

# Living Out God's Call to Joy and to Justice

First Presbyterian Church of McAllen, Texas  
February 1, 2026



Laura James  
*Sermon on the Mount*

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## Opening Sentences

- What does the Holy One require of us? To be just, kind, and humble before God.
- Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship.

## Prelude

## Call to Worship

*Please rise in body or in spirit.*

In a world that rewards selfishness,

**it is wise to hoard resources,  
foolish to share.**

In a world built on violence,

**it is wise to be suspicious,  
foolish to risk compassion.**

But God's wisdom is not the wisdom of the world:

**God's wisdom draws us away from greed and self-preservation.**

**God's wisdom calls us toward love.**

**Though it seems foolishness to the world,**

**we will choose to God's wisdom, which is love.**

Let us worship God.

## Opening Hymn

Seek Ye First

GG #175

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness,  
and all these things shall be added unto you. Allelu, alleluia!

Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and you shall find;  
knock, and the door shall be opened unto you. Allelu, alleluia!

You shall not live by bread alone, but by every word  
that proceeds from the mouth of God. Allelu, alleluia!

## Prayer of the Day

God our deliverer,  
you walk with the meek and the poor,  
the compassionate,  
and those who mourn,  
and you call us  
to walk humbly with you.

When we are foolish, be our wisdom;  
when we are weak, be our strength;  
that, as we learn to do justice  
and to love mercy,  
your rule may come as blessing.  
Amen.

Károly Ferenczy  
*Sermon on the Mount*



### Call to Confession

God has told us what is good, what is required:  
Do justice. Love kindness. Walk humbly with God.  
These commands are so simple,  
yet we know we have not always followed them.  
With that knowledge, let us bring to God  
our Prayer of Confession.

### Prayer of Confession

**Surprising God,  
you have made foolish the wisdom of the world,  
teaching that the meek shall inherit the earth  
and heaven belongs to those who pursue justice  
even at great cost.  
But we cling to the values of this world,  
things that enhance our status but cheat our souls.  
We seek comfort in simple answers and easy outs.  
We disregard the marginalized and mock weakness,  
forgetting that Christ lifted up the lowly  
and made a home among the vulnerable.  
God of blessing, reorient our hearts, and renew our minds,  
so that we might act with justice, practice kindness,  
and – in all things – walk humbly with you.**

*A moment of silent prayer.*

### Words of Assurance

God is stronger than our weaknesses, and greater than our failings.  
Even when we fall short,  
God's love embraces us and sets us on the path of life once more.  
Friends, hear and trust in the good news of the Gospel:  
**In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, healed, and made whole.  
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

Act of Praise      Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart, v. 1      GG #688

Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;  
wean it from earth; through all its pulses move;  
stoop to my weakness, might as thou art,  
and make me love thee as I ought to love.

## Passing the Peace of Christ

The peace of our Lord be with you all. / **And also with you.**

## The Life of the Church

## Time with the Younger Church

## Prayer for Illumination

Holy God, your blessings are abundant,  
and your wisdom exceeds our grasp.  
Fill us with your Spirit as we hear your word,  
that we may be justice seekers  
and peacemakers,  
sharing your light wherever it is needed,  
and revealing your glory to all. Amen.



DoveTailnK  
Blessed Are ...

## Anthem

## Gospel Reading

Matthew 5: 1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup> And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

<sup>3</sup> “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup> “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

<sup>7</sup> “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

<sup>8</sup> “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup> “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

<sup>10</sup> “Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup> “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup>

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

The Word of the Lord / **Thanks be to God.**

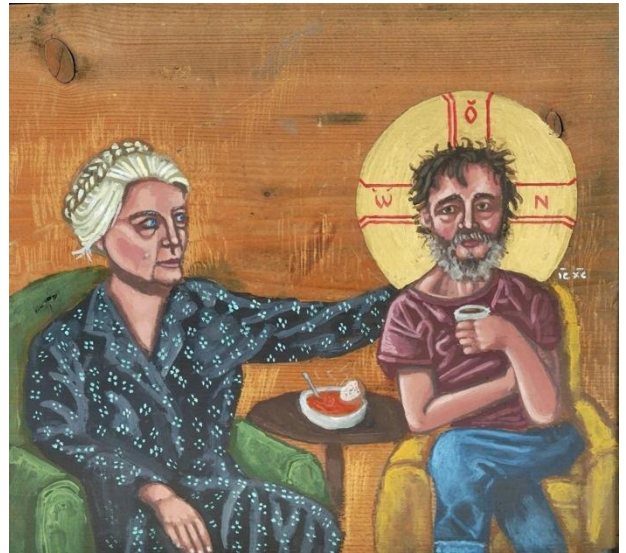
## Sermon



## Affirmation of Faith

**We believe that God  
has entrusted the church  
with the message of reconciliation  
in and through Jesus Christ;  
we believe that the church  
is called to be the salt of the earth  
and the light of the world,  
that the church is called blessed  
because it is a peace-maker,  
that the church is witness  
both by word and by deed  
to the new heaven and the new earth  
in which righteousness dwells.**

from The Confession of Belhar



Kelly Latimore  
*Dorothy Day with Homeless Christ*

## Hymn

### Help Us Accept Each Other

GG #754

Help us accept each other as Christ accepted us;  
teach us as sister, brother, each person to embrace.  
Be present, Lord, among us and bring us to believe  
we are ourselves accepted, and meant to love and live.

Teach us, O Lord, your lessons, as in our daily life  
we struggle to be human and search for hope and faith.  
Teach us to care for people, for all, not just for some,  
to love them as we find them, or as they may become.

Let your acceptance change us, so that we may be moved  
in living situations to do the truth in love;  
to practice your acceptance until we know by heart  
the table of forgiveness, and laughter's healing art.

Lord, for today's encounters with all who are in need,  
who hunger for acceptance, for justice, and for bread,  
we need new eyes for seeing, new hands for holding on:  
renew us with your Spirit; Lord, free us; make us one.

### Invitation to the Offering

With what shall we come before the Lord this day?  
We come with a love of justice  
and a passion for sharing Christ's love.  
Let us walk in humble gratitude,  
offering to God a portion of the gifts  
that God freely shares with us,  
gifts for the healing of the world.

### Offertory

Act of Dedication Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart, v. 5 GG #688

Teach me to love thee as thine angels love,  
one holy passion filling all my frame;  
the baptism of the heaven-descended Dove,  
my heart an altar, and thy love the flame.

### Offertory Prayer

We thank you, God, that you have blessed us  
with an abundance of gifts for the flourishing of your world.  
May this offering of our life and labor reveal your love  
as we seek to share your promised reign with all creation. Amen.

## **SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION**

### Invitation to the Table

### Prayer of Great Thanksgiving and Lord's Prayer

The Lord be with you / **And also with you.**  
Lift up your hearts / **We lift them to the Lord.**  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Blessed are you, O Lord our God:  
You delivered us from captivity and made us your people.  
You ask us not for burnt offerings or rivers of precious oil,  
but to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you, our God.

Therefore we praise you, joining the song  
of the universal church and the heavenly choir:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Blessed is Jesus Christ, our Savior:  
He taught us what it means to be truly blessed –  
to be merciful and meek, peaceful and pure in heart;  
to such as these the kingdom of heaven belongs.

Remembering your goodness and grace,  
we offer ourselves to you with gratitude  
as we share this joyful feast.  
Great is the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us  
and upon this bread and cup;  
make us one in the body and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Teach us the wisdom of the cross, the message of Christ crucified.  
Let the weak be lifted up, and the mighty be made humble,  
so that we may boast in nothing other than the grace of our Lord.

Through the Lord Jesus Christ,  
in the unity of the Spirit,  
we bless you, God of glory,  
now and forever.

**Amen.**

Let us pray together as Christ has taught us, saying:  
**Our Father, who art in heaven ...**

### Sharing Bread and Cup

### The Sacrament is Carried Beyond the Sanctuary

We send you out with this bread and cup  
to share the feast of the risen Lord.

**We who are many are one body,  
for we all partake of the one bread.**

### Prayer after Communion

We give you thanks and praise, O God,  
that you have fed us with your mercy  
and poured out your Spirit in this place.  
Continue to nourish and fill us each day,  
that we may live as your beloved people;  
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Hymn

Come! Live in the Light

GG #749

Come! Live in the light!  
Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!  
We are called to be light for the kingdom,  
to live in the freedom of the city of God.  
*Refrain: We are called to act with justice; we are called to love tenderly;  
we are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.*  
Come! Open your heart!  
Show your mercy to all those in fear!  
We are called to be hope for the hopeless  
so hatred and violence will be no more.      *Refrain*  
Sing! Sing a new song!  
Sing of that great day when all will be one!  
God will reign, and we'll walk with each other  
as sisters and brothers united in love.      *Refrain*

### Charge and Benediction

Congregational Response Come! Live in the Light, *refrain*

*We are called to act with justice; we are called to love tenderly;  
we are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.*

### Postlude

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#### **Today's Worship Leaders:**

Rev. Kathryn J. Escandell	Caly Fernandez		
Jack Harriff	Robert Garza	Ale Pacheco	FPC Chancel Choir

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