

*Divisions in the church
always breed atheism in
the world.*
- Thomas Manton,
chaplain to Oliver
Cromwell

**RISING
FROM
QUARRELING**

April 28, 2024



WELCOME

PRELUDE *Allegretto* Purcell/Drummond

CALL TO WORSHIP

Whoever is in Christ is a new creation.

The old has gone; the new has come!

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ.

We receive God's ministry of reconciliation and commit to learning, growing in, and sharing the unifying ways of Christ.

As God counts not our sins against us, neither do we count others' sins against them. We are Christ's ambassadors as Jesus continues to make all things new.

HYMN *The Church's One Foundation* no. 545

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of unity and peace, you know that we talk much about peace, but at the same time make so much trouble for ourselves and for each other. We quarrel — in church, at home, at work, and even between nations and religions. We let our loyalties to things and ideas and even our nation surpass our loyalty to Jesus Christ. We think worldly wisdom sometimes looks better than the truth shown to us by your incredible Word. Forgive us. Embrace us with the Spirit's power of reconciliation. Fill us with your gracious power. May we become even more committed to living Christ-like lives today and every day. In the name of our risen Lord, Friend, and Savior. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

In the power and name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

In our forgiveness, may we blossom fully with unity and purpose, so that the world will know us by our love. Amen.

SIGNS OF PEACE AND UNITY IN CHRIST

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in God whose love is the source of all life and the desire of our lives, whose love was given a human face in Jesus of Nazareth, whose love was crucified by the evil that awaits to enslave us all and whose love, defeating death, holds a promise of freedom.

Therefore, though we are sometimes fearful and full of doubt, in God we trust; and in the name of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves, in the service of others, to seek justice and to live in peace, to care for the Earth and to share the commonwealth of God's goodness, to live in the freedom of forgiveness and the power of the spirit of love, and in the company of the faithful, wherever found. Amen.

-Iona Abbey Worship Book

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE Acts 15:1-11(CEB)

Some people came down from Judea teaching the family of believers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom we've received from Moses, you can't be saved." Paul and Barnabas took sides against these Judeans and argued strongly against their position. The church at Antioch appointed Paul, Barnabas, and several others from Antioch to go up to Jerusalem to set this question before the apostles and the elders. The church sent this delegation on their way. They traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, telling stories about the conversion of the Gentiles to everyone. Their reports thrilled the brothers and sisters. When they arrived in Jerusalem, the church, the apostles, and the elders all welcomed them. They gave a full report of what God had accomplished through their activity. Some believers from among the Pharisees stood up and claimed, "The Gentiles must be circumcised. They must be required to keep the Law from Moses." The apostles and the elders gathered to consider this matter. After much debate, Peter stood and addressed them, "Fellow believers, you know that, early on, God chose me from among you as the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and come to believe. God, who knows people's deepest thoughts and desires, confirmed this by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, but purified their deepest thoughts and desires through faith. Why then are you now challenging God by placing a burden on the shoulders of these disciples that neither we nor our ancestors could bear? On the contrary, we believe that we and they are saved in the same way, by the grace of the Lord Jesus."

TESTIMONY

Nancy Holland

PASSING OF THE FRIENDSHIP FOLDERS

MESSAGE FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS

Conflict Resolution – Examples in the Bible

1- Isaac and Ishmaelites – Genesis 26:15-22

Issue- wells of water

Resolution – leave the conflict

Move and dig more wells

Enemies claimed the wells that Isaac had dug – Isaac more powerful than enemies – Isaac moved instead of fighting

2-Joseph and his brothers – Genesis 37-50

Issue – abuse – physical and emotional

Resolution – forgiveness after years and seeing God in life

Process – proving that the brothers had changed, grieving the losses

Multiple proofs required, brothers held accountable – restoration

3-Saul and David – I Samuel 19-31

Issue – abuse, attempt to kill

Resolution – flee, hide, not retaliate

Process- David recognized that God had chosen Saul

God chose David to replace Saul – David waited for God's time

David – did not shun Saul's family, was kind and open to relationship

4-Jacob and Esau – Genesis 25,27,28,32,33

Issue – deception

Resolution – both said, "I have enough"

Process – discussion, meeting, gave gifts to each other

Jacob – wrestled with God before resolving tensions with Esau

5-Jacob and Laban – Genesis 24, 29-31

Issue- deception/mutual distrust

Resolution- part ways

Process- Jacob and Laban agree to parting
Jacob & Laban – separation of operations, geographical distance

6- Jonathan and David – I Samuel 18-23

Issue – who is heir to the throne

Resolution – Jonathan defend and defer to David

Process – Friendship between Jonathan and David

Why is it that you harbor strife, bad temper, dissention, schism, and quarreling? Do we not have one God, one Christ, one Spirit of grace which was poured out on us?... Your schism has led many astray; it has made many despair; it has made many doubt; and it has distressed us all. Yet it goes on!... The result is that the Lord's name is being blasphemed because of your stupidity, and you are exposing yourselves to danger.-St. Clement's First Letter, 46-47.



How to Talk Through a Conflict

For the Speaker

-The person who identifies the problem should bring it up first. They should be prepared with a workable solution to the problem.

-Be brief.

-Stick to one subject at a time.

-Begin most statements with "I."

-Share feelings as well as thoughts.

-Do not be critical/judgmental.

For the Listener

-Do not emotionally react. Thoughtfully respond.

-Be inquisitive; search for underlying meanings.

-Do not counter, criticize, or attack.

-Acknowledge by saying, "I understand..."

-Receive the solution and improve upon it.

Seek compromise.

-Congratulate each other for coming to a solution. Put a timeline in place for behavior change.



As the Church Quarrels, Jesus Prays for Unity

"I'm not praying only for them but also for those who believe in me because of their word. I pray they will be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. I pray that they also will be in us, so that the world will believe that you sent me. I've given them the glory that you gave me so that they can be one just as we are one. I'm in them and you are in me so that they will be made perfectly one. Then the world will know that you sent me and that you have loved them just as you loved me.
John 17:20-23 CEB