

Worship @ Home Guide – Sept 13, 2020

Woodstock Presbyterian Church, 142 E. Court St., Woodstock, VA 22664

RECONNECT

Gathering Music/Announcements

Just as I am, (Woodworth)



Image: "The Unforgiving Servant," Jesus Mafa, 1973.

Welcome & Call to Worship – Psalm 103:1-5

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.

² Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and do not forget all his benefits—

³ who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,

⁴ who redeems your life from the Pit,

who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
⁵ who satisfies you with good as long as you live^[a]
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Moment for Children

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7c976lrlek>

Hymn "Bless the Lord My Soul"

<https://youtu.be/3lC2XWBxktk>

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, deliver us.

From selfishness and vain desires,

Merciful God, deliver us.

From irresponsible behaviors, quarreling, and jealousy,

Merciful God, deliver us.

From hurtful disagreements and irreconcilable differences,

Turn us away from the death sin inflicts.

Lead us into the abundant life Christ brings.

**Forgive us, we pray,
and teach us to forgive,
through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Assurance Psalm 103:8-12

The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

⁹ He will not always accuse,
nor will he keep his anger forever.

¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

¹¹ For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far he removes our transgressions from us.

READ

Scripture Reading

Matthew 18:21-35

²¹ Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church[Ⓜ] sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven[Ⓜ] times.

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

²³ "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents[Ⓜ] was brought to him; ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii;[Ⓜ] and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister[Ⓜ] from your heart."

REFLECT

Message

forgive(n)

Thoughts: In the end, then, Peter's question is on the wrong foot, as usual (God bless him!). Forgiveness isn't something you can quantify; in practice, both "seventy-seven" and "ten thousand" are essentially uncountable quantities. Counting, after all, is an avenger's game. Instead, Jesus calls each of us to leave the quantities behind, and embrace forgiveness as a quality of mind and heart, an ongoing bearing, a way of walking, a skillset for living, seventy times seventy times seven. For then forgiveness won't be something we do. It'll be part of who we are, givers and receivers of mercy, children of God living by the grace of God — in tune with "deep physics" of creation, the love beyond measure at the heart of all things, on earth as it is in heaven.

RESPOND

Affirmation of Faith - A Brief Statement of Faith, 11.4

We trust in God the Holy Spirit,
everywhere the giver and renewer of life.
The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,
sets us free to accept ourselves
and to love God and neighbor,
and binds us together with all believers
in the one body of Christ, the Church.
The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles
rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture,

engages us through the Word proclaimed,
claims us in the waters of baptism,
feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation,
and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.
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!"

Prayers

Please see congregational email for specific prayer concerns and joys.

Almighty God, you alone are Lord of conscience. In life and death, we belong to you. Ultimately, we are accountable only to you. Trusting in your mercy, confident as your children, we come to you eager to be in your presence and receive your wisdom.

When uncertainty swirls all around us, we rest in your peace. When the world feels threatening, we find solace in your compassion. When we are overwhelmed by the needs of the world, we remember your power to heal and bring wholeness in ways we could never imagine. When we fear we are alone, you promise never to abandon us. When we yearn to unburden our hearts, you assure us that you hear our sighs too deep for words.

Merciful God, there is much on our minds this day: people still recovering from hurricanes and fires, communities reeling from racial injustice, families grieving the death of loved ones, students, parents and teachers attempting to navigate a school year like no other. In all these places and with all your people, bring relief and offer encouragement. We suffer with those suffering from hunger, illness and loneliness. We rejoice with those who rejoice at the birth of a baby or the beginning of a marriage. We give thanks for the care we receive from friends and the kindness shown to us by strangers. Make of us, we pray, reflections of your goodness and grace to those most in need of your mercy.

Loving God, we seek only to be faithful in this season, as in all seasons. Do not let us forget that you equip us to do your will. You surround us with others with whom to do the work you call us to do. You send your Spirit to give us the words, show us the way and empower us to keep going when we are tempted to turn away from you. We hold fast to your promises in order that others might come to experience your love through us.

Gracious God, we are bold to pray for those closest to us and even for ourselves. As we wrestle with “what if?” and “what now?” we ask for a sure sense of your providence even when we cannot yet perceive it. Grant us the wisdom to know the next thing we must do in order to follow you. Give us the courage to do that next thing with our whole heart and the faith to do it with joy.

We make our prayer in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who taught us to say when we pray, Our Father...

RETURN

Charge & Benediction

Sending Hymn

"Help Us Accept Each Other"

<https://youtu.be/7bqkTMO5fW8>

Special Thanks:

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Lori Staley, JJ Jones

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Hymns from Glory to God.

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