

11-19-2023 Worship Service

Welcome – Pastor Brett will reflect this morning on words from the prophet Isaiah. As we've heard, the prophets came up with some creative images to try to help people understand what God was feeling what God was trying to tell the people. In this morning's passage Isaiah was using the image of a vineyard and also a new, young shoot growing out of what seemed to be a dead stump. These agrarian images are, of course, found through the Biblical story used by all the prophets and great teachers including Jesus! I'm reminded of a wonderful quote from Wendell Berry:

"I don't think it is enough appreciated how much an outdoor book the Bible is. It is a "hypaethral book," such as Thoreau talked about - a book open to the sky. It is best read and understood outdoors, and the farther outdoors the better. Or that has been my experience of it. Passages that within walls seem improbable or incredible, outdoors seem merely natural. This is because outdoors we are confronted everywhere with wonders; we see that the miraculous is not extraordinary but the common mode of existence. It is our daily bread. Whoever really has considered the lilies of the field or the birds of the air and pondered the improbability of their existence in this warm world within the cold and empty stellar distances will hardly balk at the turning of water into wine - which was, after all, a very small miracle. We forget the greater and still continuing miracle by which water (with soil and sunlight) is turned into grapes."

— **Wendell Berry, The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays**

Brett – we've really appreciated you being with us these couple-a Sundays and we're eager to hear what you have to share with us today.

What opportunities for Celebration or Service do you bring this morning?

- This evening from 5-6:30 is the Community Thanksgiving meal at the Elementary School, in the gym. This is sponsored by the three churches that make up the Goessel Ministerial Alliance and everyone is welcome!

Call to Worship

Invocation

God, you're the worker of miracles – those we think are extraordinary and those that seem ordinary to us. We welcome your presence with us as we worship and we invite you to work miracles in our minds and our hearts and our lives. Help us to recognize them. Amen.

Morning Prayer

We're grateful for rain, God! We grateful for the many ways that it brings new life and refreshment to the earth. Thank you for this Sabbath day – a day to rest, to remember and reflect, to recall your faithfulness to us and to your people from ancient times til now. In this season that seems to move at the speed of light from one holiday to the next with barely a

thought given to message or meaning, help us to find your peace in a spirit of gratitude and your contentment in a spirit of waiting.

We pray for those we know and love who live at Bethesda, Schowalter Villa, Kidron-Bethel, Pine Village and other care facilities. We thank you for their lives, their wisdom, their experiences and their endurance. We thank you for their caretakers and for all the employees, for the community that they create together. We ask for your comfort and love to surround these residents as we know that sometimes the days can seem long and it can be easy to lose sight of life's purpose. May your hope be real and close for them.

O God, we pray for those who may be struggling with illness – in body or mind... we know that the two can be closely related and that you long for health and wholeness for each of us and for all of creation. Where there is illness, we pray for healing. Where there is grief or anger, we pray for comfort and for perseverance, that people may speak and be heard and understood.

God of mercy and compassion, we pray for your peace in places where war and hatred are raging. We pray for those in Ukraine, in Gaza and the West Bank and other places around your world. We pray for those closer to home, in our own cities and towns who are suffering from violence or fear. May your spirit of Love prevail on this earth, as it is in heaven, and may we have courage and wisdom to know how to share your Love in ways that reflect you and bring your peace with justice. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Let's continue to worship now as the choir leads us.

Prayer of Dedication

God, we ask you to receive and bless these gifts as we give them for the work of your church and betterment of this world. Amen.

Benediction

Go now in God's peace, joy and love. Carry love's message wherever you go. Amen.