

WORSHIP SERVICE PLAN**(Traditional & Online Service)**

November 16, 2025 • 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

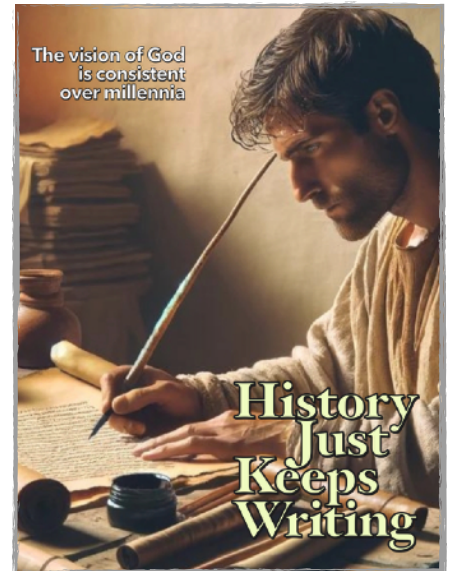
Isaiah 65:17-25; Revelation 21:1-5*"History Just Keeps Writing"*

The vision of God is consistent over millennia.

(online only) Preparation for Worship

Gather these items for worship. If an items unavailable, fret not:

- a piece of white cloth
- an end table or stand
- a plate
- a cup
- a glass or bowl
- a lighter/match
- ink pens or pencils
- 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:*

- What do you think your life is adding to history?
- We talk about the mark we're making on life. What mark is life making on you?
- Why do you think God willed you to be?
- What difference do your choices make? Why does God allow you to have such an impact?

Opening Sentence**Isaiah 65:24 (CEB)**

"Before they call, I will answer;
while they are still speaking, I will hear."
—God

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.

What Difference Do You Make?

It can be very easy to dismiss our role or impact. We are quite certain (at least, we think we are) of how things affect us, but our impact on others is less clear. There are any number of reasons for this: distance, awareness, indifference, apathy, maybe even a low assessment of how far-reaching God permits our acts to collide with the world, with the people, around us. But at any and all times our choices matter a great deal to God. Not only that, but because God has graced us to be here on purpose, we are already a part of the history God is writing. And so this week, whatever decisions, large or small, visible or hidden, spoken or unspoken, consider that God's purposes are wrapped up in the choices you make. The bottom line is we should be praying a LOT more than we do. We never know who's being touched by us.

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. Prayer Time with the Pastor is an

opportunity for you talk and pray about *anything!* The podcasts (first and third Sundays at 3:00pm) are opportunities to ask anything and share your stories. Link up with any or all of these opportunities!



Directory Update

The update of our church directory needs you! You can find an update form in the vestibule, Fellowship Hall or online. *Please fill out BOTH sides of the form*, including your name(s), addresses (college students too!), home and/or cell phone numbers, children or other household members, dates of birth, baptisms, and joining dates. No worries if you don't have all the dates—just fill out what you do have! Please return the completed form to the offering plate, church office, or mail.

Also, we're taking photos for the directory each Sunday through November 30th, from 11:15 AM to 1:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall or during the week by appointment. We will also be taking pictures following the Faith@Night Service. You can make use of the sign up sheet in the sanctuary to have your photo taken for the directory. This only works with your participation!



Our Theme for Advent 2025

An expectant mother isn't just a bystander or a passive observer of their pregnancy. Waiting on the child to be born means wellness visits, fulfilling cravings, bones and hormones shifting, nesting, changes in clothing, changes in priorities, changes in habits. Waiting on the child can involve self-

reflection, changing relationships, periods of discovery, even illness. And hopefully the community surrounding and supporting the mother to be are going through changes as well. We have traditionally called Mary the *theotokos*, "God-bearer." And Mary's journey through Advent is instructive for us. As we anticipate what God is going to do, is *our* waiting passive or active? Are we making room, making preparations for the grace of God to arrive in our lives? May our own journeys through Advent involve self-reflection, changing relationships, periods of discovery as well. Jesus is coming!

(10am only) Greet one another in Christ!

(10am only) Gathering Song

"Come into His Presence" CEL #171

**Come into His presence
with thanksgiving in your heart
and give Him praise, and give Him praise;
Come into His presence
with thanksgiving in your heart,
your voices raise, your voices raise.
Give glory and honor and power unto Him,
Jesus, the name above all names.**

(10am only) Prelude:

"The Solid Rock" arr. Melody Bober

The vision of God is consistent over millennia.

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

Time keeps moving

As does the history God is writing

God's grace is ever present

As is our responsibility to live gracefully

The end is already prescribed

As is the love God gives and expects us to share

Sing:

"God Is Here!" GTG #409

Prayer of Confession/Preparation

Sometimes we are dismissive of our role in the history God is writing. It's not good that we do 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: Holy God, you have made and kept promises. You have taken what was shattered and put it back together. You make allies of the unlikely and heroes of the rejected. You rewrite by your grace the histories our sins continue to author. You answer sickness with healing, poverty with provision, isolation with Emmanuel. And for whatever your reasons, Lord, you want us to be a part of all of that. Help us embrace this partnership and legacy. Forgive us for dismissing our role in the future you want 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. 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: God's Word is a gift. And good gifts are meant to be opened. Our hearts and minds are gifts. And good gifts are meant to be opened. God offers to help us open our presents by God's own Spirit. Let us take God up on that offer and ask for help to understand. Let us pray...(everyone sings)

Pray/Sing: "Lead Me, Lord" CEL #695

Lead me, Lord,

lead me in Your righteousness;

Make Your way plain before my face.

Lead me, Lord.

Sometimes we emphasize a difference between the Old and New Testaments. We place a wedge in our understanding of who God is as we find God in these pages. And yet the God of Creation, the God of the Exodus, the God of the Kings, the God of the Exile, the God who gifted us with Jesus Christ, is the same. Our Scripture lessons come to us from two places: the prophet Isaiah and the Revelation to John. Listen closely to the Word of God to us all and our ongoing place in God's story...

Read: Isaiah 65:17-25 (CEB)

New Creation and New Jerusalem.

¹⁷ Look! I'm creating
a new heaven and a new earth:
past events won't be remembered;
they won't come to mind.

¹⁸ Be glad and rejoice forever
in what I'm creating,
because I'm creating Jerusalem as a joy
and her people as a source of gladness.

¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem
and be glad about my people.
No one will ever hear the sound of weeping
or crying in it again.

²⁰ No more will babies live only a few days,
or the old fail to live out their days.

The one who dies at a hundred
will be like a young person,
and the one falling short of a hundred
will seem cursed.

²¹ They will build houses and live in them;
they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

²² They won't build for others to live in,
nor plant for others to eat.

Like the days of a tree
will be the days of my people;
my chosen will make full use of their handiwork.

²³ They won't labor in vain,
nor bear children to a world of horrors,
because they will be people blessed by the LORD,
they along with their descendants.

²⁴ Before they call, I will answer;
while they are still speaking, I will hear.

²⁵ Wolf and lamb will graze together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox,
but the snake—its food will be dust.

They won't hurt or destroy at any place

on my holy mountain,
says the LORD.

Revelation 21:1-5 (CEB)

New Creation and New Jerusalem.

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ I heard a loud voice from the throne say, "Look! God's dwelling is here with humankind. He will dwell with them, and they will be his peoples. God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more. There will be no mourning, crying, or pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." ⁵ Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look! I'm making all things new." He also said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

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 piece of paper and writing implement
- If you aren't feeling inspired, you might use a video of someone drawing
- Don't forget to wait for answers

"Lines on a Page"

- (Speak as you draw)
- This is just a pencil and a piece of paper. By themselves, they may not seem special. But the pencil can be neat colors, it can even have an eraser. And the paper can become an envelope, an airplane, even a mask.
- But where these two things really shine is what they can be together. A few marks. A few lines on the page and suddenly you have a picture, an idea of something, on the page. You can carry it with you, copy it, love it, or even turn it away. But whatever the pencil and paper were, they are so much more when the drawing happens.

- Our faith is like this. On our own we're special, we're amazing! But with God, we become so much more.
- So when you're around the people who care about you, ask them how God is drawing in their life. Talk with them about how God is drawing yours.
- Don't forget to pray!

(10am only) Anthem:

"Lift Me Up!" by Andy Beck; Soloists: Michele Vincent, David Ealy; Percussionist: Chason Alligood

"History Just Keeps Writing"

The vision of God is consistent over millennia.

So, in your opinion, what was the most significant event in human history? I mean, what kind of question is that, right? There are far too many choices! Creation? Learning to farm or fish? How about hunting? The building of the pyramids? The invention of the printing press? The discovery of fire? The invention of writing? Abraham saying 'Yes' to God (more than once)? Ruth choosing to stay with Naomi? Mary saying 'Yes' to God? Joseph staying engaged to Mary? The resurrection of Jesus Christ? The giving of the Holy Spirit (at many points throughout history)? Maybe something that hasn't happened yet?

Of course, what we choose is a reflection of what's important to us in any given moment. Any answer to such a question is so subjective as to be resistant to consensus, rightfully. Let's face it: we celebrate birthdays for a reason. We celebrate anniversaries for a reason. We have local and national holidays for a reasons. We observe points on the calendar like points on the compass. History can help us stay sane, recover hope, gain perspective on what we're experiencing presently. Our history can frame how we even understand our futures.

And God's values, God's priorities, God's sense of history are plain. There are definitely things that God wants. And as people who claim to follow God, to believe in God, God's sense of history is supremely important.

If you ever find yourself wondering how to keep God's sense of history in front of you, then I invite

you to remember Genesis 1:1 in its genius simplicity:

When God began to create the heavens and the earth...

One of the reasons why history can be so fascinating is the answer to the question of how it started. How did this war start? No, how did it *really* start? Who discovered this technique? When did they realize things were going sideways? When was victory clear? When did they know they were making history?

Making history.

The phrase seems grandiose and yet is completely accessible to everyone born because there is no history without us. And as we move through time, we realize over and over again a truth the second Creation story teaches:

...The LORD God formed the human from the topsoil of the fertile land and blew life's breath into his nostrils. The human came to life.

—Genesis 2:7

With a beginning like that, what can we possibly point to that doesn't have God's breath as a part of it? At the same time, God instilled from the beginning that our choices would matter. Unlike the AI that created this marvelously weird picture,



God created us to move past programming and robotic limitations. God makes us partners in history unfolding. We get to shape destiny!

If it isn't obvious to us by now, it should be: we have not handled this power well. Our history is replete with examples of selfishness, abuses, and just plain evil. But it is also ubiquitous with dignity, heroics, and the goodness God intended with us.

So on what should we focus? Where should we cast our gaze when trying to visualize the past and zero on the future? Well, we ought to be paying attention to what God's been doing.

Our Bible is 66 books from a wide variety of cultures, eras, philosophies, agendas and faith. It is such a marvelous example of the wide diversity that is the human race. But it is also a cozy consistent picture of God.

If you're like me, you grew up learning that the Old Testament God was the angry, wrathful God and the New Testament God was the loving, merciful God. Nice, right? But that assessment is not only misguided or misinformed: it's just wrong. The God of the Old Testament is the God that inspired ALL of the Biblical writers, breathed into them, and is the same God breathing into us now. Not only that, but whenever any of them, including Jesus himself, are quoting Scripture, they are quoting the Old Testament. Jesus didn't invent the two greatest laws: they are located in Leviticus. That's about as old and dry and tedious a book as you can find.

But don't take my word for it, see for yourself. Compare the language of the prophet Isaiah and the end times of Revelation.

Read:

Isaiah 65:17-25 (CEB)
New Creation and New Jerusalem.

Revelation 21:1-5 (CEB)
New Creation and New Jerusalem.

What do you see? What do you notice? What do you *feel*?

I can remember well taking a workshop on Biblical interpretation. In it, the leader asked us to detail Genesis 11:1-9 from memory. It's a story I thought I knew well. In fact, I was so confident in what I thought I knew, I actually lost my breath at much I

got wrong about the story. I invite you to try it. Write down everything you remember about the story of the Tower of Babel (including why we call it that). Then compare what you remember to the actual passage.

It's amazing how authoritative our memories can feel. And so God says, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." I'm glad for the corrective.

What do we find comparing "Old" and "New"? We find God never stopped creating. We find God never gave up breathing life into us. We find God not backing off, backing away, backing down. We find God pressing to the new Heaven and new Earth and, importantly, dwelling WITH us. This isn't some history that God is trying to write us OUT of. God is, as ever, trying to include us. Even now. Even after all of our attempts to write the history in a way God didn't want.

The thing is, God's intention for us, it's in us already. Think about the number of times you've heard somebody say, "Why can't we get along?" or "Why can't we just talk to each other?" We KNOW it's supposed to be different. We already know what we are experiencing is not the end of the story, the end of our history with God. The vision of God is consistent over millennia. And we are consistently a part of that vision, that history. It's well past time we set aside our murky and non-sober view of our history and recover what God has spent those millennia trying to help us see. In just a few weeks we'll start down the road to celebrate it.

Emmanuel.

Song of Reflection

"This Is My Father's World" CEL #143

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

"I Want to Know Him" arr. Carl Seal; Soloist: Lora Melton

(10am only) Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below.
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts;
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Blessing

(text is for the ONLINE service)

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.

Prayers of the People

- Say: The Lord be with you...and also with you. Let us pray...
- "Blest Be the Tie That Binds" CEL #426
**Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.(2X)**
- Holy God, we know in our heads that everything happens in your time. But it's hard to be patient. We want to see and end to wars, to starvation, to greed, to lying, to oppression, to malice, to harassment, to violence, to corruption, to apathy now, right now. Yet even as we pine for such things, we know you want them more. Forgive us, please, for causing such things, but thank you so much for continuing to make us a part of the solution. Thank you for having the confidence in us to actually count on our destiny as your people. Thank you, God, with all our hearts.
- Help us stop being carried away with time. We complain that we don't have enough. We complain when we must wait. We complain when we realize anew how very much it is out of our control. Help us to be obsessed with you instead, Great God. Help us to be obsessed with loving better, praying better, better building up our courage, being better disciples. Thank you for believing we can get there: that we can reach the expectations you have for us.

- Thus, let us be Godly people. Let us make a habit of compassion and consolation. Let us make second nature your grace and mercy and sense of justice. Let us set aside safety and embrace risk-taking with you. May your healing balm reach through us to those around us, especially those on our prayer lists and those we will come to know. Help us love and give love. Help us value mercy as you do. Despite our collective answer of violence, of disdain, of division, of cynicism, to your love, may we truly be washed by you and embrace hope instead...(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.**

Hymn of Sending

(10am) "O for A World" GTG #372

Sending & Benediction

Let us say together our benediction...

We are consistently a part of God's vision, God's history. So let us embrace it.

(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!

Sing: "The Family of God" CEL #419

I'm so glad I'm a part of the fam'ly of God,

I've been washed in the fountain,

cleansed by His blood!

Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod;

For I'm part of the fam'ly, the fam'ly of God.

(10am only) Postlude

"Lord, I Lift Your Name on High"

arr. Victor Labenske
