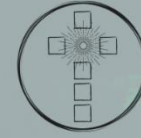


WORSHIP WITH ZION

SUMMER 2023



Serve & Enrich
Zion United Church
of Christ

13th Sunday After Pentecost

Prelude

Echoes of Spring

Gathering—All good gifts come from above, from our abundantly generous God. Let us bring to God our thanks and our praise for all that God has done in our lives.

A Time of Prayer—God, we thank you for your generosity—for the wisdom and guidance you offer, for the forgiveness and grace you pour out, for salvation and the precious gift of life we know in you. Help us to be doers of your word, not just hearers, that we might embody the kind of generosity you call us to live...

The Lord's Prayer (unison)—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.

Special Music

The Cross in the Stained Glass Window
Martha Main and Vivian Thomas

Stories of Generosity

Greg Miller

We Hear God's Word—*James 1:12-27 (NRSV)*

Vivan Thomas

12 Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. ¹³No one, when tempted, should say, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴But one is tempted by one's own desire, being lured and enticed by it; ¹⁵then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death. ¹⁶Do not be deceived, my beloved.

17 Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸In fulfilment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

19 You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for your anger does not produce God's

righteousness. ²¹Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

22 But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. ²³For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; ²⁴for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. ²⁵But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

26 If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. ²⁷Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Meditation

Generous Living

Song

God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending, 572

We Respond to God's Word with Our Giving

Invitation—It would be impossible to name all the ways that God’s generosity has touched our lives, but today we bring our gifts as a sign of gratitude for all God has done.

When we went to see *Godspell* a few weeks ago, I was reminded in such a beautiful and uplifting way of the gratitude that can be stirred within us when we recognize how truly generous our God is. Listen to what ever so powerful rock ballad “All Good Gifts” from the *Godspell* proclaims:

We plow the fields and scatter the good seed on the land..
 But it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand..
 He sends the snow in winter, the warmth to swell the grain...
 The breezes and the sunshine, and soft refreshing rain...

All good gifts around us
 Are sent from Heaven above
 So thank the Lord, oh thank the Lord for all his love...

We thank thee then, O Father, for all things bright and good,

The seedtime and the harvest, our life, our health, our food,
No gifts have we to offer for all thy love imparts
But that which thou desirest, our humble thankful hearts!

All good gifts around us
Are sent from Heaven above..
So thank the Lord, oh thank the Lord for all his love..

“All Good Gifts,” *Godspell*. Stephen Schwartz.

August Benevolence—Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM)

Doxology

We Give Thanks— God, all good gifts are sent from you above. We want to thank you, God, for all you have done for us. We want to thank you for the generosity of those who have brought forth their gifts this day. We pray that you receive these gifts, bless them, and multiply them that they might be used to do your work in this world, as we live out the mission you have given us here at Zion to serve and enrich your beloved. Amen.

Song

I Surrender All, 474

Benediction—As you go out into the world, be generous in how you treat others, tending with care to the vulnerable in our community. Be not only hearers of God’s word but doers of God’s words, and know that the one who creates, sustains, and redeems, is with you always. Amen.

Postlude

Recessional