

United Church of Christ, First Congregational  
Norwich, New York  
August 22, 2021 Worship Video

**PRELUDE** *Deep Peace*  
Jason Handy, piano

by John S. Dixon

**WELCOME** (Pastor John)

**PRAYER OF THE DAY** (Ericka Tyler)

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Sovereign. Amen.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** (Linda Oehme)

**CALL TO WORSHIP** (Katie Izzo)

ONE: This is the day that God has made;

**ALL: let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

ONE: O Come, let us worship with glad and open hearts;

**ALL: let us give thanks and praise to God, our Maker.**

**HYMN** *What A Covenant* (#471)

Elisha A. Hoffman, 1887  
Tune: LEANING  
by Anthony J. Showalter, 1887

What a covenant, what a joy divine,  
leaning on the everlasting arms.

What a blessedness,  
what a peace is mine,  
leaning on the everlasting arms.

*Refrain*

*Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms;  
leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.*

Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,  
leaning on the everlasting arms.

Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,  
leaning on the everlasting arms.

*Refrain*

What have I to dread, what have I to fear,  
leaning on the everlasting arms?

I have blessed peace with my Savior near,  
leaning on the everlasting arms.

*Refrain*

God's own covenant: Love's eternal sign—  
Sacred love forever, everywhere!

Reaching out to us with true love divine  
We are held by God's embracing arms.

*Refrain*

**CHILDREN'S TIME** (Linda Oehme)

The Lord's Prayer

**CONGREGATIONAL GREETING OF PEACE**

ONE: May the peace of Christ be with you.

**ALL: And also with you.**

**AFFIRMING OUR FAITH** (Jason Handy and Brad Morrison)

*United Church of Christ Statement of Faith in the form of a doxology*

ONE: We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit,

**ALL: God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:**

ONE: You call the worlds into being,

**ALL: create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.**

ONE: You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

**ALL: You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.**

ONE: In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot,

**ALL: conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.**

ONE: You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit,

**ALL: creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.**

ONE: You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others,

**ALL: to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.**

ONE: You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,

**ALL: courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.**

ONE: Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you.

**ALL: Amen.**

### ***WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD***

#### **SCRIPTURE** (Brad Morrison)

1 Kings 8:22-30, 41-43

<sup>22</sup> Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands to heaven. <sup>23</sup> He said, "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and steadfast love for your servants who walk before you with all their heart, <sup>24</sup> the covenant that you kept for your servant my father David as you declared to him; you promised with your mouth and have this day fulfilled with your hand. <sup>25</sup> Therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant my father David that which you promised him, saying, 'There shall never fail you a successor before me to sit on the throne of Israel, if only your children look to their way, to walk before me as you have walked before me.' <sup>26</sup> Therefore, O God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you promised to your servant my father David.

<sup>27</sup> "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built! <sup>28</sup> Regard your servant's prayer and his plea, O LORD my God, heeding the cry and the prayer that your servant prays to you today; <sup>29</sup> that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you said, 'My name shall be there,' that you may heed the prayer that your servant prays toward this place. <sup>30</sup> Hear the plea of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place; O hear in heaven your dwelling place; heed and forgive.

**ANTHEM** *Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart* (NCH #290)

George Croly, 1854

Tune: MORECAMBE, Frederick C. Atkinson, 1870

Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;  
wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;  
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as you are,  
and make me love you as I ought to love.

I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies,  
no sudden rending of the veil of clay,  
No angel visitant, no opening skies;  
but take the dimness of my soul away.

Have you not bid us love you every way?  
All, all your own: soul, heart, and strength and mind;  
I see your cross— there teach my heart to stay:  
O let me seek you, and O let me find.

Teach me to feel that you are always nigh;  
teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,  
To check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;  
teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.

teach me to love you as your angels love,  
one holy passion filling all my frame;  
The baptism of the heaven-descended dove,  
my heart an altar, your love the flame.

**SCRIPTURE** (Pastor John)  
Ephesians 6:10-20

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. <sup>15</sup> As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup> Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. <sup>19</sup> Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

**SCRIPTURE** (Ericka Tyler)  
John 6:56-69

<sup>56</sup> Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. <sup>57</sup> Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever." <sup>59</sup> He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

<sup>60</sup> When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?" <sup>61</sup> But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, "Does this offend you? <sup>62</sup> Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? <sup>63</sup> It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. <sup>64</sup> But among you there are some who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. <sup>65</sup> And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father."

<sup>66</sup> Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. <sup>67</sup> So Jesus asked the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" <sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup> We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

**SERMON** (Pastor John)

**INTERLUDE** *Gentle Meditation*  
Jason Handy, piano

by Garrett Parker

**A LITANY OF INTERCESSION** (NCH #878) (Pastor John)

ONE: Gracious God, who loves all and forgets none, we bring to you our prayers for all your children. For all whom we love, watch over, and care for;

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For all prisoners and captives, and all who suffer from oppression, that you will manifest your mercy toward them, and make all hearts as merciful as your own.

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For all who bear the cross of suffering, the sick in body or mind;

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For all those who are troubled by the sin or suffering of those they love;

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For all who are absorbed in their own grief, that they may be raised to share the sorrows of others, and know the saving grace of the cross;

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For all perplexed by the deeper questions of life and overshadowed with doubt, that your light may guide them;

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For all who are tried by temptations or weakness, that your mercy maybe their strength.

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For all who are lonely and sad in the mist of others' joy, that they may know you as their friend and comforter;

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For the infirm and aged and for all who are dying, that they may find their strength in you and light at the evening time;

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: For all forgotten by us, but dear to you;

**ALL: Hear us, O God.**

ONE: O compassionate God, hear our prayers, answer them according to your will, and make us channels of your infinite grace, through Jesus Christ we pray.

**ALL: Amen.**

**BLESSING** (Pastor John)

May the steadfast love of God give you hope,  
the redeeming power of Christ give you courage,  
the abiding presence of Spirit give you strength,  
as you serve the will of God  
this day and every day.

**POSTLUDE** *Lord God on High*  
Jason Handy, piano

Lani Smith

---

Permission to reprint, podcast, and / or stream the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE with license #735996-A. All rights reserved.

Prayers, Call to Worship, Blessing are reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from *Feasting on the Word Worship Companion* © 2015