

A photograph of a sunflower field at sunset, with a large sunflower in the foreground and a bright sun in the background. The text is overlaid on the image.

I CAME SO
THAT YOU
MAY HAVE
LIFE AND
LIVE IT MORE
ABUNDANTLY.

JOHN 10:10

New Covenant Presbyterian Church
May 3, 2020 **Worship Service**



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The Worship of God

4th Sunday of Easter May 3, 2020

(Bulletin to follow the online service)

Welcome

Preparing Ourselves for Worship



- Be assured that the cup adds nothing to the quality of the coffee...

How is the **worldly version of abundant living** different from **abundant life in Christ**? Here is a story to consider which is entitled "Life is Like a Cup of Coffee":

A group of alumni, highly established in their careers, got together to visit their old university professor. Conversation soon turned into complaints about stress in work and life. Offering his guests coffee, the professor went to the kitchen and returned with a large pot of coffee and an assortment of cups – some porcelain, others plastic or glass, crystal, some plain looking, others expensive, some exquisite - inviting them to help themselves to the coffee.

When all the students had a cup of coffee in hand, the professor said: "If you noticed, all the nice looking, expensive cups have been chosen, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones. While it is normal for you to want only the best for yourselves, that is the source of your problems and stress. Be assured that the cup itself adds no quality to the coffee. In most cases, it is just more expensive and, in some cases, even hides what we drink. What all of you really wanted was coffee, not the cup, but you consciously went for the best cups. And then you began eyeing each other's cups."

"Now consider this: Life is the coffee. The jobs, money, and position in society are the cups. They are just tools to hold and contain life, and the type of cup we have does not define, nor change the quality of life we live. Sometimes, by concentrating only on the cup, we fail to enjoy the coffee. Savor the coffee, not the cups! The happiest people don't have the best of everything. They just make the most of everything. Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly."

Preparing to Meet God

Call to Worship

L: What a joy it is to be able to join together to form the Body of Christ.

P: We find such encouragement from gathering together in the presence of our God.

L: Remember what it felt like when we were able to physically come together in the same room to worship Almighty God?

P: Yes, we realize that maybe we took those opportunities for granted. And yet, we give thanks for having the opportunity to worship with our church family, though we may not be gathered in the same worship space.

L: Let us remember that we are the people of God, no matter where we worship. And we praise God for every opportunity we have to be part of the Body of Christ.

*Hymn of Praise

The King of Love My Shepherd Is



*The King of love my Shepherd is, Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his, And he is mine forever.*

*Where streams of living water flow, My ransomed soul he leadeth;
And where the verdant pastures grow, With food celestial feedeth.*

*Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, But yet is love he sought me.
And on his shoulder gently laid, And home, rejoicing brought me.*

*In death's dark vale I fear no ill, With thee dear Lord, beside me;
Thy rod and staff my comfort still, Thy cross before to guide me.*

*Thou spread'st a table in my sight; Thy unction grace bestoweth;
And O what transport of delight, From thy pure chalice floweth.*

*And so through all the length of days, Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise, With thy house forever.*

Meeting God in the Word

Prayer for Illumination

First Lesson

Acts 2: 41-47

Life Among Believers

So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Second Lesson

John 10: 1-10

Jesus, the Good Shepherd

'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.



Sermon

What Abundant Life in Christ Looks Like

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

The Invitation

(Introductory words....) As we gather today, lend Christ your table – your bread and cup – and your heart, for, God desires to draw close to each of us.

Prayer of Consecration

L: We are one bread, one body, one cup of blessing. Though we are many throughout the earth and this church family is scattered today, we are one in Christ. Wherever you are, rest your hands upon these elements of bread and juice, which we set aside today to be a sacrament. Let us ask God's blessing upon them.

P: *Gentle Redeemer, there is no lockdown on your blessing, and no quarantine on your grace. Send your Spirit of life and love to us this day, along with your blessing upon every table where your children shelter in place, that this Bread may be broken in love, and this Cup poured out to give hope to all. Risen Christ, live and breathe in us that we may honor you with our lives.*

The Words of Institution

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

L: Let us in our many places receive the gift of God – the Bread of Heaven.

P: *We are one in Christ in the bread we share. (Pause to receive the Body of Christ.)*

L: Let us in our many places receive the gift of God – the Cup of Blessing.

P: *We are one in Christ in the cup we share. (Pause to receive the Blood of Christ.)*

Prayer of Thanksgiving

L: Let us pray in thanksgiving for this meal of grace, rejoicing that, by the very method of our worship, we have embodied the truth that Christ's love is not limited by buildings made with human hands, nor contained in human ceremonies, but blows as free as the Spirit in all places.

P: *Spirit of Christ, you have blessed our tables and our lives. May the eating of this Bread give us courage to speak faith and act love, not only in church sanctuaries, but in your precious world, and may the drinking of this Cup renew our hope even in the midst of pandemic. Wrap your hopeful presence around all whose bodies, spirits and hearts need healing, and let us become your compassion and safe refuge. Amen.*

Responding to the Word

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Cares Chorus:

*I cast all my cares upon you.
I lay all of my burdens down at your feet.
And anytime, that I don't know what to do,
I will cast all my cares upon you.*

The Call to Celebrate Our Gifts



God provided all that we need, and so we are called to return a portion of our blessings to God to be used in God's service. We so appreciate all that each of you shares for our church's ministry. May we all give sacrificially for God's glory.

Going Out to Serve

Closing Hymn

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

*There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in his justice,
Which is more than liberty.
There is plentiful redemption,
In the blood that has been shed;
There is joy for all the members,
In the sorrows of the Head.*

*For the love of God is broader,
Than the measures of our mind;
And the heart of the Eternal,
Is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more simple,
We should take him at his word;
And our lives would be thanksgiving,
For the goodness of the Lord.*

Blessing

- L: Take the Good News with you as you leave this service.
- P: *We will speak of God's love often.***
- L: Care for the needy, teach the ways of peace, work for justice and bring joy and hope to all.
- P: *We will enjoy the abundant life that God desires for us.***
- L: May the risen Christ give you true and everlasting peace and may the blessings of ...

Response

He Is Lord

*He is Lord, he is Lord. He has risen from the dead, And he is Lord.
Every knee shall bow, Every tongue confess, That Jesus Christ is Lord.*

