



September 10, 2023
Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ

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Sunday Morning Meditation

It is a fearful thing to sin against God, but still more fearful to be hardened under it.

– James Thomas Holloway
The Analogy of Faith (1836)

Greenfield Charge United Church of Christ September 10, 2023
Mt Hope 8:30am Greenfield 9:50am Grace 11:00am
15th Sunday after Pentecost / 'Accountability'

Community News

Prayer List and Prayers of the People

Prelude/Lighting of the Candles

* *Call to Worship*

Inspired by Psalm 149

Let our praise today be made new.

**May we sing a new song, pray a new prayer, dance a new dance,
and speak and hear a new word.**

Let the faithful delight in the Holy One's marvelous acts

From the seats in the sanctuary to the couches in our homes.

Let us glorify God with our voices, the work of our lives, and the joy of our souls.

Glory to God! Praise the Holy One!

* *Invocation*

God who journeys with us, we give thanks to be gathered in your presence. May we acknowledge you in the brightness of the day and in the stillness of the night. Provide us with a vision of your reign on earth and in our lives. Make us your witnesses to a world in need of hope and peace. Infuse us with your love, and may this time gathered as your people transform us to reflect your goodness in the world. Amen.

* *Opening Hymn*

"Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus"

Mt Hope VH #368

Greenfield CH #730

Grace VH #368

Prayer of Transformation and New Life

**Holy One, we confess that accountability can be discomfoting,
and we avoid discomfort. We seek the good enough, convenient,
and easy over the good, possible, and hard. Hold us accountable
to the gospel. Hold us accountable to our claim and commitment
to follow you. Hold us accountable to your will. Help us to
receive your grace and liberate us from shame in order to
embrace accountability as a loving act of community.**

Words of Grace

Beloved, accountability from God is rooted in love, hope, and mercy. Know that your past actions and attitudes do not define your present nor limit your future. Through God's grace, you can grow, learn, and thrive.

Old Testament Reading

Exodus 12:1-14 NIV

The Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread

¹The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, ²“This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. ³Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. ⁴If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. ⁵The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. ⁶Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. ⁷Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. ⁸That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. ⁹Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire—with the head, legs and internal organs. ¹⁰Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. ¹¹This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover.

¹²“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. ¹³The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

¹⁴“This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance.

Epistle Reading

Romans 13:8-14 NIV

Love Fulfills the Law

⁸Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not

murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,” and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

The Day Is Near

¹¹ And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. ¹⁴ Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

* *The Reading of the Holy Gospel*

Matthew 18:15-20 NIV

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

TH #497

Dealing With Sin in the Church

¹⁵ “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. ¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ ¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

¹⁸ “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

¹⁹ “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

* *Gloria Patri*

Children's Message / Congregation Conversation

* *Meditation Hymn*

“O Perfect Love”

Mt Hope PH #465

Greenfield CH #458

Grace TH #356

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

Gracious God, thank you for the gifts you give and allowing us to be gift givers as well. May our generous offerings bear fruit to nurture our community, our neighbors, and all creation.

* *Closing Hymn* **“Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee”**
Mt Hope PH #8 *Greenfield CH #90* *Grace TH #21*

* *Benediction*

May we go from this gathering
Strengthened in love,
Encouraged by hope,
Pursuing and speaking God’s peace,
And being good news in the world.

* *Three-Fold Amen*

TH # 558

* *Postlude/Extinguishing of the Candle*

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