



Grace Episcopal Church

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Homecoming Sunday

September 13, 2020 | 9:30am

Ministers | All of Us

Rector | Wren Blessing

Curate | Stephen Crippen

Music | Ann Strickland

Homecoming

Once only when the summer
was nearly over and my own
hair had been white as the day's clouds
for more years than I was counting
I stood by the garden at evening
Paula was still weeding around
flowers that open after dark
and I looked up to the clear sky
and saw the new moon and at that
moment from behind me a band
of dark birds and then another
after it flying in silence
long curving wings hardly moving
the plovers just in from the sea
and the flight clear from Alaska
half their weight gone to get them home
but home now arriving without
a sound as it rose to meet them

~ W.S. Merwin, from *The Moon Before Morning* (Copper Canyon Press, 2014)

A bell rings. We listen to the longing in our hearts.

Gathering Song | I Am Walking a Path of Peace

by Janet Bauman Tissandier

The musical score is written in 4/4 time on a single treble clef staff. It consists of three lines of music. The first line contains the lyrics: "I am walk-ing a path of peace*, I am walk-ing a path of". The second line contains: "peace*, I am walk-ing a path of peace*, lead me home,". The third line contains: "lead me home. I am home." The music features a mix of quarter, eighth, and half notes, with some notes beamed together. There are repeat signs at the beginning and end of the piece.

* I am walking a path of love ...,
I am walking a path of grace ...

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

After the gathering song, the Officiant invites us to stand and says

Officiant We are not alone.

People We live in God's world.

Officiant We are listening, Holy One.

People Give us hope, give us courage.

Officiant God, bless every step that we are taking.

People And God, bless the earth beneath our feet.

We remain standing and sing together.

Opening Song | Coming Home

by Skylar Grey

I'm com - ing home, I'm com - ing home, tell the world I'm com - ing
home. Let the rain wash a - way, all the pain of yes - ter -
day. You know my king - dom a waits and they've for - giv - en my mis -
takes. I'm com - ing home, I'm com - ing home, tell the world I'm com - ing
home. Let the rain wash a - way all the pain of yes - ter -
day. You know my king - dom a waits and they've for - giv - en my mis -
takes I'm com - ing home, I'm com - ing home, tell the world I'm com - ing
home.

The Collect

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Officiant Let us pray.

Flowing Spirit, living water, Mother of creation: refresh our hearts, inspire our gifts, indwell our gathering and make us a sign of all the world's vocation to communion with you; through Jesus Christ, who quenches our thirst. **Amen.**

Steven Shakespeare

WE TELL THE STORY

We are seated for the reading.

The First Reading | Genesis 50:15-21

Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

After the reading, the reader will say

The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

We stand and say the Psalm.

Psalm | 103:1-13

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

**Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits.**

He forgives all your sins
and heals all your infirmities;

**He redeems your life from the grave
and crowns you with mercy and loving-kindness;**

He satisfies you with good things,
and your youth is renewed like an eagle's.

**The Lord executes righteousness
and judgment for all who are oppressed.**

He made his ways known to Moses
and his works to the children of Israel.

**The Lord is full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and of great kindness.**

He will not always accuse us,
nor will he keep his anger for ever.

**He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.**

For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.

**As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our sins from us.**

As a father cares for his children,
so does the Lord care for those who fear him.

We are seated for the second reading.

The Second Reading | Romans 14:1-12

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written,

"As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God."

So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

After the reading, the reader will say

The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

We stand together and sing

Gospel Song | Hosea (Come Back to Me) *Offered by Maggie Finley*

by John Michael Talbot

Come back to me with all your heart
Don't let fear keep us apart
Trees do bend though straight and tall
So must we to others' call

Long have I waited for
Your coming home to me
And living deeply our new lives

The wilderness will lead you
To the place where I will speak
Integrity and justice
With tenderness
You shall know.

Long have I waited for
Your coming home to me
And living deeply our new lives

Come back to me with all your heart
Don't let fear keep us apart

Long have I waited for
Your coming home to me
And living deeply our new lives

Long have I waited for
Your coming home to me
And living deeply our new lives

Come back to me with all your heart
Don't let fear keep us apart

Long have I waited for
Your coming home to me
And living deeply our new lives

Long have I waited for
Your coming home to me
And living deeply our new lives

The Officiant introduces the Gospel by saying

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

The Gospel | Matthew 18:21-35

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

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; 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. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. 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.’ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. 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. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

After the Gospel the Officiant will say

The Gospel of the Lord.

People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

OUR RESPONSE TO THE STORY

The Homily

Affirmation of Faith

We stand and say

**We believe in God above us,
maker and sustainer of all life,
of sun and moon,
of water and earth,
of all humanity.**

**We believe in God beside us,
Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh,
born of a woman's womb, servant of the poor,
he was tortured and nailed to a tree.
Knowing full passion and deep sorrow, he died forsaken.
He descended into the earth to the place of death.
On the third day he rose from the tomb.
He ascended into heaven to be everywhere present,
and his Kingdom will one day be known.**

**We believe in God within us,
the Holy Spirit of Pentecostal fire,
life-giving breath of the Church.
She is the Spirit of healing and forgiveness,
source of resurrection and of life everlasting. Amen.**

We gather silently in prayer.

The Prayers of the People

Words: Taizé Community | Music: Ann Strickland

Give peace to ev-ery heart, give peace to ev-ery heart. Give peace. Give peace.

5
Give peace to ev-ery heart, give peace to ev-ery heart. Give peace. Give peace_

Silence

Leader "Who is like you, O Lord... majestic in holiness, awesome in splendor, doing wonders?"
(Exodus 15:11)

We thank you for the glorious beauty of your creation of the world. Push us to guard its resources wisely and with equity for all, now and in the future.

We pause for further prayer.

Leader God, in your mercy,
People hear our prayer.

Leader "So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." (Genesis 50:21)

We welcome all to the season of Homecoming as we come together after summer. The ways we have come home may be different from years past, but the Spirit remains the same and we are graced by her. Help us to grow spiritually, individually and together.

We pause for further prayer.

Leader God, in your mercy,
People hear our prayer.

Leader We pray for peace in our divided nation and in the world. Teach us, Lord, to work together for the common good, dealing with conflict in good faith and with a readiness to forgive as Jesus taught us, "Not seven times, but I tell you, seventy-seven times." (Matthew 18:22)

We pause for further prayer.

Leader God, in your mercy,
People hear our prayer.

Leader "The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and of great kindness." (Psalm 103:8)

Be with us in our uncertainty and fear during the pandemic.

We give thanks and pray for all those who place themselves in harm's way to provide us with medical care, food, and other essential services during this time.

We pray for those who have lost family members and friends to COVID.

We especially pray for Fishline Food Bank, our partner in ministry.

We pray for those struggling with poverty, mental illness, substance use disorder, unemployment, homelessness, and for those in prison.

We pray for those whose needs are known to you alone, and for those whose needs are known to us.

We pause for further prayer.

Leader God, in your mercy,
People hear our prayer.

Leader "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is in me, bless his holy Name." (*Psalm 103:1*)
We are blessed by your Presence with us today and every day. Deepen our gratitude for the many gifts within this community and beyond it.

We pause for further prayer.

Leader God, in your mercy,
People **hear our prayer.**

Give peace to ev-ery heart, give peace to ev-ery heart. Give peace. Give peace.

5
Give peace to ev-ery heart, give peace to ev-ery heart. Give peace. Give peace—

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the staff. The second staff starts with a measure rest (5) and continues the melody. The lyrics are also written below the staff.

Officiant Let us pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Offertory

While we cannot gather in person, we make our weekly offerings online here: <https://www.gracehere.org/online-giving/>.

The Blessing

The Officiant offers a blessing.

May we remain open to wonder and mystery, to what is strange and new and precious in each child of God, that with all the saints we might walk in the light of hope; and the blessing of the one, holy, and undivided Trinity be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Steven Shakespeare

Closing Song | Teach Your Children

by Graham Nash

You who are on the road
Must have a code that you can live by
And so become yourself
Because the past is just a good bye.

Teach your children well,
Their father's hell did slowly go by,
And feed them on your dreams
The one they picked, the one you'll know by.

Don't you ever ask them why, if they told you,
you would cry,
So just look at them and sigh and know they love
you.

And you, of tender years,
Can't know the fears that your elders grew by,
And so please help them with your youth,
They seek the truth before they can die.

Teach your parents well,
Their children's hell will slowly go by,
And feed them on your dreams
The one they picked, the one you'll know by.

Don't you ever ask them why, if they told you,
you would cry,
So just look at them and sigh and know they love
you.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

*Using the Zoom chat window, please share a milestone that we can recognize together.
We will sing, "God Grant Them Many Years."*

The Peace

We conclude with the sharing of God's peace.

Officiant Now the peace of the Lord be always with you.

All **And also with you.**

Coming Home at Twilight in Late Summer

We turned into the drive,
and gravel flew up from the tires
like sparks from a fire. So much
to be done—the unpacking, the mail
and papers ... the grass needed mowing
We climbed stiffly out of the car.
The shut-off engine ticked as it cooled.

And then we noticed the pear tree,
the limbs so heavy with fruit
they nearly touched the ground.
We went out to the meadow; our steps
made black holes in the grass;
and we each took a pear,
and ate, and were grateful.

~ Jane Kenyon from *Collected Poems*
© Graywolf Press, 2005

Excerpted from “Alone”

Lying, thinking
Last night
How to find my soul a home
Where water is not thirsty
And bread loaf is not stone
I came up with one thing
And I don't believe I'm wrong
That nobody,
But nobody
Can make it out here alone.

Alone, all alone
Nobody, but nobody
Can make it out here alone.

~ Maya Angelou from
Oh Pray My Wings Are Gonna Fit Me Well
© 1975

News from Grace | September 13, 2020

Grace Church | Bainbridge Island

..... inclusion service discovery gratitude

Grace Homecoming

On Homecoming, we welcome our community back together after the summertime and we welcome members who are joining us from a distance! Right after our birthday and anniversaries song at the end of the liturgy, we'll take a moment to consider what makes home feel like home. We invite children and people of all ages hold up something to your camera -- an item like a favorite teacup, a vase of flowers, a book or a pet — for 30 seconds of warm, shared silence as we look around and appreciate all that welcomes us home during this time. Kids and adults, please feel free to be fun and creative!

Finding Blessings at Grace

We will string the blessings you have written along the wooded entry way of Grace Church for you and your loved ones to find! We invite Grace members of all ages to come home to Grace any time between 11 am and 5 pm, walk the grounds, offer a prayer for our community, and find a blessing offered for you by others.

Newcomers

Are you new or visiting? Please email one of our clergy, Stephen Crippen (stephen@gracehere.org) or Wren Blessing (wren@gracehere.org), to get more connected.

Do you want to share your music through Zoom?

Please contact Martin Cockroft and Ann Strickland (music@gracehere.org) if you'd like to offer a song during our online Sunday service.

Upcoming Events & Programs

Today | Youth Group Fall Kick-off | 5 - 7 pm at Grace

The wait is finally over. All students in grades 6-12 are invited for an opportunity to gather around a fire, meet our new Curate, the Rev. Stephen Crippen, and show off their rad tie-dye skills. Masks and social distancing will be required to participate. Contact Faith (youthgroup@gracehere.org)

September 14 | Men's Group Gathering | 7:30 pm

Please contact Eric Matthews for the Zoom link: eric@gracehere.org.

September 16 & 23

Wednesday Healing Prayer & Bible Study | 10:30 am

Please find links to the Zoom login and the worship bulletin on our website: <https://www.gracehere.org/join-us-for-online-worship-at-grace/>.

Vestry Meeting | 7 – 9 pm

September 17 | Fall Film Discussion: Ava DuVernay's *August 18th* | 7 pm

We'll explore acclaimed director Ava DuVernay's short film *August 28th: A Day in the Life of a People*, commissioned for the Smithsonian's African American Museum and just released to the public. Maggie Finley will facilitate.

To RSVP and receive a Zoom link, please contact Kim (kim@gracehere.org).

To see the film on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5W7yFS4fac>.

September 24

Fall Book Discussion Group: *Sparrow* by Jan Richardson | 10:30 – noon

The discussion group, facilitated by Florrie Munat and the Rev. Kate Kinney, will meet on three Thursdays this fall; September 14, October 1, & October 8. Open to all.

For details, visit our website: <https://www.gracehere.org/blog/sparrow-book-discussion/>

To sign up and get the meeting link, contact Kim Cockroft (kim@gracehere.org).

Under the Eaves | 3:30 – 5 pm

Current fourth through sixth graders are invited to join as we gather under the eaves at Grace to play gaga ball and enjoy a video series about ancestors in faith.

We'll meet on Thursdays, from 3:30 - 5pm, September 24 - October 15th.

Contact Wren Blessing for more information: wren@gracehere.org

September 25 | Compassionate Caring Support Group | 9:30 - 11 am

The Compassionate Caring group meets online every second and fourth Friday at 9:30am. Please contact Diane (office@gracehere.org) for the Zoom link.