



Date: November 14th, 2021, 25th Sunday after Pentecost

Greeting and Sharing our Joys and Concerns, Announcements

Prelude: Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing **Alessandra Way**

Lighting of the Candles: **Please enjoy a moment of silence and inner reflection as we quietly prepare ourselves for worship**

***Opening Hymn** **By Gracious Powers**

UMH No. 517

1. By gracious powers so wonderfully sheltered, and confidently waiting, come what may, we know that God is with us night and morning, and never fails to greet us each new day.
2. Yet is this heart by its old foe tormented, still evil days bring burdens hard to bear; O give our frightened souls the sure salvation for which, O Lord, you taught us to prepare.
3. And when this cup you give is filled to brimming with bitter sorrow, hard to understand, we take it thankfully and without trembling, our of so good and so beloved a hand.
4. Yet when again in this same world you give us the joy we had, the brightness of your sun, we shall remember all the days we lived through, and our whole life shall then be yours alone.

Call to Worship Based on 1 Samuel 2:1-10

Pastor: My heart exults in the Lord

People: my strength is exulted in my God.

Pastor: There is no one like our God,

People: there is no Rock like our God.

Pastor: God raises up the poor from the dust,

People: and they inherit a seat of honor.

Pastor: The Lord will judge the ends of the earth,

People: And exult the power of the anointed.

Unison Prayer: Providing God, you journeyed with Ruth and comforted Hannah when their lives were burdened by grief. Grant us faith to believe you will provide a future where we see none, that bitterness may turn to joy and barrenness may bear life. Amen.

OT Reading: 1 Samuel 1: 4-20

NT Reading: Hebrews 10: 11-25

***Hymn: O Day of God, Draw Nigh**

UMH No. 730

1. O day of God, draw nigh in beauty and in power; come with thy timeless judgement now to match our present hour.
2. Bring to our troubled minds, uncertain and afraid, the quiet of a steadfast faith, calm of a call obeyed.
3. Bring justice to our land, that all may dwell secure, and finely build for days to come foundations that endure.
4. Bring to our world of strife thy sovereign word of peace, that war may haunt the earth no more, and desolation cease.
5. O day of God, draw nigh as at creation's birth; let there be light again, and set thy judgements on the earth

Gospel Reading: Mark 13: 1-8

Pastor: The word of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God!

Choral Anthem

Message: "Torn Down and Rebuilt"

Over the last couple of weeks, Potsdam UMC and Grace UMC have been hosting Bible studies on the book of Ecclesiastes. We've been meeting in person at Grace on Wednesday afternoons, and online on Tuesday evenings for Potsdam.

I will admit, we've been wrestling with this book because Ecclesiastes is sort of dark. It's wisdom literature, but very existential. While we've been reading a book on the side to help clarify, Ecclesiastes has a lot to do with life and with death.

One of the biggest struggles we've been having is "do we laugh and enjoy life, or are we supposed to be somber."

The beginning of the book sort of suggested that maybe more somber attitudes were appropriate, but the further into the book you get, the more this changes.

This next week is the last week for Potsdam, and the week after this is the last week for Grace. Over the course of this Bible study, I'm perceiving life-and-death differently. It's been so wonderful to have frank conversations with others about life, and death, and everything in between. How to live wisely, how to live foolishly...

One key theme to this book is that everyone has their "time under the sun." How do we live wisely when we live in this time under the sun, and everything around us is just a glimpse of what is to come. All of this is

smoke compared to a true life to come. Our Bible may translate the word as vanity, or meaningless, but it's best to think of it as impermanent, or smoke.

I live life one day at a time, but I'm often reflecting on the past and projecting myself into the future.

Everyday I hear from others how fast time goes, and I find myself saying how quickly time goes without me even noticing that I'm saying it anymore. One moment I was 5, and then I blinked and I was 15, and then I blinked and I was 25.

This could be a comment on how people remember, which is often mentioned in the book of Ecclesiastes. But I think how we perceive the passage of time has a lot to do with everything being smoke. Everything is transient.

How do you see that in your own life? Immediately I think of grandparents, and how quickly they notice their grandchildren grow from just being born, to opening eyes and lifting heads, to crawling, to walking. That infamous phrase "oh my gosh how you've grown." As if that was something we were not supposed to do. As if that was not something that we were made to do.

But this change is something that just amazes us. If you're in college, you might not notice how fast time goes, you might not notice how things change. When I entered college, I was under the impression that I would be a biology major, with an English minor. Then all of a sudden, my senior year I was a philosophy major with a theology minor, and a ministry minor. How fast 4 years went. How surprised I was when I moved out.

But we're all in times of change, and that's something that we notice but can't hold on to. Like sand moving between our fingers.

But do you fear change? Perhaps you're thinking that fear is a strong word. And it is. Perhaps none of us necessarily **fear** change, but maybe we dislike it, or are anxious about it. Maybe it wakes us up in the night, if only briefly.

But one thing I've taken from bible study, is that change is always happening. The cycle of our life is something that God created for us to be in, and sometimes it is more predictable than others. But God created the world for change; and there's a promise of a day when change won't look like it does now.

I am struck by the passage where Jesus has just left the temple after seeing the woman donate her 2 coins. And Jesus' disciples notice the amazing temple that was built, and they point out it's beauty and it's strength. Surely this place can't be all bad.

That building hasn't always been there, but it certainly will withstand the test of time!

And Jesus, the intense, sometimes somber person that he is, says "do you see this building? not one stone we left upon the other. all will be thrown down." When I read this, I might've muttered 'buzzkill.'

I suppose that's what we mutter when we read Ecclesiastes as well.. but there's a good point here.

Change will happen to this building too.

Maybe on some of our most pessimistic days we see beautiful buildings (I immediately think of a museum of modern art, or cathedral, or even just say Andrew's Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh that I did my field education at). One day not one stone will be left upon the other.

Change is going to happen. I admit, I don't wake up in the night worrying that the buildings I love will no longer be there the next day, but it does cross my mind sometimes. Maybe some buildings in our lifetime will go through a period of great change.

Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Jesus privately, "when will these buildings be thrown down and what sign will show that this is about to happen?"

The disciples want to be ready for the change.

But Jesus tells them in a roundabout way, "you just have to be prepared for these things. I can't tell you the day, only my father can. But just be warned how you live on this Earth, and how many people tell you that they can control the change.. People cannot control the change. People can cause change, but when the Day of the Lord is upon us, it will not be people who brought it."

It's been argued about for centuries how much control God has on the lives of human beings, and we just don't know. Some of us believe every action is directed by God, and some of us believe that God oversees our actions and smiles or cries appropriately. Some people believe that God doesn't even smile or cry.

The Day of the Lord is a concept in the Hebrew Bible that we don't hear a lot about in the New Testament. But, it is glimpsed in pieces of apocalyptic literature. The Day of the Lord, in concise terms, is the beginning of the end of all that we know under the sun.

It's something that evangelists over the years, and fear mongers have used to move people. "The end is near, so you'd better do this and this to prepare for it."

And when the day passes, regular bouts of change and stability are still the same, the next date is predicted.

I can see why the disciples wanted to know when and how the end would happen. But Jesus tells them that they're not privy to that information.

This is not something that should concern them right now. Be concerned that no one leads you astray. Do not listen to the fear mongers, do not listen to those who are misguided. "There will be many horrible things that you are familiar with, and these will happen before the end." But Jesus calls these birth pangs.

While we deal with so much change in our time under the sun, from generation to generation, we all live for a blink of an eye. Be comforted that what will come after us and what has come before us is in a long process bending towards redemption.

We can't just throw up our hands and say there's nothing that can be done; we can't just sit idly. We can't work our way into finding meaning. We just have to know and experience that this is what God does.

We have to find ways to cope with knowing that what we see as stable and firm are not as established and firm as we may assign them to be in our brains. The cathedral may burn. The church will crumble one day.

We will only live a century, if we're lucky.

But we do not need to worry about when the time will be when things will be made right. When all this change we see will really change.

We have been promised that things will be made right. We have been told to watch out for those who may lead us astray in our faith, and been warned about the wars and birth pangs that we will see.

But all in this life is like smoke. Beautiful, meaningful, enjoyable. But we know that there is a true life to come. And that is what we must fix our eyes upon.

The temple may not stand forever, but our God always will.

Pastoral Prayer:

Pastor: In peace, we pray to you, Lord God. For all people in their daily life and work;

People: For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.

Pastor: For this community, the nation, and the world;

People: For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.

Pastor: For the just and proper use of your creation;

People: For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

Pastor: For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;

People: For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.

Pastor: For the peace and unity of the Church of God;

People: For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.

Pastor: For Bishop Mark Webb, DS Mike Weeden, all bishops and other ministers;

People: For all who serve God in his Church.

Pastor: For the special needs and concerns of this congregation. **silence for personal prayers** Hear us, Lord;

People: For your mercy is great.

Pastor: We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life. **silence for personal prayers** We will exalt you, O God our King;

People: And praise your Name for ever and ever.

Pastor: We pray for all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom. **silence for personal prayers** Lord, let your loving-kindness be upon them;

People: Who put their trust in you.

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and power and the glory forever. Amen

***Closing Hymn: I Know Whom I Have Believed**

UMH No. 714

1. I know not why God's wondrous grace to me he hath made known, nor why, unworthy, Christ in love redeemed me for his own. But I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day.
2. I know not how this saving faith to me he did impart, nor how believing in his word wrought peace within my heart. But I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day.
3. I know not how the Spirit moves, convincing us of sin, revealing Jesus through the word, creating faith in him. But I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day.
4. I know not when my Lord may come, at night or noontide fair, nor if I walk the vale with him, or meet him in the air. But I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day.

Postlude - Talent Show - Celebration of Giving

Announcements

1. Our Charge Conference is scheduled for Sunday Nov. 21st at 4pm

Birthdays

Stephen Pask - November 19

Worship Participants

Greeters/Ushers:

Nov. 14: Kathy Bracy and Doug & Jean Theobald

Nov. 21: Carol Willmert and Trish Lewis

Reader: Nov.14th Trish Lewis

Upcoming Meetings/Studies

Tuesday November 16, 5:30pm - Bible Study – Ecclesiastes – Google Meet

Tuesday November 16, 7:30pm - Worship Team – Google Meet

Thursday November 18 - NO Pastor's office hours - Pastor Taylor has a district meeting

Saturday November 20, 1:30pm - Cheery Os -

Weekly Offering:

\$2,625.00: November 7th offering

\$1,700.00: need each week

Offering plates are located at the entrance of the sanctuary

***Stand if you are able to do so comfortably**

If you have an announcement, a Joy or a Concern, please fill out a card (located at the entrance of the sanctuary) and put it on the altar rail for Pastor Taylor.

Church office hours: Monday and Wednesday 9am - 11pm

Pastor Taylor's Office Hours: Tuesdays 3-5pm, Thursdays 10am-2pm.

email: info@potdamumc.org ♦ Website: www.potdamumc.org

Pastor Taylor: pastortaylor@potdamumc.org

Potsdam United Methodist Church, 26 Main Street, Potsdam NY 13676, 315-265-7474