



Pittsburg Presbyterian Church

July 17 2022 ~ 10:00 am

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

GATHERING

Prelude

Wade in the Water

Spiritual

Jeff Simpson, Harmonica

Jim Harris, Piano

Lay Leader: Preset your folder at your seat.

Bring in the Light of Christ during the Prelude.

Lighting of the Candles (Acolyte) Eli Forsythe assisted by Blake Benson

Welcome

Blake Benson

Good Morning, we are glad you are here with us today at Pittsburg Presbyterian Church. We are truly blessed to gather together for worship on the sixth Sunday after Pentecost.

Mission Statement

Blake Benson

Our Mission at Pittsburg Presbyterian Church is to love God, know Christ, care for one another, and to joyfully share the good news of Jesus Christ!

Please remain seated and join together in singing our Missional Song.

Missional Song

Susan Laushman

Love God, care for one another;
Know Christ, care for one another;
Joyfully share the good news of Jesus Christ!
Joyfully share the good news of Jesus Christ!

Please stand for the Opening Sentences.

*Opening Sentences

Blake Benson

Leader: *The Lord be with you.*

People: And also with you.

Leader: *God is good and loving to the faithful.*

Give thanks and praise for all that God has done for us.

People: God is good! Praise the Lord!

Leader: Our opening hymn today is "Go Down Moses" ...Come, let us worship God.

***Opening Song**

The Presbyterian Hymnal #334

Go Down Moses

Verse 1

When Israel was in Egypt's land,
Let my people go!
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go!

Refrain

Go down, Moses, Way down in Egypt's land,
Tell old Pharaoh, Let my people go!

Verse 2

"Thus saith the Lord," bold Moses said:
Let my people go!
"If not, I'll smite your first-born dead,"
Let my people go!

Refrain

Verse 3

"No more shall they in bondage toil,"
Let my people go!
"Let them come out with Egypt's spoil,"
Let my people go!

Refrain

Please be seated

Announcements

Blake Benson

- *Good morning and thank you for worshiping with us today!*
 - *Please Check-in on Social Media to share the peace of Christ with your friends and loved ones online!*
 - *(Explain & show the Yellow Cards.) Please fill out the front and write any information/prayer concerns, etc. on the back and place it in one of the white boxes at the back of the Sanctuary, as you leave.*
 - *"Kids Following Jesus" (KFJ) is available online. Please access the KFJ video through "The Sower", Facebook page, or YouTube channel.*
 - *(Show the Announcement flyer): Please refer to the Announcement flyer for important information and take it home with you.*
 - *Fellowship: Following worship, please join together for Coffee & Cookies Fellowship in the Parlor, hosted by Dorothy Templin and Debbie Walker.*
- * **Please mention any last minute announcements.**

Call to Confession

Blake Benson

*We live with this reality:
God never forgets what we have done
but, in mercy, forgives those whose hearts are full of repentance.
Let us confess those things that break our relationship with God,
assured that God will never break relationship with us.*

Prayer of Confession

Blake Benson

Leader: God of balance, help us:

*All: forgive us when we do not know
when to be workers and when to be hearers.
In your mercy, heal our worries and our judgments,
so that we can, indeed, keep the best part.
In the name of our loving Master.*

Leader: Hear now our individual silent confessions:

Wait a minute and say “Amen”, then proceed into the Assurance of Pardon.

Assurance of Pardon

Blake Benson

Leader: Before, . . .

*because of your evil thoughts and actions,
you were strangers and enemies of God.*

Now,

*you have been reconciled to God
by the death and resurrection of Christ.*

Now,

you can live in peace, restored by the blood shed on the cross.

Live thankfully!

. . . In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

People: Thanks be to God!

[Virginia offers intro to *Gloria*]

Please stand

***Gloria Patri**

Glory to God #581

Meineke

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.

Amen. Amen.

Please be seated

WORD

Special Music

Ave Verum Corpus

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Keller Erwin, tenor

Virginia Darling, piano

Message “Jesus Needs a Boat?!” Sheriff Jim (Jim Harris)
(What in the world are you doing for Heaven’s sake?!)



Jim: *It might be a little misleading to say that I’m going to preach a sermon today.*

We have a great variety of people using the talents and abilities they have been blessed with to bless us. And, to tell you the truth, one of the least recognized talents will be the one most on display, the Tech Crew will have as much to do with delivering this message as I will. Today is both a celebration of those who serve God and humanity in many ways and a it is a summon for all of us to to answer the call to Love God and Love Others with whatever means we have.

Here to ask the question, “Does Jesus Need a Boat? Really?” is Spencer and Allie Wade:

New Testament Reading Various Verses from the Allie & Spencer Wade
Book of Matthew (NirV)

Allie: *A New Testament Reading: Matthew 8:23 through 26. Listen to the Word of God:*

Spencer: *Jesus got into a boat. His disciples followed him. Suddenly a terrible storm came up on the lake. The waves crashed over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him up. They said, "Lord! Save us! We're going to drown!" He replied, "Your faith is so small! Why are you so afraid?" Then Jesus got up and ordered the winds and the waves to stop. It became completely calm.*

Matthew 13:1 through 3

Allie: *...Jesus left the house and sat by the Sea of Galilee. Large crowds gathered around him so he got into a boat and sat down. All the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things using stories.*

Matthew 14:13 and 14

Spencer: *Jesus heard what had happened to John. He wanted to be alone. So he went in a boat to a quiet place. The crowds heard about this. They followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus came ashore, he saw a large crowd. He felt deep concern for them. He healed their sick people.*

Matthew 14:22 through 32

Allie: *Right away Jesus made the disciples get into the boat. He had them go on ahead of him to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Then he sent the crowd away. After he had sent them away, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone. The boat was already a long way from land. It was being pounded by the waves because the wind was blowing against it.*

Spencer: *Shortly before dawn, Jesus went out to the disciples. He walked on the lake. They saw him walking on the lake and were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they said. And they cried out in fear.*

Allie: *Right away Jesus called out to them, "Be brave! It is I. Don't be afraid."*

Spencer: *"Lord, is it you?" Peter asked. "If it is, tell me to come to you on the water."*

Allie: *"Come," Jesus said.*

Spencer: *So Peter got out of the boat. He walked on the water toward Jesus. But when Peter saw the wind, he was afraid. He began to sink. He cried out, "Lord! Save me!"*

Allie: *Right away Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "Your faith is so small!" he said. "Why did you doubt me?"*

Spencer: *When they climbed into the boat, the wind died down.*

Allie and Spencer: *This is the word of God...*

Congregation: *Thanks be to God.*

Jim: *Thank you, Allie and Spencer.*

In case you missed the point of those readings I have a video that some friends helped me make and the part that I want you to take away is that Jesus needs

us because He's chosen to rely on us. If God is going to make a difference in this world, He is going to use our hands, our feet and our hearts - and maybe our boat. Here's the video:

Video **“Jesus Needs a Boat?”** **Words & Music by J. Harris**

**Puppeteers: Virginia Darling, Zadie Rhodes, Taylor Jones, Terry Cox,
Jeremy Johnson, Jim Harris, Brock Willard, Keller Erwin**

[Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7SFjZBlMw&authuser=0>]

Jim: *Next, I'd like to have my friend, Melinda Kitchen give the Old Testament reading.*

Old Testament Reading The Book of Esther (paraphrase) Melinda Kitchen

[Video: https://youtu.be/rvgayvVEP_I]

Melinda: *A reading of the Story of Esther:*

Our story is set in ancient Persia - picture, if you will, the culture of Aladdin and his Magic Lamp. Esther was a girl from the conquered people of Judah. She had an older cousin, Mordecai, who adopted her when her parents died.

The next character we find in our story is Xerxes, King of Persia, who was looking for a queen. There are many ways in which people decide to get married and having a contest to find the right wife is probably not the best idea - but that's what they did. Esther entered a contest and her beauty and charm won the heart of the king and she did, indeed, become queen. Mordecai gave her a little coaching, “Esther, don't mention that you are Jewish. There are some in the government who are racist bigots.”

Mordecai earned the post of a low ranking official in the King's palace, he was the gatekeeper. One day he overheard two men plotting to overthrow the government and kill King Xerxes. Quietly, he reported the coup attempt and saved the kingdom. From my point of view, Mordecai should have been honored right away - but those who do good deeds are not always rewarded promptly.

Our last character in this story is a smug high ranking official, Haman. Haman used to enjoy walking around the city and having the ordinary folk bow down in front of him. It seemed that everyone had heard how important Haman was except for Mordecai. Mordecai refused to grovel before this self-important man and it steamed the high official to no end.

No one knew that Esther was Jewish, but apparently that couldn't be said about her cousin. Haman knew of Mordecai's Hebrew heritage and hatched a plan to get back at him for his slight.

Haman came before the king with a plan. “Oh King, live forever! I have a request. There are a group of people captured and brought to this country in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. They have been nothing but trouble! They are called the Children of Israel - Jews! I ask that you make a decree that on a certain date everyone in the

country are encouraged to kill the Jews and take their property. I'll roll the dice, or 'purim' to choose what day to set." Xerxes, wanting to honor his friend, Haman, and not

knowing his wife, Esther, was a Jew, signed the law and had notices posted around the kingdom telling of the fate of the Children of Israel.

Mordecai, was shocked when he saw one of these posters. Being a lower official, he hadn't seen his foster daughter for some time. Mordecai snuck in to her room. "What can I do?" she asked, "The king hasn't called me into his presence in the last month and anyone who bursts in on the king will have their head chopped off!" "You've got to try!", said Mordecai, "The fate of every Jew living in Persia depends on this. Haman had Xerxes write this order so that it couldn't be rescinded, but you are the queen. You can convince the king to make a new decree that will protect us - your people.

"I tell you," whimpered Esther, "I seem to have fallen out of favor with the king, If I come into his throne room uninvited and he has one of his fits my head will come off."

"Esther!" implored her cousin, "Who knows but that God set you up in this position for such a time as this? Who knows but that it was God's will that caused you to be chosen from all the young women in the land to be queen. You have the opportunity to save your people - and yourself, remember that you are a Jew and Haman will surely find out. My dear cousin-daughter, you've been put in this position for the saving of Israel. I don't know how, but if you choose to play it safe, God will find another way."

"I will go into the throne room to make this request to the king." answered the queen, "Just know that if he doesn't find favor with me, he will not raise his sceptre and the guards will have my head rolling down the hall. Gather our people together and have them fast and pray for me and our deliverance. I will disturb the king in his throne room, and if I perish, I perish."

The Jews fasted and prayed. Esther entered the throne room of the king. And I guess you figured it out that Xerxes held out his scepter to his queen. If he hadn't our story would be over and the history of the world would have been changed in ways that I cannot imagine.

But the king did hold out the scepter, sparing Esther's life. He looked at his wife, knowing the risk she took and asked her what she would like.

Now you or I might at this point bungle things up by blurting out your real request, but Esther was a bit more cool headed than we might have been and asked that the king and Haman come to a special dinner she was planning in his honor.

They had their fine dinner and afterward the king asked, "Okay, Esther, that was a great meal for Haman and me, I'm here to grant you whatever request you want."

Here again seems to be a good opportunity to say, "Honey, would you spare my life and that of my people", but perhaps Esther was still more wise than we are. She just

asked that Xerxes and Haman come to another dinner she was planning the next night.

Haman was over-the-moon when he heard about his second special invitation. I can hear him humming to himself, "We're in the money! We're in the money!" as he walked out of the palace, into the courtyard and was stopped dead by the sight of Mordecai, sitting at the gate. Mordecai, again, did not bow down to Haman.

"Oooo, I hate that guy so much!" thought Haman, "I was so happy and now, I'm just mad! I'll have a gallows erected in my back yard and the first Jew that dies on that appointed day will be this lowly gatekeeper! If he doesn't want to bow down before me, I'll stretch his neck!"

As interesting as this story has been so far, it gets more interesting. That night Xerxes couldn't sleep. He tossed and turned and finally he called for a scribe to read to him something boring so he could nod off. What the scribe started reading was old news accounts and one of those news stories involved an assassination attempt on the king's life!

"What!" Xerxes sat up, "I don't remember that! What did we do for the man who saved my life and the kingdom?"

"Well, your majesty," the scribe stammered, "from the records, it doesn't look like anything was done to reward the gatekeeper, Mordecai."

"I'll fix that!" said the king and turned over to go to sleep.

The next morning Xerxes saw Haman and called to him, "What should be done for someone the king wants to honor?"

Well, of course Haman thought that Xerxes would want to honor him most of all. (People who are stuck on themselves think that they should be constantly the center of attention) "Oh King, live forever! Do this: Put a special ring on his hand and a signet on his head and your very own robe around his body. Have him sit on your horse and paraded around by a high servant proclaiming, 'This is one the king delights in!'

"Haman, you always come up with bright ideas!" praised the king, "Get all the things together to do this and I want you, personally, to honor Mordecai, the gatekeeper, by parading him around the city telling everyone how I honor him for saving my life!"

I would guess if steam ever came out of anyone's ears it was blasting out of Haman's that day. "You just wait, gatekeeper!" Haman thought, "After I get back from my dinner with the queen I'm going to invite you to a little 'necktie party!'"

That evening Haman arrived at the dining room in time to hear Xerxes ask Esther, "This is another great meal, dear, but what is it you really want?"

"O Xerxes! My love!" Esther cried out, "I'm Jewish! - and this wicked Haman has tricked you into signing our death warrant!"

The king was shocked! He turned his back to Esther as he tried to think how he could take back his irreversible order.

Haman was more shocked than even the king and he stumbled and fell on Esther as he tried to escape what he knew was going to be a very bad situation.

“Now you’re attacking my wife!” Shouted Xerxes! “Guards! Take this former high official and hang him from the nearest gallows!”

You might know that the nearest gallows was the very one that Haman had hoped to execute Mordecai on.

“What can you do about my people, Xerxes?” cried Esther, “We’re still doomed!”

“I Am The King”, said the king, “and though I can’t take back my order, I can provide weapons for the Jews to defend themselves. My new order will be that anyone who tries to harm the Children of Israel on that day, those Jews can put them to the sword.”

Of course the appointed day came and went without the bloodshed that had been promised. Queen Esther with her bravery and her shrewd diplomacy answered God’s call and saved her people. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Jim: Thank you, Melinda.

Esther was a woman whom God called on and she bravely answered the call to save his people from destruction. She is rightfully celebrated.

So - a beautiful woman was put in place to be used in Heaven’s service. How ‘bout you? Are you a beautiful woman? Maybe, maybe not, but God chooses whom He will for His purpose. Here’s the story of Balaam’s donkey.

“Balaam”

Words and Music by Donald Francisco

Sung by Jim Harris

[Video: <https://mixcord.co/acapella/p/iRbSKkbC1TJm8Vy7r0eUCw/>]

Jim: Okay, so far we’ve seen people - or donkeys that save a nation. Maybe God isn’t calling you to something the world sees as noble. We all have “little” jobs to do in the Lord’s service. (Start to cough - and Mason Benson brings Jim a bottle of water) Do you know that Jesus said if you give water to someone who needs it God won’t forget your reward.

So perhaps you can say, “Yes, I’ll serve God by giving water to those who need it.” Maybe even you can use a talent that Suzie Butorac exercises every day, and that’s a smile. Her “Hello, Handsome” (I don’t think I’m the only one she lies to) brightens our day. But maybe you don’t have Suzie’s bent to cheerfulness. What are some other things you can do? Sing a beautiful song as Keller did earlier in the service or maybe it’s something a little more menial.

Sara Forsythe is going to read a poem for us now that illustrates that there are no

jobs that are beneath us when it comes to doing God's work.

Poem "Romans 9:21 Does the Clay say to the Potter..." Written by James Harris,
Read by Sara Forsythe

Mr. Potter grabbed His shovel about the break of day.
He dug into His backyard until He found some clay.

In a bucket to His workroom He hauled what He had found
And dumped it on His table and shaped it flat and round.
"I wonder what He'll make of me?" was on the clay's grey matter.
The wheel started spinning and there was quite a splatter.

"I have a Chinese uncle," our clay began to sing,
"He turned into a fancy vase, I think his name was Ming.
I wouldn't have to be that great, I could be a coffee mug,
Or maybe hold some breakfast milk - I could be a jug."
Mr. Potter scratched his head and then He scratched it more,

"I think what I would like is a fine cuspidor."

"Cuspidor?" quizzed the clay, "That word sounds real classy!
I'll try to keep it humble; Can't help but feel quite sassy.

A 'cuspidor', what is it? I'm walking on the moon!"

"Yes, indeed," said the Potter, "You'll make a fine spittoon!"

"Spittoon!" cried the clay, "I'll be filled with all Your spit!"

"Don't complain." grumbled a pot sitting under the bed.

Jim: Thank you, Sara.

So what is it if God expects you to be a beautiful vase - or a spittoon - or a chamber pot? When the church bathroom needs cleaning it's more important to have a talented custodian around than it would be to have a great musician or even a magnificent pastor.

You may have noticed we are using several spirituals from the days of slavery in our service today. My last illustration of the call God has for you is the story of how these songs, Wade in the Water, Let My People Go, Swing Low Sweet Chariot, and many others, which might have never been known outside the circle of those oppressed by slavery, were taught to the world through a woman, a former slave, by the name of Ella Shepherd. But Ella was almost murdered by her traumatized mother. This is the story of God using an old slave woman to save her life and the life of her mother.

Video Feed:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_jLGZrUuMI&t=151s&ab_channel=](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_jLGZrUuMI&t=151s&ab_channel=AmericanExperience%7CPBS)

AmericanExperience%7CPBS

"Jubilee Singers"

American Experience on PBS

[Video clip: (start to 2:20)]

Prayer Song
Glory to God #825
Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
Spiritual

Music Arr. © 1936, ren. Belwin-Mills Publishing Corp. (admin. Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.)
(R, V 1, R, V 2, R)

Refrain

Swing low, sweet chariot,
coming for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
coming for to carry me home.

Verse 1

I looked over Jordan, and what did I see
coming for to carry me home?
A band of angels coming after me,
coming for to carry me home. O,

Refrain

Verse 2

If you get there before I do,
coming for to carry me home,
tell all my friends I'm coming too,
coming for to carry me home. O,

Refrain

Prayer of Intercession

Blake Benson

You may say your own words OR the following:

*Leader: Creator God, as we look at the world you have made,
we notice that the songs of love that you wanted us to sing
have turned into cries of abuse, oppression, and prejudice.*

*We have abused the planet that you have provided
for us to inhabit and to share with other creatures.
We have wasted the water, abused other resources,
limited access to food, and marked borders of inhospitality.
We pray for this world in need of restoration
and ask that you provide us with the tools and the intelligence
needed to rebuild the world you created for us.*

*. . . God, save us, heal us,
All: and make us whole.*

*Leader: There is oppression in the world that we live in.
We see it in the ways human beings treat one another,
taking advantage of those considered to be of less value.
We turn our eyes away when we see the needy being trampled*

*or the poor being stashed out of sight.
May your will be the last word,
and the church an effective witness
to the Sovereign Lord in our midst.*

. . . God, save us, heal us,

All: and make us whole.

Leader: *We see prejudice in our relationships, Lord.*

*We judge one another, not with justice and fairness,
but with fear and misinformation.*

*It is easier to demonize than to take the time to listen
and to establish relationships.*

*It is easier to assume than to ask questions and to acquire knowledge.
Make us agents of peace and restore our songs of love
for you and for one another.*

God, save us, heal us,

All: and make us whole. Amen.

Leader: *Please join together as Jesus taught us to pray . . .*

The Lord's Prayer

People: 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors;

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Invitation to Offering

Blake Benson

As we prepare for our offering today, there are various ways that you may give. You may place your offering and Yellow Card in the white box, at the back, as you leave or contact the office for other options.

Bring your gifts and your talents,

bring your sacrifice of praise to the Lord.

*Bring them with prayers and shouts of thanksgiving,
to celebrate God's faithfulness!*

Prayer for Offering

Blake Benson

Let us pray:

*God, we give today in thankfulness and with the assurance that
anything we give will contribute to the continuing growth
of your kingdom in the world.*

*Give us wisdom as a church, so that this offering is used
for the sharing of your word and the service of your people.*

In the name of the One that gave us everything we are and have. Amen.

Please stand

***The Doxology**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***Affirmation of Faith**

Adapted from the French
Confession of 1559, based on
a translation of the original
text by Dr. Ellen Babinsky,
Austin Presbyterian
Theological Seminary, and Dr.
Joseph D. Small, Office of
Theology and Worship,
PC(USA)

Blake Benson

Lines 10-19

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/bcr-115/>

Leader: Believer, what do you believe?

People: We believe that we are illuminated in faith
by the unfathomable grace of the Holy Spirit.
God imparts this gracious gift.
By faith we receive grace
to live holy lives in awe and reverence for God,
for we receive what the gospel promises
when God gives us the Holy Spirit.
Faith does not cool our desire for good and holy living,
but rather engenders and excites it in us,
leading naturally to good works.

SENDING

***Closing Hymn**

Blake Benson

Our closing hymn today is "I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me".

***Closing Hymn**

Glory To God #700

I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

Music Arr. © Estate of Wendell P. Whalum

(V 1, 2, 4)

Verse 1

I'm gonna live so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I'm gonna live so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

Verse 2

I'm gonna work so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna work so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

Verse 4

I'm gonna sing so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!
I'm gonna sing so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

***Blessing & Charge**

Jim Harris

I thank God for the people in our congregation willing to work for Him in innumerable ways to make this world a better place.

When Jesus left this earth and gave us the Holy Spirit, the idea was that if His work was to go on, it would be our hands, our feet, our hearts that would do it.

I leave you with two thoughts - Jesus needs a boat because He chooses to need a boat - and - God chooses you to do His work and to show His love.

Lay Leader: After the blessing, begin to take the light of Christ into the world:

1. Light the candle lighter with one of the candles on the communion table.
2. Extinguish both candles on the communion table.
3. Stand with the light, facing the congregation.
4. Walk out with the light through the East aisle, in front of Pastor, to the back of the sanctuary.
5. Extinguish the light and stow the candle lighter.

Postlude

“Jesus Needs a Boat?”

Words & Music by J. Harris

Puppeteers: Zadie Rhodes, Virginia Darling, Taylor Jones,

Terry Cox, Jeremy Johnson,

Jim Harris, Brock Willard, Keller Erwin

[Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7SFjZBI Mw&authuser=0>]