



WORSHIP GUIDE

February 20, 2022

First Presbyterian Church

If you are curious, and have come to see –
If you are weary, and have come to rest –
If you are grateful, and have come to share –
If you are hurting, and have come for solace –
If you are listening, and have come to pray –
If you are seeking, and have come for answers...Welcome!

A Service for the Worship of God

Sunday, 11:00 A.M

7th Sunday after Epiphany

February 20, 2022

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." - C.S. Lewis

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

*GATHERING SENTENCES; (from Psalm 81)

Leader: Sing for joy to God our strength.

People: Shout aloud to the God of Jacob.

Leader: Begin the music, strike the tambourine, play the harp and lyre.

People: This is a decree for God's people, and ordinance of the God of Jacob.

Leader: Let us worship God and be filled with joy.

*HYMN #90 (*all verses*)..... *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*

*MORNING PRAYER

*CALL TO CONFESSION

Leader: Let us come to God with full confidence, in Christ we are forgiven.

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

Lord God, we are so thankful for the many blessings in our life, they are truly more than we can count. Yet, too often we forget the blessings and become distracted by wanting more. In wanting more we can become anxious about our life and forget that there is always enough, that we lack nothing. Forgive us for spending too much time on what we do not have. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: The Word is clear, we are forgiven and set free in Christ Jesus.

All: Thanks be to God.

*GLORIA PATRI (#813)

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

*HYMN #671 (all verses)..... *Something for Thee*

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (#633)

**Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,
To reach out and touch Him, and say that we love Him.
Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen.
Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING Page 85 (in unison) Leviticus 2:1-6

ANTHEM..... "Our Hymn of Celebration"Besig/Price

.....Descant Solo, Sylvia Rockwell and Trombone Solo, Joshua Bledsoe.....

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON Page 169 (in unison) 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

MESSAGE..... "An Offering" Rev. Steven H. Rhodes

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: From the Brief Statement of Faith - 1991

Minister: Let us affirm what we believe.

People: In Baptism we declare that Christ has died and been raised to new life. Anyone in Christ is a new creation, the old life is gone, and the new life has begun.

All: In life and death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in one triune God, whom alone we worship and serve. In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equal in God's image, male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community.

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God.

We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father.

We trust in God, the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life.

With believers in every time and place we rejoice that nothing in life and death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE - THE LORD'S PRAYER

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

(Please continue to place your offering in the plate in the front of the narthex)

*DOXOLOGY

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

BEARING AND FOLLOWING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

*HYMN #308 (*all verses*).....*There Is a Redeemer*

*BENEDICTION

*CHORAL RESPONSE..... *Three-fold Amen*

*POSTLUDE

*Stand if you are able

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Greg Bledsoe (22)
Graham Campbell-Work (22)
Vivian Powell (22)

SESSION
Laura McNew (23)
Beth Mooney (23)
Doug Sanders (23)

Clerk: Joyce Kelly
Martha Smith (24)
Mark Davis (24)
Wendy Kempa (24)

"An Offering"

Rev. Steven H. Rhodes

February 20, 2022

If you have had the privilege of traveling to another country you have experienced firsthand that our American English language has many words with multiple meanings.

For example, the word 'offer'. Judy and I recently bought a used car, a 2018 Nissan Rogue. We did some research, then drove the car around and then made an offer to the owner.

On a recent visit to the home of a member I sat down and was immediately asked: 'Can I offer you something to drink'? About a week ago I told my investment broker that I wanted to make a specific offer on a stock if it reached a certain price. These are just a few examples of how we use the word 'offer' in different ways.

Now let us listen again to Lev. 2:4-5. *"If you bring a grain offering baked in an oven, it is to consist of the finest flour: either thick loaves made without yeast and with olive oil mixed in or thin loaves made without yeast and brushed with olive oil. If your grain offering is prepared on a griddle, it is to be made of the finest flour mixed with oil, and without yeast. 6Crumble it and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering.*

The meaning of offer or 'offering' in this context has nothing to do with being offered a coke or making an offer on a car.

The offerings to God described in Leviticus are not a way to get something out of God. God is not a vending machine, you put something in and get something out. The many offerings were God's way of building a unique community.

So, three things.

First, an offering is a way to acknowledge that we are dependent on God for all things and that God will provide.

Second, making regular offerings to God of our time and resources and talents keeps us from being distracted by the allure of our world, the temptation to think that we are center of creation, not God.

And **third**, the purpose and meaning of making regular offerings is to help restore the balance between us and God's creation. Our offerings are an act of stewardship.

At the heart of the meaning of the word 'offering' is a call to live a faithful life, to set our lives apart from the easy path the culture tries to entice us with, a life that insist on personal rights without personal taking responsibility.

But let us dig a bit deeper this morning. As we read earlier, according to the God's word when we 'offer' our lives to God it is described as an 'aroma pleasing to God.'

The Apostle Paul who was steeped in Levitical Law said it like this to the congregation in that met in Ephesus. **Read 5:1-2.** *Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children 2and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

Like the offerings of the ancient Israelites were an aroma pleasing to God, Christ's life became the fragrant aroma to God for us.

But there is even more. Turn with me if you will to 2 Cor. 2. Verse 14. This sums up all the Levitical code and the purpose of the cross and resurrection: *But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere.*

Do you hear it? We are now called to be the aroma of Christ in our daily life. We who have the living and risen Christ within us are now the aroma of God to our community and to those around us.

We are now the source of encouragement and faith for others.

Here is why this is important. When we see our lives in this way we are set free to live creatively without fear, free to love one another without judgment, free to care for one another without thought of merit, to lift one another up without thought of cost, to raise our children by offering our lives to them without the need for them to please us, free to love our marriage partners without a demand of return.

Yesterday, as I was finishing these notes, it occurred to me that Judy and I have made 'offers' on six houses in three states, each time our offer was predicated on wanting to get something in return.

But listen carefully, God does not make us an offer that includes Jesus Christ like a signing bonus - Jesus is Gods offering to us and for us...

And now, now we are being invited to be an offering to others!