

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, March 23rd, 2025
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Doing God's Will
Third Sunday in Lent
John 5:8-30

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Seek the Lord while God may be found. Call upon God who is near.

We will return to the Lord our God.

God's thoughts are not our thoughts. God's ways are not our ways.

We come, seeking new paths to follow.

As the heavens are higher than the earth so are God's ways higher than ours.

We come as pilgrims on the journey, praising God along the way.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Dear God,

help us to worship you today.

May we listen carefully, pray honestly, and sing joyfully.

Send your Holy Spirit

so that our words will bring you glory.

Thank you that Jesus makes our worship perfect for you.

Help us remember that when we worship you,

we are part of your family;

we join everyone who loves you

around the world and throughout history.

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

Children's Video

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

God of grace and mercy,

We confess that our thoughts are so often not your thoughts;

our way are rarely your ways.

Our tempers are short and we fail to act with kindness.

**Our confidence is weak and we treat others without respect.
 Our faith falters and we lose track of you.
 Forgive the many ways we fail you,
 and inspire us to follow you more faithfully. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news! Who is in a position to condemn us? Only Christ –
 And Christ died for us; Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays
 for us.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. By Christ's mercy, we can make a fresh start
 following him

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: "O Lord, My Rock and My Redeemer"

O Lord my rock and my redeemer, greatest treasure of my longing heart
 My God like You there is no other, true delight is found in You alone.
 Your grace, a well too deep to fathom Your love exceeds the heavens' reach
 Your truth, a fount of perfect wisdom, my highest good and my unending need.

O Lord my rock and my redeemer, strong defender of my weary heart
 My sword to fight the cruel deceiver, and my shield against his hateful darts
 My song when enemies surround me, my hope when tides of sorrow rise
 My joy when trials are abounding, Your faithfulness my refuge in the night

O Lord my rock and my redeemer, gracious saviour of my ruined life
 My guilt and cross laid on Your shoulders, in my place You suffered, bled, and died.
 You rose the grave and death are conquered, You broke my bonds of sin and shame
 O Lord my rock and my redeemer, may all my days bring glory to Your name.

Responsive Reading

Psalm 63:1-8

¹O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;
 my soul thirsts for you;
 my flesh faints for you,
 as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

**² So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.**

**³ Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.**

**⁴ So I will bless you as long as I live;
in your name I will lift up my hands.**

**⁵ My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food,
and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,**

**⁶ when I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;**

**⁷ for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.**

**⁸ My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.**

Anthem (Music Ministry): “In This Very Room”

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

John 5:8-30

⁸ Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” ⁹ And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

Now that day was the Sabbath. ¹⁰ So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.” ¹¹ But he answered them, “The man who healed me, that man said to me, ‘Take up your bed, and walk.’” ¹² They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk?’” ¹³ Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. ¹⁴ Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.” ¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. ¹⁶ And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

Jesus Is Equal with God

¹⁸ This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

The Authority of the Son

¹⁹ So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father

does, that the Son does likewise. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. ²¹ For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. ²² For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

²⁵ “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. ²⁸ Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Witnesses to Jesus

³⁰ “I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

Sermon

Last week we started to learn about the third sign that is described in the book of John. The healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda. We spoke about the real physical healing that is being described in this sign, as well as the much bigger and still relevant spiritual healing that is needed in the world today.

As a reminder, this sign signals the beginning of Jesus’s second year of ministry, and it is the beginning of the shift from a ministry that took place in relative privacy to a ministry that will take place publicly.

And that is where we start today, ‘**8 Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” ⁹ And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath.**

Jesus told this man who had been an invalid for 38 years to get his things and go, and he did, which is a true miracle, there is no way he could have the muscular strength and coordination to do so. However, that is not why we started back in verse 8. The reason we went back is for those last few words of verse 9, ‘**Now that day was the Sabbath.**’

Jesus did this on the Sabbath day, and he did it publicly, which will bring him into conflict with the Jewish religious leaders and authorities of the day. And it is this conflict, the

healing of the man at the 'house of mercy' that will ultimately lead to his trial and his crucifixion upon the cross.

John 5:10-16

¹⁰ So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed." ¹¹ But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.' " ¹² They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" ¹³ Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. ¹⁴ Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you." ¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. ¹⁶ And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

As I have said before, when John uses the term 'the Jews' he is not speaking of Jewish people in general, he is speaking of the Jewish elite, the aristocrats of Jewish Society, the Sadducees, the Pharisees and the Scribes. Many of them who were members of the Jewish high court, the Sanhedrin.

The Jewish leaders do not start by questioning the miraculous healing that took place, instead they go instantly to the accusation of a violation of Jewish law, carrying his bed on the Sabbath day.

The Sabbath day was a law given in the Ten Commandments by God to the nation of Israel. It was a day that was meant to be kept Holy, a covenant between God and the nation of Israel.

What we should know is that it is not worshipping or praying on the Sabbath that saves people. In fact, if we were to look at the New Testament it would imply that we should be worshipping, praising and praying to God every day, not just on the Sabbath.

However, in Jesus's day the nation of Israel took this covenant quite seriously, especially the leaders of the faith.

In the Old Testament you will find reference to the Sabbath days, annual Sabbaths and even Sabbath years. They took this command to rest and worship seriously.

And what had happened in the days of Jesus is that those Jewish leaders had kept adding on to the things that you could not do on the Sabbath, until it had become a spiderweb of regulations, one that probably took more work to keep than the work it was meant to stop. Many Jews considered keeping the Sabbath more of a burden than a day of rest because of the rules they were meant to obey.

The Jewish leaders had said that you could do no work on the Sabbath, and carrying a burden was work. So, the Jewish leaders had set out to define what was a burden. They got very detailed, they had more than 25 regulations to define what a burden was. If you had a fake leg, you could not carry it on the Sabbath it was a burden. If you had false teeth, you could not carry them on the Sabbath or even put them in your mouth, because they were a burden.

The Sabbath was no longer a day of rest, it was a legalistic day of rules, regulations and restrictions. You could not carry a burden, you could only walk so far, you could not light a fire.

Now people had to live, so they found ways to work around the law, to circumvent it, so that they could continue to live and still obey the laws set forth by the Sanhedrin.

What is funny is that there are still people who try to live like this in the world today. There are people who insist that we need to worship on Saturday, and that you should not do any work, or have any fun on that day.

They are focused on the laws of man, the same way those Jewish leaders were when they focused on the man carrying his bed, breaking their rules, rather on the fact that the Invalid man that they had known for 38 years, was walking around carrying his bed!

They should have been rejoicing, praising God, and offering their thanks to God for the healing that they were witnessing, but instead they got caught up on being religious, and let their narrowminded focus on obedience to the laws that they had created overrule their desire to praise and worship God.

We need to understand something here, as upset as the Jewish leaders are that their rules and regulations have been violated, Jesus has not violated the Sabbath in any way.

He never broke the Sabbath law, instead he broke the manmade version of the Sabbath which the Jewish leaders had created. He was once again showing them that they had it wrong, and he was showing them the correct way to worship God.

The church today still has this problem, there are churches out there who are more concerned about the rule of man being broken, that their church ideals are being challenged, than they are living according to the Word of God as it is written.

Do you see what happens in verse 14, **‘See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.’** Every time that Jesus heals, every time that Jesus saves, he says to sin no more. This is the message of the Gospel, be converted, committed and changed by your relationship with the Savior.

Jesus’s words to this man seem to indicate that his infirmity was related to the sin in his life, and Jesus is quiet clearly saying, STOP SINNING! Oh, how the world today hates that message.

Jesus does not say, try to stop sinning, or do your best to resist your sin and if you fail its ok, or stop the sins you want and keep doing the ones you like. He says, 'SIN NO MORE!'

After this the man goes to the Jewish authorities and the path to Jesus's death upon the cross is started, the persecution of Jesus for violating the Sabbath of man has started.

To understand how Jesus kept the Sabbath of God and broke the Sabbath of man, lets look at the book of Matthew.

Matthew 12:1-8

12 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. ² But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath." ³ He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him: ⁴ how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? ⁵ Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? ⁶ I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. ⁷ And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. ⁸ For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."

Jesus and his disciples were walking through a wheat field, and the disciples were plucking grains of wheat from the heads of the grain. They would then rub those grains in their hands to remove the husk, blow the husk away and then eat the grain like a snack. The Jewish leaders considered this threshing or harvesting grain on the Sabbath. How absurd, simply removing the husk from a piece of grain was considered work.

So, Jesus pushes back, and tells them think about it, the priests are working on the Sabbath, and they are not accused of doing work on the Sabbath. If we kept the Sabbath the way that many people wanted it kept, then there could be no preaching and teaching on the Sabbath, because it takes work to preach and teach.

Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath, and if we were to continue reading the book of Matthew, we would see Jesus explain to them how God is always working, even on the Sabbath. Jesus is saying to them that showing mercy, grace and love is more important than keeping the laws of man that the Sanhedrin had written for the Sabbath.

God heals people every day of the week, God hears and answers prayers every day of the week, God cares about people every day of the week.

Furthermore, the Sabbath was made for man, it was meant to be a blessing for man, a day of rest from the world around us, not a burden upon us.

Mark 2:27-28

²⁷ And he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸ So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”

So, the Sabbath is a day of rest, a day that we are called to praise and honor God. In the Old Testament, it was covenantal, and it was Saturday. In the New Testament we see the early Christian meeting on the first day of the week, Sunday, or The Lords Day, because that was the day that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

We have to be careful, to not make Sundays for us, like the Jewish leaders did, it is not a Christian Legalistic requirement that we rest, praise and worship God only on Sundays. Instead, it is something that we do as a congregation on Sundays, however if we cannot do it on Sunday for some reason, we should try to find another day of the week on which to rest and praise and honor God.

And this idea of the Sabbath that the Jewish leaders embraced lead to the conflict.

John 5:17-18

¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

¹⁸ This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

In verses 17 and 18 Jesus tells them that he is equal to God. This is one of the most powerful set of verses in the Scriptures. When someone questions the deity of Jesus Christ, show them these verses, it states quite clearly that Jesus claimed that He and God the Father were equal, and for that reason the Jewish leaders of the day wanted to kill him.

In Greek, where it says ‘My Father’ it actually reads, ‘My own Father’ a small difference, but an important one, the inclusion of that word own implies a special, unique relationship with the Father. Jesus was the one and only son of God.

It also says something else we should take note of, in the story of creation God rested on the seventh day. And then sin came into the world, and he has not had a day of rest since, he has been working at saving people ever since. God does not take days off, or vacations, or time away, he is always seeking out the lost and bringing salvation to mankind.

In this simple statement, Jesus has upset the Jewish leaders twofold. He has shown that their manmade idea about the Sabbath is wrong, and he has claimed to be equal with God.

Some people say that Jesus never claimed to be God. Make note that Jesus never refutes their claim that he said he was equal with God.

Under Jewish law you could be put to death by stoning for breaking the Sabbath and for blasphemy. Jesus has done both, and yet he refutes neither. He stands true to what he is accused of throughout the entire Scripture.

So, Jesus claims to be God here in the Scriptures and now all the world has choice to make, you either believe it is true, or it is false.

Jesus is either God or not God.

If he is not God.

He knew this claim was false and he would be a liar. For those in the world who believe that Jesus was a good man, a good moral and ethical teacher, if he claimed to be God and was not, wouldn't him being a liar disqualify him from being a good moral and ethical teacher.

If he claimed to be God and believed it himself but he was in fact not God, then he was mentally troubled. And that would make him a lunatic. Again, disqualifying him as a good moral and ethical teacher.

These are the only two options you have if you do not accept him being the Son of God.

So, the only other option is that Jesus is God, and if he is God, he died on the cross for my sins and he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and he is the Savior of the world.

Everyone in the world has to put Jesus Christ in one of these three categories, he is a liar, a lunatic or the one and only Lord.

Jesus Christ is Lord.

John 5:19-20

¹⁹ So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel.

Every time you see 'Truly, truly' in the book of John, Jesus is saying, 'Amen, Amen' or 'So be it, So be it!' he is emphasizing what follows and being an absolute truth.

Jesus says to those gathered that what he does is equal to the Father. That he does what the Father has planned, that everything that will be witnessed by man as he walks in this world on his ministry, has been part of God's plan for salvation of mankind.

This statement is once again blasphemy by the Jewish standards of the day. Jesus is saying that 'the things I do are equal with the things of God'.

In verse 20 we see the statement that the 'Father loves the Son' and for those of you who know that there is more than one kind of love described in the Bible, this is not agape love, this is Phileo love. An expression of love and affection between family and close friends.

Jesus then claims to be equal in power and sovereignty to God as well.

John 5:21

²¹ For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.

Jesus begins by claiming to have authority over life itself. He brings people back to life and to spiritual life the same way that God the Father does.

As much as we love to debate where life come from in the scientific world today, whether it was the big bang, evolution or some other theory. The challenge that all of these theories have is that life cannot just spontaneously appear from non-life. Even with all of the necessary components, there still needs to be some form of interaction for life to appear.

There is only one place that the concept of life comes from that is true, God is the source of all life. And Jesus claims to have equal ability and sovereignty over life.

Then comes a claim from Jesus Christ that many in the modern church like to skip over.

John 5:22-23

²² For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

Jesus will judge all of mankind, he is the one who the Father has given the authority to sit upon the Great White Throne at the end of this world to separate the sheep and the goats.

And for this reason, all men shall honor the Son as they honor the Father. They should praise and worship God and Jesus as equals. They are one.

This means that if you have a wrong understanding of Jesus, you have a wrong understanding of God.

If you do not have the Jesus Christ of the Bible, you do not have salvation, you have a God of your own creation, a false idol.

This means that the Mormons, the Jehovah Witnesses and a plethora of other false religions do not have God or salvation because they have rejected the Jesus Christ of the Bible and created their own false idols.

Jesus made it absolutely clear when he said,

John 14:6

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Salvation is through Jesus Christ alone, and you better be sure that you know the Jesus Christ of the Bible as your Lord and Savior.

John 5:24-26

²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

²⁵ “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

Verse 24 is very clear, you hear his word, when you hear the Word of God you find your faith and our salvation is based on the truth of God’s Word. You hear the Word, and you believe that Jesus was sent by God the Father. This is not that simple belief, this is being converted, committed and changed by the Word of God. And you are given an everlasting life. It is a new life here on earth that is spiritual, you are reborn, and then when your time on this world ends and you stand before God in judgement you shall not receive condemnation. Jesus went to the cross and died for the debt of your sin. If you are converted, committed and changed there is no condemnation for you in judgement.

Verse 25 and verse 26 speak of what it means to be reborn, as he told Nicodemus. The time has come, right now, for those who are spiritually dead, the unbelievers, shall hear the voice of God and be reborn into spiritual life. Before we knew God we were dead spiritually, and we were convicted by God, Converted by God and have become committed to God, because of God.

Ephesians explains it in more detail

Ephesians 2:1-10

2 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not

your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Then in verses 27-30 we are once again reminded that Jesus Christ will sit in Judgement of mankind and not just a spiritual resurrection, but also that physical resurrection that will come.

John 5:27-29

²⁷ And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. ²⁸ Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

At the end of times, when the prophecies that are described in the book of Revelation have been fulfilled, every person who has ever lived will stand before Jesus as he sits in the White Throne and judges' mankind. There will be a physical resurrection of every person at that time, everyone will be given a new eternal physical body, and for those who have been saved, it will be into a body that will spend all of eternity in New Jerusalem, a place of eternal peace and happiness. For those who rejected God, for those who worshiped a false idol, there will also be a very real physical resurrection of the body, into an eternal place of torment and suffering, the lake of fire.

John 5:30

³⁰ "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

Finally, he once again ties, God the Father and himself together. You cannot separate Jesus and God, you cannot sperate the God of the Old Testament and Jesus Christ. They are one, and with the Holy Spirit they are the Trinity, the One True Living God.

Jesus was obeying the will of the Father, and this should be our will in this life as well. To do the will of our Father in Heaven as we walk as the Salt and Light of God's Word in this dark and broken world.

Let us pray,

Preserve Us in All Temptations

Lord God, heavenly Father,
you sent your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
to take on himself our flesh

that he might overcome the devil's tyranny
 and defend us poor sinners.
 We give you thanks for your merciful help.
 Be present with us in your grace in all temptations,
 preserve us from worldly security
 and by your Holy Spirit keep us
 in your Word and your fear,
 that we may be delivered from the enemy
 and obtain eternal salvation;
 through your beloved Son,
 Jesus Christ our Lord,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one true God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Source: Veit Dietrich, d. 1549, Lent 3

Hymn: "Above All"

Above all powers, above all kings
 Above all nature and all created things
 Above all wisdom and all the ways of man
 You were here before the world began

Chorus
 Crucified, laid behind a stone
 You lived to die, rejected and alone
 Like a rose trampled on the ground
 You took the fall and thought of me
 Above all

Above all kingdoms, above all thrones
 Above all wonders the world has ever known
 Above all wealth and treasures of the earth
 There's no way to measure what you're worth (Chorus)

Invitation to Offering

Offering Prayer

Closing Hymn: "My Worth is Not in What I Own"

My worth is not in what I own
 Not in the strength of flesh and bone

But in the costly wounds of love
At the cross

Chorus
I rejoice in my Redeemer
Greatest treasure, wellspring of my soul
I will trust in Him, no other
My soul is satisfied in Him alone

My worth is not in skill or name
In win or lose, in pride or shame
But in the blood of Christ that flowed
At the cross. (Chorus)

As summer flowers, we fade and die
Fame, youth, and beauty hurry by
But life eternal calls to us
At the cross. (Chorus)

I will not boast in wealth or might
Or human wisdom's fleeting light
But I will boast in knowing Christ
At the cross. (Chorus)

Pastoral Prayer

God of Hope,
When the world is confusing and frustrating,
you bring light and hope.
We give you thanks for lessons learned, for changes of heart,
for fresh discoveries made, and new paths followed.
We pray this day for those who are confused or afraid.
for those who feel anger or despair.

God of Peace,
there is so much conflict, hostility, and antagonism
around us and within us.
Personal relationships are often tense; the world community at odds.
We pray for understanding to prevail
in relationships at home and at work,
in our community and our country.
And we pray for diplomacy to end conflict and threat among nations

God of Joy,
we give you thanks for moments of joy and celebration in our lives,
for small pleasures given and received.,
We remember those who feel left out or bitter,
those who are anxious or in distress.
We pray for those who face loss and hardship in these uncertain times,
and all who know sorrow and suffering,
naming before you those on our hearts this day.

God of community and compassion,
we thank you for your steadfast presence
in the face of all that brings uncertainty and worry these days.
Bless our congregation and every church
inspire us to consider our ministry and mission
Reawaken our love for one another
and our desire to worship and serve together in Jesus' name.
Sustain leaders who feel exhausted by the challenges they face
and renew our stewardship with gratitude for your love.

God of grace,
Receive these prayers and the unspoken prayers of our hearts.
Deepen our trust in you for the days ahead,
We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Benediction

May the grace of Christ attend you,
the love of God surrounds you,
the Holy Spirit keep you
now and forevermore.