



**FIFTH AVE. UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**

323 South 5th Avenue
West Bend WI 53095

Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost
September 17, 2023

Dorthy Dahlen, Liturgist
Deanna Gibeau, Organist
Rev. Clarissa Martinelli, Senior Pastor

JOIN US IN PERSON OR ONLINE
Sundays, 9:30 A.M.

WELCOME TO FIFTH AVE. UMC
Whether you're just beginning to explore
your faith or have been following Christ for
years, you and your whole family can belong
at Fifth Ave. UMC

***Note: L - denotes worship "Leader"**
P - denotes "People"

~GATHERING GOD'S PEOPLE~

PRELUDE:

"O Lamb of God"

Benton Price

~WELCOME & CENTERING~

GREETING:

Pastor. How Many Times? We come to the Throne of Grace on this Rally Sunday asking this question. We can be honest with ourselves and with God as we realize that we too often have asked that same question, "How many times must I forgive?" Jesus tells Peter that we forgive 77 times, or 70 times 7; we keep forgiving. Come as we are reminded that this means we also must be forgiving of those who offend us, again and again. Come as we wrestle with the call to unlimited grace and forgiveness outlined in Matthew 18. Amen.

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Pastor Clarissa: 847-721-1826; Ms. Ellen Johnson: 262-339-7673;

Email -rev.cmartinelli6@gmail.com

CENTERING MUSIC: **“Here is Bread, Here is Wine”** **Graham Kendrick**

***INVOCATION:**

Leader: God takes broken promises and turns them into vows of faithfulness. God takes our biggest failings and shapes lives of service. God listens to our prayers of confession and changes them into songs of mercy. Let us come to the One who pours forgiveness into our lives. **Amen.**

***CALL TO WORSHIP: (Unison)**

Psalm 2:1-12

Our God, our Help in ages past,
Our Hope for years to come,
Our Shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal Home!
Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its years away;
They fly forgotten as a dream
Dies at the opening day.
A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone,
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.
Our God, our Help in ages past,
Our Hope for years to come,
Be Thou our Guard while troubles last
And our eternal Home! Amen!

***GATHERING PRAYER:**

L: God of surprises, we come here from the weariness of the week, from various triumphs, from fears and doubts. Open our hearts to receive your surprising message of hope for all people, for we ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION: (Unison)**

L: Merciful God, You call us to turn away from behaviors and attitudes that belong to the darkness, to live honest and transparent lives as children of the Light. We confess the times when we have failed, giving in to our darker thoughts and desires; and acting in ways that did not bring honor to Your name.

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L: Lord, in Your mercy,

P: forgive us. Teach us how to live as children of the light.

L: You call us love one another, to put the needs and interests of those around us above our own; to love others as deeply as we have been loved by You. We confess the times when we have failed,

allowing our own desires and interests to take precedence over the needs of others.

L: Lord, in Your mercy,

P: forgive us. Teach us how to love as we have been loved.

L: You call us to deal honorably with one another, even those who have hurt or offended us; to work through our disagreements with love and integrity, and so to build up the Body of Christ. We confess the times when we have failed, finding it easier to simply walk away from hurtful relationships, or to talk behind people's backs rather than to their faces.

L: Lord, in Your mercy,

P: forgive us. Teach us how to live with love and integrity.

L: Give us hunger to know You more, so that we may do Your will and walk in Your ways, to the glory of Your name. **Amen.**

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON:**

L: The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and has not dealt with us according to our sins. Instead, God has chosen the sacrifice of God's own son on our account. It is because Jesus Christ pays the last full measure that our sins are forgiven. This gift of forgiveness makes us able, with the power of Holy Spirit, to choose to forgive, renew and live again in right relationship with each other and with our God. In the name of Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

***OPENING HYMN:**

"Freely, Freely"

UMH 389

~WE PROCLAIM~

***Matthew 18:21-23;26-38~Good News Translation (GNT)**

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, if my brother keeps on sinning against me, how many times do I have to forgive him? Seven times?" "No, not seven times," answered Jesus, "but seventy times seven, because the Kingdom of heaven is like this. Once there was a king who decided to check on his servants' accounts.

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The servant fell on his knees before the king. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay you everything!' The king felt sorry for him, so he forgave him the debt and let him go.

Then the man went out and met one of his fellow servants who owed him a few dollars. He grabbed him and started choking him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he said. His fellow servant fell down and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back!' But he refused; instead, he had him thrown into jail until he should pay the debt.

When the other servants saw what had happened, they were very upset and went to the king and told him everything. So, he called the servant in. 'You worthless servant!' he said. 'I

forgave you the whole amount you owed me, just because you asked me to. You should have had mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you.' The king was very angry, and he sent the servant to jail to be punished until he should pay back the whole amount."

And Jesus concluded, "That is how my Father in heaven will treat every one of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

L: Forgive as God has Forgiven You.

L: The Word of God for the People of God.

P: Thanks be to God.

CHANCEL CHOIR

"Give Me Oil in My Lamp"

Joseph Martin

Dave Bertelsen, Director

SERMON:

"Mercy for Me, but Not for Thee"

Pastor Clarissa

SERMONIC HYMN:

"Surely the Presence of the Lord" x2

UMH 328

~THE GREAT THANKSGIVING~

L: May the God of hope be with you!

P: And also with you!

L: God, our God, leads us through the flood of fears into the future of wonder and hope.

P: We open our hearts to the One who journeys with us, in the past, in the present, into tomorrow.

L: God goes before us, preparing the Table piled high with grace and peace.

P: We sing songs of glad thanksgiving to the One who fills us with goodness and mercy.

Pastor: You stretched out your hand, Cloud of Glory, parting a way through chaos, so your goodness might come forth. You looked, and laughed out loud, as seas ran forth in joy, mountains played leapfrog, and hills hopscotched with valleys. Creation became a sanctuary for those created in your image. But we decided to live for ourselves, every day becoming one

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in which we could turn your dreams to ashes, your overflowing love into dust bowls of despair.

Out of pity, you sent the prophets, those pillars of faithfulness, but we wrangled with their gentle words. So, you sent Jesus, to lead us through evil's deeps, to that freedom found only in your Kingdom of Life.

Therefore, on this day, when we stand in your grace around your Table of Life, we join our voices with all who offer praise to the One who saves:

P: Living, we serve others in God's name; serving, we die unto ourselves; dying, we are given life eternal with God. Blessed is the One who comes forgiving us more times than we can count. Hosanna in the highest!

Pastor: Holy are you, Cloud of Joy, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Servant. When we were weak in faith, he came to strengthen us with your everlasting hope; when we were enslaved to sin, he came to lead us into the Promised Land of mercy; when our hearts became like flint, he softened them with compassion; when we could only focus on ourselves, he came to die for us.

As we gather at your Table, we remember his love for us, His patience with our failings, His hope in our willingness to follow, His trust in that mystery we call faith:

P: Baptized in Christ, we would live for him; forgiven through Christ, we would emulate him; putting on Christ, we wait for his return. Alleluia! Amen!

Pastor: Creator God, send your Spirit in peace upon us and these simple gifts of the bread and of the cup. As we share the bread, we share the presence of Christ, strengthened to go out with forgiveness in our hearts.

As we pass the cup, we share Christ's Spirit with our neighbors, and are called to welcome all as our sisters and brothers, especially those held captive by the bitterness of the world.

As you gathered your children to lead them to that promised land, so you will bring all your children from the very ends of time itself, to seat us around your heart, where we will feast on your grace, lifting our hearts to praise you forever: God our Maker, Christ our Brother, Spirit our Compassion, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION: (hymn) "The Lord's Prayer" UMH 270

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~PRAYERS & CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE~

Pastor: God of all goodness:

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Reconciling God, we would rather gossip about those who sin against us, than speak to them privately; we would rather parade our wounds for all to see, than quietly work toward forgiveness and reconciliation. Help us choose the harder road, the road that opens possibilities for real healing, real forgiveness, and real growth in your Spirit. Help us place the best interests of our ministry, our community of faith and each other above our own need for public vindication.

[Silent Prayer] All: Amen.

~2023 WEST BEND FARMERS MARKET~

~INVITATION TO SHARING OUR GIFTS, TITHES, & OFFERINGS~

***DOXOLOGY: "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" UMH 94**

OFFERTORY PRAYER:

All: We have a variety of intentions for offering these gifts to you, Loving God, but whatever the reason, whatever might be our purpose, we trust you will use them to bring healing to brokenness, hope to despair, and welcome to the forgotten. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN: "Make Me A Channel of Your Peace" TFWS 2171**

~SENDING FORTH/BENEDICTION~

L: In every person, God is with us.

P: We will welcome God in the family we know all too well, and in the strangers we will meet

in the coming days.

L: In every choice, Jesus is with us.

P: We will welcome the Christ who serves us unexpectedly, and in those who will offer us forgiveness.

L: In every moment, the Spirit is with us.

P: We will welcome the Spirit who calls us to live as well as calling us to give of ourselves without question.

Pastor: May you go from this place with a posture of forgiveness, leading and being led by the grace that saves us into right relationship with God, neighbor, self, and creation.

***POSTLUDE:**

“Faith”

Stewart Landon

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**Please join us for continued Fellowship
during our Coffee Hour.**