

**USE OBSTACLES AS  
OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW  
RATHER THAN EXCUSES  
TO QUIT**

**New Covenant Presbyterian Church**  
**September 27, 2020      10:00am Service**



**1125 Jamison Corner Road Middletown, DE**  
**(302) 378-4446 [www.newcov-church.org](http://www.newcov-church.org)**

# The Worship of God

## 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

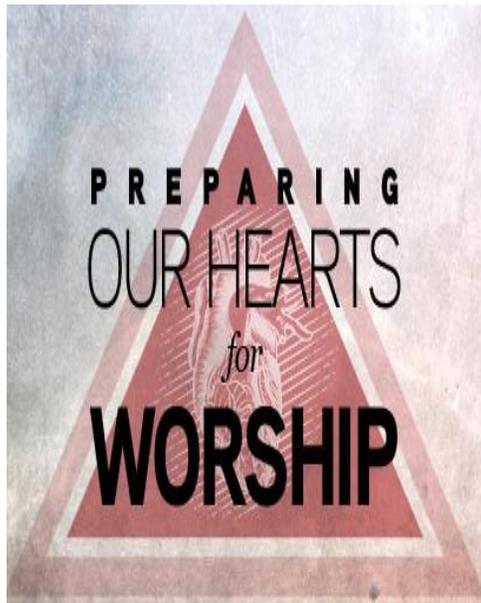
### September 27, 2020

Welcome, Announcements and Sharing of Our Vision

Lay Leader: Brian Lindgren

## Preparing to Meet God

### Preparing Ourselves for Worship During the Prelude...



*Have you ever considered that God provides us with opportunities to “lean into” difficult situations to prepare us for even more challenging situations in the future? It’s true that when we lean into God, God provides us with the support that is needed. Of course, at times, we may feel uncomfortable – feeling like we are leaning too far and may fall over.*

*In 1989, almost a million visitors clamored up the 294 steps and peered out over its vertiginous tilt – about 13 feet off plumb and growing by an alarming 0.04 - 0.08 inches per year. Pisa’s historic Leaning Tower, experts warned, had leaned too far and could topple at any time in the next decade or two. So, the 800-year-old white marble structure, one of Italy’s most famous monuments, was closed for nearly 12 years, and for \$25 million of ingenious engineering work, to set it a little straighter.*

*What might we need to do to straighten up some areas of our lives so that they don’t topple?*

### Call to Worship

**L:** Christ our Lord united his followers together in Christian experience.

**P:** ***The presence of Christ makes our fellowship a happy experience.***

**L:** When Christ is our life, our fellowship takes on the nature of Christ, and we experience unity, love and humility toward one another.

**P:** ***May Christ live in us that we may be like him.***

### \*Hymn of Praise

#### *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*

*A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing.*

*Our helper he, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.*

*For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe.*

*His craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate, on earth is not his equal.*

*Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing,  
Were not the right man on our side, the man of God's own choosing.  
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is he.  
Lord Sabaoth his name, from age to age the same, and he must win the battle.*

*And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,  
we will not fear, for God hath willed his truth to triumph through us.  
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him.  
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure. One little word shall fell him.*

*That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth.  
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through him who with us sideth.  
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also.  
The body they may kill; God's truth abideth still. His kingdom is forever.*

### Prayer of Confession

***Holy and loving God, you have promised us eternal life for following Jesus Christ, your Son. In the confidence that you will not let us perish, we acknowledge that we are not worthy of your care, and do not follow Jesus as closely as we should. Forgive our sins for his sake, that we may rejoice with all believers who have found joy in loving and serving you. And now we turn to you in silent prayer to share our concerns and seek your forgiveness.....Amen.***

### Assurance of Forgiveness

**L:** Hear the Good News: Set your troubled hearts at rest and banish your fears.

**P:** ***Peace is Christ's gift to you.***

**L:** Friends, believe the Good News of the Gospel –

**P:** ***In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!***

## Meeting God in the Word

### Children's Message

#### Prayer for Illumination

#### First Lesson

Exodus 17: 1-7 Water from the Rock

*From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, 'Give us water to drink.' Moses said to them, 'Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?' But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?' So Moses cried out to the Lord, 'What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.' The Lord said to Moses, 'Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.' Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel.*



*He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?'*

**Second Lesson**                      Psalm 78: 1-4, 12-16                      God's Goodness and Israel's Ingratitude

*Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our ancestors have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.*

*In the sight of their ancestors he worked marvels in the land of Egypt, in the fields of Zoan. He divided the sea and let them pass through it, and made the waters stand like a heap. In the daytime he led them with a cloud, and all night long with a fiery light. He split rocks open in the wilderness, and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep. He made streams come out of the rock, and caused waters to flow down like rivers.*

**Sermon**                                      Obstacles or Opportunities for Blessing?



## Responding to the Word

**Hymn #**                                      *O God of Earth and Space*

*O God of earth and space, Of sea and fire and air,  
Your providence surrounds us here, And everywhere,  
In fruit and grain and tree, In shelter from the cold,  
In cooling breezes, flowing wells, Now as of old.*

*Where faithfulness is shown, Where love and truth abound,  
Where beauty graces human life, There you are found.  
Inspirer of all thought! Creative force of art!  
The melody on every tongue, In every heart!*

*Wherever freedom reigns, Where sin is overthrown,*

*Where justice fused with mercy rules, There you are known.  
Give us the courage clear, To make the earth a home,  
For all to live in harmony, In Christ's shalom.*

**\*Affirmation of Faith**

The Ecumenical Version of the *Apostles' Creed*

*I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.*

*I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.*

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

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

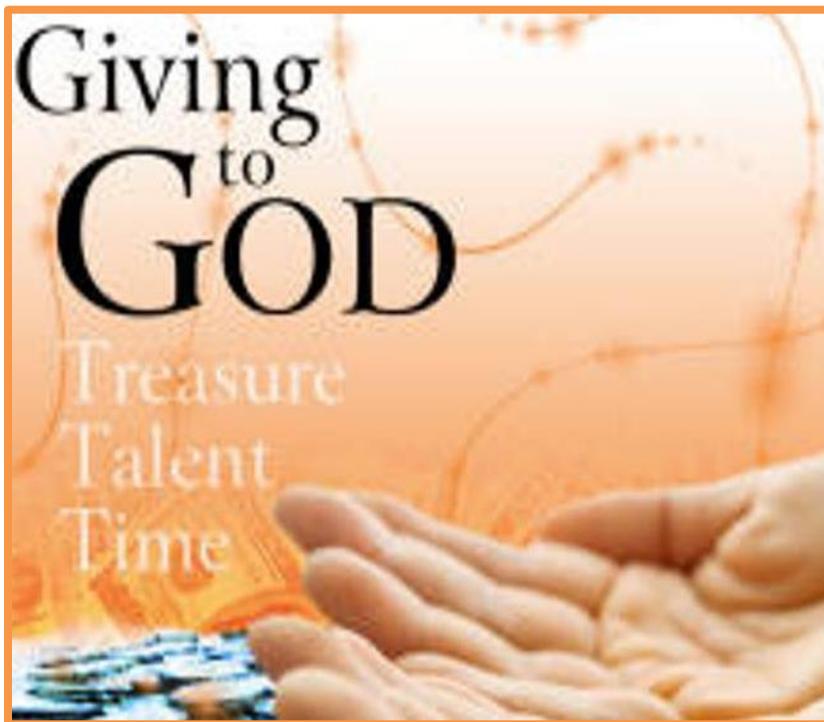
Cares Chorus:

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

**The Call to Celebrate Our Gifts**

**The Invitation**

*You are invited to place your offering in the basket at the back of the sanctuary or send it in to the church. Thank you!*



**Prayer of Dedication**

## Going Out to Serve God

### \* Hymn

*Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*

*Guide me, O thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land.  
I am weak, but thou art might; hold me with thy powerful hand.  
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more.  
Feed me till I want no more.*

*Open now the crystal fountain, whence the healing stream doth flow.  
Let the fire and cloudy pillar, lead me all my journey through.  
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer, be thou still my strength and shield;  
Be thou still my strength and shield.*

*When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside.  
Death of death, and hell's destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side.  
Songs of praises, songs of praises, I will ever give to thee;  
I will ever give to thee.*

### \* Blessing

L: Go forth from this place ready to serve God where needed.

**P: *We will never let obstacles prevent us from saying "YES" to God's call.***

L: We will go forth with courage and fortitude, glad for the opportunity to serve.  
And may the blessings of God ...

### \*Response

*He Is Lord*

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

