

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY
Sunday, July 26, 2026
17th Sunday of Ordinary Time

ACCOLYTES

At the beginning of worship, the acolytes carry the light of Christ into the sanctuary. This symbolizes Christ's presence among the gathered people — a reminder that we don't create the light ourselves; God brings it to us.

As the candles are lit, we remember Jesus' words, "*I am the light of the world.*" Worship begins in that light.

PRELUDE

Tommy Clay, Jr.

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

Liturgist: Sherry Mills

PASSING OF THE PEACE

May the Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!
And also with you!

CALL TO WORSHIP

ALL Thank God! Pray to him by name!

Tell everyone you meet what he has done!

Sing him songs, belt out hymns,

translate his wonders into music!

Honor his holy name with Hallelujahs,

you who seek God. Live a happy life!

Keep your eyes open for God, watch for his works;

be alert for signs of his presence.

Remember the world of wonders he has made,

his miracles, and the verdicts he's rendered

ALL: Together let us worship God!

GATHERING PRAYER

**All: Holy God, let the incense of our prayers ascend
before you, and let your loving-kindness descend upon
us that with devoted hearts we may sing your praises**

**with the church on earth and the whole heavenly host,
and glorify you forever and ever. Amen.**

HYMN “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty! Hymn #1

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

CONFESSION AND PARDON

**ALL God of grace, we want to understand what the
kingdom of heaven is like, but our minds are clouded by
cares and concerns of the world. We fail to trust your
power, hidden in all things. We fail to watch for you,
working out your purposes in mysterious ways. We fail
to be whole-hearted in our faith and discipleship. We
fail to put our trust in the treasures of your kingdom
instead of the treasures of the world.**

And now in this moment of silence, those sins which are ours alone

**ALL: Gracious God, hidden and manifest, give us eyes to
see and ears to hear your good news for the world even
here and now. Transform our lives and our world by
your grace. AMEN**

GLORIA PATRI “Glory Be to the Father” Hymn #581

“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. World
without end, Amen.”

ANTHEM “Soon and Very Soon” Chancel Choir

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE (NRSV UPDATED EDITION)

<i>First Reading</i>	1 Kings 3:5-12
<i>Psalm Reading</i>	Psalms 119:129-136
<i>Second Reading</i>	Romans 8:26-39
<i>Gospel Reading</i>	Matthew 13:31-33

1 Kings 3:5-12

⁵ At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, “Ask what I should give you.” ⁶ And Solomon said, “You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you, and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷ And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸ And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹ Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil, for who can govern this great people of yours?”

¹⁰ It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹ God said to him, “Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or for the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹² I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you, and no one like you shall arise after you.

Psalms 119:129-136

¹²⁹ Your decrees are wonderful;
therefore my soul keeps them.

¹³⁰ The unfolding of your words gives light;

it imparts understanding to the simple.
¹³¹ With open mouth I pant,
because I long for your commandments.
¹³² Turn to me and be gracious to me,
as is your custom toward those who love your name.
¹³³ Keep my steps steady according to your promise,
and never let iniquity have dominion over me.
¹³⁴ Redeem me from human oppression,
that I may keep your precepts.
¹³⁵ Make your face shine upon your servant,
and teach me your statutes.
¹³⁶ My eyes shed streams of tears
because your law is not kept.

Romans 8:26-39

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

God's Love in Christ Jesus

³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up for all of us, how will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to

come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Matthew 13:31-33

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

³¹ He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

The Parable of the Yeast

³³ He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“Wise Circle Makers”

Rick Mills

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Heidelberg Catechism of 1563)

ALL: We affirm together: We are not our own, but belong, body and soul, in life and in death, to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all our sins with his precious blood and has set us free from the tyranny of evil. He watches over us so carefully that not a hair can fall from our heads apart from the will of our Father in heaven, and in all things, God works for our salvation. Because we belong to him, Christ, by the Holy Spirit, assures us of eternal life and makes us wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him. AMEN

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (with the Lord’s Prayer)
Hymnal p.35

ALL: 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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

OFFERING/OFFERING MUSIC

Tommy Clay, Jr.

DOXOLOGY

Hymn #606

“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.”

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

HYMN “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” Hymn #465

1 What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit;
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer!

2 Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer!

3 Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge;
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!

In his arms he'll take and shield thee;
thou wilt find a solace there.

ACCOLYTES

At the end of the service, the acolytes take the flame back out of the sanctuary. This is not extinguishing Christ's presence — it is sending it.

The light that gathered us now goes ahead of us into the world, where we are called to carry Christ's love, justice, and compassion into our daily lives.

BLESSING AND CHARGE

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE "Because He Lives"

Because He lives I can face tomorrow
Because He lives all fear is gone
Because I know He holds the future.
And life is worth the living just because He lives

POSTLUDE

Tommy Clay, Jr.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: (Details on our website, Facebook, Realm & 386-385-3040.)

Volunteers Needed for Children & Youth Ministries

Beginning **August 2**, we need **two volunteers each Sunday** to help lead Children's Church. We are also seeking adults willing to support and grow our children's and youth ministries throughout the year. These ministries simply cannot thrive without dedicated volunteers. If you feel called to serve, please contact Terry Albright or Steve Crowley.

This week's prayer : Gracious God, we give you thanks for the showers that refresh the earth, replenish streams and fields, and remind us that all creation rests in your faithful care; grant us wisdom to be good stewards of the land you have entrusted to us and bless those whose labor brings food from field to table with fruitful harvests. Protect all first responders who serve during storms, keep every community safe beneath your watchful hand, and continue to send the rain we need in your perfect measure. Amen.

Church Activities

Small Groups-Sunday 9:15 am; Wed. 4:30 pm.

Presbyterian Women-recess until September.

Social Connections-Thurs.1pm in Zoom Rm.

Quilting Group-Friday's at 10:00 in the Zoom Room.

Outreach Ministries

Showers Ministry-Thurs. from 2-6pm

Meridian/Grace Market Place-Thurs. 2-4pm in the Bartram Rm.

CDC (Chemical Dependency Counseling)-Mon. 8-12; T, W, Sat. 8-6.

Spiritual Youth Group-every 2nd & 4th Tuesday at 6pm.

Starting August 10th. Contact Suzie Cornelio for more information.

Church Calendar

7/28 through 7/30

RCMA	8:00am-3:30pm	WH & Zoom
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Rm

8/4, 8/6 RCMA	8:00am-3:30pm	WH & Zoom
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Rm