“Trinity UMC exists to **ENGAGE** people in joyful relationships with God and with each other, that we will **GROW** in Christ-like compassion, and **SHARE** the blessings of the Holy Spirit.”

September 17th, 2023 10:30 a.m. DIGITAL WORSHIP BULLETIN

Rev. David S. Vallelunga, Pastor; Neva Wacker, Liturgist;

Caroline Fairchild, Violinist; Christina Wong, Zoomologist

PRELUDE

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS Pastor Dave

GREETING ONE ANOTHER IN CHRISTIAN LOVE Everyone

CALL TO WORSHIP Liturgist

We gather again, coming from our lives of endless choices,

**TO SING AND PRAY AND HEAR THE TRUTHS OF GOD.**

We choose to come here, for the first time or for the thousandth time,

**YET ALL OF THIS FREE CHOICE IS DECEPTIVE.**

There are, in fact some mandatory aspects of the Christian faith,

**AND WE HEAR ABOUT ONE TODAY, FROM THE COLORFUL STORYTELLING FO JESUS OUR LORD. AMEN!**

HYMN # 121 “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy”, BEACH SPRING

**There’s a wideness in God’s mercy, like the wideness of the sea;  
there’s a kindness in God's justice, which is more than liberty.  
There is welcome for the sinner, and more graces for the good!  
There is mercy with the Savior; there is healing in his blood.**

**If our love were but more simple, we should rest upon God's word;  
and our lives would be illumined by the presence of our Lord.**

**For the love of God is broader than the measure of our mind;  
and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.**

**When we make God’s love too narrow with false limits of our own,**

**then we magnify its strictness with a zeal God will not own.**

**May God’s kindness be our witness, may God’s mercy be our goal;**

**may God’s fairness be our passion, and the thing that makes us whole!**

A TIME FOR THE CHILD IN ALL OF US (10:30) Pastor Dave

OUR LORD’S PRAYER *(Following the prayer, the children may leave for Sunday School.)*

GOSPEL Matthew 18:21-35 Liturgist

MUSICAL INSPIRATION

SERMON “Mandatory Mercy” Pastor Dave

WE PAUSE TO CONTEMPLATE

SONG # 2169 “God, How Can We Forgive”

**God, how can we forgive when bonds of love are torn?**

**How can we rise and start anew, our trust reborn?**

**When human loving fails and every hope is gone,**

**your love give strength beyond our own to face the dawn.**

*Great God, who has told us "Vengeance is mine," save us from ourselves,  
save us from the vengeance in our hearts and the acid in our souls. Save us from our desire to hurt as we have been hurt, to punish as we have been punished, to terrorize as we have been terrorized. Give us the strength it takes to listen rather than to judge, to trust rather than to fear, and to try again and again to make peace even when peace eludes us. Amen.*

**We gather in your name, we try and live with grace,**

**and yet our world persists at its destructive pace.**

**We hear your word afresh, your challenge bold and clear,**

**to make our lives more merciful, and cast out fear.**

*We ask, O God, for the grace to be our best selves. We ask for the vision to be builders of the human community rather than its destroyers. We ask for the humility as a people to understand the fears and hopes of other peoples.  
We ask for the love it takes to bequeath to the children of the world to come more than the failures of our own making. We ask for the heart it takes to care for all the peoples of your world. Amen.*

**When we have missed the mark, and tears of anguish flow,**

**how can you still release our guilt, the debt we owe?**

**The ocean depth of grace surpasses all our needs.**

**A priest who shares our human pain, Christ intercedes.**

*Give us the depth of soul, O God, to constrain our might, to resist the temptations of power, to refuse to attack the attackable, to understand  
that vengeance begets violence, and to bring peace--not war--wherever we go. For You, O God, have been merciful to us. For You, O God, have been patient with us. For You, O God, have been gracious to us. And so, may we be merciful, and patient, and gracious, and trusting with others whom you also love. This we ask through Jesus, the one without vengeance in his heart.  
This we ask forever and ever. Amen.*

**Who dares to throw the stone to damn another's sin,**

**when you, while knowing all our past, forgive again?**

**No more we play the judge, for by your grace we live.**

**As you, O God, forgive our sin, may we forgive.**

WE PAUSE AGAIN TO CONTEMPLATE

DOXOLOGY and PRAYER OF CONSECRATION Liturgist

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;**

**praise God all creatures here below;**

**praise God above, ye heavenly host, praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

CLOSING HYMN # 389 “Freely, Freely”

**God forgave my sin in Jesus’ name, I’ve been born again in Jesus’ name;  
and in Jesus’ name I come to you to share His love as He told me to…  
He said: ‘Freely, freely, you have received, freely, freely give;  
Go in My name, and because you believe, others will know that I live.’**

**All power is given in Jesus’ name, in earth and heaven in Jesus’ name;  
and in Jesus’ name I come to you to share His power as He told me to…**

**He said: ‘Freely, freely, you have received, freely, freely give;  
Go in My name, and because you believe, others will know that I live.’**

**So now we go, our lives to lead, with blessed peace and blessed deeds,**

**for in Jesus’ name our lives are new, with much forgiving now to do…**

**He said: ‘Freely, freely, you have received, freely, freely give;  
Go in My name, and because you believe, others will know that I live.’**

BLESSING *When we make God’s love too narrow with false limits of our own, then we magnify its strictness with a zeal God will not own. May God’s kindness be our witness, may God’s mercy be our goal; may God’s fairness be our passion, and the thing that makes us whole!*

POSTLUDE