

**First Presbyterian Church of Rolla**  
**Worship Service for the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**

*January 28, 2024*

**Pre-Service Music:** *How Can I Keep from Singing* - Tracey Craig McKibben

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Prelude:** *Reflection* – Todd Beany

**Introit #652:** *A Grateful Heart*

**Call to Worship**

With our whole hearts, we give God thanks.

**Great are the works of the Lord!**

We ascribe honor and majesty to God.

**God's righteousness endures forever.**

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

**Let us worship God!**

**Prayer of the Day**

**Great God, we know that you are our God and that we are mere mortals, but self-righteousness still consumes us, arrogance still guides our decisions, and we become isolated and alone. Bring us back to rest in your sovereign love, encourage us in relationship, and guide us to live in the community of faith, that we might experience your love building us up, enabling us to do the work to which you call us. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.**

**Opening Hymn #327:** *From All That Dwell Below the Skies* (please stand)

**Call to Confession**

**Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, creator of darkness and light, word of truth, wind sweeping over the waters. Amen**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

**Prayer of Confession**

We come before you now, O God, to confess our sins:

**By seeking happiness without God and ignoring the command to love, we have turned away from God and from our neighbor. Our selfishness and our desire to possess and control separate us from God. *Silence***

Merciful God: **Forgive and heal us.**

**When we accept ideologies that demean the humanity of others, we build walls of division, sow the seeds of hatred and violence and abandon the Lord's command to love one another. *Silence***

Merciful God: **Forgive and heal us.**

**We have hardened our hearts and deceived ourselves. In our lack of compassion, we no longer see Jesus in those who are different from ourselves. *Silence***

Merciful God: **Forgive and heal us.**

**We fail to open our hearts and minds to the infinite and unconditional nature of God's love for all. By being closed to this love, the world is darkened by selfishness, violence, indifference and absence of meaning. *Silence***

Merciful God: **Forgive and heal us.**

**God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ whom you sent in the fullness of time to redeem all creation, we ask you to have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and transform us by your Holy Spirit.**

Glory to God, whom we praise with one voice.

**Holy God! Holy Strong! Holy Immortal, have mercy on us!**

### **Declaration of Pardon**

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters. God has spoken:

**The time of grace is now. In Jesus, the reign of God has come near. By the authority of Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven. We are God's beloved.  
Amen.**

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

### **Passing the Peace of Christ**

**Glory Be to the Father #581:**

*(please stand)*

**Anthem:**

*Invitation to Praise*

Stan Pethel

**Time for sharing joys and concerns, and the prayer list.**

**Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer**

We have been invited to live the divine call to love God and our neighbor as ourselves. As we renew our commitment to this call, may this love strengthen our unity as Christians.

**With all our hearts, we desire to dwell in God's love and to have the grace to love our neighbors as ourselves.**

God of boundless love, we pray that all people may come to know your unlimited mercy and believe in your desire to fill us with your infinite love.

**Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.**

We join our prayers to that of Jesus, who prayed for the unity of all who follow him.

**God of communion, we pray that we may work together for your greater glory and spread the Good News of salvation for all. Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.**

Our hearts are broken because of the confusion and division in our world. God, our healer, we who are scattered like sheep without a shepherd, ask you to gather us into one fold.

**Enliven us by your Spirit and send us again, two by two, to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.**

Our world is scarred by terror and violence. Millions are forced to leave their homes in search of refuge and safety.

**God of welcome, grant us the grace to risk embracing the stranger, tending their wounds and standing in solidarity with them. Strengthen our resolve to be kind and merciful and to act towards our sisters and brothers at all times as you do towards us. Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.**

In our weakness and fear we know that we often pass by on the other side, turning away from those who need our help.

**God of power, despite our lack of charity, open our hearts to experience the length, width, height and depth of your love, so that we may love you more and love our neighbor as ourselves. Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.**

As children of the one God, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**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**

**Hymn #205:** *Live in Charity/Ubi Caritas* sing 3 times – English, Latin, English (seated)

**Prayer for Illumination:**

**Living God, help us so to hear your holy Word that we may truly understand; that, understanding, we may believe, and, believing, we may follow in all faithfulness and obedience, seeking your honor and glory in all that we do; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Scriptures for the Day**

**Old Testament Lesson:** Deuteronomy 18:15 – 20

**Epistle Lesson:** 1 Corinthians 8:1 - 13

**Gospel Lesson:** Mark 1:21 – 28

Heaven and earth will pass away, but the word of the Lord is forever.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon:** *Christian Unity* Susan Murray

**Prayer for the Unity of Christians as prayed by the Chemin Neuf Community**

**Lord Jesus, who prayed that we might all be one,  
we pray to you for the unity of Christians,  
according to your will,  
according to your means.  
May your Spirit enable us  
to experience the suffering caused by division,  
to see our sin, and to hope beyond all hope.  
Amen.**

**Dedication of Tithes, and Offerings** (please stand)

**Offertory Hymn #710:** *We Are an Offering*

**Prayer of Dedication:** *adapted from Stewardship Prayer – Thomas Merton*

**Almighty God, we thank you for all the gifts You have given us: our lives, our loved ones, all that we have and all that we are. Most of all, we thank You for Jesus, your Son and our Redeemer, who came among us to show us the way to eternal life. Jesus was the perfect steward of your gifts, showing that complete trust in You is necessary, and that giving of self is a most important part of following Him. May the offerings of our time, our talents, and our material resources be made in the same spirit of sacrifice that Jesus taught us by His life and death for us. Amen.**

**Sending Hymn #300:**

*We are One in the Spirit*

(stand)

**Benediction:**

(remain standing)

Refreshed by the water of life, let us go forth to love God, and to love our neighbor as ourselves, united in Christ and enlivened by the Holy Spirit.

**Everything we can do together, let's do it! Amen!**

Go in peace. Live in love. **Serve the Lord**

**Postlude:** *Christians, We Have Met to Worship* – Mark Hayes

*Scriptures are read from the NRSV translation. Music presented by the Chancel Choir, Jeff Sandquist, and Lorie Francis. Worship led by Ming Leu and sermon provided by Susan Murray.*

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*Portions of today's service are from "Resources for the The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024. Developed and distributed by the World Council of Churches 2024.*