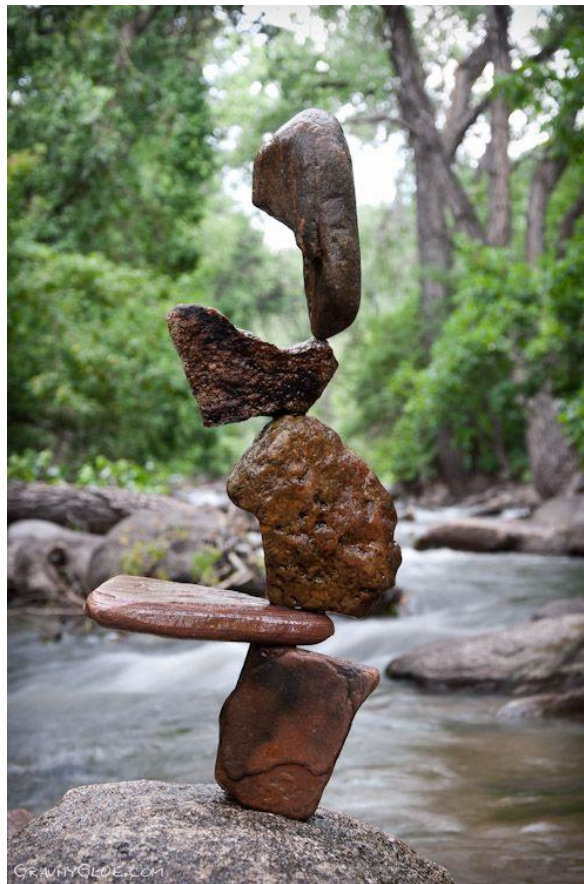


Living Out God's Call to Joy and to Justice

First Presbyterian Church, McAllen
Sunday Worship – September 17, 2023



Michael Grab
Balanced Rock Sculpture

Opening Sentences

- We observe this day as the Lord's Day, giving thanks to God, who gives justice to the oppressed, who forgives and redeems us, and crowns us with steadfast love and mercy.
- Let us prepare our hearts and minds to worship the One who is worthy of our praise.

Prelude

Call to Worship

Please rise in body or in spirit for the Call to Worship.

Bless the Lord, my soul.

Bless God's holy name.

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

**God's steadfast love
stretches from earth to the heavens.**

Bless God's holy name.

Opening Hymn Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven; v. 1,2,4

GG #619

Praise, my soul, the God of heaven;
glad of heart your carols raise;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
who, like me, should sing God's praise?
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise the Maker all your days!

Praise God for the grace and favor
shown our forebears in distress;
God is still the same forever,
slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Sing our Maker's faithfulness!

Angels, teach us adoration;
you behold God face to face.
Sun and moon and all creation,
dwellers in all time and space:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise with us the God of grace!

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you call your church to witness
that in Christ we are reconciled to you.
Help us so to proclaim the good news of your love,
that all who hear it may turn to you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.

Call to Confession

Trusting in the steadfast love and abundant mercy
of the God who forgives and saves,
let us offer our Prayer of Confession.

Prayer of Confession

**God our Judge, we admit we have double standards.
We seek forgiveness for ourselves,
but fail to forgive others.
We seek relief for ourselves,
but fail to seek relief for others.
We seek leniency for ourselves,
but fail to show that mercy to others.
Forgive us, mighty God,
and help us to live as forgiven and forgiving people,
showing others the same grace and mercy
that you have generously shown to us.**
A moment of silent prayer.

Assurance of Pardon: A Responsive Reading from Psalm 103

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.
**Lord, you are full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;**
you will not always accuse us,
nor will you keep your anger forever.
**You have not dealt with us according to our sins,
nor repaid us according to our iniquities.**
For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.
**As far as the east is from the west,
so far have you removed our transgressions from us.**

Act of Praise

Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me

GG #582

Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,
and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,
and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

Passing the Peace of Christ

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

Prayer for Illumination

Holy God, your Word is strong and leads our feet
to your holy dwelling place.

Strengthen and guide us with your Word
through the power of your Holy Spirit;
in Jesus' name. Amen.

Anthem

Gospel Reading

Matthew 18:21-35 (The Message)

At that point, Peter got up the nerve to ask, "Master, how many times do I forgive a brother or sister who hurts me? Seven?"

Jesus replied, "Seven! Hardly. Try seventy times seven.

"The kingdom of God is like a king who decided to square accounts with his servants. As he got under way, one servant was brought before him who had run up a debt of a hundred thousand dollars. He couldn't pay up, so the king ordered the man, along with his wife, children, and goods, to be auctioned off at the slave market.

"The poor wretch threw himself at the king's feet and begged, 'Give me a chance and I'll pay it all back.' Touched by his plea, the king let him off, erasing the debt.

"The servant was no sooner out of the room when he came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him ten dollars. He seized him by the throat and demanded, 'Pay up. Now!'

"The poor wretch threw himself down and begged, 'Give me a chance and I'll pay it all back.' But he wouldn't do it. He had him arrested and put in jail until the debt was paid. When the other servants saw this going on, they were outraged and brought a detailed report to the king.

"The king summoned the man and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave your entire debt when you begged me for mercy. Shouldn't you be compelled to be merciful to your fellow servant who asked for mercy?' The king was furious and put the screws to the man until he paid back his entire debt. And that's exactly what my Father in heaven is going to do to each one of you who doesn't forgive unconditionally anyone who asks for mercy."

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

Sermon

Affirmation of Faith

from the Confession of Belhar

We believe in the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who gathers, protects, and cares for the church through Word and Spirit. This, God has done since the beginning of the world and will do to the end.

We believe that Christ's work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another.

We believe that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ;

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 peacemaker, that the church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells. (10.1, .3, .5)

Hymn

O God of Every Nation

GG #756

O God of every nation, of every race and land,
redeem the whole creation with your almighty hand.
Where hate and fear divide us and bitter threats are hurled,
in love and mercy guide us and heal our strife-torn world.

From search for wealth and power and scorn of truth and right,
from trust in bombs that shower destruction through the night,
from pride of race and station, and blindness to your way,
deliver every nation, eternal God, we pray.

Lord, strengthen those who labor that all may find release
from fear of rattling saber, from dread of war's increase;
when hope and courage falter, your still small voice be heard;
with faith that none can alter, your servants undergird.

Keep bright in us the vision of days when war shall cease,
when hatred and division give way to love and peace,
till dawns the morning glorious when truth and justice reign
and Christ shall rule victorious o'er all the world's domain.

Time with the Younger Church

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

Life-giving, liberating God,
we entrust to you this day
all the concerns of our hearts
and all the troubles of the world.

Hear our prayers:

for those who are fleeing
war and violence ...

for people seeking freedom
from oppression ...

for the healing and restoration
of the earth ...

for loved ones who are sick or suffering ...

for those at the beginning or end of life ...

for people struggling with financial burdens ...

for your children who are caught in the grip of addiction of any kind ...

for all who are seeking forgiveness ...

Lead us from captivity to freedom,
from sin to salvation,
and from death to life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who taught us to pray together, saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven ...



Josefina de Vasconcellos
Reconciliation

Invitation to the Offering

God is unfailing in blessing and love.

With thankful hearts,

let us offer up to God a portion of what God has given us.

Offertory

Act of Dedication

I Come with Joy, v. 5

GG #515

Together met, together bound by all that God has done,
we'll go with joy, to give the world
the love that makes us one, the love that makes us one.

Offertory Prayer

Almighty God,
receive these gifts that we offer with grateful hearts
and use our lives for the ministry of your Son, Jesus Christ,
in whose name we pray. Amen.

Hymn

When We Are Living

GG #822

v. 1-2 in English; v. 3-4 in Spanish

When we are living, it is in Christ Jesus,
and when we're dying, it is in the Lord.
Both in our living and in our dying,
we belong to God; we belong to God.

Through all our living, we our fruits must give.
Good works of service are for offering.
When we are giving, or when receiving,
we belong to God; we belong to God.

*En la tristeza y en el dolor,
en la belleza y en el amor
sea que suframos o que gocemos
somos del Señor, somos del Señor.*

*En este mundo por doquier habrá
gente que llora y sin consolar.
Sea que ayudemos o que alimentemos,
somos del Señor, somos del Señor.*

The Life of the Church

Charge and Benediction

Congregational Response

When We Are Living, v. 1 in Spanish

*Pues si vivimos, para Él vivimos,
y si morimos para Él morimos.
Sea que vivamos or que muramos,
somos del Señor, somos del Señor.*

Today's Worship Leaders:

Rev. Kathryn J. Escandell
Robert Garza

Margie Karst
Ale Pacheco

Ann Rowland
FPC Chancel Choir

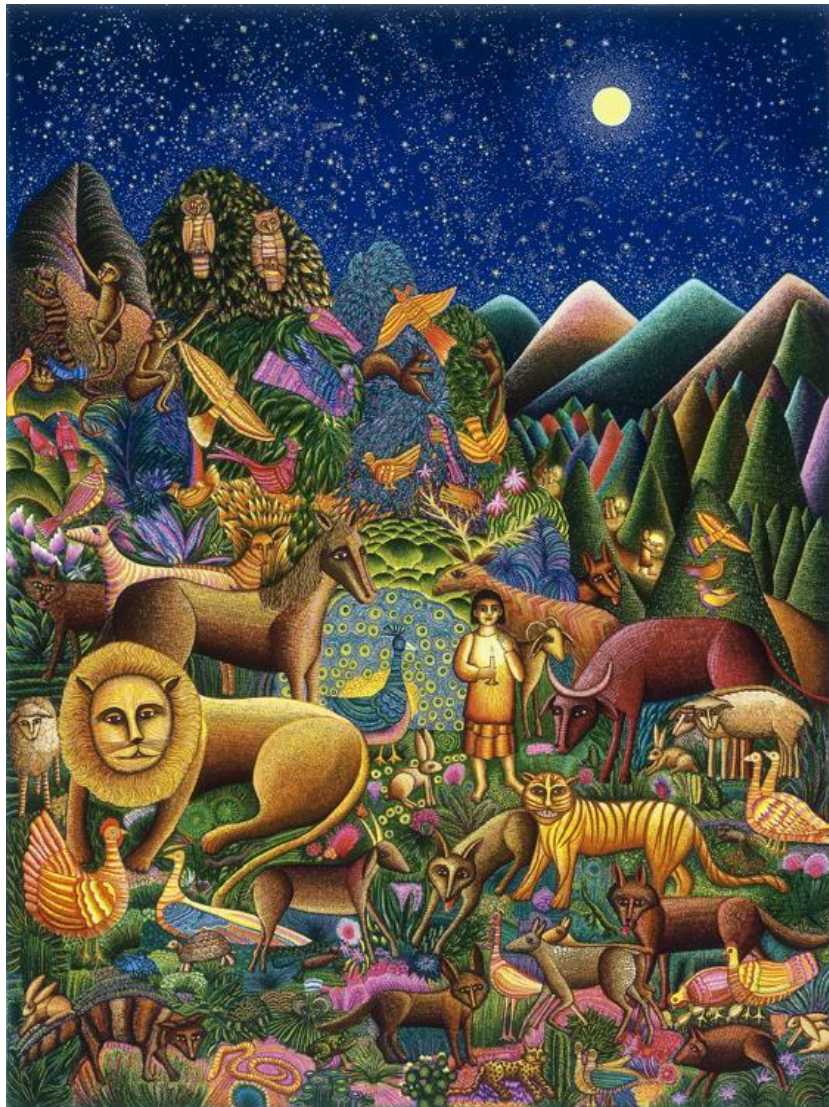
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John August Swanson
Peaceable Kingdom