**St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Perth**

**Sunday, October 6th, 2024**

**Rev. Gerry Gallant**

**The Forgotten Sin**

**Proper 22**

**James 4: 13-17**

**Welcome**

**Announcements**

**Call to Worship**

We come as guests invited to a table;

**We come to celebrate with friends and neighbors.**

Jesus Christ, our Friend, and Saviour, invites us to gather:

**We gather with his friends around the world.**

Come and worship with hearts full of God’s praise and promise.

**We worship God in gladness, for God’s faithfulness endures forever.**

**Prayer of Adoration and Invocation**

Praise be to you, O God,

for the wonders of your creation.

You spin the galaxies and stretch out the seas to the furthest horizon.

You lift the curtain of dawn to end the night.

You give the earth its seasons and each creature its lifespan,

breathing life into each precious soul.

And so we come to praise you,

knowing human greatness is a mere shadow of yours.

Breathe your Spirit into us once again,

and inspire us to walk your way in the world,

serving our neighbours and loving our enemies.

In Jesus name we pray. **Amen.**

**Children’s Hymn**

**Call to Confession**

Prepare the way of the Lord!

Let us make our confession to God.

**Prayer of Confession**

**Holy and merciful God,**

**in your presence we confess**

**our sinfulness, our shortcomings,**

**and our offenses against you.**

**You alone know how often we have sinned**

**in wandering from your ways,**

**in wasting your gifts,**

**in forgetting your love.**

**Have mercy on us, O Lord,**

**for we are ashamed and sorry**

**for all we have done to displease you.**

**Forgive our sins,**

**and help us to live in your light**

**and walk in your ways,**

**for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

Your sins are pardoned.

The penalty is paid.

Let there be to God.

**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 the Evil One.**

**For Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory,**

**Forever and ever. Amen.**

**Hymn #466: “Praise the Lord With The Sound of Trumpet”**

Praise the Lord with the sound of trumpet, praise the Lord

with the harp and lute, praise the Lord with the gentle

sounding flute. Praise the Lord in the field and forest, Praise

the Lord in the city square, Praise the Lord anytime and

anywhere. Praise the Lord in the wind and sunshine, Praise the

Lord in the dark of night, Praise the Lord in the rain or snow,

or in the morning light. Praise the Lord in the deepest valley,

Praise the Lord on the highest hill, Praise the Lord; never let

your voice be still.

Praise the Lord with the crashing cymbal, praise the Lord with

the pipe and string, praise the Lord with the joyful songs you

sing. Praise the Lord on a weekday morning, praise the Lord

on a Sunday noon, praise the Lord by the light of sun or moon.

Praise the Lord in the time of sorrow, praise the Lord in the

time of joy, praise the Lord every moment; nothing let your

praise destroy. Praise the Lord in the peace and quiet, praise

the Lord in your work and play, praise the Lord everywhere in

everyway

**Responsive Reading**

**Psalm 119: 25-32**

**25**My soul clings to the dust;

give me life according to your word!

**26When I told of my ways, you answered me;**

**teach me your statutes!**

**27**Make me understand the way of your precepts,

and I will meditate on your wondrous works.

**28My soul melts away for sorrow;**

**strengthen me according to your word!**

**29**Put false ways far from me

and graciously teach me your law!

**30I have chosen the way of faithfulness;**

**I set your rules before me.**

**31**I cling to your testimonies, O Lord;

let me not be put to shame!

**32I will run in the way of your commandments**

**when you enlarge my heart!**

**Anthem (Music Ministry): “As We Break The Bread”**

**Prayer for illumination**

**(Congregant Prepared)**

**Scripture**

**James 4:13-17**

**13Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— 14yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. 15Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” 16As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. 17So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.**

**Sermon**

Have you ever gotten into trouble for something that you did not do? Every one of us here who has a sibling can probably think of at least one time in our past where we were wrongfully punished for something that we did not do. You know what I mean, a time where your sibling, your cousin, or even a friend did something wrong and for some reason you got lumped in on the punishment.

But ‘Have you ever gotten into trouble for something you did not do?’ You know, a time when you were supposed to do something, but for whatever reason you did not do it. I am guilty of this way too often, I will be asked to do something, and agree to do it, only to have my mind filter it away as the day goes on. It’s usually not until it is too late that I remember and at that point the disappointment in the people I have let down is already apparent. It can be something simple like vacuuming the house, or picking up some groceries, an appointment or an email, and even though I understand its importance, it just fades away into the back of my mind until it’s too late. So, have you ever gotten into trouble for something that you did not do?

I want you to keep that thought in the back of your mind as we walk through the Scriptures we are studying today in the book of James. Because ultimately that is what he wants us to think about today as he tries once again to teach us to walk closer to the Lord in our day-to-day lives.

**James 4:13-14**

**13Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— 14yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.**

One of the greatest blessings we have as the Children of God is the diversity we see within the people called to serve the Lord. His people are made up of people from all nations, tribes, ethnicities, languages, social standings, financial statuses. God’s people are God’s first, living in unity with one another regardless of all the ways in which the world might seek to divide them, they have a supernatural unity in their incredible diversity. We can have this within the church because of the freedoms we have in our lives.

However, if you recall back to a couple weeks ago, we spoke about how the wisdom we live by in this world is important. James is once again telling us that the ways of the world and the ways of God are incompatible. As a Christian we are called to live set apart from the world around us, living by the wisdom of the Lord, we are called to make different choices about how we live in this world because we are servants of Christ. We need to live our life with God in control.

How do we do that? James has a few suggestions in today’s Scripture.

He starts by reminding us that we cannot live our lives like a non-believer. He goes a little deeper than that. He tells us not to live our lives like practical atheists, people who profess faith in Christ, but do not let that faith have any influence over their day-to-day lives. The practical atheist treats God like the fancy dishes that you only pull out when special guests are over for dinner. The practical atheist puts no thought to the wisdom of God, the call to participate in the Great Commission, their sinful nature and the call to repent; God does not have a place in their life, until Sunday morning and he loses his place by the mid-afternoon.

James uses the metaphor of someone planning a trip to make money selling their wares. They plan a trip to major centers and begin to imagine all of the money they will make on the trip. Start to fantasize how they will spend all of the money that they make. However, even though they have considered the details around the route they will take, the places they will stay, how long they will be on the road, they have completely ignored thoughts of God in their plans. It is as if they think that the results of this trip are determined by their plans and not by the will of God. They are following the wisdom of the world; their pride, selfishness and arrogance have led them to completely forgetting God.

Don’t misunderstand me, there is nothing wrong with making plans in this world to make money. Jesus himself told us to do just that in the book of Luke.

**Luke 14:28**

**28For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?**

It is wise to plan, and it is good to make money. However, we should be cautious about letting practical atheism creeping into our plans. We need to keep God in the forefront of our minds when we make plans. Whenever we begin to think about our career path, our business plans, our educational journey or even our family life and we neglect to consider God and God’s plan for our lives in our thoughts and plans we are practicing practical atheism. It is a form of presumptuous planning, because we make these plans without God in them and then we sit down and pray that God makes OUR plans come true. How many of us are guilty of planning without God and then asking him to bless the plans we have already made for our lives?

This does not mean that we need to spend time fasting and praying over every aspect of our lives. It means that we consider our motives behind the decisions we make, we ask ourselves ‘Would this please God?’ as a constant reminder to keep God first in our thoughts, words and actions.

When we have more serious life decisions to make, we do take the time to put God into the planning process. We spend time in prayer -asking God to put in our hearts what is His will for our lives. We spend time in the Scripture – so that we learn the ways of God and the ways in which He calls us to live. We seek out wise counsel – people around us who show evidence of living with the wisdom of the Lord in their lives.

We can spend time in consultation with Godly people, time in prayer with God and asking him to align our hearts with his will, time in the Scripture making plans that ensure we are following Godly wisdom and lay our wonderful plans for our life, that will promptly go wrong the minute that they are put into action. We all have had this happen, everything seems to be falling into place exactly as we wanted it to happen and then a curveball comes out of no where and all of our plans are torn apart.

As Christians we need to accept what James says next.

**James 4:14-15**

**14yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. 15Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”**

We need to live in the light of the fact that God is the one in control, and we are not. We need to understand that we can make plans with God in the very forefront of our minds, taking him into consideration during every aspect of the planning process, doing everything correct and then placing them into God’s hands, only for them to go in a completely different direction when he is in control of them. Far too often as Christians we treat the phrase ‘If the Lord wills’ as a type of cliché and it should not be one, it should be the conviction of our hearts. We should honestly recognize that it is always God who is in control, not us or anything other being or entity in this world.

The practical atheist gets angry at God when their plans do not go their way, because they believe they are in control. The Christian knows that God is the one in control, God is sovereign and that they are not the ones in control.

People who are filled with worldly wisdom believe that they are the ones in control of the destiny, that they are sovereign in their own lives, that they can determine the outcome of their plans, that they can pick and choose what parts of God they like and which ones they want to reject. They think they know best, that they can foresee the future, that they can look at the data, the metrics and the projections and predict the best possible outcome. They let their arrogance and pride take charge of their lives and in doing so abandon God, becoming practical atheists even though they might consider themselves followers of God. When we live our lives, making decision based on our feelings, out worldly wisdom and in our own best interests without taking into consideration what the Bible tells us about what we are to believe and how we are to live we are telling God that we are bigger and wiser than him.

If you want a simple way to determine who is the one making the plans in your life, ask yourself if you get angry when things do not go the way you planned. Do you get frustrated or furious when you lose control of a situation or when people threaten your sense of control? If you do, it is probable you that is making the decision in your life and not leaving a lot of room for the will of God to run its course. The same can be said for those of you who live in fear and despair, worried about everything in this world. It is easy to intellectually believe that God is control, that he is sovereign and good, but when you live in fear and despair dominating your life, you are living and a practical atheist.

As Christians our plans should always be written in pencil and we should hand God the eraser, so he can do as he wills in our lives.

Notice that in the midst of this teaching James asks, ‘What is your life?’ Once again this is a question meant to make the faithful stop and think. ‘What is your life?’

Honestly, this is a question most of us spend our life trying to avoid. Most of us do not want to consider the frailty of life or its limited time. However, as you get older and experience life and death the reality of the question begins to settle into the back of your mind, and it gets more and more consideration. “What is your life” has little meaning to the young, who want everything in this world to move faster, because they believe that they are immortal and will live forever. However, for those of us who have a few years under our belts the reality of that question is a sobering reminder of the limited time we have left, and how we wish everything would slow down so we could enjoy it for just a little longer.

In the book of Ecclesiastes, we are told that life is ‘all vanity’. He means that it is fleeting and temporal. The author of Ecclesiastes is trying to teach us that when we chase the treasures, pleasures, statuses and all of the other things of this world, we are on an endless cycle of enjoyment and disappointment, where we will never be fulfilled or satisfied, because the things of this world serve no real purpose. That word vanity is ‘hebel’ in Hebrew and when it is translated to Greek and then into English it is the word ‘mist’ that we see appear here in the book of James. Life is a mist, a mist that appears and then vanishes in this world like morning dew.

Let that sink in this morning, your life is a mist, a puff of smoke, a vapor, a morning fog or dew. Just like the puff of steam that appears when you breathe out of a cold winter morning, visible for a moment and then gone. That is our life. Here now and then gone quickly.

Why does James ask us, ‘what is your life?’ and then tells us it is a mist. He is reminding us that our time is short, and we had better figure out quickly who should be the one steering our ship. God is better equipped than we are, life is too short to fight against God being the one in control.

It is only when we accept the truth that in comparison to eternity our life on earth is insignificant that we can learn to focus our eyes on heaven, it is only when we understand the frailty and quickness of our lives that we become willing to focus on Heaven. Our deceitful hearts lull us into thinking more about our happiness in the fleeting here and now, than the eternal, often to the detriment of our salvation.

Think about it, how foolish is it that so many people live their lives in defiance of God and his teachings for something that lasts as long as a puff of smoke. How many people leverage all of the parental support for their children into sports and teams, skipping church, for a puff of smoke. How many people invest everything they have into career goals for a blade of grass. How many people make financial decisions and plans investing in their own wealth and financial wellbeing, ignoring the church and those in need, for a morning fog. How many are willing to pursue the sinful pleasures of this world, things that they know go against God’s will, following their hearts in the here and now, at the cost of forever. James is saying change now, the truth of the brevity of life should allow you to take God’s Word seriously and change the trajectory of your life here on earth.

Instead of worrying about managing your money so you can attain or maintain a certain standard of living, you should be looking at your wealth as a tool to assist in the spreading of the Word of God, managing your money out of a concern for the people who are headed to hell. Instead of managing your schedule out of concern that your child might become a start athlete, manage your schedule with the understanding that 1 in 100 thousand becomes a career athlete, but 1 out of 1 will stand before the Lord in judgement. Instead of pursuing the pleasures that you find in the sins of this world, waiting for your deceitful heart to change, come to the realization that your heart is deceiving you and change today, come to the Lord and admit your sinfulness, seek his forgiveness and repent.

‘What is your life?’ James wants us to understand the reality of our existence, because he has one last critical lesson to teach us.

**James 4:17**

**17So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.**

I won’t kid you this is going to be a hard pill to swallow for many of us.

The most common side effect of believing that our lives have more significance in the flow of eternity than a vapor is that we often put off doing what God calls for us to do in our lives.

We think that we have plenty of time in this world to do what God wants us to do. We being to live life with a mentality that says:

Tomorrow I will forgive the person that hurt me.

Tomorrow I will help out my neighbor.

Tomorrow I will pace my wife first.

Tomorrow I will pray with my kids.

I will start reading the Bible faithfully in the new year.

I will volunteer to help out in the church next time.

I will tithe when I have a little more disposable income.

We see this mentality creep into every aspect of Christian living; prayer, family, evangelism, teaching of the Scriptures, gathering in fellowship, serving the needy, each and every teaching of the Word of God becomes a secondary consideration when we fail to recognize the brevity of life.

James is saying your life is short, God is sovereign, and you need to start living in the truth of that light.

If you never consult God in your plans, you are a practical atheist. He wants you to know and understand this because of sin. In our lives we can easily point out any sin that goes against the big 10. We know what it is to murder, to commit adultery, to lie, to steal. We know that those are sins, there is tangible evidence of doing them in our lives, however James is saying there is also another kind of sin, one we often ignore and that is the sin of omission.

He is saying that if you know that God has called for you to do something, to live in a specific way, to obey and trust in him always, and you choose not to for whatever worldly reason you come up with, you have in fact sinned against God.

James is saying ask yourselves, ‘What is something that you know you should be doing as a Christian, or should have done already, but you have not done?’ Our life is the sum of our daily choices, and James is saying that it is time to start choosing God first every day in every choice, to stop putting off doing what we ought to do. To stop trusting in our deceitful hearts, our self-centered thoughts and our pride and arrogance, and to humbly submit ourselves to God’s sovereign authority and will.

If God has put it on your heart to change something in the way you live, to reconcile with someone, or to re-evaluate some aspect of your life this morning, and you choose to ignore it, then you are one who, ‘**knows the right thing to do and fails to do it’** and it is sin.

When you hear the Word of the Lord and you ignore it, you are sinning. When you find something in God’s Word that tells you to change the way you live you are sinning. When the Holy Spirit is convicting you to do something, or to stop doing something and you ignore it, you are sinning.

People will come up with hundreds of reasons to justify their actions. They have things that they want to do, they need to make more money, they want to fulfill their fleshly desires, and they do not want to give up something that they know they will have to give up. They all have reasons for putting off the truth, for ignoring the truth and continuing in their sin. But ignoring the truth just puts them in a dangerous situation.

**Hebrews 10:26-27**

**26For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.**

Once you have heard the truth, you had better respond to it, even if your mind and heart tell you otherwise. When you hear the truth of God’s Word, when you feel the movement of the Holy Spirit in your life, you need to listen. Once you have heard the truth you no longer have an excuse for your sin. You know the truth. You know what it takes to get into heaven. You know what God is calling for you to do. And only a fool turns his back on that.

And if you choose to ignore that call from God, eventually it will go away. God’s mercy extends to great lengths, but if you keep ignoring God eventually, he will stop talking to you. We need to listen to him when he speaks, be quick to obey, and the more we put that into practice the easier it will be. Christians need to respond to the truth of God’s Word when they hear it.

For Christians, sin is more than just breaking one of the ‘Thou shall nots’. It is more than just doing something wrong. Sin can be not doing something that we should have done. When you see a need and you can do something about it and you choose not to, that is a sin. When you have a gift, a talent, or a resource and you refrain from using that gift for the glory of God, you are sinning. When you hear the truth of God’s Word proclaimed, when you hear the Holy Spirit speaking to you, when you read the Scriptures, and you ignore what they say, you are sinning.

I told you it is a hard pill to swallow. And now it is up to you to decide what you are going to do with this knowledge. Are you going to respond to it? Or will you ignore it? It is your choice. But I implore you to respond to it, because on that final day when you stand before God and you say, ‘But I didn’t do anything…’ his response might just be, ‘ I know, it is just that you didn’t do anything’.

Whatever your need might be, whatever light God has shown you this morning, respond to it and go walk as the Salt and light of God’s Word in this dark and broken world.

Let us pray,

**Give Us Confidence in Your Mercy, and Teach Us to Be Merciful**

Lord God, heavenly Father,

you are merciful

and through Christ you promised us

that you will neither judge nor condemn us,

but graciously forgive us all our sins

and abundantly provide for all our needs of body and soul.

By your Holy Spirit

establish in our hearts a confident faith in your mercy

and teach us also to be merciful to our neighbor,

that we may not judge or condemn others,

but willingly forgive all people,

and judging only ourselves,

lead blessed lives in your fear;

through your dear Son,

Jesus Christ our Lord,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one true God, now and forever.

*Source: Veit Dietrich*

**Hymn #529: “O Holy Father God Most Dear”**

**Communion**

**Invitation to the Table**

As we prepare to celebrate holy communion, let us remember that Scripture calls us to examine ourselves before God. We are taught that eating and drinking unworthily brings judgment upon ourselves (1 Cor. 11:28-29). Let us therefore ask God for the proper spirit in which to celebrate the sacrament.

Let us Pray,

Almighty God, before whom can be neither secret thought nor hidden deed, grant us your Spirit that we may know our hearts, our lives, and our inmost thoughts as you know them.

Grant us your grace that we may repent sincerely of all sin, find peace with you through our Lord Jesus Christ, and grow in assurance of salvation in him.

May the celebration of our Savior's infinite love in his redeeming death bring joy to us and glory to you. **Amen.**

**The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving**

The Lord be with you;

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts;

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God;

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

It is truly right and our greatest joy

to give you thanks and praise,

O Lord our God, creator and ruler of the universe.

In your wisdom, you made all things

and sustain them by your power.

You formed us in your image,

setting us in this world to love and to serve you,

and to live in peace with your whole creation.

When we rebelled against you

refusing to trust and obey you,

you did not reject us,

but still claimed us as your own.

You sent prophets to call us back to your way.

Then in the fullness of time,

out of your great love for the world,

you sent your only Son to be one of us,

to redeem us and heal our brokenness.

Therefore we praise you,

joining our voices with choirs of angels,

with prophets, apostles, and martyrs,

and with all the faithful of every time and place,

who forever sing to the glory of your name:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

You are holy, O God of majesty,

and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

In Jesus, born of Mary, your Word became flesh

and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

He lived as one of us, knowing joy and sorrow.

He healed the sick,

fed the hungry,

opened blind eyes,

broke bread with outcasts and sinners,

and proclaimed the good news of your kingdom to the poor and needy.

Dying on the cross,

he gave himself for the life of the world.

Rising from the grave,

he won for us victory over death.

Seated at your right hand,

he leads us to eternal life.

We praise you that Christ now reigns with you in glory,

and will come again to make all things new.

Remembering your gracious acts in Jesus Christ,

we take from your creation this bread and this wine

and joyfully celebrate his dying and rising,

as we await the day of his coming.

With thanksgiving, we offer our very selves to you

to be a living and holy sacrifice,

dedicated to your service

Christ is the bread of life:

**When we eat this bread and drink this cup,**

**we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus,**

**until you come in glory**

Gracious God,

pour out your Holy Spirit upon us

and upon these your gifts of bread and wine,

that the bread we break

and the cup we bless

may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,

that we may be one with all who share this feast,

united in ministry in every place.

As this bread is Christ’s body for us,

send us out to be the body of Christ in the world

In union with your church in heaven and on earth,

we pray, O God, that you will fulfill your eternal purpose

in us and in all the world.

Keep us faithful in your service

until Christ comes in final victory,

and we shall feast with all your saints

in the joy of your eternal realm.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

all glory and honor are yours, almighty Father,

now and forever.

**Amen.**

Let us together confess the faith of the church at all times and in

all places:

**The Apostles Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,**

**creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,**

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

**born of the Virgin Mary,**

**suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

**was crucified, died, and was buried;**

**he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;**

**he ascended into heaven,**

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father,**

**and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the holy catholic church,**

**the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins,**

**the resurrection of the body,**

**and the life everlasting.** **AMEN.**

**Communion**

The Lord Jesus, on the night of his arrest, took bread,

and after giving thanks to God,

he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take, eat.

This is my body, given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup, saying:

This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood,

shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.

Whenever you drink it,

do this in remembrance of me.

Holy God, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption.

Recalling Christ’s death and his descent among the dead,

proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your right hand,

awaiting his coming in glory,

and offering to you, from the gifts you have given us,

this bread and this cup,

we praise you and we bless you.

These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

**Taking of the bread**

   Take and eat.

This is the body of Christ, which is [given] for you.

Do this, remembering him.

**Drinking of the cup**

This cup is the new covenant

sealed by Christ’s blood,

which was shed that the sins of many

might be forgiven.

Drink from it, all of you

**Prayer after Communion**

Gracious God,

you have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth.

You have fed us with the bread of life,

and renewed us for your service.

Help us who have shared Christ’s body and received his cup,

to be his faithful disciples

so that our daily living

may be part of the life of your kingdom,

and our love be your love

reaching out into the life of the world;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Invitation to Offering**

**Offering**

**Offertory Prayer**

**(Congregant Prepared)**

**Closing Hymn #641: “One More Step”**

One more step along the world I go.  
One more step along the world I go.  
From the old things to the new  
keep me traveling along with you.  
And it's from the old I travel to the new.  
Keep me traveling along with you.  
  
Round the corners of the world I turn.  
More and more about the world I learn.  
All the new things that I see  
you'll be looking at along with me.  
And it's from the old I travel to the new.  
Keep me traveling along with you.  
  
As I travel through the bad and good  
keep me traveling the way I should.  
Where I see no way to go,  
you'll be telling me the way, I know.  
And it's from the old I travel to the new.  
Keep me traveling along with you.

**Pastoral Prayer**

O Lord and Father of the household of faith,

we thank you for the gift of faith

worked within us by your Holy Spirit.

We thank you for having called us to yourself,

for consecrating us to your service,

for having set us apart to the sacred ministry of prayer.

O Lord and Father of the household of faith,

we pray for the church

in all her breadth and variety,

gathered out of every nation, family, people, and tongue,

to be a kingdom of priests serving you.

We pray for the church in all the world,

for churches in North America, Europe, and the Middle East,

for churches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America,

for young churches and old churches,

small churches and large churches,

weak churches and strong churches.

Grant to the church true lowliness

and genuine humility where there is pride, unity where there is division.

Grant to her truth where there is error and wisdom where there is folly,

that you might fulfill your purposes for her.

O Lord and Father of the household of faith,

we pray for those stewards to whom you have

entrusted the affairs of your house,

for pastors, elders, deacons, lay leaders, volunteers, and committees.

Give them the spirit of willing service and true humility.

Give them a sense of spiritual devotion.

Give them delight in those whom they serve.

Grant that they may lead your people in the way of Christ,

that thereby we might all enter the land of our heritage.

O Lord and Father of the household of faith,

we pray for all peoples of all nations.

We pray that in every land there might be peace and true justice

(especially in the middle east and other places of conflict).

Grant that in our own communities

those who are troubled,

those who suffer,

those who are discouraged

might find support in time of need

especially from your church.

Particularly we remember before you

the work done for the troubled, the suffering, and the discouraged

by the deacons in our congregations

and denominational and Christian agencies.

O Lord and Father of the household of faith,

we pray for our nation and

those who lead the nation:

the prime minister and advisors,

the parliament and the courts,

the diplomatic corps as they negotiate for peace and justice.

We pray for the leaders of all nations,

that they might know that you have called them

to serve their people in your fear and

for your glory and the good of the peoples.

O Lord and Father of the household of faith,

we pray for those who have special needs.

To all who suffer any sickness or weakness,

give health and strength.

To all who are disturbed or troubled, give rest and understanding.

To all who are lonely and alienated, give fellowship and love.

To all who grieve and sorrow,

give comfort and assurance.

To all who are aged and frail, give homes of comfort and safety,

and others to help them, and a willingness to accept help.

All these requests we present to you,

O Father of mercy, we pray this in the name of Jesus Christ,

who even now is seated at your right hand to intercede for us

and who will come at the last trumpet to gather us into

his holy city, the Jerusalem that is above,

and toward which we journey even now. **Amen.**

**Benediction**

May the God who made you,

The Christ who mends you,

And the Spirit who brings you life

Bless and keep you now and always. **Amen.**