayer saying... Our Father...

Prayer of Confession:

O God who gives birth to all that we see, all that we know, all that we dream,

and all that is unseen, unknown and unimagined,

We celebrate your life that holds and nurtures the universe,

we celebrate your love which joins creation as one and unites all things with you;

We give thanks for your life which is incarnated in Christ,

and which is revealed in every created being;

We savor your presence which is limitless and welcoming,

and your Spirit which fills every moment of time and every fragment of matter.

But even as we receive again your vision of life,

we recognize that we have been blind to its universal heartbeat;

Even as we remember the connectedness of all things,

we acknowledge that we have divided and separated ourselves, and forgotten our part in your creation;

Even as we are energized by your breath within us,

we confess our destructiveness, and repent of the harm we have done to ourselves and our world.

For the sake of Jesus, the firstborn of all creation, who, in death, disarmed all that is evil, and, in resurrection, stripped death of power,

We ask you to recreate us, to reconnect us, and to restore to us the vision of your life in creation, and the power to live it. Amen.

SILENCE IS KEPT

Assurance of Pardon

God is the one who renews our spirits, renews our hearts, and renews the earth season by season. God is planting something new in you. When you let the old die, the new takes root and grows strong. Grow in God's love and forgiveness, and let the ways of selfishness die. Let God's love cultivate in you, so you may grow into God's intention: a beautiful co-creator with God. Amen.

Affirmation of Faith (based on the CRCNA's "Our World Belongs to God")

Let us proclaim together our conviction of, and commitment to, God's purpose in creation: In the beginning, God—Father, Word, and Spirit— called this world into being out of nothing, and gave it shape and order.

Our world, fallen into sin, has lost its first goodness, but God has not abandoned the work of his hands: our Maker preserves this world, sending seasons, sun, and rain, upholding all creatures, renewing the earth, promising a Savior, guiding all things to their purpose.

Made in God's image to live in loving communion with our Maker,

we are appointed earthkeepers and caretakers to tend the earth, enjoy it, and love our neighbors. God uses our skills for the unfolding and well-being of his world so that creation and all who live in it may flourish.

Even now, as history unfolds in ways we know only in part,

we are assured that God is with us in our world, holding all things in tender embrace and bending them to his purpose. The confidence that the Lord is faithful gives meaning to our days and hope to our years. The future is secure, for our world belongs to God.

Invitation to the Table

And now we come to your table again, Jesus, Mindful of how you laid your life down, so that we and creation could be born anew; Mindful of how you took your life up again, so that we and creation could be filled with the life abundant; Mindful that we cannot earn or purchase this privilege, but that it is your grace which beckons us, and your grace which ensures that all creation may be one and whole. May your Spirit work in these fruits of earth, so that they may become for us a sharing in Christ's body and blood. May your Spirit work in we, who are children of earth, so that we may be transformed into Christ's body, carrying his life, his care, and his salvation to all creation. Amen

COMMUNION

Prayer After Communion

In this moment and this meal, we have remembered That the whole creation is held in the hand of God.

and that the whole creation is filled with the life of God;

That the whole creation has been restored by the work of God

and that the whole creation is flooded with the Spirit of God;

That the whole creation will be renewed according to the promise of God

and that the whole creation reflects the glory of God from eternity to eternity.

So now we go from this place back into the world,

to proclaim the saving message of God, in word and action, in challenge and compassion, to all creation.

And we go in the confidence that comes from knowing that

Christ's limitless grace, God's infinite love, and the Holy Spirit's relentless companionship, always encompass us, and are always within us. Amen.

Closing Hymn GTG#401 *Here in This Place*

- 1. Here in this place, new light is streaming, now is the darkness vanished away.
See, in this space, our fears and our dreamings, brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in - the lost and forsaken, gather us in - the blind and the lame.
Call to us now, and we shall awaken, we shall arise at the sound of our name.*
- 2. Here we will take the wine and the water, here we will take the bread of new birth.
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters, call us anew to be salt for the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion, give us to eat the bread that is you.
Nourish us well, and teach us to fashion lives that are holy and hearts that are true.*
- 3. Not in the dark of buildings confining, not in some heaven, light years away,
but here in this place, the new light is shining; now is the Kingdom, now is the day.
Gather us in - and hold us forever, gather us in - and make us your own.
Gather us in - all peoples together, fire of love in our flesh and our bone.*

Charge and Benediction

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to proclaim the saving message of God, in word and action, in challenge and compassion, to all creation.

And we go in the confidence that comes from knowing that

Christ's limitless grace, God's infinite love, and the Holy Spirit's relentless companionship, always encompass us, and are always within us. Amen.

The Passing of Christ's Peace

One: *Having met Christ in this house, let us now share his peace: the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!*

All: **And also with you!**

Trinity United Presbyterian Church (USA) is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA). We are three churches which merged together and became one in 2007. We are a multicultural, multigenerational and multiethnic congregation reflecting the rich diversity of God's people. This congregation is a witness to the uniqueness of the Christian faith which must be responsive to diversity both in the church and in the world. You are welcome here.

OFFICERS

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Class of 2021 Greg Bolduc, Waldo Bronson, Denise Dixon

Class of 2022 Allison Bradley, Gayle Kettler, Ryan Wier

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Class of 2021 Matt Burton, Kathy Henderson, Jeri Taylor

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