

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY
Sunday, August 23, 2026
Twenty First Sunday of Ordinary Time

PRELUDE

Tommy Clay, Jr.

ACCOLYTES (Bringing in the Light)

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.

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

Liturgist: Elliott Kane

PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

**ALL: If the Lord had not been on our side—
let Israel say—**

**²if the Lord had not been on our side
when people attacked us,**

**³they would have swallowed us alive
when their anger flared against us;**

**⁴the flood would have engulfed us,
the torrent would have swept over us,**

**⁵the raging waters
would have swept us away.**

**⁶Praise be to the Lord,
who has not let us be torn by their teeth.**

**⁷We have escaped like a bird
from the fowler's snare;
the snare has been broken,
and we have escaped.**

**⁸Our help is in the name of the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.**

Together let us worship God!

GATHERING PRAYER

All: We come to this time of worship. We've come to give thanks to God, who has been and is and will be on our side! When life is tough, God is still on our side. When the day gleams with light and life, God is still on our side. When enemies surround us, when the flood threatens to carry us away, God is on our side. So come! Together, let us rejoice, for our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. AMEN

HYMN

"Go to the World!"

Hymn #295

God to the world!
Go in to all the earth.
Go preach the cross where
Christ renews life's worth,
Baptizing as the sign of our rebirth.
Alleluia. Alleluia.

Go to the world!
Go into every place.
Go live the word of God's redeeming grace.
Go seek God's presence in each time and space.
Alleluia. Alleluia

Go to the world!
Go struggle, bless, and pray;
The nights of tears give way to joyous day.
As servant church, you follow Christ's own way.
Alleluia. Alleluia.

Go to the world!
Go as the ones I send,
For I am with you till the age shall end,
When all the hosts of glory cry "A-men!"
Alleluia. Alleluia.

CONFESSION AND PARDON

ALL: God of truth, like a moth that gnaws at wool, our brokenness eats away at our souls. We allow the cacophony of greed, selfishness, apathy and ignorance

to drown out your voice as you call us to see the suffering in our world and respond to the needs of your children. In our busy lives, we convince ourselves that there is no time to help, no space for prayer and no need for justice.

ALL: Forgive us. Remind us that only when we slow down and breathe deeply of your Holy Spirit and holy Word can our ears hear your voice. Inspire us to greater love for you and for one another. 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 “People Need the Lord” Chancel Choir

CHILDRENS CHURCH **Carolyn Faunce and Jordy**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE (NRSV UPDATED EDITION)

First Reading

Exodus 1:8-2:10 p.38, OT

Second Reading

Romans 12:1-8 p.123, NT

Gospel Reading

Matthew 16:13-20 p.14, NT

Exodus 1:8-2:10 p.38, OT

The Israelites Are Oppressed

⁸ Now a new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph. ⁹ He said to his people, “Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. ¹⁰ Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.” ¹¹ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. ¹² But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. ¹³ The Egyptians

subjected the Israelites to hard servitude ¹⁴ and made their lives bitter with hard servitude in mortar and bricks and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

¹⁵ The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, ¹⁶ “When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.” ¹⁷ But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. ¹⁸ So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this and allowed the boys to live?” ¹⁹ The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” ²⁰ So God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and became very strong. ²¹ And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. ²² Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.”

Birth and Youth of Moses

2 Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. ² The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. ³ When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. ⁴ His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

⁵ The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. ⁶ When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. “This must be one of the Hebrews’ children,” she said. ⁷ Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?” ⁸ Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Yes.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. ⁹ Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed it. ¹⁰ When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, “because,” she said, “I drew him out of the water.”

The New Life in Christ

12 I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, on the basis of God's mercy, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable act of worship. ² Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

³ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴ For as in one body we have many members and not all the members have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. ⁶ We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; ⁸ the encourager, in encouragement; the giver, in sincerity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Peter's Declaration about Jesus

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist but others Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." ²⁰ Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Confession of 1967, one of the confessions in the PC(USA) Book of Confessions.

ALL: The new life finds its direction in the life of Jesus, his deeds and words, his struggles against temptation, his compassion, his anger, and his willingness to suffer death. The teaching of apostles and prophets guides men and women in living this life, and the Christian community nurtures and equips them for their ministries.

The members of the church are emissaries of peace and seek the good of all in cooperation with powers and authorities in politics, culture, and economics. But they have to fight against pretensions and injustices when these same powers endanger human welfare. Their strength is in their confidence that God's purpose rather than human schemes will finally prevail.

Life in Christ is life eternal. The resurrection of Jesus is the sign that God will consummate the work of creation and reconciliation beyond death and bring to fulfillment the new life begun in Christ. 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 “Precious Lord, Take My Hand” Hymn #834

Precious Lord, take my hand;
lead me on, help me stand;
I am weak, I am worn.
Though the storm, through the night,
lead me on to the light;
take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

When my ways grows dear, precious Lord, linger near;
When my life is almost gone, hear my cry,
Hear my call, hold my hand lest I fall;
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

ACCOLYTES (Taking the Light Out)

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 & Ministries

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.

Volunteers Needed for Youth Ministries

We are also seeking adults willing to support and grow our youth ministries throughout the year. Starting September 6th a Youth Group will meet in the basement from 9:15-10:00. These ministries simply cannot thrive without dedicated volunteers. If you feel called to serve, please contact Terry Albright.

This week's prayer : Loving God, we give thanks for the rain that nourishes the earth and sustains all that grows; help us tend your creation with wisdom, gratitude, and care. Guard our communities from danger and surround with your protection all first responders who courageously serve in times of storm and disaster. Amen.

Church Activities

Youth Group-Sunday 9:15am

(basement-Starting September 6th.)

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

Shower 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.

All Together Youth Group-every 2nd & 4th Wednesday at 7pm. Starting August 26th. Contact Suzie Cornelio for more information.

Barron Rice Music Studio/ Azalea City Children's Chorus Starts August 24th! Ages 6–16, No audition required, Mondays, 11:00 AM–12:00 PM

Church Calendar

8/31 SMA	4:00pm-8:30pm	WH
9/7 RCMA	8:00am-3:30pm	WH, Zoom Rm
9/19 Private Event	TBD	WH