

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

There is a prayer blanket in the annex for Andy Reese. Please take a moment to pray for Andy and sign the card.

We are looking for a leader/mentor for our middle/high school level youth group. We are seeking a person committed to the Lord who is enthusiastic and has a passion for working with young people. This is a part time position. If interested, please contact the church office.

The Deacons are asking for donations of cakes and pies and also for help cooking chili for the upcoming community dinner on 10/24/20. If you can help in any way, please contact the church office 724-932-2101. Proceeds from the chili dinner will go to the Deacons Fund which helps people in need for rent, utilities and food.

### October Sunday Duties:

**Close-Up:** Bud Owen  
**Counting the Offering:** Tom Walker

**Deacon for October:** Linda Kappelt - If you know of anyone in the hospital or in need of assistance please contact Linda @ 814-573-6889

**Organist today:** Cindy Loveridge  
**Worship Leader today:** Janeen Mihoci

# Happy Birthday!

10/06 William McElhaney  
10/07 Linda Lorigan  
10/08 Katie Arnett  
10/29 Shirley Bonam



### JAMESTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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*Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.  
Worship the Lord with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs  
Psalm 100: 1-2a*

October 4, 2020  
World Communion Sunday

### GOD CALLS US TO WORSHIP HIM

Prelude

Welcome and Sharing News of the Kingdom

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

(Noisy Offering Buckets are on the entry table)

*To prepare our hearts and minds for worship,  
let us take a few moments in silent prayer.*

Call to Worship (based on Psalm 107:1-3, 31):

One: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;

**All: His steadfast love endures forever!**

One: Let those God has redeemed proclaim his salvation:

**All: those whom he has rescued and gathered in from distant lands – from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.**

One: Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,

**All: For his wonderful kindness and saving power.  
Praise, oh praise the Lord!**

Hymn "Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above" # 343

Call to Confession  
Silent and Personal Confession

Unison Prayer of Confession: **Lord God, Creator of the universe, you have graciously called us to be part of Christ's body, the Church. You call us to be ambassadors of your grace, but we confess that we often allow ourselves to be swept up into fruitless controversies and hurtful divisions. We confess, too, that we spend more time discussing the brokenness of our world than we do praying for it. Forgive these and all our sins, we pray, and help us to look upon others with your eyes of compassionate grace, that we may dwell in peace through Christ, who is the Lord of all. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon: (2 Peter 3:9 & Romans 10:15)

One: Friends, Scripture assures us that God does not want anyone to perish,

**All: but desires all to come to repentance and new life in Jesus Christ.**

One: Scripture also promises that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

**All: Not because we have done anything to deserve God's mercy, but because he loves us and sent his own Son to redeem us from sin. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!**

\*Response of Faith "Gloria Patri"✠ #142

Prayers of the People, ending with the Lord's Prayer in unison  
*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 sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

Dedication of our Tithes & Offerings

\*Response of Praise "Doxology" #384

## GOD SPEAKS TO US THROUGH HIS WORD

Scripture Lesson: Genesis 11:1-9, Isaiah 25:6-9

Message: "Beyond Babel" Pastor Sue Nageotte

## GOD SENDS US FORTH TO SERVE

Celebration of the Lord's Supper – see overhead

Invitation to the Lord's Supper

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

Words of Institution

Partaking of the Elements

Prayer after the Sacrament

\*Closing Hymn: "The Church's One Foundation" #547

\*Benediction

\*Closing Refrain: #523  
*"God be With You 'Til we Meet Again"*

*\*Those who are able please stand*

## “Beyond Babel”

*Genesis 11: 1-9, Isaiah 25: 6-9*

World Communion Sunday was first celebrated at the Shadyside Presbyterian Church in 1936. It has been adopted as an annual observance by many denominations – one special day each year set aside to intentionally remember and celebrate the fact that Christians around the world are all members of one body – one family – in Christ. Two dozen time zones . . . almost two hundred nations . . . and more than six thousand different languages are spoken in the world today.

Have you ever wondered how we came to have so many different languages, since we are all descended from Adam and Eve? The Book of Genesis explains how it happened. Now we must first understand that after the Great Flood, when Noah and his three sons and their wives emerged from the ark, God gave that little group of survivors some specific instructions. He told them to “be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.” God had created a wonderful world and was giving humanity a new start. “Go!” he said, “have children, be productive, spread out!” And they began to do that, each of Noah’s sons having children of his own. For half-a-dozen generations, they continued to spread out across the earth. But then . . .

[read Genesis 11:1-9] This is the word of the Lord; **thanks be to God.**

So the Bible tells us very clearly that this ‘confusion’ of languages was part of God’s intervention to halt what would have been the first skyscraper in history. When we read about the Tower of Babel, it seems as if it is primarily a story of judgment.

The people, as a whole, don’t want to keep spreading out across the earth. When they come to the Plain of Shinar they decided to settle there and build a great tower, the likes of which has never been seen on earth before.

When God sees what is taking place, he responds by intervening in a complete and decisive way – by confusing their languages and dispersing them over the earth. The people planned to build a city with a great tower; in the end, they built neither tower nor city. They had planned to remain in one place -- intentionally disobeying God’s will -- but God scatters them over the whole earth so the building project is abandoned. Lastly, they wanted to “make a name for themselves” – to become famous – but they don’t get that either. Instead, the PLACE will be forever remembered by the name “babel” meaning *confused*.

The story of the Tower of Babel is sometimes seen as a story of rebellion and judgment: ALL the people planning together to do something that was not in line with God’s will, and God taking decisive action to put them back on track.

But this is not a story of punishment; rather it is a story of grace. But in order to hear that grace, we must first clear up a common misunderstanding. Many people make the mistake of thinking that God, in putting a stop to that building project, was trying to protect himself against the ambition and ingenuity of the people. We can get that impression if we don't read the passage thoughtfully.

God says, "*If as one people, speaking the same language, they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.*" It sounds as if God is worried that his reign will be endangered, and his heavenly home will be invaded, if these humans are permitted to keep building towers up to heaven. It almost sounds as if God is worried that humans will become like him, able to do anything!

But of course, we know that is not true. God is not threatened by human ingenuity. Even the greatest of human achievements are no threat to the God who created the entire universe and continues to sustain all things by the power of his Word. It wasn't as if the people could have literally built a tower to heaven, snuck in some back door and taken over! No; as soon as we stop to think about it, we realize God must have intervened for a different reason. God doesn't act to protect *himself*; he does it to protect *them*.

It's not that they are threatening *God* by building the tower; they are *threatening themselves*. They are jeopardizing their own well-being, by giving themselves over to a massive endeavor in rebellion against God, focusing all the resources of their society in order to try to avoid his will for humanity to increase across the face of the earth. When God says, "nothing they plan to do will be impossible," he means "there will be no limit to their self-destructive endeavors."

Those of you who have children know that sometimes, when they start getting into mischief, you've just got to split them up. There are times when they seem to bring out the worst in each other. God's 'punishment' of those ancient people was, in fact, a way of putting a check on them, to hold them back from even further rebellion. It was definitely a judgment, but it is an act of grace.

Of course, God knew that scattering the people and confusing their language was going to result in a new set of challenges. As human-kind spread across the earth, settling in small groups here and there, each region, each people-group, developed its own cultural attributes. Even today, with the increased communication made possible by modern technology, there are enormous differences between cultures: different traditions – economic circumstances – educational and employment opportunities – government structures. God knew that nations would strive with other nations for scarce resources. There are, continually, "wars and rumors of wars."

Not just a problem between nations, is it?

Talk a little about current issues & the level of discord/spite/hostility

But God also knew – God *intended* and *planned* and *provided* -- there would come a day of gathering, not separation. There would come a day of unity and not discord. There

was hope *beyond* Babel – beyond the confusion, beyond the ill-conceived plans of proud and rebellious humanity. Listen with me, now, to a wonderful promise found in the Old Testament Book of Isaiah. We begin with the last verse of Isaiah chapter 24, then Chapter 25, verses 6-9.

Early Christians quickly recognized that this prophecy referred to the holy city Jerusalem, to the place where Jesus was crucified for our sake. It was there that he paid full penalty for all our sins and removed the shame of those who trust in him for salvation. In the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we not only remember Christ's sacrifice on our behalf, but we celebrate the feast of victory and look forward to the day of his return. At this banqueting table, ALL of God's people come together:

the saints from days past and the saints now living,  
people of every nation, every tribe, every language ...  
    dark skinned, fair skinned or in-between ...  
        Republican, Democrat, Independent or undecided ...  
    Protestant, Roman Catholic, Anabaptist, Pentecostal,  
        Coptic or Eastern Orthodox Christians ...  
those who have labored long in the Lord's vineyards,  
    and those who have just begun their journey of faith –  
those who have stumbled and been lifted up and stumbled again –  
    those who seek to understand what others are feeling,  
        and those who are afraid no one will ever understand them.

ALL have a place, ALL are welcome, at the banqueting table of the Lord.  
ALL, ALL are sinners, saved by the amazing grace of our merciful God.

We do not have to try to build a tower up to heaven to make a name for ourselves; God has come down to us, in the person of Jesus Christ, and has given us a new name:

**FORGIVEN, BELOVED, CHILD OF GOD**

This is what we celebrate, on World Communion Sunday -- the wideness of God's mercy. Though different strands of the Christian faith have different ways of celebrating the Lord's Supper, nevertheless we are still one in the Lord.

And though, around the world, we speak many different languages – yet, through the Holy Spirit, we speak with one voice, with one heart, in witness to the powerful, incomparable, unfailing and eternal kindness of God our Savior.

World Communion Sunday is a wonderful time to rejoice in the one-ness we have as brothers and sisters, children of God through the grace of Christ. At the same time, let us remember that we are called to do more than just SIT at the table. Jesus calls us to go out into the world in love, sharing the good news of God's mercy and grace with everyone we meet so that they, too, may join in the greatest of feasts.

Let us pray ...

## Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving (congregation use bold text):

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God;

**It is right to give God our thanks and praise.**

Eternal God, Creator of the universe, You spoke and everything we know came into being.

**You created humans in Your own image, breathing into us Your own breath of life.**

When we wandered from Your ways and were lost in sin,  
**Your Spirit spoke through the prophets, reminding us of Your holy truth; and at the right time, You sent Your Son to be our Savior. Therefore, with all the saints and angels we praise Your name forever.**

Holy Lord, heaven and earth are full of Your glory.

**Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!**

Blessed is Jesus Christ, Your only Son, our Lord.

**He showed Your love, healed the sick, fed the hungry, forgave sins and taught that we also should forgive.**

He suffered, died and rose again to deliver us from sin.

**He established a new covenant with all who believe and trust in Him.**

Remembering His mighty acts we offer ourselves in praise, proclaiming the mystery of our faith:

**Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again!**

Together let us pray:

**Gracious God, send Your Holy Spirit to make this bread and wine the sign of our new life together in Christ. Fill our hearts with love for Your truth and the deep desire to do Your will, so that our lives may be a joyful testimony to Your redeeming grace. Amen.**

Words of Institution and Partaking of the Bread and Wine  
Prayer after the Sacrament