



"A Community Of Many Faithing Communities Where All Belong!"

Living Waters Contemplative Life Center | Divine Intervention Ministry to the Homeless  
Tippecanoe just.good.food Garden | Food Justice Site PCUSA  
Arts and Science Literacy Camps for Children

# Welcome To Worship

October 15, 2023

9:30 a.m.



*Welcome to this time of being with God and each other.*

*"Staying the Course" Betsy Gonwa*

## ✧Prelude

### ✧Welcome and community news

- Sundays for 6 consecutive weeks from October 15 through November 19 from 11:15 am – 12:45 pm. Diane Wirhanowicz and Carol Meverden will co-facilitate.
- Save these Sunday dates:
  - October 29 Judy Berdan will join us during worship to provide us a presentation about Divine Intervention
  - November 19 is our Congregational Meeting, which will be embedded in our worship service

### ✧Readying Ourselves for Worship

***Surely God is in this place, Holy Ground!  
Surely God is in this place,  
Holy Ground!***

### ✧A Reading as we Center Ourselves in this Moment

Christianity began in a culture where “desert” and “wilderness” were familiar environments, both respected and feared as the place where angels and demons might be found.

In wild, desolate places God’s people have been shaped by their struggles, and have found that rocks have yielded water, and manna has appeared on the ground.

Beware of the comfort of our lives, where we grow complacent and over -confident, and where discernment is limited to choosing which products to buy.

Our journey may be into an inner desert: a place where motivation and desire is purified, and we find ourselves refined and strengthened in spirit.

Jesus, whose formation included wilderness, will be at our side to pray for us, will wipe away our tears, and place bread into the hands which have clutched at stones.

*Ann Siddall, [Stillpoint Spirituality Centre](#)*

***Becoming Present to God and Each Other - Our One-Word Check-in***

✧ **Gathering Hymn: *All that We Have* (# 5, W&P)**

✧ **Opening Ourselves to God's Grace**

One: Our God, we have no idea where we are going.

**ALL: We do not see the road ahead of us.**

**We cannot know for certain where it will end.**

One: Nor do we really know ourselves,

**ALL: and the fact that we think that we are following your will does not mean that we are actually doing so.**

One: But we believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.

**ALL: And we hope we have that desire in all that we are doing.**

One: We hope that we will never do anything apart from that desire.

**ALL: And we know that if we do this you will lead us by the right road though we may know nothing about it.**

One: Therefore will we trust you always though we seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

**ALL: We will not fear, for you are ever with us, and you will never leave us to face our perils alone."**

— adapted from Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude*,  
text altered to be inclusive and plural

~ **The Joy of Passing the Peace** ~

✧ **Time for Young Hearts**

✧ **Gathering as God's People**



**You are invited . . .**

✧ **Sharing our Innermost Lives with God**

**ALL: God, I don't want to live falsely, in self-imposed prisons and fixed, comfortable patterns that confine my Soul and diminish the Truth in me.**

**I want to let my soul out.**

**I want to risk what's true, to be myself.**

**Set free the daring in me ~ the willingness to go within, to see the self-lies.**

**I'll try to run away, but don't let me.**

**Don't let me stifle the creative revisioning of life and the journey toward wholeness.**

**I'm scared, God.**

**Make me brave.**

**Lead me into the enormous spaces of becoming.**

**Help me cease the small, tedious work of maintaining and protecting so that I can break the masks that obscure your face shining in my Soul.**

**Help me to risk becoming the person you created me to be.**

**I may regret these words, but for now I speak them, for I know that you're somewhere inside them, that you love me and won't leave me alone in their echo.**

*~From False to True Self Prayer by Sue Monk Kidd (When the Heart Waits)*

✧ **Special Music: *Stay the Path* words and music by Betsy Gonwa**

**CHORUS:**     *I'll stay the path, keep letting Your love in.  
I'll stay the path, keep living with what is.  
Trusting that whatever is meant to be in my life  
is making its way towards me right now.*



## ✧ **Prayer for Illumination**

Holy Spirit, may we hear your precious Word for us today. May we grow in wisdom, strength, and love as we open our ears, our minds, and our hearts to the transformative message you have in store for each of us. Amen.

## ✧ **Bible Wisdom Teaching**

**Exodus 32: 1-14**

**Phiippians 4:1-9**

**Matthew 22:1-14**

One: May we hear anew the origin stories of our faith and draw from the roots of our tradition.

All: **Thanks be to our God.**



## ✧ **Message:** *Staying the Course*

### ✧ **Reflection Questions**

*What are some spiritual practices that help you stay the course?*

*Do your spiritual practices engage your feelings? your thinking? your behavior?*

*What people in your life are you fully present for?*

*Which Bible character did you most identify with from today's readings?*

### ✧ **Short period of silent reflection**

### ✧ **Sharing Our Wisdom**



✧ **Hymn: *We Will Go, God*** by Shannon Cerneka and Orin Johnson

(I) We will go, God, where You would have us go,  
and we will do what You would have us do.

(II) Christ Jesus, we will follow you.

(III) We will be strong. We will be strong

*Refrains may be sung consecutively or simultaneously.*

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✧ **Community Prayers & the Pastoral Prayer**

**The Lord's Prayer**

**ALL: O most Compassionate Life-giver,  
May we honor and praise you;  
May we work with you to establish  
your new order of justice peace and love;  
Give us what we need for growth,  
And help us, through forgiving others, to accept forgiveness.  
Strengthen us in the time of testing, that we may resist all evil,  
For all tenderness, strength and love are yours,  
now and forever.**

**Amen.**

*~Bill Wallace, Aotearoa/New Zealand*

✧ **Benediction**

May we unfold.

May no place in us hold itself closed.

May we stay open, and be true.

May we stay clear in Your sight.

Amen.

*~adapted from Rainer Maria Rilke, Rilke's Book of Hours: Love Poems to God*

*Now that the worship has ended, may the service truly begin.*

✧ **Our Response:**

***Holy One, now we your servants go in peace.  
Your Word lives on in us.***

✧ **Postlude**