

**Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost September 13, 2020**

**WELCOME & INSTRUCTION**

*Participants are invited to respond with the text in* **bold type.**

In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

**CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS**

Seeking reconciliation with God and neighbor, let us confess our sin…

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Loving God, **we have turned against you.**

**By our thoughts, words, and deeds, we have broken our relationship with you and with each other.** *Breathe*

Gracious God**, when you showed us love, we have thought and spoken poorly of our neighbors.** *Breathe*

God of Abundance, **when you provided for our needs, we ignored the needs of others and often justified our wants.** *Breathe*

Consoling God, **when you said “do not be afraid,” we allowed fear to fester, giving birth to anger and hatred of the other.** *Breathe*

Empowering God, **when you made us caretakers of the earth, we hurt your creation with our greed and selfishness.** *Breathe*

Merciful God, **often we do not recognize our own sinfulness though we are quick to point out the sinfulness of others;** *Breathe*

God of Compassion, **at times, we believe we are unforgiveable and we do not trust in the capacity of your Spirit.** *Breathe*

Redeeming God, **Forgive us, transform us, empower us by your grace. Amen.**

God hears the cries of all who call out in need,

and through his death and resurrection,

Christ has made us his own.

Your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father, ☩ the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness

to do God’s work in the world.

**Amen.**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

### FIRST READING| Romans 14:1-12

1Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. 2Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. 3Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. 4Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.
  5Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. 6Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.
  7We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. 8If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s. 9For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.
  10Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. 11For it is written,
 “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
  and every tongue shall give praise to God.”
12So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Holy Wisdom. Holy Word. **Thanks be to God.**

**THE GOSPEL| Matthew 18:21-35**

God is with you! **And also with you!**

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

21Peter came and said to [Jesus], “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” 22Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.
  23“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. 24When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; 25and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. 26So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ 27And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. 28But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ 29Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ 30But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. 31When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. 32Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ 34And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. 35So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**MESSAGE**

### BREAK OUT QUESTIONS

### Have I harbored a grudge against someone whom I found difficult to forgive?

### Consider a time God’s grace and forgiveness has or may have freed you to offer forgiveness. Is there something you wish to be able to forgive?

### What judgements do I make against others’ convictions? How might I be in relationship with others, forgive, and love “from a distance?”

### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

You welcome us when we are weak in faith. Uphold your church throughout the world; make it a place of welcome. Strengthen faith through study of your Word, and through relationship and participation in the body of Christ. Nurture new ministries of education and growth. Help us to trust in your guidance and presence to leap in faith. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

The heights of the heavens show us the vastness of your steadfast love. Have compassion on your creation. Where human selfishness has brought ruin and destruction, we look to you to heal, renew, and redeem your world. For the lands and people effected by the wildfires in the west, and the recovery from hurricane Laura: Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Make your ways known to the nations. Speak kindness to our bitter grudges. Settle our hearts when we want to settle accounts with violence. Bless our leaders with patience and wisdom. Silence the rhetoric of hate and division and speak restoration into lives. Teach us to listen to one another and transform ignorance into understanding. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Bring healing and justice wherever harm is dealt. Provide vindication for all who are oppressed. Free victims of human trafficking and forced labor; deliver all who are bound by debt. Liberate victims of abuse, sexual assault, and racial oppression. Feed all who hunger, and guard refugees fleeing famine, poverty, and war. We pray for all in need of healing: Nancy, Katherine, Rob and Scott, Yancey, Heather, Travis, Tyler, Blake, John P., Kevin, and all whom we name now… Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Teach us to forgive. Remind us that you do not always accuse us. Still our tongues when we are tempted to pass judgment and argue over opinions. Make this congregation a community of mercy for one another and for all our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Whether we live or whether we die, we are yours. We thank you for those who have showed us faithfulness, for the knees that taught us how to bow to you and the tongues that taught us to praise you. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**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 trespasses,**

**as we forgive those**

**who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,**

**and the power, and the glory,**

**forever and ever. Amen.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**YARD SALE!** Saturday, August 29th 10am – 4pm. Volunteer to set up, run a table, or clean up, we need your help! Organizing needs to happen over the course of the week in order to set up and break down quickly on Saturday. Please let Pastor Jim know of your availability.

**COURTYARD WORSHIP AT 9:30AM**

Participants must: wear masks, observe social distance, bring a lawn chair or a blanket to sit on. Bulletins will be electronic, available on mobile devices. The service will continue to be streamed online. And in the event of rain, will still be offered online. There will be no singing, and no communion, and no access to the building including the restrooms at this time. We do, however, look forward to being in your presence!

**Thank you** for your continued generosity and for sustaining our ministry during this strange and difficult time! You can provide offering or make a special gift at anytime through the church’s giving portal. Links can be found in the e-newlsetter and on the church website at <http://www.churchontheavenuehampden.org.>

**BENEDICTION**

God is with you! **And also with you!**

May God bless you and keep you.

May God’s face shine on you and be gracious to you.

May God look upon you with favor and give you peace,

in the name of the Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**