



An Affirming Congregation of the United Church of

2018 July 29

Pentecost 10



*I sought to hear the voice of God
and climbed the topmost steeple,
but God declared: "Go down again--
I dwell among the people."
John Henry Newman*

Welcome and Inclusion

We open our hearts and our church family to all people in our community regardless of differing abilities, ethnicity, economic circumstances, sexual orientation, age, or gender. Many people's lives continue to be devastated by hatred, prejudice, and inequality, therefore we stand with those who are adversely affected by injustice, alienation and oppression.

Friends in Christ

Prelude: *Morning in the Garden*, Rex Koury

Belinda Chiang, organ

Embracing Our Spirit

Call to Worship:

We gather in the love of God to worship, hoping to find some new way of knowing our God.

We come seeking you, O God.

We gather in the love and fellowship of one another, offering our friendship, care, and support, ready to serve.

We come seeking you, O Jesus.

We gather in awe of a holy, loving presence, yearning for an experience beyond ourselves.

We come seeking your, Holy Spirit.

Come now, worship and experience the Holy alive in the presence of God, working in Christ Jesus and living in the mystery of the Holy Spirit.¹

Opening Hymn: *Holy Spirit into Our Lives*

More Voices 6

Coming Into God's Presence

Rev. Karen Bridges

God's Holy Word

Introit: *In the Garden*, C. Austin Miles

Marilee Stephens, soprano & Belinda Chiang, organ

Scripture:

Felicia Drever

1 Kings 3: 16-28; 6: 11-14 • Solomon's Wisdom in Judgment

Later, two women who were prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. The one woman said, "Please, my lord, this woman and I live in the same house; and I gave birth while she was in the house. Then on the third day after I gave birth, this woman also gave birth. We were together; there was no one else with us in the house, only the two of us were in the house. Then this woman's son died in the night, because she lay on him. She got up in the middle of the night and took my son from beside me while your servant slept. She laid him at her breast, and laid her dead son at my breast. When I rose in the morning to nurse my son, I saw that he was dead; but when I looked at him closely in the morning, clearly it was not the son I had borne." But the other woman said, "No, the living son is mine, and the dead son is yours." The first said, "No, the dead son is yours, and the living son is mine." So they argued before the king. Then the king said, "The one says, 'this is my son that is alive and your son is dead'; while the other says, 'Not so! Your son is dead, and my son is the living one.'" So the king said, "Bring me a sword," and they brought a sword before the king. The king said, "Divide the living boy in two; then give half to the one, and half to the other." But the woman whose son was alive said to the king – because compassion for her son burned within her – "Please, my lord,

¹ Written by Heather McClure, **Gathering** Pentecost 1 2017, p. 29. Used with permission.

give her the living boy; certainly do not kill him!” The other said, “It shall be neighter mine nor yours; divide it.” Then the king responded: “Give the first woman the living boy; do not kill him. She is his mother.” All Israel heard of the judgement that the king had rendered; and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him, to execute justice.

Now the word of the Lord came to Solomon, “Concerning this house that you are building, if you will walk in my statutes, obey my ordinances, and keep all my commandments by walking in them, then I will establish my promise with you, which I made to your father David. I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.” So Solomon built the house and finished it.

This is the witness of Israel.

Thanks be to God our loving Creator.

Solo: *Steal Away to Heaven*, Spirituals, arr. Mark Hayes

Marilee Stephens, soprano & Dessislava Gavrilova, piano

Sermon: *Solomon – The Wise*

Rev. Karen Bridges

Hymn: *Wisdom 7*

Voices United p. 892

Pastoral Prayers

Rev. Leigh Sinclair

Lord’s Prayer

Voices United 916 (A Translation)

Grateful Response

Offering: *Panis Angelicus*, Cesar Franck

Offertory Hymn: *We Give You But Your Own*

Voices United 542

**We give you but your own,
Whate’er the gift may be;
All that we have is yours alone,
we give it gratefully.**

Prayer of Gratitude

Closing Hymn: *What Does the Lord Require?*

Voices United 701

Commissioning

In responding to God’s call,

There is fear of what will be required of us.

In responding to God’s call,

There is a willingness to venture into the unknown.

In responding to God’s call,

There is a sense that God will be with us.

In responding to God’s call,

We know we will go faithfully forward.

And so, we listen for God’s call.

Amen.²

Postlude: *Jubilate*, Noel Rawsthorne

Music Notes

Thank you to Marilee Stephens and her teacher/accompanist Dessislava Gavrailova as well as Belinda Chiang for sharing their musical talents with us as our summer special musicians series continues.

Marilee is singing one of the most popular hymns from the early 1900's, one that is very meaningful to many as it has been sung in many contexts, especially as a hymn of comfort at funerals. In the Garden was written in 1912 in the "gospel" style of the era by C. Austin Miles, who was a pharmacist, but eventually became the editor and manager of a publishing company. This hymn also comes from an era, beginning with an author like Fanny Crosby when it was popular to write hymns for personal use or devotion or even sung from a personal perspective in worship (**I** come to the Garden **Alone**), as opposed to congregational corporate worship, where we sing of all of us (ie. **we**).

The other solo is a medley of three spirituals (Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen, Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child, and Steal Away). Hayes is very well known for his arrangements of folk songs and spirituals.

Cover Image

Cover image was taken by Rev. Karen Bridges in worship at Robertson-Wesley United, June 2018

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² Written by David Sparks, **Gathering**, Pentecost 1 2014, p. 36. Used with permission.