

Durham Mennonite Church

June 18, 2023



Welcome to Durham Mennonite Church

Welcome and Announcements

Opening Prayer

O Lord, you are the source of all true and lasting joy. Your love and mercy to us knows no bounds. We praise you for your power which is beyond compare. We worship you for your wisdom which is beyond understanding. You meet all our needs. You restore the brokenhearted and heal the wounded. How great you are, Lord! Fill our hearts with love as we respond by singing praises to you. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Call to Worship (Psalm 116:1-2,16-19)

**1 I love the LORD, because he has heard
my voice and my supplications.**

**2 Because he inclined his ear to me,
therefore I will call on him as long as I live.**

**16 O LORD, I am your servant;
I am your servant,
the child of your serving girl.
You have loosed my bonds.**

**17 I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice
and call on the name of the LORD.**

18 I will pay my vows to the LORD

in the presence of all his people,

19 in the courts of the house of the LORD,

in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!

Hymn - What Shall I Render to the Lord?

**1 What shall I render to the LORD,
what shall my offering be,
For all the gracious benefits
God hath bestowed on me?**

**2 Salvation's cup my soul shall take
while to the Lord I pray,
and with God's people I will meet
my thankful vows to pay.**

**3 Not lightly dost thou, Lord, permit
thy chose saints to die;
from death thou hast delivered me;
thy servant, Lord, am I.**

**4 Within God's house, the house of prayer,
my soul shall bless the Lord,
and praises to God's holy name
let all the saints accord.**

Hymn - VT #190, The God of Sarah Praise

**1. The God of Sarah praise
the God of dreams long dead
who births new life from barren ground
disarming dread.
Though grief lasts through the night
joy rises with the sun
God leaves us laughing in surprise at
death undone.**

**2. The God of Abr'ham praise
the God of all who roam
who guides us into foreign lands
and makes our home.
Though darkness shrouds our path
the stars as pledges shine
God's covenant will be fulfilled
by love's design.**

**3. The God of Hagar praise
the God of those oppressed,
who sees the lost and overlooked
and calls them blessed
Though wandering alone
through deserts of despair
God leads us to a well of hope
and meets us there**

Hymn - VT #563, Come Thou Fount

**1 Come, thou Fount of every blessing;
tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
mount of God's unchanging love!**

**2 Here I raise my Ebenezer;
hither by thy help I'm come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.**

**Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wandering from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger,
interposed his precious blood.**

**3 O to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart; O take and seal it;
seal it for thy courts above.**

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, source of all life,
Lord of mercy and grace, hear our prayer.
We come before you in need of healing:
The healing of our bodies and souls,
The healing of our relationships,
The healing of our pride
and fear and apathy.
We know that with you,
nothing is impossible,
not even our healing,
Not even the restoration of the whole world.
We pray that you will heal us,
that you will heal our world,
So that we will be freed
to serve and love and dream and be,
As Christ calls us. Amen.

Hymn - VT #553

How Many Times We Start Again

**1 How many times we start again
on faith's unwinding way;
we want, dear God, to settle in,
to build a home and stay;
but then a dream, a voice, a light
disturbs our peace and rest
and sets before our straining sight
new stages on our quest.**

**2 Before we go, we look around,
surveying where we are.
Some ask, why leave familiar ground
for somewhere strange and far?
We know from all our startings out
each journey has its cost:
that sometimes faith gives way to doubt
and sometimes we get lost.**

**3 But greater than the cost we find
is our expanded view
of what it means with heart and mind
to trust and follow you:
we hear a music never heard,
a diff'rent light descends,
and meeting strangers, we are stirred
to welcome them as friends.**

**4 With eager hope, we now depart
the places that we know
to travel regions in your heart
where you would have us go.
In you we live and move and dwell
as close as breath and prayer,
you are our home, Emmanuel,
God with us everywhere.**

Scripture - Romans 5:1-8 NRSV

Results of Justification

5 Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces

endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. 8 But God proves his

love for us in that while we still were sinners

Christ died for us.

Scripture - Genesis 18:1-15 NRSV

A Son Promised to Abraham and Sarah

18 The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. 2 He looked up and saw

three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. 3 He said, “My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. 4 Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do

as you have said.” 6 And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.” 7 Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. 8 Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

9 They said to him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” And he said, “There, in the tent.” 10 Then one said, “I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. 11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. 12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I

have pleasure?” 13 The LORD said to Abraham,
“Why did Sarah laugh, and say, ‘Shall I indeed
bear a child, now that I am old?’ 14 Is anything
too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I
will return to you, in due season, and Sarah
shall have a son.” 15 But Sarah denied, saying,
“I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. He said,
“Oh yes, you did laugh.”

**Sermon – “Under the Oaks at Mamre:
The Last Word In Welcome”
Jonathan Larson**





Congregational Response

Litany - "Is Anything Too Daunting, Too Difficult?"

We remember that when there was only inky, empty darkness, a spoken word called forth light and beauty and wonder.

Is anything too daunting, too wonderful for the Lord?

We remember that out of weary, bitter years, a visit of strangers once renewed laughter, promise and offspring for a wandering family.

Is anything too daunting, too wonderful for the Lord?

We remember a people at dead end, without land or future or dignity, who

were led away to dancing and sweet freedom. Call it the first Juneteenth.

Is anything too daunting, too wonderful for the Lord?

We remember a captive nation stranded far from home, bereft of dreams, when a homeward path opened through the howling waste.

Is anything too daunting, too wonderful for the Lord?

We remember a village twosome with bare hands and 'let-it-be' hearts, who came to cradle the promise of the ages.

Is anything too daunting, too wonderful for the Lord?

We remember a day when last hopes had fled, when promise was shut up in a darkened tomb, then life strode out the victor.

Is anything too daunting, too wonderful for the Lord?

We remember ourselves, ordinary in gifts, in strength, in every way. How can we escape that question:

Is anything too daunting, too wonderful for the Lord?

Sharing praises and prayer concerns

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name;
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn - VT #610

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

**1 Precious Lord, take my hand,
Lead me on, let me stand
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn
Through the storm, through the night
Lead me on to the light
Take my hand, precious Lord,
lead me home**

**2 When my way grows drear,
precious Lord, linger near
When my light is almost gone
Hear my cry, hear my call
Hold my hand lest I fall
Take my hand, precious Lord,
lead me home**

**3 When the darkness appears
and the night draws near
And the day is past and gone
At the river I stand
Guide my feet, hold my hand
Take my hand precious Lord,
lead me home**

Benediction - Jonathan Larson