



*November 19, 2023*  
*Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ*

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*Sunday Morning Meditation*

Sabbath, in the long run, is as essential to your well-being as food and water, and as good as a wood fire on a cold day.

– Mark Buchanan  
*The Rest of God (2006)*

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

November 19, 2023  
Grace 11:00am

*Community News*

*Prayer List and Prayers of the People*

*Prelude/Lighting of the Candles*

\* *Call to Worship*

Holy One, you have been our God from generation to generation.  
Before the universe exploded and the earth was without form, you  
have been with us.

**Creator, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.**

We enter your presence to worship and praise your holy name.

**Mighty One, you have been our dwelling place in all  
generations.**

Teach us to count the days with joy and appreciation for all your  
marvelous works and steadfast love.

**Everlasting God, you have been our dwelling place in all  
generations.**

\* *Invocation*

Generous God, you pour your Spirit into us. You bless us with  
your love. In your presence, there is fullness of joy, comfort for  
those in despair, and peace in the midst of chaos and confusion.  
You do not abandon us in time of need or of celebration. We turn  
toward you now seeking to receive your message, to give you  
honor, and to commune in your presence. Make yourself known  
among us, O God, make yourself known to us. Amen.

\* *Opening Hymn*

*Mt Hope VH #449*

**"Saved By Grace"**

*Greenfield FHP #471*

*Grace VH #449*

## *Prayer of Transformation and New Life*

**Sovereign God, we confess that life is hard. We don't always make the best choices, and all too often we realize the options before us are lacking. We are overwhelmed with the enormity of the world's problems. Sometimes, we turn away completely. Sometimes, we respond with our tribal allegiances first in mind. Bitterness and resentment are easy guides. Help us seek wisdom and clarity, compassion and presence, hope and peace over shallow victories, material gain, and violence of the mind, body, or spirit. Bless us to be peacemakers, hope sharers, and love spreaders in the world for our neighbors and for your glory. Amen.**

## *Words of Grace*

Friends, God is merciful and journeys with us as we navigate uncertain terrain. God is still at work in us and through us that we might have flourishing and abundant lives in community with one another. Receive the grace God grants to begin anew when our journey stalls or diverts from the path of the kingdom. That grace is yours.

## *Epistle Reading*

**1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 NIV**

### *The Day of the Lord*

<sup>1</sup> Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, <sup>2</sup> for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup> While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

<sup>4</sup> But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. <sup>5</sup> You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. <sup>6</sup> So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. <sup>7</sup> For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. <sup>8</sup> But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. <sup>9</sup> For God did

not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>10</sup> He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. <sup>11</sup> Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

\* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

**Matthew 25:14-30 NRSV**

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

**TH #497**

*The Parable of the Talents*

<sup>14</sup> “For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; <sup>15</sup> to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. At once <sup>16</sup> the one who had received the five talents went off and traded with them and made five more talents. <sup>17</sup> In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. <sup>18</sup> But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. <sup>19</sup> After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ <sup>21</sup> His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ <sup>22</sup> And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ <sup>23</sup> His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ <sup>24</sup> Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter, <sup>25</sup> so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ <sup>26</sup> But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter?’ <sup>27</sup> Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup> So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For to all those who have,

more will be given, and they will have an abundance, but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. <sup>30</sup> As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

\* *Gloria Patri*

*Children's Message / Congregation Conversation*

\* *Meditation Hymn*

“Just As I Am”

Mt Hope VH #422

Greenfield CH #488

Grace VH #422

*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

**Generous God, we bring the gifts of ourselves and our abundance. Magnify and multiply these offerings to meet the needs before us. Continue to cultivate the spirit of generosity among us and make us good stewards as we allocate the use of these gifts in your name. Amen.**

\* *Closing Hymn*

*“Moment By Moment”*

*Mt Hope* VH #285

*Greenfield* CH #545

*Grace* VH #285

\* *Benediction*

As you go on your journey...

Trust in God.

Use your talents.

Multiply the impact of your gifts.

Enter the Holy One’s joy.

\* *Three-Fold Amen*

TH # 558

\* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*

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Investment: Service Prayers for the Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost were written by The Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology, United Church of Christ.