

New Covenant Community Church  
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost  
Akron, Ohio



September 18, 2022  
Tom Ulrich, Pastor

10:30 a.m.  
Elissa Hock-Wimmer, Music Director

WELCOME

PRELUDE *All Things Bright and Beautiful* – Hayes

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Today God again shares with us new manifestations of grace; may our eyes be clear to see them.

People: **Today God blesses us with new things to learn; may our minds be open to receive them.**

Leader: Today God again provides us with new opportunities for growth; may we have the courage to embrace them.

People: **Today God offers the unity that enriches the world; may we live together in harmony.**

Leader: Today God blesses us with wisdom and enlightenment; may our words and our work would be seasoned with the grace that enables all people to experience beauty.

People: **Today let us worship our God who supplies our every need, for great is God's faithfulness.**

\*HYMN OF PRAISE *Great Is Thy Faithfulness* #276

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not;  
As Thou hast been Thou forever will be.

*Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!*  
*Morning by morning new mercies I see;*  
Refrain: *All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;*  
*Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

*Refrain*

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

*Refrain*

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION (Unison)

**God of renewal and redemption, in the tangled web of the world's ways,  
we are frequently influenced by false messages.**

**We are often misled by those who promise power and influence.**

**We become fearful when tragedies strike and disasters occur.**

**We are filled with anxiety about what the future may hold.**

**Have mercy upon us, Lord, and renew us through Your grace.**

**Grant to us the forgiveness greater than our sins,  
the faith that overcomes our uncertainty,**

**and the hope that is grounded in Your ability to make all things new.**

**We offer this prayer in the name of the One who came not to condemn but to redeem, Jesus Christ our Lord. (Silent)**

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS (adapted from Ephesians 2:8-10)

Leader: By grace we have been saved through faith, and this is not our own doing; it is the gift of God.

People: **We have been blessed by God, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.**

Leader: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

People: **Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.**

SCRIPTURE

Daniel 3:13-23

<sup>13</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought in; so they brought those men before the king. <sup>14</sup> Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods and you do not worship the golden statue that I have set up? <sup>15</sup> Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble to fall down and worship the statue that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire, and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?"

<sup>16</sup> Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no

need to present a defense to you in this matter. <sup>17</sup> If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. <sup>18</sup> But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up.”

<sup>19</sup> Then Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face was distorted. He ordered the furnace heated up seven times more than was customary, <sup>20</sup> and ordered some of the strongest guards in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to throw them into the furnace of blazing fire. <sup>21</sup> So the men were bound, still wearing their tunics, c their trousers, d their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the furnace of blazing fire. <sup>22</sup> Because the king’s command was urgent and the furnace was so overheated, the raging flames killed the men who lifted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. <sup>23</sup> But the three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down, bound, into the furnace of blazing fire.

**SCRIPTURE**

Daniel 3:24-28

<sup>8</sup> Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up quickly. He said to his counselors, “Was it not three men that we threw bound into the fire?” They answered the king, “True, O king.” <sup>25</sup> He replied, “But I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the fourth has the appearance of a god.” <sup>26</sup> Nebuchadnezzar then approached the door of the furnace of blazing fire and said, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!” So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. <sup>27</sup> And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men; the hair of their heads was not singed, their tunics were not harmed, and not even the smell of fire came from them. <sup>28</sup> Nebuchadnezzar said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him. They disobeyed the king’s command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God.

**MEDITATION**

*Near the Fire?*

**ANTHEM**

*There Is a Balm in Gilead*

– Spiritual / Hayes

**\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

from *The Confession of 1967*, 9.17 and 9.35

**Life is a gift to be received with gratitude and a task to be pursued with courage.**

**People are free to seek life within the purpose of God:**

**to develop and protect the resources of nature for the common welfare,**

**to work for justice and peace in society,**

**and in other ways to use their creative powers for the fulfillment of human life.**

**Wherever the church exists,**

**its members are both gathered in corporate life and dispersed in society**

**for the sake of mission in the world.**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER**

**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 GIVE**

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)**

**Gracious God,**

**for the opportunity to do Your will and to work for Your kingdom on earth as in heaven, we thank You.**

**Take what we have brought before You – the gifts of our hands, our hearts, and our lives – and shape them into instruments that will serve as signs of Your faithfulness and fulfillers of Your righteousness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**\*HYMN**

*I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me*

#369

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

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

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

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

I’m gonna pray so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I’m gonna pray so God can use me anywhere, Lord, anytime!

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

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

**\*BENEDICTION**

**\*CHORAL RESPONSE**

*Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place; I can feel His mighty power and His grace*

*I can hear the brush of angel’s wings, I see glory on each face.*

*Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.*

**POSTLUDE**

*When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder*

– Hayes/Black

✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚

You are invited to be seated as we listen to the Postlude which sends us forth into the world.

CCLI #4220373