

WORSHIP SERVICE PLAN

(Traditional & Online Service)

October 5, 2025 • 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time • World Communion

Lamentations 1:1-6, 3:19-26

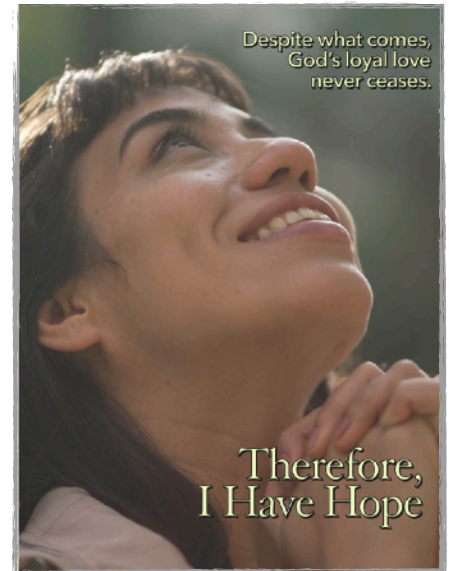
"Therefore I Have Hope"

Despite what comes, God's loyal love never ceases.

(online only) Preparation for Worship

Gather these items for worship. If you don't have a particular item, fret not:

- a piece of white cloth
- an end table or stand
- a plate with bread
- a cup with juice
- a glass or bowl of water
- a lighter/match
- a picture of a sunrise
- a flag from another country
- a computer or internet-accessible device
- a thank you card to God for something this week



For each item you have, thank God for the provision. For each piece you do not have, thank God you don't need it. Place the table/stand in the area you plan to worship. If more than one person will be present, place the table in the middle of where you will be seated. Drape the cloth over it. Arrange the cup, plate, glass of water, and other items on the table. Keep the Bible in front of you. Have enough elements for each person in your household.

Questions for the announcement loop

In preparing for Worship, consider the following:

- Do you think your life (words, thoughts, actions) give people hope?
- Is God justified in having hopes for you?
- How do you usually form and lose hope in your life?
- Does God deal in hope or guarantees (or both)?

Opening Sentence

Lamentations 3:22 (CEB)

Certainly the faithful love of the LORD
hasn't ended;
certainly God's compassion
isn't through!

Welcome to this service of Worship, We are glad you are with us! We have a few Community Notes for you to consider as we worship throughout the week...

Welcome Visitors!

We are glad you are here! Our nursery is in the Education Building and our restrooms are in the buildings other than this Sanctuary.

Hope Is a Lifelong Vocation

Given the state of the world, even our immediate lives, speaking of hope might seem a naive venture. Why speak of hope when it seems clear there's little we can do to really change anything. Except...that's not true. God is able to take what little we do, what little we offer, what little we're able, and accomplish great things. Seriously great. But there are lots of things we allow to become roadblocks to our hope: lack of resources, being overwhelmed and, of course, the time-honored classic: impatience. But hope is like a favorite recipe: it takes intentional attention, great ingredients, and time to be good. Really good. As you move through the week, pay attention to what ingredients do you add to your hope. Also, what do you do to stir your hope? And finally, what do you keep in your life, in your heart, that's worth waiting for? Take time to share your discoveries with one another.

Pumpkin Patch Is Here (Practically)!

Starting this weekend, October 5th, our pumpkin patch is open for business! The day before, Saturday, October 4th, we will unload a literal truckload of pumpkins and other gourds. Once set up, we will be selling the lots in the hopes of not just raising funds, but also raising awareness of our

congregation. You *can* help! You can help unload. You can help run the sale by taking a shift or two (or five). You can post one of signs advertising the sale in your yard. You can make phone calls. Every effort adds up to a lot! You can sign up using the volunteer boards or contact Mandy Ealy, Nanette Pedelty, Chris Yow, Caroline Massey, Courtney Covington, Morgan Covington or Vicky MacLean for more information.



The Story of Our Church Is Written in Our Connections

Whether we're talking about history or our ever-emerging present, God's goal has always been to connect us with God's Spirit and each other. A big way this happens is through our stories. *Linking Lives* is

an opportunity for folks to share their stories and in so doing help link us together with each other. Over the next 12 months, there will be opportunities for us to learn more about and, most importantly, *pray* for every family in our congregation. We will feature profiles and have times for personal prayer and chatting as well as bi-monthly opportunities for a podcast featuring faith stories (1st week of the month) and/or burning faith questions or theology (3rd week of the month). Invitation letters have already started going out. You can view/listen to the podcasts on our church YouTube channel or from our website.

The Scouts Are Selling Popcorn!

Our Scouts are in the season for selling popcorn of all kinds of varieties. They are selling at various locations including here in an effort to support their activities.

Congregational Meeting

The Session is calling for a congregational meeting for Sunday, October 5th, immediately following the morning worship service in the Sanctuary. The purpose of the meeting is to receive and act on the report from the Nominating Committee regarding the next class of Elders. They are recommending Courtney Covington, Greg Massey and Nanette

Pedelty for consecutive terms, along with Brody Cameron and Erin Layfield. Morgan Covington is recommended for an additional term as Youth Elder. Profiles for these folks will be published shortly. Thanks to the Nominating Committee for their work!

One of the rights of the congregation in our system is to elect its leadership. The presentation of these names should NOT be seen as the final word on nominations. But the work of the Nominating Committee SHOULD be seen as a prayerful and thoughtful recommendation. We will review the recommended slate as well as any potential additional nominations with rationale made at the meeting. Any additional nominees must be prayerfully considered, have already agreed to have their name placed in nomination and be a member of the congregation.

12 Years of Healing Work!

Believe it or not, 12 years ago Alcoholics Anonymous partnered with us to host a local meeting, regional gatherings, and celebrations here at Hawfields. Every year, our group celebrates their anniversary with us with a Halloween bash potluck. To put plainly, we are invited to attend! Costumes are welcome. Books for jails and prisons are welcome and being collected. The meal starts eat 6:30pm and the guest speaker begins at 7:30pm. come be a part of the celebration!

This Weekend Is World Communion Sunday!

It is an opportunity to participate knowing that Christians from around the earth will be sharing the symbol of the Table together. In anticipation of the occasion, share a greeting in another language during the greeting time!

(10am only) Greet one another in Christ!

(10am only) Introit

"We are Called" by Noah Melton

Despite what comes, God's loyal love never ceases.

In this moment, let us stand, take a deep breath, silence our devices, and continue in worship. Let us make use of the Call to Worship that is before you...

(10am only) Call to Worship

Hurricanes might even combine

Earthquakes can rage

Shutdowns can leave people without help

Violence can leave us shaken

Troubles can feel inevitable and overwhelming

Yet God's love is the only truly certain thing

Sing:

"Today We Are All Called to be Disciples"

GTG #757

Prayer of Confession/Preparation

We sometimes forget that hopes are not imposed, they're cultivated. It's not good that we forget that. It's important to talk about our shortcomings so that we're ready to hear what God has to say. Let us begin with silent prayer...

(Please pray silently...)

Pray: God of Our Hopes, You have called us to walk on the stormy waters. You have called us to have courage in the face of our fears. You have marked us as your own even when we aren't acting like your own. You offer us explanations, directions, blessings even though we don't listen, won't go, and fold our arms. And yet, your hopes for us remain. Forgive us when we allow our hopes with you to wane: in our actions, the things we tell each other, the things we tell ourselves, the ways we refuse to pray. May our hopes become as rich as the hopes you maintain for us. May we come to reflect your generosity as enthusiastically as we receive it. Thank you for listening, God. Amen.

(10am only) Assurance of Pardon

God's love can change everything, even the power of our sins over us. And it is God's will that we have this power:

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

The Peace of Christ be with you

And also with you.

(10am only) Gloria Patri (Glory to God)

Glory be to the Father and to the Son

And to the Holy Ghost

As it was in the beginning

It is now and ever shall be

World without end: Amen, amen.

Reading of Scripture

Say: When the temptation and tendency to overcomplicate God's will overtakes us, God's Word is given, accessible and ready. By God's Spirit, it can light up even the darkest recesses of our hearts and minds and show us something new. Let us be open to this gift of God and ask for help to understand. Let us pray...(everyone sings)

Pray/Sing: *"Make Me a Servant"* CEL #669

Make me a servant, humble and meek;

Lord, let me lift up those who are weak.

And may the prayer of my heart always be:

Make me a servant, make me a servant, Make me a servant today.

The Book of Lamentations is a book of songs of mourning. They are reflections that come from out of the Exile and are basically Israel's way of saying, "Sorry, God, for everything." But out of these words of mourning come some of the most powerful words of hope in the entire Bible. Listen closely to the Word of God to us all and our ongoing place in God's story...

Read: Lamentations 1:1-6, 3:19-26 (CEB)

Excerpts of Mourning.

1:1 Oh, no!

She sits alone, the city that was once full of people.

Once great among nations,

she has become like a widow.

Once a queen over provinces,

she has become a slave.

² She weeps bitterly in the night,

her tears on her cheek.

None of her lovers comfort her.

All her friends lied to her;

they have become her enemies.

³ Judah was exiled after suffering and hard service.

She lives among the nations; she finds no rest.

All who were chasing her caught her—
right in the middle of her distress.

⁴ Zion's roads are in mourning;

no one comes to the festivals.

All her gates are deserted.

Her priests are groaning,

her young women grieving. She is bitter.

⁵ Her adversaries have become rulers;

her enemies relax.

Certainly the LORD caused her grief because of her many wrong acts.

Her children have gone away,
captive before the enemy.

⁶ Daughter Zion lost all her glory.

Her officials are like deer that can't find pasture.

They have gone away, frail, before the hunter.

3:19 The memory of my suffering
and homelessness

is bitterness and poison.

²⁰ I can't help but remember and am depressed.

²¹ I call all this to mind—therefore, I will wait.

²² Certainly the faithful love of the LORD
hasn't ended;

certainly God's compassion isn't through!

²³ They are renewed every morning.

Great is your faithfulness.

²⁴ I think: The LORD is my portion!

Therefore, I'll wait for him.

²⁵ The LORD is good to those who hope in him,
to the person who seeks him.

²⁶ It's good to wait in silence
for the LORD's deliverance.

*One: For the Word of God in Scripture, for the
Word of God among us, for the Word of God within
us...*

All: Thanks be to God!

Children's Sermon

Adults, you'll need:

- a picture or video of a sunrise
- Don't forget to wait for answers
"Object Permanence"
- So this is a sunrise...it's happened every morning. We go to bed and the next day the sun rises, shines, even when the day is cloudy, there's light everywhere.
- But how do you know the sun will rise?...the truth is, we don't know that. All we can do is hope it does. Hope. That's a big people word for thinking something will happen. We hope Christmas comes. We hope someone will be kind to us. We hope people will be happier. We hope people will stop fighting so much. We hope to have something to eat. We hope to take a bath (at least we should!). We hope we don't get sick. we hope the sun rises.

- Our faith in God is like this. We hope all of God's promises come true. And all we can really know about that is how God has kept promises in the past. God always does. Therefore we can have faith. We can have hope.
- So when you're around the people who care about you, ask them about their hopes. Then tell them yours.
- Don't forget to pray!

(10am only) Anthem:

"How Beautiful (Incorporating When I Survey the Wondrous Cross)" arr. Benjamin Harlan

Sermon: "Therefore I Have Hope" *Despite what comes, God's loyal love never ceases.*

What does it really mean to you to *make* something happen? As you think about your life and your choices, what have you truly made manifest, truly made happen?

I can really relate to people who tell that sometimes it feels like they can look back and see how God stitched everything together for them, cleared the path so that they're life ended up where it did. Or how some situation clearly had God's fingerprints on it. Believe me, as a good ol' fashioned, classically-trained Presbyterian, I'm all about God's provision and sovereignty.

But I'm also keenly aware that I'm not just a spectator to my own life or even the lives of others. What I choose to say and do, even think and feel, matters a great deal. It makes a difference if I send that letter or make that call or sign that contract or tell that person "No" and the other person "Yes." It matters if I move to Alaska or to Texas or to Mebane or Madagascar. I only have this one life and therefore this one chance to see, not just what God will make of me, but what I will make of myself.

So...which is it? **What rules or governs** our lives? God's sovereignty or our choices?

Truthfully, our forebears struggled with this question also. In fact, the Book of Job is devoted to it. And the various people of faith pictured for us

throughout the Bible struggled with telling the difference. But when it came to the Exile, there was no doubt: It was Israel's fault.

There were lots of ideas floating around about prescriptions for **what would happen after the Exile** and how to even understand how they came to be in the Promised Land. There were varying schools of thought as to the necessity of the Temple versus the Torah versus just plain giving up on the whole idea of being God's people, exclusively or otherwise (see Jonah, for example). But on the subject of the Exile itself, there was no debate: it came as a result of the nation's sins and at God's hand. It is a powerfully depressing vision. The idea that the God of unfathomable love and vast mercy would cause and affect (not just permit, but make happen) the Exile was beyond sobering. And living in the midst of it, I can only imagine the anguish. I mean, seriously y'all, when you watch your home be flattened to the ground and your place of worship be gutted and burned to the ground and you watch your children be carted off to be slaves or worse, all of that trauma can leave more than just scars. When you watch your leaders be executed and your army be overrun and your culture be overturned overnight, the sense that things will never be the same becomes abiding belief.

I watched as my father-in-law tried to adjust to the changes in the textile industry here, even to the point of uprooting his family at a pace that rivaled military deployments. And as the last job dried up and the last plant moved overseas, he asked fundamental questions in himself. Who am I now? How do I even understand who I'm supposed to be? What am I doing if I'm not running a knitting floor?

What about the legion of shooting victims we can point to? Do we really think their questions are any less fundamental? What about storm victims? Abuse victims? Folks suffering from the political whims of war or changes in policies they have come to depend on? What about folks who get that diagnosis? Come into that life complication that changes everything? What do you do when your memories start betraying you and your own hands or lungs or heart or legs or eyes or back

refuse to obey you anymore? What do you do when you don't even recognize where you live or your country anymore? All of these things have one very real thing in common. Grief. They all induce grief because the people in question are suffering the death of something or someone. Grief to the point of mourning. Grief to the point of tears. Grief to the point of anger. Grief to the point of questioning everything, fundamentally.

This is where the Exile was leaving Israel. And it gave the prophets who were trying to help Israel cope with it no pleasure to lay blame. How compounded a grief to experience, knowing that it could've all been different had they simply made different choices? If they had actually taken God at God's word and lived a different path than the ones they chose? The idea of a dream well within reach being snatched away, not by God, but by their own faithlessness. **Verse 5 leaves no room** for doubt:

*Certainly the LORD caused her grief
because of her many wrong acts.*

To be sure, there were folks caught up in the consequences of the sins of their neighbors. People who sought to actually be faithful but were swept up in the consequences of dishonest economics, ill treatment of the orphans and discarding of widows and the fundamental rejection of none other than God (the complaint of all the prophets against the nation). The grief all were made to experience went beyond who was to blame, who deserved what, who caused what. Broken down to their most basic needs, **the people were left** with one question: "What happens now?"

It might be easy to miss that one of the most popular songs in Christian hymnody takes its inspiration from this book of mourning and sadness. The song "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" comes from Lamentations, **specifically, chapter 3:23:**

*They are renewed every morning.
Great is your faithfulness.*

It is more than just a clever poetic tie to speak of God's compassion, mercies, renewing like the

morning, **like the sunrise**. Though we do nothing to cause it, though we do nothing to control the brightness or reach of the sun's heat, we hope for it's coming, for it's rising, with a sense of certainty. This is how the author has framed God's compassion and, most importantly, **God's hesed**.

We've talked about this word before. It's one of those Hebrew words that just doesn't have an English equivalent and so we punt. We throw lots of words at it, trying to define it well enough. About as short, and close, as I understand it: Loyal love. The kind of love a Mom has for a son, even when they land *themselves* in jail. The kind of love a friend has another that they drop everything to help. The kind of love that makes a whole bus of children MY children so I choose not to pass when the red lights are flashing and the STOP sign is poked out. The kind of love that makes a place, a people, family. The kind of love that doesn't give up even when maybe it should. It's like flypaper except that you WANT to be stuck. Hesed aches the heart until the best is attained for the one loved this way. Hesed is so important because it defines the morals of none other than God. God loves us enough to allow us to suffer the consequences of *some* of our actions, but not all. God loves us enough to tell us the truth about our sins, but also of what remains possible. God loves us enough to allow us to see the horrific and the honorable, the excruciating and the exemplary, the terrible and the terrific. Our choices matter because God takes us seriously in this relationship, seriously enough not to lie to us.

And so the passage presses us to do the one we don't like doing as a humanity: **wait**.

Waiting on God.

Of course, the meaning of this is patience. But imagine us waiting on God, "hand and foot." Tending to God's needs, making sure there was enough food, water, clearing the mess, bringing the dessert menu: waiting on God. What would that even look like?

But waiting on God isn't just sitting around waiting for God to do all of that for us...is it?

We celebrate World Communion this weekend. It's a time set aside for Christians around the world to observe the sacrament of the Table and remember the bread and cup. To remember Jesus, taking off his clothes donning a servant's garb and washing the disciples' feet, serving them the meal, and leaving them with the one instruction that bolster all our hopes in a time such as ours.

Hope, then, isn't driven by circumstances but it is informed by them. It is driven by blind belief but it is fed by our imaginations. Hope is not merely something that happens TO us, but something in which we participate. Because despite what comes, God's loyal love never ceases. May it be so with our hopes, people of God. Morning by morning may people see new mercies in us, new love in us.

Song of Reflection

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness" GTG #39

Offering

God chooses to love us, abundantly. We should respond by choosing to be loving, abundantly. This is why we should give and share what we have and who we are. Let us reflect together on what has been given...

(10am only) Offertory

"One World, One Communion" by Pepper Chaplin
Duet: Noah and Lora Melton

(10am only) Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below.**

Alleluia, Alleluia!

**Praise God above ye heavenly hosts;
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost.**

Alleluia, Alleluia!

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Blessing

(text online only)

Let there be no doubt, Great God: you love us. And we are grateful. Let there be no doubt, Great God: we should be loving in turn. As we receive the gifts you provide, may the gifts we are meant to be emerge. In the great name of Jesus Christ, we pray this together. Amen.

Service of Communion

- Say: Let us first show we belong to a faith larger than ourselves. Let us say what we believe:

I believe in God's hopes—

That God created us for a reason,

That God chose people for a reason

That God fought for us for a reason

That God fought against us for a reason

That God called us out on our sins for a reason

That God made us partners with God for the building of the kingdom

That God created us for a purpose.

**We are clay that can be remade, reshaped:
prophets, priests, teachers, students,
companions, travelers, historians, parents,
grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings and most
importantly children
all tilling the earth**

**Now by God's grace,
God's love really does
change everything**

**and makes us people of God
because of Jesus Christ**

Who was, who is, and is to come.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

- Say: The Lord be with you...and also with you. God invites us to the Table as we are, given who we are! God invites us to the Table even though we may think we don't belong. Yet God invites us, does NOT force us, because God still loves us. So let us answer together as one Church across time, across our homes, across our various situations, and eat and drink of what the Lord offers. Let us pray...
- "Come, Bring Your Burdens to God" GTG #851
**Come, bring your burdens to God
Come, bring your burdens to God
Come, bring your burdens to God
For Jesus will never say no. (2X)**
- Creator God, We were made with the best of the best. You fashioned everything we appreciate about ourselves and each other. We've been given the best of the best. We have more than we can need and use: more space, more air, more sustenance, more love, than we could consume in a lifetime. Now, O Lord, help us live the best of the best life. Simply, help us live the way you wish.
- And please help us remember how we started. Help us remember well what you did. Knowing

that you used the best of the best to make us and gave us your own Spirit to empower us, it makes sense that you would not give up on us. But as we celebrate your grace, let remember well the example of the Potter. Let us remember that we must make room for you to be God and for you to refashion us as you wish. Help us be open to the transformation you wish to make in us that the world around us might change as a result..

- Thus, let us be Godly people. Let us make a harvest of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Teach us to live lives weeding out apathy, selfishness, cravenness, callousness, and evil. We pray this not only for ourselves, but for so many that we can name... (take time to name your own prayers)
- Thank you for believing in us, Thank you for transforming us. Thank you for teaching us, even how to pray when words fail us, saying,
- **Pray: 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.**
- (take the bread in your hands) On the night in which he was betrayed, Jesus took the bread and having blessed it he broke it, gave it to his disciples and said, "This is my Body given for you. As often as you eat of it, do this in remembrance of me." (break and eat some of the bread)
- (take the cup with juice in your hands) In the same manner he took the cup, and, having blessed it, he gave it to his disciples and said, "This cup represents the new covenant sealed by my blood for the forgiveness of many. All of you drink of it." (drink some of the juice)
- Say: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup we proclaim the Lord's saving death until He comes. These are the gifts of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.
- The only proper response to the grace of God is gratitude. Let us pray together with the whole Church:

- **Pray: Thank you, God, for making us your kingdom. Help us live out that thanks by being a refuge to all you call us to. Thank you for including us at your Table. Help us do the same with ours. In the great name of Jesus Christ we pray this together. Amen.**

Hymn of Sending

(10am) *"I Come with Joy"* GTG #515

Sending & Benediction

Let us say together our benediction...

**Despite what comes,
God's loyal love never ceases.**

(raise your hands and say) "Get up, take heart,
Jesus is still calling you..."; Go, and the peace of
God which surpasses all understanding guide your
hearts and minds this day and forever more. Amen!

Christ is risen!

The Lord is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

Sing: *"Show Me Your Ways"* by Russell Forager

**Show me Your ways that I may walk with You,
Show me Your ways, I put my hope in You.
The cry of my heart is to love you more,
To live with the touch of your hand,
Stronger each day, show me Your ways.**

(10am only) Postlude

"Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation"

arr. Cindy Berry
