



*November 12, 2023*  
*Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ*

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*Sunday Morning Meditation*

“Some of God’s greatest gifts are unanswered prayers”

– Garth Brooks

Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ  
Mt Hope 8:30am                      Greenfield 9:50am  
24<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost / 'Wisdom'

November 12, 2023  
Grace 11:00am

*Community News*

*Prayer List and Prayers of the People*

*Prelude/Lighting of the Candles*

\* *Call to Worship*

Wisdom is radiant and unfading.

**We hear your Still Speaking voice. We come to you, Wisdom,  
seeking knowledge and understanding.**

Wisdom is easily discerned by those who love her.

**We remember your marvelous acts and faithful instruction.**

**We come to you, Wisdom, as you have been near to us!**

Wisdom is found by those who seek her.

**We trust in your guidance and place our hope in you through  
feast and famine. We come to you, Wisdom, to worship and  
to serve.**

\* *Invocation*

Wisdom, your presence illuminates our path. Shine your light into dim spaces so that we do not stray from your teaching. Help us discern what you are calling us, your church, to do and be in this moment in time. Give us urgency to be good news in the world and for our neighbors. Let your glory reign among us and your Spirit lead us into truth, justice, and love. For your name and in your name, we pray. Amen.

\* *Opening Hymn*

***“Rejoice, the Lord Is King”***

*Mt Hope PH #204*

*Greenfield CH #370*

*Grace VH #45*

## *Prayer of Transformation and New Life*

Wise God, we often seek counsel from so many sources while ignoring your guidance. Help us to navigate the tough choices we must make and to discern the circumstances of our world and our lives through your perspective. Your way is life and embodies care, compassion, and concern for all creation. May we follow your model for the flourishing of our human siblings and our home, the Earth. Amen.

## *Words of Grace*

Beloved, God gives good instruction and the grace to begin anew. You are empowered by God to choose the path of life everlasting and nudged by God when your journey strays. Know that every movement toward God is received with gladness and the full and welcoming embrace of the Holy One.

## *Old Testament Reading*

**Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25 NIV**

### *The Covenant Renewed at Shechem*

**24** Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God.

<sup>2</sup> Joshua said to all the people, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Long ago your ancestors, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods. <sup>3</sup> But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants. I gave him Isaac,

<sup>14</sup> “Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. <sup>15</sup> But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

<sup>16</sup> Then the people answered, “Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods! <sup>17</sup> It was the LORD our God

himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. <sup>18</sup> And the LORD drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God.”

<sup>19</sup> Joshua said to the people, “You are not able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. <sup>20</sup> If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you.”

<sup>21</sup> But the people said to Joshua, “No! We will serve the LORD.”

<sup>22</sup> Then Joshua said, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the LORD.”

“Yes, we are witnesses,” they replied.

<sup>23</sup> “Now then,” said Joshua, “throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel.”

<sup>24</sup> And the people said to Joshua, “We will serve the LORD our God and obey him.”

<sup>25</sup> On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people, and there at Shechem he reaffirmed for them decrees and laws.

\* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

**Matthew 25:1-13 NIV**

*Gloria Tibi (Glory be to Thee, O Lord.)*

**TH #497**

*The Parable of the Ten Virgins*

**25** “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> Five of them were foolish and five were wise. <sup>3</sup> The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. <sup>4</sup> The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. <sup>5</sup> The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

<sup>6</sup> “At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’”

7 “Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

9 “‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

10 “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

11 “Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’

12 “But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’

13 “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

\* *Gloria Patri*

*Children's Message / Congregation Conversation*

\* *Meditation Hymn*      “*Lord, Speak to Me*”

*Mt Hope* VH #215

*Greenfield* CH #667

*Grace* VH #215

*Today's Message*

\* *The Apostle's Creed*

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hades; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic/Christian church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.  
Amen.**

## *The Lord's Prayer*

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is  
in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And  
forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And  
lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
forever. Amen.**

## *Sung Response*

*"Hear Our Prayer, O Lord"*

TH # 501

## *The Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings*

Offertory Statement

Offertory (MH)

\* Doxology

TH # 551

\* Offertory Prayer

**Discerning God, receive our offerings and gifts for your kingdom. Let them be a blessing to those in need of encouragement, material goods, and evidence of your presence among us. Magnify them beyond our imagining and grant us insight into the possibilities before us for ministry and witness. We are grateful to give. Amen.**

## \* *Closing Hymn*

*"Tell Me the Story of Jesus"*

*Mt Hope* VH #86

*Greenfield* CH #295

*Grace* VH #86

## \* *Benediction*

May Wisdom give you knowledge and peace beyond understanding. May Wisdom reveal the way to reach the unreachable. May Wisdom pour her love upon you with generous abandon and inspire and empower you to do the same as you go in the world. Amen.

## \* *Three-Fold Amen*

TH # 558

## \* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*