

the
HARBINGER
open minds open hearts

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From the Pews, Mark Matlock

Keepers and seeds

“Am I my brother’s keeper?”

That was the answer Cain gave to God after Cain killed his brother Abel. You can hear the exasperation in Cain’s words. He was older but sounded much like a child caught with a hand in the cookie jar. Cain might well have said, “I wasn’t doing anything!”

Through the Scriptures, God has shown that we are each other’s keeper. It’s the sense of family, of community, of faith that binds us. We must widen our field of vision to encompass all of God’s family: we must embrace black and white; Christian and non-Christian; straight and gay; sister and brother; teacher and student; laborer and legislator; protestor and police. Being part of God’s family is not an exclusionary endeavor.

Leading a Christian life means a commitment to caretaking. That life is a responsibility to what and to whom God has entrusted to us. Part of life is opening ourselves to divine possibilities. That is the thrust of the mustard seed parable in Matthew 13: We can be the fertile ground where the seeds of a Christian life can grow and thrive.

Growing and thriving these last four or five months have been a real challenge. In the midst of our pandemic, my mind has wandered to that question: “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

The answer is a resounding yes. We have to watch out for and help each other. Recent history is rife with such examples. There was the Underground Railroad during the 19th century; there were the brave souls throughout occupied Europe who helped shelter Jews escaping persecution from Hitler; and, of course, mission work done by countless churches throughout the world.

Many times our divisive world drives us a wedge between God and ourselves. We must remember to be the fertile ground for God’s word and love. And to be our brother’s – and sister’s – keeper.



WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, July 26, 2020 | online, 10:00a | Eighth Sunday after Pentecost



Prayer of Preparation

Teach me your ways, Lord, that I may be open to the same Spirit who moved over the face of the waters in the first day of creation and moves also over the chaos of this time to fashion a day like this, a world like ours, a kingdom like heaven in bread, like a treasure buried in the fields of the daily I plow; and make me aware of the miracles of life, and of the unfathomable mystery of amazing grace in which I am kept.
- Ted Loder

Gathering and Preparing for God’s Word

Prelude *My Shepherd Will Supply My Need* arr. Limbaugh

Welcome and Announcements

Sentences of Scripture *from Psalm 105: 1-6*

O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name,
Make known his deeds among the peoples.
Sing to him, sing praises to him;
Tell of all his wonderful works.
Glory in his holy name,
Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

Hymn #12 *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise* ST. DENO
See hymn sheet.

Prayer of Confession & Assurance of Pardon
What can we say about our foolish lives, O God?
Too often, we choose to worship power when we could serve others in humility.

We toss and turn at night, all those things over which we have no control keeping us wide awake, when we could turn them over to you.

No matter how many times we hear the news that death has lost its power over us, we dread that day and try everything we can to postpone it.

For believing that our sins are more powerful than your mercy, forgive us, O God.

We know that you cast out your net of grace so that all might be gathered into your kingdom.

Help us to trust, believe, and live that truth for ourselves and others.

We humbly offer these prayers at the foot of your throne of grace. Amen.

Response *God of Great and God of Small* SLEETH
See hymn sheet.

Hearing God’s Word

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Lesson, *1 Kings 3:5-12*

Gospel Lesson, *Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52*

Sermon “Valuable”

Anthem *An Instrument of Your Peace* Manuel

Responding to God’s Word

Affirmation of Faith, *The Apostles’ Creed*

I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy catholic Church;
the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Morning Prayers

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.**

Hymn #761 *Called as Partners in Christ’s Service* BEECHER
See hymn sheet.

Charge and Benediction
Postlude *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty* arr. Smith

Leading Worship this Morning

Lauren Slingerland, *preaching*
Mary Kathleen Duncan, Leigh Stuckey, *liturgists*
Cathy Bailey, *lay reader*
Nancy Smith, *organist*
Katie Knauer, Diana Dailey, Derek Pitman, Mark Kemp, *vocalists*

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise 12

1 Im - mor - tal, in - vis - i - ble, God on - ly wise,
 2 Un - rest - ing, un - hast - ing, and si - lent as light,
 3 To all, life thou giv - est, to both great and small.
 4 Thou reign - est in glo - ry; thou dwell - est in light.

in light in - ac - ces - si - ble hid from our eyes,
 nor want - ing, nor wast - ing, thou rul - est in might:
 In all life thou liv - est, the true life of all.
 Thine an - gels a - dore thee, all veil - ing their sight.

most bless - ed, most glo - rious, the An - cient of Days,
 thy jus - tice, like moun - tains high soar - ing a - bove;
 We blos - som and flour - ish like leaves on the tree,
 All praise we would ren - der; O help us to see

al - might - y, vic - to - rious, thy great name we praise.
 thy clouds, which are foun - tains of good - ness and love.
 then with - er and per - ish; but naught chang - eth thee.
 'tis on - ly the splen - dor of light hid - eth thee!

The opening line of this hymn was inspired by the three divine attributes listed in 1 Timothy 1:17 (King James Version), and it continues by considering how God's life exceeds our own finite existence. The text is well set to a Welsh melody shaped by many three-note units.

God of Great and God of Small 19

1 God of great and God of small, God of one and God of all,
 2 God of land and sky and sea, God of life and des - ti - ny,
 3 God of si - lence, God of sound, God by whom the lost are found,
 4 God of heaven and God of earth, God of death and God of birth,

God of weak and God of strong, God to whom all things be - long,
 God of nev - er - end - ing power, yet be - side me ev - ery hour,
 God of day and dark - est night, God whose love turns wrong to right,
 God of now and days be - fore, God who reigns for - ev - er - more,

Refrain
 al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, praise be to your name.

Although it uses remarkably simple language, this text affirms a great mystery: beyond all our powers of explanation, God holds together all the opposites that seem to pull us in one direction or another. Yet God is present to them all and also to us; for that we give praise.

Called as Partners in Christ's Service 761



1 Called as part-ners in Christ's ser-vice, called to min - is - tries of grace,
 2 Christ's ex-am - ple, Christ's in-spir-ing, Christ's clear call to work and worth,
 3 Thus new pat-terns for Christ's mis-sion, in a small or glob-al sense,
 4 So God grant us for to - mor-row ways to or - der hu - man life



we re-pond with deep com-mit-ment fresh new lines of faith to trace.
 let us fol - low, nev - er fal-tering, rec - on - cil - ing folk on earth.
 help us bear each oth - er's bur-dens, break-ing down each wall or fence.
 that sur-round each per - son's sor-row with a calm that con-quests strife.



May we learn the art of shar-ing, side by side and friend with friend,
 Men and wom-en, rich - er, poor - er, all God's peo-ple, young and old,
 Words of com - fort, words of vi - sion, words of chal-enge, said with care,
 Make us part-ners in our liv - ing, our com-pas-sion to in - crease,



e - qual part-ners in our car - ing to ful - fill God's cho - sen end.
 blend - ing hu - man skills to - geth - er gra - cious gifts from God un - fold.
 bring new power and strength for ac - tion, make us col - leagues, free and fair.
 mes - sen - gers of faith, thus giv - ing hope and con - fi - dence and peace.



This hymn is a celebration of mutuality and diversity as well as a challenge to the Christian community to live out a ministry of reconciliation and inclusion. This 20th-century text is set to a 19th-century tune named for the noted pastor and preacher Henry Ward Beecher.