

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, September 6th, 2026
Rev. Gerry Gallant

The Deliverer They Rejected
Proper 18
Acts 7:17-36

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Come, let us worship the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God who remembers His promises.

He has surely seen the affliction of His people and has heard their groaning.

He came down to deliver His people, and in mercy He has sent us His Son.

Jesus Christ is our true Deliverer, our Ruler and Redeemer.

Let us draw near with reverence and awe, for the Lord is holy and gracious.

Let us worship the Lord with grateful hearts, for His steadfast love endures forever.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Holy and gracious Father, we come before You with reverence and thanksgiving. You are the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God who remembers His promises; the God who sees the affliction of Your people, hears their groaning, and comes down to deliver. You are high and lifted up, yet You draw near to the humble and the needy. You are holy, and yet in Jesus Christ You welcome sinners to come near.

Lord Jesus Christ, we adore You as our true Deliverer, our Ruler, and our Redeemer. Though You were rejected by men, You were chosen by the Father and precious in His sight. You came not to be served but to serve, and to give Your life as a ransom for many. You entered our suffering, carried our sin, bore our judgment, and rose again in victory. Because of You, we do not come to worship as strangers, but as children who have been brought near by grace.

Holy Spirit, come among us now. Quiet our anxious hearts. Lift our eyes from ourselves to Christ. Help the weary to find rest, the doubting to find assurance, the grieving to find

comfort, and the hardened to be softened by Your Word. Make this ordinary place holy by Your presence, and make our worship pleasing to the Father through the Son. Receive our praise, forgive our distractions, strengthen our faith, and shape us again by the gospel. We ask all of this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. **Amen.**

Call to Confession

God is holy, and by His grace He calls us to come into the light. We confess that we have resisted the gracious rule of Christ, even while needing His mercy.

Let us therefore confess our sins to God, not hiding from Him, but coming honestly to the One who sees, hears, and has come down to deliver us in Jesus Christ.

Prayer of Confession

**Merciful Father,
we confess that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed.
You have remembered Your promises,
but we have often forgotten Your goodness.
You have seen our need and heard our cries,
but we have resisted Your Word and trusted our own strength.
You sent Your Son to be our Deliverer, Ruler, and Redeemer,
yet we have pushed against His rule and gone our own way.**

**Forgive us, Lord. Cleanse us by the blood of Jesus Christ.
Soften our hearts by Your Spirit.
Teach us to receive Christ with faith,
to follow Him with joy,
and to rest in His finished work. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news: Jesus Christ, the rejected Deliverer, was given for our sins and raised for our justification.
To all who repent and trust in Him, God promises full forgiveness and peace.
In Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.
Thanks 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 #293: “Come, Thou Almighty King” (V 1,2,3)

Come, thou almighty King;
help us thy name to sing;
help us to praise.
Father, all glorious,
o'er all victorious,
come and reign over us,
Ancient of Days.

Come, thou incarnate Word;
gird on thy mighty sword;
our prayer attend:
come, and thy people bless,
and give thy word success;
Spirit of holiness,
on us descend.

Come, holy Comforter;
thy sacred witness bear
in this glad hour!
Thou who almighty art,
now rule in every heart,
and ne'er from us depart,
Spirit of power.

Responsive Reading

Isaiah 43: 1-7

43 But now thus says the Lord,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
“Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.

**²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.**

³For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
I give Egypt as your ransom,

Cush and Seba in exchange for you.

**⁴ Because you are precious in my eyes,
and honored, and I love you,
I give men in return for you,
peoples in exchange for your life.**

**⁵ Fear not, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,
and from the west I will gather you.**

**⁶ I will say to the north, Give up,
and to the south, Do not withhold;
bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the end of the earth,**

**⁷ everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made."**

Anthem (Music Ministry): "In This Very Room"

**Prayer for illumination
(Congregant Prepared)**

Scripture

Acts 7:17-36

¹⁷ "But as the time of the promise drew near, which God had granted to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt ¹⁸ until there arose over Egypt another king who did not know Joseph. ¹⁹ He dealt shrewdly with our race and forced our fathers to expose their infants, so that they would not be kept alive. ²⁰ At this time Moses was born; and he was beautiful in God's sight. And he was brought up for three months in his father's house, ²¹ and when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. ²² And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.

²³ "When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. ²⁴ And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. ²⁵ He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand. ²⁶ And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?' ²⁷ But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? ²⁸ Do you want to kill me as

you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’²⁹ At this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.

³⁰ “Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. ³¹ When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight, and as he drew near to look, there came the voice of the Lord: ³² ‘I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.’ And Moses trembled and did not dare to look. ³³ Then the Lord said to him, ‘Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. ³⁴ I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.’

³⁵ “This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’—this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. ³⁶ This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years.

Sermon

Most of us have been there. You're waiting for a breakthrough that doesn't come. You prayed about that job, that relationship, that health situation—and nothing changes. Weeks pass. Months pass. And in the quiet moments you whisper, 'God, did You forget about me?'

That question isn't new. It's not a sign of weak faith. It's the question God's people have asked in every era—Israel in Egypt asked it. Moses asked it during forty years alone in the desert. And Stephen wants to remind us: God's silence in our lives is never God's absence from our lives.

That is the thread Stephen wants us to follow. Stephen isn't just giving the Sanhedrin a history lesson. He's showing them a dangerous pattern that keeps repeating: God sends someone to save His people. His people reject that person. But here's the stunning part—their rejection doesn't stop God's plan. It just delays it. This pattern shows up over and over in the Old Testament. And Stephen wants his hearers—and us—to see it clearly, because it's about to happen again in a way they can't miss.

And nowhere is that pattern seen more clearly than in the life of Jesus Christ: the rejected Deliverer, the One whom men crucified and God raised from the dead.

This passage teaches us that God never forgets His covenant promises, never abandons His people, and never allows human rejection to overthrow His saving purpose. Stephen shows the Sanhedrin, and us, that Moses points beyond himself to Jesus Christ, the greater Deliverer, who accomplishes the salvation Moses could only foreshadow.

Stephen begins,

Acts 7:17-19

¹⁷ “But as the time of the promise drew near, which God had granted to Abraham, the

people increased and multiplied in Egypt ¹⁸ until there arose over Egypt another king who did not know Joseph. ¹⁹ He dealt shrewdly with our race and forced our fathers to expose their infants, so that they would not be kept alive.

Notice 'the time of the promise.' Long before Moses was born, God promised Abraham a great nation, a season of affliction, and a final deliverance. Generations came and went. Abraham died. Isaac died. Jacob died. Joseph died. But the promise did not die.

This is something that we all need to understand; God's promises do not have an expiration date.

Stephen shares that a new Pharaoh came to power and 'did not know Joseph' (Acts 7:18). That does not necessarily mean he had never heard Joseph's name. It means Joseph's service no longer weight with him. The new king did not honor the memory of the man through whom Egypt had once been preserved. The truth is that political power had changed, the gratitude of the people of Egypt had disappeared, and now the people of Israel were viewed as a threat. The Scripture then says that Pharaoh 'dealt shrewdly' with them. The Greek verb used here carries the idea of acting craftily or deceitfully. He used organized power against vulnerable people. He oppressed them and attempted to destroy their sons.

And this is the first thing that the Scriptures want to make clear to us today: the season that seemed to threaten God's promise was the very season in which God was bringing that promise near.

This is one of the most surprising patterns of God's providence. The darkness always seems to get stronger just before dawn.

Sometimes God's purposes become clearest after a season when His people could see no way forward. Israel could not see deliverance, but God was already working according to His promise. We must never interpret God's silence as His absence, or His delay as His forgetfulness.

Some of you might feel like the Israelites today—living between the promise of God and its visible fulfillment. You believe God works all things together for good, that He completes what He begins, and that He will build His church. Yet the pieces of your life do not seem to fit. Do not measure God's faithfulness by a single moment. Measure it by His covenant promise, by His character, and by the cross of Christ, where God kept His promise by giving His own Son for sinners. The God who remembered Abraham has not forgotten you.

This is God's providence: He is not reacting to what is happening in the world; He rules over the world. Nothing in this passage falls outside God's sovereign providence—not Pharaoh's cruelty, Moses' preservation, Moses' exile, the forty years in Midian, or Israel's suffering.

God is supreme over everything, however, that does not excuse mankind's evil. Pharaoh's sin was real. Israel's suffering was real. Moses' rejection was painful.

But even man's desire, deceit, and sinful actions cannot escape God's providential rule or frustrate His saving design.

And it is now with God's providence in full view that Stephen turns from the promise God remembered to the deliverer God preserved.

Acts 7:20-22

²⁰ **At this time Moses was born; and he was beautiful in God's sight. And he was brought up for three months in his father's house, ²¹ and when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. ²² And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.**

'At this time'—at the time of oppression, cruelty, and danger—Moses was born. God did not begin his saving work after the crisis was over. He placed his servant right into the very middle of it.

The phrase 'beautiful in God's sight' echoes Exodus and Hebrews. Stephen's point is not that Moses earned God's favor by physical appearance. Moses was a child marked out in the providence of God.

For three months his family hid him by faith, 'not afraid of the king's edict.' Eventually, Moses was placed in a basket among the reeds of the Nile. The river that Pharaoh intended to use as an instrument of death became, under God's providence, the place where the deliverer was preserved.

Then Pharaoh's daughter found him and raised him as her own son. Think about the irony. Pharaoh had commanded the destruction of Hebrew boys, yet a Hebrew boy was raised within Pharaoh's own household. The resources of the oppressor were used to educate the man through whom God would break the oppressor's power.

Our God is not merely reacting to history. He rules over it.

Stephen tells us that Moses was instructed in "all the wisdom of the Egyptians." God used that education as part of Moses' preparation, but education itself could not make him God's deliverer.

And that is worth remembering. We should be thankful for education, learning, skills, and experience. God can use all of them. But none of those things qualifies us to serve Christ by

themselves. The most educated Christian still needs grace. The most gifted Christian still needs the Holy Spirit. And the most experienced Christian still needs to depend upon the Lord. Augustine noticed something important here: Christians do not have to fear every good thing outside the church. Whatever is true—mathematics, history, skill at a trade, insight into people—can be received with gratitude and put to work for the kingdom. All truth is God’s truth.

But notice the balance. Moses had the best education Egypt could offer, yet Egypt could not make him the deliverer. Education can sharpen the mind; only God can humble the heart. Some of you have degrees, skills, and experience. Thank God for them. But none of those things qualify you to serve Christ by themselves. The most gifted Christian still needs the wilderness. The most experienced Christian still needs to learn dependence

Which brings us to verse 23.

Acts 7:23-29

²³ “When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. ²⁴ And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. ²⁵ He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand. ²⁶ And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, ‘Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?’ ²⁷ But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?’ ²⁸ Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’ ²⁹ At this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.

When Moses was forty years old, something changed. He went to see his brothers—the enslaved Israelites. And right away, he sees injustice. An Egyptian is beating a Hebrew slave. Something inside Moses snaps. He defends the man and kills the Egyptian.

Here's what's important: Moses believed this was it. God was working through him. His people would finally recognize that God had sent them a deliverer. He was sure of it.

But they didn't understand. Not at all.

The next day, Moses tries again. He sees two Israelites fighting and tries to make peace. 'Men, you are brothers,' he says. 'Why are you hurting each other?'

But one of them turns on him with contempt. 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?' Those words sit at the heart of Stephen’s message: the people rejected the very man God intended to use for their deliverance.

Now Stephen's purpose becomes clear. It is here that he is holding up a mirror to the Sanhedrin.

The rejection of Moses exposes the deeper pattern that reaches its climax in the rejection of Christ.

Stephen is holding up a mirror. He is saying, 'You have done it again.' God sent Moses; Israel pushed him away. God sent Jesus; you pushed Him away.

And the same question still lives in the human heart: 'Who made You ruler over me?' Here's the uncomfortable truth: we want rescue, but we don't want a Rescuer who has authority over us.

You know what I mean. We pray, 'God, fix my finances,' but we don't want Him telling us how to spend money. We pray, 'God, heal my marriage,' but we don't want Him speaking into how we treat our spouse. We pray, 'God, help me,' but we want God as a consultant, not as King. That's what's happening in this passage. Israel doesn't reject Moses because he's weak. They reject him because accepting a deliverer means accepting his authority. And we're the same. The real question isn't 'Can Jesus save me?' It's 'Will I let Jesus rule me?'"

Moses was pushed away when he tried to bring peace and fled into exile. Jesus came as the true Prince of Peace, was rejected, led outside the city, and crucified, turning what appeared to be defeat into the victory of our salvation.

Moses could deliver Israel from Pharaoh, but he could not remove their sin. Jesus came to do what Moses could never do. He bore the judgment of God in the place of sinners, died, rose again, and was exalted as Lord and Saviour.

It is here that we must see both a warning and an invitation.

The warning is that religious familiarity does not guarantee a submissive heart. Stephen's hearers knew all about Moses, honored Moses, and possessed Moses' writings, yet they rejected the very One to whom Moses pointed.

The invitation is to stop resisting Christ. He is not merely an adviser we add to our lives to improve them. He is the Lord who has the right to rule us and the Redeemer who alone can save us.

And Stephen's sermon does not end here with the rejection of Moses. It leads us into the wilderness, where God often does His deepest work.

After Moses was rejected, he fled to Midian—a desert far from Egypt, far from his people, far from everything. One day he's a prince with an education, the next day he's an exile with a shepherd's staff.

For forty years.

Let that sink in. Forty years. Not forty days. Not forty months. Forty years of watching sheep. Of going to bed in a tent. Of wondering if God had forgotten him. Of questioning whether that calling he felt—that moment when he defended the oppressed—was real or just youthful idealism.

Most of us would have given up. We would have told ourselves, 'I was crazy. God didn't call me. I misunderstood.'

But Moses didn't. He kept showing up. He kept being faithful. In the small, invisible ways. And God saw.

God often does deep work in hidden places, developing humility, patience, and dependence before visible usefulness.

There is real dignity in quiet faithfulness.

Some of you feel unnoticed right now. You are raising children in the ordinary grind. You are caring for an aging parent. You are serving in a role that no one applauds. You wonder if the best years have already passed.

Moses spent forty years watching someone else's sheep. That was not wasted time. It was God's classroom.

Do not despise the ordinary place where God has put you. The wilderness is often where He empties us of self-reliance so that, when the time comes, we will lean only on Him.

When we read Scripture, we often focus on the dramatic moments—the Red Sea, the public victory, the visible deliverance. We can forget that before the Red Sea came the wilderness, and long before Moses lifted his staff, he carried a shepherd's crook.

Do not despise the ordinary place where God has put you. The wilderness may be God's school, but faithfulness is still today's calling.

Acts 7:30-33

³⁰ **"Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. ³¹ When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the**

sight, and as he drew near to look, there came the voice of the Lord: ³² 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.' And Moses trembled and did not dare to look. ³³ Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.'

The bush burned, yet it was not consumed. Calvin saw here a picture of the church: weak and surrounded by affliction, yet preserved because the Lord dwells in her midst.

This does not mean Christians avoid suffering. Jesus promised tribulation, but suffering cannot separate us from God's love in Christ.

You know what the burning bush says to people who are suffering right now? It says: 'You're still here. You're still alive. God is still with you.'

Maybe you've been in a hard marriage for ten years and nothing has changed. The bush burns but isn't consumed.

Maybe you've battled an addiction or depression for longer than you care to admit. By all rights, it should have destroyed you. But it hasn't. The bush burns but isn't consumed.

Maybe you've been faithful in something invisible—a job nobody notices, a ministry nobody praises, a sacrifice nobody sees. And you wondered: does any of this matter? Is God even here? The burning bush says yes.

As Moses approached, the Lord said, 'Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.'

Take notice of where this holy ground was. Not Jerusalem. No temple. No altar. No priestly ceremony. It was holy because God was present.

Stephen shows that God's glory was never confined to a building. God appeared to Abraham outside the land, was with Joseph in Egypt, and met Moses in Midian. The temple had an honored place, but it could not contain the God who made heaven and earth.

Through Christ, believers have access to the Father by one Spirit. Because Christ is the true meeting place between God and His people, we have access to the Father through Him wherever we are, and especially as His gathered people in worship.

Yet God's nearness must never produce carelessness. Moses trembled. Grace brings us near, but grace does not make God common. Hebrews 12:28 calls us to worship with 'reverence and awe.'

So we come boldly because of Christ, but we do not come casually. We come as accepted children, yet we remember that our Father is holy. And from that holy ground, the Lord sends the very deliverer His people once rejected.

The Lord tells Moses,

Acts 7:34-36

³⁴ **I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.'**

³⁵ **"This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?'—this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. ³⁶ This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years.**

Notice the movement in God's words: 'I have seen... I have heard... I have come down... I will send.' His knowledge is not distant. His compassion is not passive. His purpose is not uncertain. That does not mean He always acts when we want Him to. Israel waited. Moses waited. God's people still wait. But waiting is never evidence that God has forgotten us. In fact, Stephen now draws the line from Moses to Christ with unmistakable clarity.

Stephen declares, 'This Moses, whom they rejected... this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer.'

Stephen calls Moses a 'redeemer.' That's a big word. It means deliverer—someone who gets you out of captivity.

But notice the limits of what Moses could do:

- Moses got Israel out of Egypt. But he couldn't take away their sin.
- Moses led them through the Red Sea. But he couldn't take them into heaven.
- Moses gave them the law. But the law couldn't save them—it could only show them they needed saving.

That's why Moses points to Jesus. Jesus is the greater Redeemer because He does what Moses only foreshadowed. Jesus doesn't just deliver us from oppression. He delivers us from ourselves. From our guilt. From death itself.

So, dear congregation, what should we take home from this passage?

When you cannot see what God is doing, remember His promise.

When you feel forgotten, remember that He sees and hears.

When you find yourself in the wilderness, remember that God's presence is not limited to the places where life seems successful or comfortable.

When you are confronted with your own sin and guilt, do not look to your own strength. Look to Jesus Christ—the rejected Deliverer whom God appointed as Lord and Redeemer.

Do not push Him away. Receive Him by faith. Rest in His finished work. Submit to His gracious rule.

If you have never truly trusted Christ, the call of the Gospel is clear and kind: stop pushing the Deliverer away. Turn from your sin and receive the One God has sent. He is not merely a helper; He is the Redeemer who died, rose, and now reigns.

And if you already belong to Him, hear this: God has not forgotten you. The same God who saw Israel's affliction, who met Moses in the desert, and who raised Jesus from the dead sees you today.

So when the waiting feels long, when the wilderness feels dry, when the fire feels hot—remember the words spoken at the bush:

'I have surely seen... I have heard... I have come down to deliver.'

That is still true

So, let us walk as Salt and Light in this dark and broken world, trusting that our covenant God is faithful, our Redeemer is risen, and His people are secure in His hands.
Amen.

Let us pray,

Lord our God, You made us for Yourself, and our hearts find rest only in You. After hearing Your Word, we come to You with honest and needy hearts.
Thank You for seeing our need, hearing our cries, and coming down to deliver us in Jesus Christ. Thank You that the One rejected by men is our true Ruler and Redeemer.
Help us stop resisting Your gracious rule. Teach us to trust Your timing, rest in Christ's finished work, and follow Him with joy.
Strengthen the weary, comfort the hurting, and make us faithful in the places where You have called us. Let Your Word take root in us, and send us out as salt and light in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Adapted from Augustine

Communion**Invitation to the Table**

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, this is not the table of this church, nor the table of any minister. This is the Lord's Table. It is given to all who have turned from their sin, trusted in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, and seek to walk with Him in newness of life.

If you are resting in Christ, you are welcome to come with faith, humility, and thanksgiving. If you are not yet trusting in Christ, or if you are unwilling to be reconciled to God and neighbour, we ask you to refrain and use this time to seek the grace and mercy of the Lord. Come, not because you are strong, but because Christ is strong. Come, not because you are worthy in yourself, but because Jesus is worthy and has given Himself for sinners.

The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

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 Him thanks and praise.

Father, we thank You for Your steadfast love, for Your covenant mercy, and for the gift of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. You are the God who remembers Your promises. You remembered Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You saw the affliction of Your people in Egypt. You heard their groaning. You came down to deliver them. And in the fullness of time, You sent Your own Son, not merely to deliver us from earthly bondage, but to rescue us from sin, guilt, death, and judgment.

We praise You that Jesus Christ is the true and greater Deliverer. Though He was rejected by men, He was chosen and precious in Your sight. Though He was crucified in weakness, You raised Him in power. Though we had pushed Him away by our sin, He came near to us in grace. He gave His body for us. He poured out His blood for the forgiveness of sins. He bore the curse we deserved, so that we might receive the blessing we could never earn.

So now, as we come to this table, teach us to come with humble faith and grateful hearts. Lift our eyes away from ourselves and set them on Christ. Strengthen the weak, comfort the weary, assure the doubting, restore the wandering, and unite us together as one body in Him. By Your Holy Spirit, feed us with Christ, deepen our trust in His finished work, and renew our joy in the gospel.

Therefore, with the whole church in heaven and on earth, with saints who have gone before us and with Your people gathered in every place, we bless Your holy name. We give You thanks and praise, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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

We remember that on the night when He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also He took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Taking of the bread

Take, eat, remember, and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was given for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

Drinking of the cup

Take, drink, remember, and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was shed for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

Prayer after Communion

Gracious Father, we thank You for feeding us at the table of Your Son.
 Strengthen our faith, deepen our love, and send us out in the power of the Holy Spirit to live as those who belong to Christ. Keep us trusting in His finished work, walking in His gracious rule, and waiting with hope for the day when we will feast with Him in glory. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Invitation to Offering**Offering****Offertory Prayer****(Congregant Prepared)****Closing Hymn #315: "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" (V 1,3,4)**

A mighty fortress is our God,
 A refuge never failing;
 Our helper sure amid the flood
 Of mortal ills prevailing,
 For still our ancient foe
 Yet seeks to work us woe;
 With craft and power great,
 And armed with cruel hate,
 On earth has not an equal.

And though this world, with evil filled,
 Should threaten to undo us,
 We will not fear, for God hath willed
 The truth to triumph through us.
 The powers of death and hell,
 Our God will surely quell;
 Their rage we can endure,
 For look! Their doom is sure;
 One little word will fell him.

That word above all earthly powers,
 No thanks to them! – abiding,
 Ensures that all God's gifts are ours,
 Through Christ in us residing.

Whose summons rings above,
All goods, all earthly love.
Earth's powers wasteaway;
God's Word endures alway,
Whose reign will last forever.

Pastoral Prayer

Gracious Father,
we thank You for meeting us in worship today.
You have called us by Your Word, fed us at Your table,
and reminded us again that Jesus Christ is our true Deliverer, Ruler, and Redeemer.

Send us from this place with humble faith and grateful hearts.
Help us to trust Your promises,
follow Christ with joy,
and walk as salt and light in the places You have called us.

We also ask Your blessing on the time of fellowship that follows.
Use our conversation to encourage one another, deepen our love,
and strengthen the bonds of this church family.
Bless the food that has been prepared and the hands that provided it.
May it refresh our bodies, gladden our hearts, and remind us of Your generous care.

Keep us near to Christ, make us thankful for every good gift,
and send us out in peace to love and serve You.
We pray in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Benediction

Now go in the peace of the God who sees you, hears you, and has come down to deliver you in Jesus Christ.

May the grace of the rejected and risen Deliverer strengthen your faith, steady your hearts, and keep you faithful in every wilderness.

May the Holy Spirit make you bold as salt and light, joyful in hope, patient in trial, and constant in love.

And may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, rest upon you and remain with you now and forever. **Amen.**