

23rd Sunday After Pentecost

October 31st at 10:00 a.m.

"I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long."

Psalm 146:2

Greeting and Welcome

Prelude Music "A Mighty Fortress" Arr: J. Raney. *Used with permission under CCLI License #11306163.*

Choral Introit "Who Is on the Lord's Side?" Francis R. Havergal, 1877; alt. MUSIC "Armageddon"; C. Luise Reichardt; arr. by John Goss, 1871. *Public Domain.*

Call to Worship Based on Ruth 1, Mark 12

Come into the land of God.

We come seeking the land of love.

Live as the people of Christ.

We gather to grow as a community of love.

Follow in the ways of the Lord.

We move forward on the path of love.

Come, young and old, friend and foreigner,
for all are welcome here.

We come to live and grow in the love of Christ.

Praise God for this wonderful gift!

Opening Prayer Based on Ruth 1, Mark 12

O God, you are our God, and we come as your people on earth.

Gather us in, that we may remember the ties that bind us together in your love.

Write your law upon our hearts, that others may find us to be generous and loving friends.

Strengthen us by your Spirit, that we may live in love—a love that transforms our lives,

even as we help to transform the lives of others. In the hope of your miraculous love, we pray. Amen.

Hymn of Praise "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" UMH #384. Words: Charles Wesley, 1747. Music: John Zundel, 1870. *Used with permission under CCLI License #11306163.*

**1. Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down;
fix in us thy humble dwelling;
all thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;**

visit us with thy salvation;
enter every trembling heart.

**2. Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
into every troubled breast!
Let us all in thee inherit;
let us find that second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.**

**3. Come, Almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.**

**4. Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee;
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.**

Prayer of Confession (Based on Ruth 1, Ps 146, Mark 12)

Helper God, be the hope that overcomes our despair; be the love that overcomes our hatred; be the mercy that overcomes our sin. Set us free from the prisons of our own making, and release us from the bonds that bind us. Forgive us and watch over us. Welcome us home into the loving arms of your mercy. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

Words of Assurance Based on Mark 12

You are not far from the kingdom of God, for in Christ we are given grace and forgiveness. Praise God for this marvelous gift! Thanks be to God! Amen.

Stewardship Mission Moment – God’s Work, Our Hands Memory Cafe – Carol Blackwell

Anthem “God of the Sparrow, God of the Whale” Jaroslav J. Vajda. *Used with permission under CCLI License #11306163.*

Blessing of the Stuffed Animals for the Teddy Bear Brigade Mission

Gospel Reading Mark 12:28-34 NRSV

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself,’—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask him any question.

The word of God for the people of God

Thanks be to God

Sermon “The Key to a Vital Community” Rev. Matthew B. Sergent

Response to the Word

“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” The second is this, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.

Hymn “Where Charity and Love Prevail” UMH #549 Words: 9th cent. Latin; trans. by Omer Westendorf. Music: Alexander R. Reinagle; harm. from Hymns Ancient and Modern. Used with permission under CCLI License #11306163.

**1. Where charity and love prevail,
there God is ever found;
Brought here together by Christ’s love,
by love are we thus bound.**

**2. With grateful joy and holy fear
His charity we learn;
Let us with heart and mind and soul
now love him in return.**

**3. Forgive we now each other's faults
as we our faults confess;
And let us love each other well
in Christian holiness.**

**4. Let strife among us be unknown,
let all contention cease;
Be Christ the glory that we seek,
be ours His holy peace.**

**5. Let us recall that in our midst
dwells God's begotten Son;
As members of His body joined,
we are in him made one.**

**6. Love can exclude no race or creed
if honored be God's name;
Our common life embraces all
whose Maker is the same.**

Prayers of the People

Sending Forth Hymn "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace" TFWS #2171 Words: Prayer of St. Francis; adapt. by Sebastian Temple. Music: Sebastian Temple. Used with permission under CCLI License #11306163.

1. Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love.
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord,
And where there is doubt, true faith in you.

2. Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is despair in life, let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness, only light,
and where there's, sadness ever joy.

3. Oh, Master grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love with all my soul.

4. Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

in giving of ourselves that we receive,
and in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Benediction (Based on Ruth 1, Mark 12)

Go to love God and neighbor.

We go forth in the love of God.

Go to welcome the stranger.

We go forth with love for the world.

Postlude "Partita on CORONATION" Tune by Oliver Holden. *Used with permission under CCLI License #11306163.*

Call to Worship, Opening Prayer, Confession, & Benediction taken from Abingdon Worship Annual, Mary J. Scifres 2021, adapted.