

**Worship Guide for  
Sunday, September 27, 2020 | 10:00 am  
and  
Thursday, October 1, 2020 | 7:00 pm**

*Watch live on NPC's Facebook Page  
For those who do not have a Facebook account,  
please visit [www.newnanpres.org](http://www.newnanpres.org) to view the recording.*

**PREPARING FOR GOD'S WORD**

**PRELUDE**

Cliff Brock

This is the day the Lord has made. **Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

**LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

Rev. David Jones

**Welcome** | We are glad you are here either in person or by Facebook. If you are worshipping virtually, please let us know. Visitors, please leave a message in the comments thread. One of our elders will reach out to you this week with a word of welcome. All may view the Worship Guide at [www.newnanpres.org](http://www.newnanpres.org) if you wish to follow along.

**Outreach Item of the Month** | We will be collecting jars and cans of marinara and alfredo sauce through next Wednesday. These are being distributed to Bridging the Gap and One Room. Please drop off the sauce to the Church Office. Next Month's item is breakfast cereal – healthy options, please.

**Officer Elections** | Thanks to all who voted for our new roster of officers. We are pleased to announce everyone was approved overwhelmingly. We welcome new elders - John McGee, Lissa Rand, Jennifer Eriksen, Nan Newman, Tom Moynahan, Chris Rice; Our new deacons are Ann Beegle, Buzz Flannigan, Gwyn Kozma and Virginia Stanley. Officer training begins in October. New officers will be ordained and commissioned in January of 2021.

**OPENING PRAYER**

As we prepare for a time of worship, we breathe in God's mercy...  
And breathe out God's mercy to others...

**HYMN 65 Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah**

*Guide me, O thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land.  
I am weak, but thou art mighty. Hold me with thy powerful hand.  
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more;  
feed me till I want no more.*

*Open now the crystal fountain, whence the healing stream doth flow.  
Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through.  
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer, be thou still my strength and shield;  
be thou still my strength and shield.*

*When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside.  
Death of death, and hell's destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side.  
Songs of praises, songs of praises I will ever give to thee;  
I will ever give to thee.*

## CALL TO CONFESSION

Rev. Tyler Brock

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor,  
trusting in the promise of forgiveness.

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Almighty God, we have been wandering in the wilderness of sin.  
We have complained in the face of your mercy.  
We have been selfish and conceited in the face of your sacrifice.  
We have not done your will.  
Teach us humility. Teach us gratitude.  
Infuse your spirit into our beings  
so that we might be reconciled to you.  
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

People of God, our sins are forgiven. The Lord is loving, and we are reconciled to God.  
Therefore, let us humble and surrender ourselves to the will of God for the glory of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God!**

## RECEIVING THE PEACE

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."  
May the Peace of Christ be with you all! **And also with you!**

## A TIME FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES

Rev. Darcie Jones

## GLORIA 583 Glory to God

*Glory to God, glory to God, glory in the highest!  
Glory to God, glory to God, alleluia, alleluia!  
Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!*

## LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

O God, fill us with your Spirit and humble our hearts so that we can hear your Word. **Amen.**

## NEW TESTAMENT READING | Matthew 21:23-32 | The Authority of Jesus Questioned

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" <sup>24</sup> Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. <sup>25</sup> Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' <sup>26</sup> But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." <sup>27</sup> So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

## The Parable of the Two Sons

<sup>28</sup> "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' <sup>29</sup> He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. <sup>30</sup> The

father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. <sup>31</sup> Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. <sup>32</sup> For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## **SERMON**

### "The Authority of Jesus"

Once again, the last shall be first and the first shall be last. And make no mistake, this is a dangerous claim Jesus is making. Think about it - even in 2020, it is dangerous to claim that those on the bottom should receive priority over those at the top. Can you imagine if you were challenged as a faithful church attendee that the stay homers were getting into heaven before you? By what authority was Jesus able to claim this preposterous notion that God is on the side of the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed? I'm not poor, marginalized, or oppressed, when is God for me?

I just finished listening to our Associate Pastor, Tyler, preach about a different angle of this same idea. The last shall be first. In last week's sermon he talked about how the disciples - our old favorites, Jesus' best friends and most ardent supporters - were not completely altruistic. In their weakest moments, their petty arguments revolved around their heavenly reward. We did all this work following Jesus, so we get to have the most honored seats in God's kingdom. Jesus starts early in his ministry by simply serving the poor and healing the sick. Then he moves on to not just folks that are unclean in terms of the Jewish law, but members of society that are an active part of society, but an unwelcome subsection of public sinners like prostitutes and tax collectors. From there he reminds his disciples that while God loves them, the leadership they provide must be servant leadership, unlike the religious leaders so highly respected. Here he ups the ante once again saying in very careful terms that even the religious leaders - supported by the history and tradition of the temple and the Hebrew patriarchs - will not be first into God's kingdom.

You see, what's happening in these first few verses before our parable is that the elders and the chief priests have witnessed Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. If you recall, Jesus makes an enormous show out of the whole thing. He rides in on a special donkey that he had prepared, his disciples and the crowds waved palm branches and placed their cloaks on the ground like in the Hebrew scriptures reserved for kings only. These religious leaders have listened and watched Jesus' actions for a while and they seek to trap him. If he tells them that he is doing all of this by his own authority, it will make no sense. No one will take him seriously and the large Passover crowds will write him off as a crackpot, or just another self-proclaimed messiah.

Instead, Jesus puts the question back to the elders in terms of someone very popular with the crowd - John the Baptist, who had amassed a considerable following among Jews all over Israel. The elders are unable to publicly discredit John the Baptist without angering the crowds and Jesus has escaped their trap. But he doesn't stop there. He punches up, calling out the so-called righteous leaders of the faith. He compares them in a parable to a man's sons. One son who begins the story doing the wrong thing, but after thinking on it, chooses to do the right thing. Meanwhile, another son pays lip service to his father agreeing to do the right thing, but then falling well short of honoring his father's instruction.

The elders, with all of their legitimacy, all of their wealth, all of their power, and all of their knowledge of God's blessings, instead of paying those blessings forward, have allowed themselves in the end to become corrupted and have lost sight of their true calling. Meanwhile, the public sinning of the prostitutes and tax collectors has been redeemed in their desire for

forgiveness. Those who were first, have been vaulted over on their way to God's kingdom by those who were last.

The actions of the religious leaders in Jesus' time prompts his warnings to his disciples. Don't be like these who get puffed up by their own righteousness and lose sight of God's calling on your lives to serve the poor and the sick and the hurting. This warning, I think, is still valid in the year 2020. Don't you think?

How many of us good ole' Presbyterians need our ego, our righteousness, our good deeds checked at the door? How many of us find ourselves in situations where the virtues of our righteousness fill us with a false sense of completeness that leads to complacency? I've done enough good for the day, for the week, for the year. How many of us find ourselves fatigued at the idea of considering our neighbors, or a stranger as equals? How many of us wish the poor people we see on the street or hear about in the news statistics would just take a page out of our playbook and get their lives together? How many of us are ready to cash in the good that we've done to pay for that premium box seat next to Jesus at the grand high table? Too many of us, too much of the time.

Jesus' warning to the chief priests and elders might as well be lobbied at me and Tyler and NPC's elders and deacons. Do not be like the second son who pays lip service publicly to God's call on their lives while falling short when it counts. Let us be more like the first son who while making a mistake early, chooses to do the right thing. Better to be a sinner who repents than a righteous Presbyterian who thinks that the work of following Jesus is over. You and I are entering the prime of election season when our earthly selfishness shines through our yard signs and our rhetoric. May we succumb to our better angels by working with our neighbors to serve those most in need among us rather than wasting our time counting up all of our righteousness. May we set an example for the entire city of Newnan by doubling down on showing the love of Christ in public, in private, and with everyone we meet. If we are the first who will be last, let us be last not because we stopped following our Lord, but instead because we chose to empower those in the back to go in first. Amen.

### **SERMON HYMN 630 Fairest Lord Jesus, vv. 1 & 4**

*Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature, O thou of God to earth come down,  
thee will I cherish, thee will I honor, thou, my soul's glory, joy, and crown.*

*Beautiful Savior, Ruler of the nations, Son of God and Son of Man!  
Glory and honor, praise, adoration, now and forevermore be thine!*

### **RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD**

#### **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

#### **SPECIAL MUSIC**

“I Believe”

Chancel Choir

music by Mark Miller | lyrics: Anonymous Jewish Poem

Martin Rudy, recorder

*I believe in the sun even when it's not shining.*

*And I believe in love, even when I don't feel it.*

*And I believe in God, even when God is silent.*

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Lalla McGee and family in the death of her mother, Tinha Anderson, this week.

Let us pray for the needs of the world, saying,

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

O God, who is ever present, you hear our cries and are ever faithful in your mercy. We come to you with our concerns for ourselves, our community, and the world. For our church and its leaders—fill them with the spirit and mind of Christ so that they would serve you and others.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

For our country and global community—enable our leaders to make decisions for the sake of people and not profits, to serve others and not themselves.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

For our local community—For those who suffer with sickness, sadness, bereavement, anxiety, or abuse—envelop them in your love and help us to be their community.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

For the other intentions we hold in our hearts.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we know that you walk with us, and you answer when we call.

With gratitude and trust, we pray in Jesus' name, who taught us to pray, saying...

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**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.**

## **OFFERING OF GRATITUDE**

God blesses us generously and it is out of this abundance that we are able to give to the operation and mission of the church. This week, we highlight the Samaritan Clinic. The Samaritan Clinic was a brainchild of Dr. Kay Crosby, who found support from this congregation in getting it started. Over the years, this church has continued to support the clinic either monetarily or through contributions like hygiene kits. Our congregation has volunteered their time to help with fundraisers, such as the upcoming BBQ fundraiser that is occurring on October 4th. Thank you for your continued support of the Samaritan Clinic.

## **CLOSING HYMN 726 Will You Come and Follow Me, vv. 1 & 4**

*“Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?*

*Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?*

*Will you let my love be shown; will you let my name be known;*

*will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?”*

*“Will you love the ‘you’ you hide if I but call your name?*

*Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?*

*Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,  
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?”*

## BENEDICTION

May the God who is always near bless and keep you on your journey.

Glory, honor, and praise be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and always. **Amen.**

## POSTLUDE

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**Samaritan Clinic Bluegrass & Barbeque | Oct 4, 2020 | 4:30-7:30 pm** | Old PAPP Clinic Parking Lot  
See Samaritan Clinic website: <https://www.cowetasamaritanclinic.org/> for tickets and details.

**Worship Sign Up** | Please sign up each week for in person worship services. You may do so through Realm, or by emailing [npcadmin@newnanpres.org](mailto:npcadmin@newnanpres.org) or by calling the Church Office at 770-253-4405. This helps us with planning and contact tracing.

**Church Emails** | We are working with NuLink and Constant Contact to rectify issues with emails not being received. Gmail users may indicate that [npcadmin@newnanpres.org](mailto:npcadmin@newnanpres.org) is a safe-sender by listing this address in your contact list. Numail.org users should set SPAM filters to indicate that emails from [npcadmin@newnanpres.org](mailto:npcadmin@newnanpres.org) are NOT spam emails. If you have questions, contact Beth in the Church Office. In the meantime, emails will be sent both through Constant Contact AND Realm. Pardon the repetitive nature of these emails. We just want to make certain that all notifications are received by church members.

### Giving Report

	<b>Giving 2020</b>	<b>Giving 2019</b>
<b>Pledged</b>	<b>\$318,776.61</b>	<b>\$310,966.24</b>
<b>Unpledged</b>	<b>\$23,419.00</b>	<b>\$50,808.49</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$342,195.61</b>	<b>\$361,774.73</b>



Members and visitors alike, please plan to give today in whatever way you are able either [Realm](#), through your bank account, using the QR code above or by mailing a check to the church. Thank you for your generosity.