

From the Pews, Cathy January Bailey

Psalm 32 begins: “Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered. Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit, there is no deceit.” The psalmist continues to tell us when he “kept silence” about his sin, his “strength was dried up.” But when he confessed his “transgressions to the Lord,” God forgave him.

I know what this psalmist was talking about! I too, at times, decide to remain quiet about my sin. I tell myself life will go on. No big deal. But my guilt grows and festers, and I feel my spirit wither.

And then, I remember. I am already forgiven. And then, I pray. I confess to our God what He already knows. I ask for the forgiveness I have already been given. Overwhelmed with joy, I say thank you.

This is not an easy process, but I remember what I have been taught in this community. I honor our Lord Jesus. I remember His insistence on social justice, and His miracles for those in need. I know He taught by radical example, and with parables that we are meant to wrestle for meaning. I remember His disciples as fallible men, and yet He chose them, and He loved them. They grew in faith and accomplished much in His name. I remember in the prayer He taught them, we still pray for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

I remember the strength I draw from all of you and pray I may offer you the same. We gather together in worship to glorify our God. We confess our sins, already forgiven. We journey together with courage. He knows us better than we know ourselves and still He says, with great love, “And remember I am with you always to the end of the age.” Praise be to God!



### Prayer of Preparation

*My Lord is the source of Love; I the river's course. Let God's love flow through me. I will not obstruct it. Irrigation ditches can water but a portion of the field; the great Yangtze River can water a thousand acres. Expand my heart, O Lord, that I may love yet more people. The waters of love can water vast tracts, nothing will be lost to me. The greater the outward flow, the greater the returning tide. If I am not linked to Love's source, I will dry up. If I dam the waters of Love, they will stagnate. Can I compare my heart to the boundless seas? But abandon not the measure of my heart, O Lord. Let the waves of your love still billow there!*

Wang Weifan

### Gathering and Preparing for God's Word

Prelude

Solo “As the Deer Pants for the Water” Scheer

Welcome & Announcements

Opening Sentences

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, the Water of Life flows abundantly from your wells. From it you call us to come and drink, yet we are reluctant to follow, and too often complain that there is not enough.

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayers.**

We wander in the wilderness of our own fear, scarcity, and doubt. Where you call us to share the water of life with those around us we attempt to store it up for ourselves.

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayers.**

Cover us again with the waters of your mercy. Remind us that we are bound together by the waters of baptism and belong to one another by the power of your call.

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayers.**

Move us to live lives of abundant generosity, and lead us from this place refreshed for the work ahead. Amen.

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayers. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

**People: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

### Hearing God's Word

Minute for Children

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Lesson, Psalm 42

Old Testament Lesson, Exodus 17:1-7

Homily, “Is God With Us, Or Not?”

Solo “Great is Thy Faithfulness”

### Responding to God's Word

Affirmation of Faith, A Brief Statement of Faith

**In life and in death we belong to God.**

**Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel.**

**In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, “Come, Lord Jesus!”**

**With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Prayers of Thanksgiving & Intercession

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 evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Response

Statement from the Head of Staff

Charge and Benediction