



Those affected by the recent violence  
Dorothy Hawkins – Prayers  
Middle East conflict  
Morris’s children  
Ginnie White - prayers for good health  
Those who need prayers and don’t ask for prayers  
People who are traveling  
John McQuade—recovery at home  
Roberta (Carolyn’s friend) - diagnosed with early dementia  
Those affected by COVID, RSV and the FLU  
Sharon S.—diabetes complications  
Jean Winter—Prayers needed  
Lainee Rivers (Kim’s friend) – prayers needed  
Dave McEchern (Kim’s friend) – prayers needed  
Kristina Terrell (Kim’s friend) – prayers needed  
Virginia Atkinson  
Those affected by gun violence  
President Carter—in hospice  
Jim White (Ginnie’s son) - recovery from rotator cuff surgery  
Steven Akers—health concerns  
Judy Spencer Baker - continued prayers  
Aubrie (Ginnie’s granddaughter) – diagnosed with breast cancer  
Joe (Ginnie & Sue’s cousin) - diagnosed with myeloma cancer  
Gary (Ginnie’s son) - continued good health  
Rev. Russel W. Shuluga  
Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi  
Rev. Paul Ritchey— Pittsburgh/Greensburg DS  
People of Ukraine  
Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church

**Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church**  
**January 14, 2024**  
**2nd Sunday after the Epiphany**



Welcome Visitors: We are pleased you have chosen to worship with us today. If you have questions concerning the service, please feel free to ask an usher or a person sitting near you. If you do not have a permanent church home, please consider joining us. May God bless your experience in worship with us today. We are here to serve, so please let us know how we might better serve you.

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Pastor Russel is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week

**ORDER OF WORSHIP – 11:15 AM**

**CELEBRATION THROUGH CENTERING**

PRELUDE

‘Prelude in E-Flat’

Gilbert M. Martin

GREETING, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER REQUESTS

CENTERING WORDS

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.)

CELEBRATION THROUGH ADORATION

OPENING HYMN & BRINGING FORTH THE LIGHT  
‘Lift Every Voice and Sing’  
No. 519

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: God of our ancestors and God of our dreams, we gather today to remember that you have created us all in your image and in your likeness.  
**People: And so, we still have the courage to dream the impossible.**  
Pastor: We remember how you spoke into the darkness and created light.  
**People: And so, we still have the courage to dream the impossible.**  
Pastor: We remember the ways you have delivered your people through trials and tribulations since the beginning of time, right up until this present moment.  
**People: And so, we still have the courage to dream the impossible.**  
Pastor: You have comforted us through the middle passage, racism, segregation, stripped identities and unjust laws.  
**People: And so, we still have the courage to dream the impossible.**  
Pastor: God, you have been the guiding light along the paths of Hope and Love leading toward a beloved community where all are equally seen and radically loved  
**People: And so, we still have the courage to dream the impossible.**  
**Pastor:** We gather today remembering your presence amongst us and the call to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with you and our neighbors.

OPENING PRAYER

God of our weary years and God of our silent tears, thou who has brought us thus far on the way, we invite your presence into our midst as we pay tribute the all who have labored for justice, equality and love. We pray that in this moment you would strengthen us to continue to fight for the fulfillment of the dream that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. so eloquently laid out on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Help us to labor so that every valley is exalted, every hill and mountain made low, the rough places are plain, and the crooked places made straight so that the glory of the Lord is revealed, and all flesh see it together. Let your love guide us to see one another as fully human with diverse hues, colors, ethnicities, and cultures, and respect the content of their character. Let your spirit strengthen us for the fight of today and tomorrow until all God’s children can say with full conviction, “Free at last. Free at last. Thank God All-Mighty, I’m free at last.” Amen.

CELEBRATION THROUGH SENDING

\*BENEDICTION

Pastor: God, we know we have come over a way that with tears has been watered. We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered. Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last where the white gleam of our star is cast. and we see you at work still creating a just world for all.  
**People: We leave empowered by the fresh winds of change and the dream that is before us to be God’s hands and feet and heart in this world today, tomorrow and forever. Amen.**

\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE  
‘Danish Amen’  
**A-men, a-men, a---men.**  
No. 898

\*CLOSING HYMN  
‘We Shall Overcome’  
No. 533

\*POSTLUDE  
‘Postlude on Benedicamus Domino’  
Gino Visona

**WE TAKE THE LIGHT OF CHRIST INTO THE WORLD**

CELEBRATION THROUGH COMMITMENT

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Beloved children of God, too often we see the world through a lens of scarcity. We look at all the things we do not have or wish for something bigger and better. And yet, our stories of faith tell us that the smallest things often become enormous when placed in God’s hands. And so, you are invited to bring your “little” and watch how God can do great things to bless the entire community.

THE LORD’S OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM ‘I Have Decided to Follow Jesus’ Mark Hayer

\*DOXOLOGY No. 95

\*OFFERTORY PRAYER

Pastor: God, we have acknowledged our weaknesses and our failed attempts at creating a just world for all, even with the best of intentions. We are ever cognizant of our limitations but continue to dream the impossible because of our faith in your power. And so, we dedicate our lives to changing the “normalcy” that continues to plague our communities and society.

All: **The only normalcy that we will settle for is the normalcy that recognizes the dignity and worth of all of God’s children. The only normalcy that we will settle for is the normalcy that allows judgment to run down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream. The only normalcy that we will settle for is the normalcy of brotherhood and sisterhood, the normalcy of true peace, the normalcy of justice.**

INTROIT

‘God, With Joy We Look Around Us’ Carolyn Winfrey Gillette  
(Sung to the tune of "Angels, from the Realms of Glory" No. 220)

*God, with joy we look around us  
At your world's diversity.  
Folk of every kind surround us  
And you call your church to see:  
All are made in your own image!  
All are people whom you love!*

*In the times we've hurt each other,  
Lord, we've hurt the ones you bless.  
Hating sister, cursing brother,  
We've denied what you express:  
All are made in your own image!  
All are people whom you love!*

*God, you sent a Savior to us,  
Breaking walls that would divide.  
By your Spirit, now work through us  
As we witness side by side:  
All are made in your own image!  
All are people whom you love!*

CHILDREN’S MOMENTS

CELEBRATION THROUGH CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

CALL TO CONFESSION

May we prepare our hearts and spirits to receive God’s mercy and healing.

HYMN OF PREPARATION ‘It’s Me, It’s Me, O Lord’ No. 352 V. 1

GENERAL CONFESSION

O God, we as broken creatures have fallen short of all that has been required of us. Whereas you looked at your beloved creation and said “it is good”, we have at times looked at that same creation and rejected its beauty and inherent goodness. We have looked at the color of one another’s skin and assigned beauty and worth based on its hue. We have felt the texture of one another’s hair and determined what is good and what is damaged. We have examined one another’s frame and labeled it as human or “other”. We have fallen short of being family and each other’s keeper but,  
**Deep in my heart, I do believe that we shall overcome some day.**

HYMN

'Precious Lord, Take My Hand'

474 V. 1

We have ignored the cries of others as they seek justice from the oppressor and we told them to wait a little while longer. We have hidden the wounds of the ghettos of our society in an attempt to showcase society’s beauty to the world. We have not fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, or shelter to the stranger because of how they looked or the inconvenience of their need, but  
*Deep in my heart, I do believe the truth shall make us free someday.*

HYMN

'Precious Lord, Take My Hand'

No. 474 V. 2

But today is a new day full of opportunities to try again. What was left undone yesterday can be completed today. We can turn from the sins of neglect and dishonesty, and prayerfully move towards reconciliation and mutual respect. The realization that “we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly”, forces me to be concerned about what happens to my neighbor. And so,  
*Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe we shall live in peace someday.*

HYMN

'Precious Lord, Take My Hand'

No. 474 V. 3

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Pastor:

Today we proclaim “to the people of the United States of America and the nations of the world, that we are not about to turn around.

People:

We are on the move now.

Pastor:

Yes, we are on the move and no wave of racism can stop us.

People:

We are on the move now.

Pastor:

The burning of our churches will not deter us. The bombing of our homes will not dissuade us.

People:

We are on the move now.

Pastor:

Like an idea whose time has come, not even the marching of mighty armies can halt us.

People:

We are on the move now.”

Pastor:

And we are on the move because The Spirit of the Lord God is upon us...to preach good tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.

People:

We are on the move and we thank you God for going with us.

HYMN OF ASSURANCE

'Through It All'

No. 507

CELEBRATION THROUGH THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Pastor:

Prepare the way of the Lord.

People:

We listen for the word of God.

CHORAL RESPONSE

"Thy Word"

No. 601 (Refrain only)

*"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."*

FIRST LESSON

1 Samuel 3: 1-10

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

'Alleluia'

No. 186

*"Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia"*

GOSPEL LESSON

The Lord be with you,

And also with you.

A reading from the Gospel of St. John.

Glory to You, O Lord.

\*THE GOSPEL IS READ

John 1:43-51

THE GOSPEL RESPONSE

The Gospel of the living Christ.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

\*GLORIA PATRI

No. 70

CELEBRATION THROUGH PROCLAMATION

SERMON

'Speak Lord, Your Servant is Listening—Or Are We?' Pastor Russel Shuluga