



ABUNDANCE VS SCARCITY

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

July 28, 2024

*Old First Presbyterian Church
Huntington, New York*



To all who live joyfully and long to share their excitement ... to all who mourn and need comfort ... to all who are weary and need rest ... to all who are homeless and desire sheltering love ... to all who pray or are in need of prayer ... to all who sin and need a Savior ... to all who recognize Christ in their midst and hunger to share God's love with all the world ... Old First Presbyterian Church opens wide its doors and in the name of Jesus Christ, says ... WELCOME!



All hymns and Scriptures are printed in today's order of worship, or you may look them up in the pew Bibles and hymnals. Large print versions of each are available with the usher.

*** The congregation is invited to stand in body or spirit and speak items printed in bold.**

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

*adapted from 2 Corinthians 9:8, Deuteronomy 28:12,
Ephesians 3:20, James 1:17, and Romans 15:13*

One: As we recall the promises of Scripture, time and time again we are reminded that we worship and serve a God of great abundance:

All: A God who makes grace abound, so that in all things and all times, having all that we need, we will flourish in every good work.

One: A God who opens the heavens and releases the storehouse of God's bounty, sending rain on our land in season and blessing the work of our hands.

All: A God who does immeasurably more than everything we may ask for or imagine, according to the power of God at work within us.

One: A God who promises every good and perfect gift from above, coming down from God, who does not change like the shifting shadows.

All: A God who fills us with hope, joy, love, and peace as we place our trust in God, so that we may overflow with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

One: In a world that often embraces scarcity, we worship a God of great abundance! In response, may we lift our hearts and voices as we worship God together!

*HYMN 41

O Worship the King, All Glorious Above!

*O worship the King, all glorious above!
O gratefully sing God's power and God's love:
our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,
pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.*

*O tell of God's might; O sing of God's grace,
whose robe is the light, whose canopy space,
whose chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form;
and bright is God's path on the wings of the storm.*

*The earth with its store of wonders untold,
Almighty, your power has founded of old;
established it fast by a changeless decree,
and round it has cast, like a mantle, the sea.*

*Your bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air; it shines in the light;
it streams from the hills; it descends to the plain,
and sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.*

*Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
in you do we trust, nor find you to fail;
your mercies, how tender, how firm to the end,
our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend.*

Text: Robert Grant, 1833, alt.

Music: Joseph Martin Kraus, 1784, alt.

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PRAYER OF ADORATION AND CONFESSION

Gracious and generous God, we gather for worship with grateful hearts, amazed by reminders of your lavish abundance that surround us in our lives and throughout your creation. We gather for worship with hopeful hearts, seeking new experiences of your abundant love for us and for all people. Your love is both mysterious and miraculous, O God, with the power to transform times that overwhelm us and lives that hunger and thirst for hope. By the power of your Holy Spirit, move tangibly among us in our worship, through prayer, praise, Scripture, and preaching. Open our hearts to each new possibility you create for us in Christ Jesus, the Savior, our eternal source of abundant hope and love, mercy and grace, freedom and possibility.

Merciful and abundant God, we gather each week to encounter your grace, trusting that no matter what, you will welcome us with unconditional love. We are grateful for your abundant gifts, but confess we are not nearly as generous with the gifts we offer one another. Too often, we are motivated not by the abundance we witness in Christ Jesus, but the scarcity of our selfish ideals and ambitions. We are often suspicious of others or fearful of what they may want from us. We criticize what others do, but rarely question our own motives. Forgive us, O God, and awaken our abundant generosity toward you and one another. Empower us to not only see, but model the example of our Lord and Savior, Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

DECLARATION OF GRACE

One: Ephesians declares that Christ dwells in our hearts through faith, for we are being rooted and grounded in his love. The forgiveness Jesus offers is a gift of this love that is deeper and wider than we may ask for or imagine.

All: May we receive with joyful gratitude, God's peace that passes understanding and God's forgiveness that restores all creation; for us, for one another, and for a world in need! Thanks be to our God! Hallelujah and amen!

*HYMN 518

Your Only Son (verse 1 & 3, with refrain)

*Your only Son, no sin to hide, but you have sent him from your side
to walk upon this guilty sod, and to become the Lamb of God.*

(Refrain)

O Lamb of God, sweet Lamb of God,

I love the holy Lamb of God!

O wash me in his precious blood,

my Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

*I was so lost, I should have died, but you have brought me to your side
to be led by your staff and rod, and to be called a lamb of God.*

(Refrain)

Text and Music: Twila Paris, 1985

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*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

One: The peace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, be with you all.

All: And also with you.

One: Please turn to those around you and share the peace of Christ.

Please share signs and words of Christ's peace with those worshipping near you.

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

Source of all wisdom, amid many distractions, focus our attention on you. Amid many competing voices, discipline our ears to hear your Word. Amid many choices, give us the strength to choose your will and your way. Challenge us to embrace the abundance of your Holy Spirit, so that we may be assured of your love, inspired to follow Jesus, the Christ, and compelled to share the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

NEW TESTAMENT READING (p. 193 in pew Bible)

Ephesians 3:14-21 [NRSVUE]

¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. ¹⁶I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit ¹⁷and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. ¹⁸I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSIVE READING OF THE PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalms 65 [NRSVUE]

¹Praise is due to you,

O God, in Zion,

and to you shall vows be performed,

² **O you who answer prayer!**

To you all flesh shall come.

³When deeds of iniquity overwhelm us,

you forgive our transgressions.

⁴**Happy are those whom you choose and bring near**

to live in your courts.

We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house,

your holy temple.

⁵By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance,

O God of our salvation;

you are the hope of all the ends of the earth

and of the farthest seas.

**⁶ By your strength you established the mountains;
you are girded with might.**

⁷ You silence the roaring of the seas,
the roaring of their waves,
the tumult of the peoples.

**⁸ Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs;
you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy.**

⁹ You visit the earth and water it;
you greatly enrich it;
the river of God is full of water;
you provide the people with grain,
for so you have prepared it.

**¹⁰ You water its furrows abundantly,
settling its ridges,
softening it with showers,
and blessing its growth.**

¹¹ You crown the year with your bounty;
your wagon tracks overflow with richness.

**¹² The pastures of the wilderness overflow;
the hills gird themselves with joy;**

¹³ the meadows clothe themselves with flocks;
the valleys deck themselves with grain;
they shout and sing together for joy.

GOSPEL READING (p. 97 in pew Bible)

John 6:1-15 [NRSVUE]

¹ After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ² A large crowd kept following him because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³ Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵ When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do.

⁷ Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.” ⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, ⁹ “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?” ¹⁰ Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was a great deal of grass in the place, so they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹ Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted.

¹² When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.” ¹³ So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴ When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, “This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.”

¹⁵ When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

MESSAGE

“Abundance? Or Scarcity?”

*HYMN 440

Jesus, Lover of My Soul

*Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly,
while the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high.
Hide me, O my Savior, hide, till the storm of life is past.
Safe into the haven guide. O receive my soul at last!*

*Other refuge have I none; hangs my helpless soul on thee.
Leave, ah! leave me not alone; still support and comfort me.
All my trust on thee is stayed; all my help from thee I bring.
Cover my defenseless head with the shadow of thy wing.*

*Thou, O Christ, art all I want; more than all in thee I find.
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint, heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is thy name; I am all unrighteousness.
False and full of sin I am; thou art full of truth and grace.*

*Plenteous grace with thee is found, grace to cover all my sin.
Let the healing streams abound; make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art; freely let me take of thee.
Spring thou up within my heart. Rise to all eternity.*

Text: Charles Wesley, 1740

Music: Joseph Parry, 1876

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***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

The Confession of 1967, 9.32-33

The life, death, resurrection, and promised coming of Jesus Christ has set the pattern for the church's mission. His human life involves the church in the common life of all people. His service to all people commits the church to work for every form of human well-being. His suffering makes the church sensitive to all human suffering so that it sees the face of Christ in the faces of persons in every kind of need. His crucifixion discloses to the church God's judgment on the inhumanity that marks human relations, and the awful consequences of the church's own complicity in injustice. In the power of the risen Christ and the hope of his coming, the church sees the promise of God's renewal of human life in society and of God's victory over all wrong.

The church follows this pattern in the form of its life and in the method of its action. So to live and serve is to confess Christ as Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Throughout today's prayer, please listen for an invitation to lift silent prayers before God, then join in praying together as follows:

One: In the unrest around us, call out to our hearts.

All: **Come near to us, O God, and overcome our fear.**

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, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

DISCERNING GOD'S CALL TO ACTION

The story of Jesus feeding the crowd with just five loaves of bread and two fish is a reminder of God's ability to multiply the gifts we offer in the name of Jesus. As we discern how God is calling us to offer ourselves today – in mind, body, and spirit; through gifts, skills, and talents – may each of us make our offering as we are able, trusting that God will meet the scarcity of others with the abundance of what we have to give.

OFFERTORY

Organ Interlude

Ken Friese

If you would like to offer a financial gift during today's worship service, please do so by placing your gift in one of the two wooden boxes, conveniently located at both Sanctuary entrances.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God of abundance, we offer our gifts of time, talent, and treasure to strengthen and empower our shared ministry. While each gift seems small in a world of great need, we trust that when we give faithfully, you will create abundance from scarcity. Bless and multiply each gift through your love. Surprise us with your power, working in us and through us to accomplish abundant things in the name of Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

*HYMN 16

O That I Had a Thousand Voices

*O that I had a thousand voices
to praise my God with thousand tongues!
My heart, which in the Lord rejoices,
would then proclaim in grateful songs
to all, wherever I might be,
what great things God has done for me!*

*Let every power in me implanted,
arise, keep silence now no more;
put forth the strength that God has granted!
Your noblest work is to adore!
O soul and body, join to raise
with heartfelt joy our Maker's praise!*

You forest leaves so green and tender
that dance for joy in summer air;
you meadow grasses, bright and slender;
you flowers so fragrant and so fair:
you live to show God's praise alone.
Join me to make God's glory known!

All creatures that have breath and motion,
that throng the earth, the sea, the sky,
come, share with me my heart's devotion;
help me to sing God's praises high!
My utmost powers can never quite
declare the wonders of God's might!

Text: Johann Mentzer, 1704; trans. *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 1941, alt.
Music: Attr. Johann B. Konig, 1738; *Harmonischer Liederschatz*, 1738
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***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

***CHORAL BENEDICTION (HYMN 658)**

God Is So Good

God is so good; God is so good;
God is so good; God's so good to me.

God cares for me; God cares for me;
God cares for me; God's so good to me.

God loves me so; God loves me so;
God loves me so; God's so good to me.

God is so good; God is so good;
God is so good; God's so good to me.

Text and Music: Anon.
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***POSTLUDE**

The flowers in the chancel are given to the glory of God by Carol Cleveland in loving memory of her family, parents Milly and Bill Sansom, brothers Robert and William, and husband Jim.