

*Just as the mountains surround Jerusalem,
so does the Lord surround His people forever.
Psalm 125:2*



Bellflower & Mt Vernon UMC

September 5, 2021

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

GREETINGS¹

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

PRELUDE & CANDLE LIGHTING

CALL TO WORSHIP²

We can trust God.

God is like the mountain: rock solid.

God loves all the people:

the poor, the disabled, the outcast, the stranger.

We can depend on God.

**God feeds the hungry, heals the sick,
and restores relationships.**

Praise our Loving God.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

 HYMN

I Will Trust in the Lord #464

Change My Heart, O God #2152

OT READING³ - Proverbs 22:1-2,8-9,22-23

Here are some wise sayings to think about:

- Your good name and reputation are the most precious things you own and the hardest to replace if you lose them or if they're destroyed.
- In God's eyes, there is no difference between a rich man and a poor man. God made them both.
- If you do unfair things, they will come back to bite you.

¹ Cover art by John Stuart, www.stushieart.com.

² Adapted from *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2012*, © 2011 Abingdon Press. Posted on the Ministry Matters website.

<http://www.ministrymatters.com/>.

³ *God's Word, My Voice, A Lectionary for Children*, Lynn Zill Briggs

- If you are generous with your food and share it, you will be blessed.
- Don't kick someone if they are down on their luck, for God himself will be on their side, and you will lose in God's court.


CHILDREN'S SERMON

INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

NT READING - James 2:1-10, 14-17

GOSPEL - Mark 7:24-37

SERMON

 HYMN - #2152 (Refrain)

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

CONFESSION & PARDON⁴

Let us confess our sins to the Lord who surrounds us with favor forevermore.

God of favor, we have not been true to you.

You have chosen the poor in the world,

but we have dishonored them.

You plead the cause of the afflicted,

but we crush them.

We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We have favored the rich and despised the poor.

We have dismissed the needy with empty words.

Soften our hearts and make straight our ways.

Heal our unbelief and turn us back to you. Amen.

⁴ Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from *Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion*. Copyright 2015.

The mercy of our God triumphs over judgment through
our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, who has pleaded our
cause, forgiven our sin, healed our sickness, and
delivered us from evil.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

Glory to God. Amen.

OFFERING & PEACE

DOXOLOGY - #95

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below;

Praise God for all that love has done;

Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.

HOLY COMMUNION

ⓑ UMH13

Ⓜ UMH17

POSTLUDE

CHARGE & BLESSING⁵

As you have been fed, go to feed the hungry.

As you have been set free, go to set free the imprisoned.

As you have received – give.

As you have heard – proclaim.

And the blessing which you have received
from the Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit
be always with you.

Go in peace.

⁵ Written by Rev. Daniel B. Randall and posted on the United Church of Christ's *Worship Ways* website, <http://www.ucc.org/worship/worship-ways/>.

Question for Reflection⁶

“Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor” (Jas. 2:5–6a). A UNICEF study reports that the United States has the second-highest child poverty rate in the industrialized world, with more than one in five children living in households that fall below the poverty line

(http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/rc10_eng.pdf). What does this mean to you as a person of faith? How might God call the church to respond to this situation?

Household Prayer: Morning

Generous God, you are my maker and I trust in you.

Surround me with your favor today so that I may hear the cry of those in need and share my resources with the poor; in the excellent name of Jesus Christ, my Savior and Lord. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Good and constant God, I have endeavored to love my neighbor as myself today. Yet the needs are so great that I find my heart failing and my faith falling short.

In your mercy, let the favor of Christ surround me with strength. Restore me as I rest in you. Amen.

⁶ Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from *Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion*. Copyright 2015.

People can donate money to Gibson City flood victims through Venmo to @gibsoncityfloodrelief, calling the Bank of Gibson City at 217-784-4233, or mailing a check payable to "City of Gibson Flood Relief" to 804 S. Sangamon Ave., Gibson City, IL 60936.

Those interested in supporting UMCOR's response in Haiti, Afghanistan, and elsewhere can make gifts online at <https://umcmmission.org/advance-project/982450/> or by checks sent to Global Ministries/UMCOR, P.O. Box 9068, New York, NY 10087-9068, with Advance #982450 noted on the memo line.

For UMCOR U.S. disaster relief, including hurricane Ida, <https://umcmmission.org/advance-project/901670> or by check with Advance #901670 on the memo line.

If you would like a prayer, a visit, a meal, to have Holy Communion brought to your home, or have any other need, please contact any church member or Pastor Rob (217 898 8161, rob@methodist.cc).