

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

June 28, 2026 • 13th Weekend in Ordinary Time

Genesis 22:1-14*"Divine Examination"*

It's not 'pass/fail' but rather who do you love.

(online only) Preparation for Worship

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

- a piece of **green** cloth
- an end table or stand
- a plate
- a cup
- a glass or bowl with water
- a lighter/match
- a blank check (real or fabricated; it's a symbol)
- 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.

Questions for the announcement loop*In preparing for Worship, consider the following:*

- Are there limits to what God gets to ask of you?
- What definitely gets a "No" from you when it comes to God?
- Can you really say that you love God more than anything or anyone else?
- Do you think it is worth it to God to give us Jesus Christ?

Introit:*"In His Presence"* arr. Richard Kingsmore

Soloist: Noah Melton

Opening Sentence**Genesis 22:8 (CEB)**

Abraham said, "The lamb for the entirely burned offering? God will see to it, my son." The two of them walked on together.

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, living that Christian life...

**Welcome Visitors!**

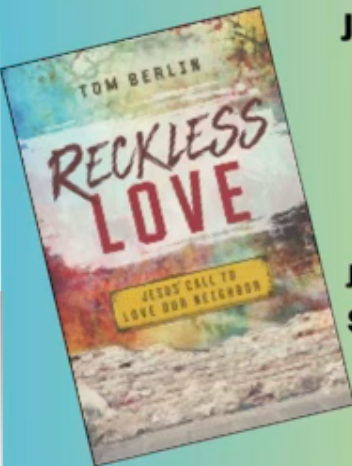
We are glad you are here! Our nursery is in the Education Building and our restrooms are in the buildings other than this Sanctuary.

Faith's Hard Edge

Connecting, really connecting, with God brings joy, peace, comfort, strength, passion, insights, and warmth. No question. And for us as Christians, the imperative to pray is more than a sentiment. What can rattle us, however, is the level of trust that faith in God demands. We are conditioned early to trust our own strength, our own insights, our own wisdom. And why not? God gave them to us. Why shouldn't we employ them? But there's an edge to our faith that calls into question who or what we trust more. Do we truly trust God ahead of all else? Are we willing to trust God's judgment more than our own? Are we willing to be patient, be courageous, be consistent for the sake of a God that simply doesn't do things our way? As you move through this summer, embrace the places where God not only comforts you or cares for you. Embrace the places in your life where God challenges you, chastises you. And when you find God's demands to seem impossible, remember that God loves us impossibly.

We Should Be Praying for and Celebrating Our Nation

While our 250th birthday as a country is certainly a major milestone, we should celebrate always that we are part of this nation. We should be praying, of course, for all that yet needs changing and those dreams that remain unrealized. But as July 4th approaches, take time to itemize so much we should be grateful for. Not only will we participate in the annual booths and parade in downtown Mebane that morning, we will have our God & Country Prayer Service at 2:00pm in the Sanctuary. More than ever our country is in need of prayer: for direction and because of our direction; for peace and because of our pieces; for power and because of our uses of power; for hope and because of our hopelessness. This prayer service celebrating Independence Day is designed for all of that but also to acknowledge the true blessing it is to live in the United States of America, to enjoy the freedoms we share and the opportunities yet before us as a nation, as citizens, as family members, bound by a living Constitution and our living God.



**Join us for a new
6 Week Book
Study!**

**Starting Monday,
July 6 at 7:00 in the
Session Room we'll
learn how to have
Reckless Love for
our neighbors.**

Hawfields Church

(10am only) Greet one another in Christ!

(10am only) Gathering Song

"What a Mighty God We Serve" CEL#672 (chorus)

What a mighty God we serve.

What a mighty God we serve.

Angels bow before Him,

heaven and earth adore Him.

What a mighty God we serve (2X)

(10am only) Prelude:

"Since Jesus Came Into My Heart" arr. Melody Bober

It's not 'pass/fail' but rather who do you love.

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

(10am only) Call to Worship

God calls us to love greatly

Because God loves greatly

God calls us to forgive widely

Because God forgives widely

God calls us to advocate for others

Because God advocates for us

God calls on us to make sacrifices

Because God gave us the Christ

Sing:

"God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand"
GTG #331

Prayer of Confession/Preparation

God's love for us means God has high expectations for us. We shouldn't 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: Lord God, In all of our seeking of your voice, your will, your blessings, we have stopped short of thinking about how we use our our voice, our will and our blessings. We forget, God, that all we have we have from you and we fail to take time to ask "Why". Why have you blessed us so? Who are these blessings

**meant to help? Who are we meant to help?
Slow us down, God, and help us realize that the
answer to the problems we see around us, the
answer you've provided, might actually be us.
When the time comes for sacrifice, help us not
shirk the opportunity. 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 confirmation of what God has
promised all along: to be with us. Taking in God's
Word is a chance for us to be with God. God offers
to make that happen through the power of God's
Spirit. Let us take God up on that offer and ask for
help to understand. Let us pray...(everyone sings)*

Pray/Sing: "Break, Thou, the Bread of Life"

GTG #460 v.2

Bless thou the truth, dear Lord, now unto me.

as thou didst bless the bread by Galilee.

Then shall all bondage cease, all fetters fall.

And I shall find my peace, my all in all.

*The following story is one of the most important in
the life of Abraham, rivaling even the sign of the
covenant from Genesis 17. Abraham is a man with
many faults and several whopping mistakes at this
point in his life. Yet his demonstration of faith in this
story is both disturbing and legendary. Listen
closely to the Word of God to us all and for our
place in God's grace...*

Read: Genesis 22:1-14 (CEB)

Binding of Isaac.

¹ After these events, God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!"

Abraham answered, "I'm here."

² God said, "Take your son, your only son whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah. Offer him up as an entirely burned offering there on one of the mountains that I will show you." ³ Abraham got up early in the morning, harnessed his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, together with his son Isaac. He split the wood for the entirely burned offering, set out, and went to the place God had described to him.

⁴ On the third day, Abraham looked up and saw the place at a distance. ⁵ Abraham said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will walk up there, worship, and then come back to you."

⁶ Abraham took the wood for the entirely burned offering and laid it on his son Isaac. He took the fire and the knife in his hand, and the two of them walked on together. ⁷ Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father?"

Abraham said, "I'm here, my son."

Isaac said, "Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the entirely burned offering?"

⁸ Abraham said, "The lamb for the entirely burned offering? God will see to it, my son." The two of them walked on together.

⁹ They arrived at the place God had described to him. Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He tied up his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice. ¹¹ But the LORD's messenger called out to Abraham from heaven, "Abraham? Abraham?"

Abraham said, "I'm here."

¹² The messenger said, "Don't stretch out your hand against the young man, and don't do anything to him. I now know that you revere God and didn't hold back your son, your only son, from me." ¹³ Abraham looked up and saw a single ram caught by its horns in the dense underbrush. Abraham went over, took the ram, and offered it as an entirely burned offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ Abraham named that place "the LORD sees." That

is the reason people today say, "On this mountain the LORD is seen."

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:

- some variety of paper dolls
- Tape or glue
- be ready to answer questions

"God's Household"

- (showing the dolls) Do you know what these are?...Yes, they are paper dolls. They are all meant to be a person...Wait, can this doll eat? Can this doll walk or ride a bike? Can this doll build a house or paint your face?
- No, we call these dolls by a special word. That word is "symbol." These are symbols for people. And when we put them together...(tape a few together)...we get a family! We think of them as families because they are connected.
- But what if this doll (take one from one end of the doll chain) needed to be connected to this doll (tape it to the other end's doll)? It would have to disconnect.
- But God wants our family big enough so that eventually...(circle the dolls and tape closed the loop)...no one is left out and everyone is connected. So even when it looks like we're disconnected, God is working to still make us family.
- So when you're around the people who care about you, ask them how God connects them to others.
- Don't forget to pray!

(10am only) Anthem:

"Somebody's Knockin' at Your Door" arr. Lloyd Larson; Duet: Noah and Lora Melton

"Divine Examination"

It's not 'pass/fail' but rather who do you love.

So when our daughter decided **she wanted to be a nurse**, it was rooted in her experience doing CNA work as a part of High School. She learned anatomy at Alamance Community College and got practical advice and reflections from nurses we

know. From there she searched nursing programs and eventually landed on the program at Queens University in Charlotte. Four years of coursework, practical experience, and rigorous testing propelled her to the stage where the campus chaplain blessed her hands and to another stage where she received her diploma and officially became a college graduate. For her work at Duke University Hospital, she had to go through interviews, a background check, and other evaluations. In addition, she just completed a few weeks ago the process of donating stem cells. All of that, and her actual employment boils down to a test. The nursing licensing text of our state covers a wide variety of topics and scenarios that any nurse should know. Despite high marks every step of the way, this test, this snapshot of her knowledge, mood, state of body and mind, could either further or derail her career (even if only temporarily).

One test.

Yet it's supposed to be the way to make it all fair. To make it all equitable. Natalie gets tested against the same body of knowledge that all the nurses in our state should know. Her life story and struggles, her personality, her kindness and sense of humor, her beauty and presence, don't matter. They don't factor in. **Pass the test.**

There are lots of examples of this around us. Just recently, I updated my Scouting Youth Protection certification. For that, I had to pass the test.

When you get your car inspected, it's got to pass a series of tests. People at the DMV: tests. Going to the doctor's office: tests. Food or fire inspectors: tests. Teachers and students: tests. Scientific discovery and water treatment plants: tests. Banks and Stock Market stability: tests. Airplane wing flexibility or tasting that favorite chili recipe: tests!

We use tests for all kinds of things. When even allow sometimes for degrees of success: grades. But in the end, one of the reasons we use tests is to answer a fairly binary question: **pass or fail**. Does the thing or person we're testing pass muster? Will what we're testing work when it matters?

This is what makes it tricky *and often wrong* to do this kind of testing in our relationships. Tests imply an inherent, transactional frame to our dealings with each other. That's just not always the case. Consider all that God has given to us. Are we really prepared to say our relationship with God is rooted merely in cause and effect? As it turns out, mercy, generosity, kindness, discipline, love are all actions that defy the formulaic. Just because I show love to you doesn't mean you'll love me back. Just because I help you doesn't mean you'll help me when the time comes. Our relationships just aren't built that way. Where would you even start to keep up with that kind of scorekeeping?

But we test anyway. We might answer, "Fine" with a sigh to see if the person will dig further: "Okay, what's really going on?" We might not mention an important date or event to see if the other remembers. We might make a deal of giving something to see if that gift will be reciprocated. We might say something outrageous to see how people will react. We even take to saying, "You're testing my patience!" Wow.

But the problem with all of those is they make the same mistake advertising, pornography, financial systems make: **it all objectifies people.** It presumes that we can draw complete meaning from a moment in time. We can know all we need know about a person from one moment, one instance, one act.

While Natalie's test can mess with her career, what kind of nurse she really is will be born of the *whole* of who she is. Not that test. Not any test alone.

That this is true for us all is God's grace at work.

Consider Abraham. He is not a great man. We're talking about a person who not once but twice leveraged his wife's beauty to save his own skin. This is a man who argued with God over Sodom and Gomorrah and banished a slave and his own son to certain death for following his and his wife's plan. And yet there are a lot of scholars in our Library who would tell you Abraham's life boils down to this moment.

Read: Genesis 22:1-14 (CEB) Binding of Isaac.

It's difficult for me to work through this story. My heart is just full of questions. But ultimately, this is, as they say, a defining series of events for Abraham.

First of all, do you think he said anything to his wife, Sarah? Here they are, having been desperate for a child for *decades* and now God requires his *life*?

And then the deception with his servants on the road. The total non-answer he gave his own son! How does he DO that?

But whatever you want to make of the story, what's clear is that **God sees what God needs to see** short of bloodshed.

Reading this, I can tell you that I believe I would have failed this test. I don't think I could have met this moment. Whether our daughters, my wife, earnestly, even any of you. I don't think I would have passed this exam with God.

And how can God ask such a thing in the first place?! This is why I'm so glad that we are New Testament people and we don't have to deal with this Old Testament, Wrath of God kind of...wait... just last week. Did **Jesus himself say**, "Don't think that I've come to bring peace to the earth. I haven't come to bring peace but a sword."

What kind of God are we dealing with?

But then **theologian Jennifer Vicinanza** reminded me of something really important. She said, "Our faith is being worked out...our faith won't be perfected until we're with Christ."

In fact, **Hebrews 12:2** tells us to "...(CEB) fix our eyes on Jesus, faith's pioneer and perfecter. He endured the cross, ignoring the shame, for the sake of the joy that was laid out in front of him, and sat down at the right side of God's throne."

What happened there on the mountain with Abraham and God and Isaac and the ram in the

thicket, was not a test. It was God perfecting the one thing Abraham needed to get it right, to make one of the most important promises in the universe work. How could Abraham become the father of faith if he didn't have any? How was he to become a blessing to all nations if his faith was wanting? It wasn't a matter of the moment. It was a matter of all the moments and those to come. **How far was Abraham willing to trust God?** Sure, that's important. It really is. And it's a question we should be asking ourselves.

But **how far could God trust Abraham?** That's the harder question. And there aren't enough tests in the world to answer that adequately.

So God doesn't do that with us. God simply loves us. God tries because God thinks we're worth trying. God seeks, finds, helps, blesses, spans, yells, holds, heals, and provides. And let's be clear: we know it's not transactional because how much of all of that does God get back from us? **Y'all, It's not 'pass/fail' but rather who do you love.** And God loves us. God has shown remarkable trust with us. With everything that matters to us, let us trust God also. Let us love God back.

Song of Reflection

"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing" GTG #475

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

"Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing"
arr. Cindy Berry

(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: God doesn't just hear our prayers. God answers. Let us pray...
- "Kum ba ya" GTG #472
**Hear us praying Lord, kum ba ya.
Hear us praying Lord, kum ba ya.
Hear us praying Lord, kum ba ya.
Oh Lord, kum ba ya.**
- Holy God, Abraham's story is tough for us. We marvel at his courage and determination. We honor the sacrifice he was willing to make. But help us remember well that this is a tough moment for you as well. Help us remember your courage and determination to see this through. Help us honor the sacrifices you have and continue to make. In the end, O God, faith is a two way street and you have elected to get on the road with us.
- So help us not take for granted your demands. Help us not brush them off or not take them seriously. Help us lean into your will and not our own, even when the stakes are high. And when we find ourselves hesitating, flinching, shaking our heads in discouragement, let us find empowerment from your own Spirit, Great God, and try again. You not just God in the moment. You are God of all the moments. And you are not done with us yet. Thank you God.
- 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, of apathy, 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) "You Shall Go Out with Joy" GTG #80

Sending & Benediction

Let us say together our benediction...

It's not 'pass/fail' but rather who do you love.

(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!

Song of Benediction:

"May the God of Hope Go with Us" GTG #765

Postlude: "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"
arr. Melody Bober
