REFLECTION

“We see that our whole salvation and all its parts are comprehended in Christ [Acts 4:12]. We should therefore take care not to derive the least portion of it from anywhere else.

If we seek salvation, we are taught by the very name of Jesus that it is ‘of Him’ [1 Cor. 1:30]. If we seek any other gifts of the Spirit, they will be found in His anointing.

If we seek strength, it lies in His dominion; if purity, in His conception; if gentleness, it appears in His birth. For by His birth He was made like us in all respects [Heb. 2:17] that He might learn to feel our pain [cf. Heb. 5:2].

If we seek redemption, it lies in His passion; if acquittal, in His condemnation; if remission of the curse, in His cross [Gal. 3:13]; if satisfaction, in His sacrifice; if purification, in His blood; if reconciliation, in His descent into hell; if mortification of the flesh, in His tomb; if newness of life, in His resurrection; if immortality, in the same; if inheritance of the Heavenly Kingdom, in His entrance into heaven; if protection, if security, if abundant supply of all blessings, in His Kingdom; if untroubled expectation of judgment, in the power given to Him to judge.

In short, since rich store of every kind of good abounds in Him, let us drink our fill from this fountain, and from no other.”

ORDER OF WORSHIP
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
JULY 12, 2020
9:30 am
(We invite you to quiet your homes as you prepare for worship.)

GATHERING IN LOVE

Prelude
“Rondeau and Aire” (Henry Purcell)
“Prelude on THAXTED” (Gustav Holst, setting by William H. Bates)

Welcome

Votum, Call to Worship (from Psalm 124:8 and Psalm 119:105, 111)
Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
People: Amen.
Leader: Your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.
People: Your word is our heritage forever, the joy of our hearts.
Leader: Let us worship God.

Hymn
“O God Beyond All Praising” (hymn on next page)
(You are invited to sing.)

The Salutation
Leader: May grace, mercy, and God’s peace be ours, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
People: Amen.
“O God Beyond All Praising” (verses 1 & 3)

1 O God beyond all praising, we worship you today
2 The flower of earthly splendor in time must surely die,
3 Then hear, O gracious Savior, accept the love we bring,

and sing the love amazing that songs cannot repay;
its fragile bloom surrender to you, the Lord most high;
that we who know your favor may serve you as our King;

for we can only wonder at every gift you send,
but hidden from all nature the eternal seed is sown—
and whether our tomorrows be filled with good or ill,

at blessings without number and mercies without end.
though small in mortal stature, to heaven’s garden grown:
we’ll triumph through our sorrows and rise to bless you still:

We lift our hearts before you and wait upon your Word,
for Christ, your gift from heaven, from death has set us free,
to marvel at your beauty and glory in your ways,

we honor and adore you, our great and mighty Lord.
and we through him are given the final victory.
and make a joyful duty our sacrifice of praise.

For accompaniment see 555

Music (THAXTED 7.6.7.6 triple): Gustav Holst (1874-1934), 1921, P.D.
Invitation to Confession (from Genesis 25:19-34)

The Scriptures are shot through with stories of people just like us: men who grieved, women who questioned, siblings who did not get along, parents who chose favorites. God’s word of grace is meant for people just like us. There is no need for pretense in this place. Let us go to God in prayer.

Prayer of Confession (from Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23)

Patient and persistent God, we come, polished and presentable, to this time of worship as if we knew what to expect, as if this were a safe and predictable place, as if we could simply observe. Holy One, forgive our tepid expectations. In the mystery of your love, overshadow us. Plant the seeds of your gospel in each of our hearts until we bloom and spill with your passion to serve in a world that is wasting. Amen.

(moment of silence)

Assurance of Pardon (from Romans 8:1 and Psalm 119:105)

Leader: There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. The Spirit of God dwells in you. If you hear nothing else today, hear these words: there is no condemnation. In the name of Jesus, you are forgiven. God will illuminate the steps before us and write God’s word on our hearts, for we carry the name of Jesus and would walk in the light of his love.

People: Amen.

Peace

Leader: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

LISTENING IN EXPECTATION

Children’s Moment
Musical Reflection  “I Will Hide Your Word Inside My Heart” (Paul Field, based on Psalm 119)

I will hide your word inside my heart so that it may guide me.
Like a shining light, let it burn so bright; I will follow you.
Come and pour your grace into my heart so that it may fill me
With the precious things that your Spirit brings; I will live in you.

First Lesson  Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: “Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!”

“Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

Leader: The Word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God.

Musical Reflection  “Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil” (Handt Hanson)

Lord, let my heart be good soil, open to the seed of your Word.
Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is understood.
When my heart is hard, break the stone away. When my heart is cold, warm it with the day.
When my heart is lost, lead me on your way. Lord, let my heart be good soil.

Second Lesson  Romans 8:1-11

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon “Faithful Living”
Rev. Steven D. Pierce

Prayer for a Blessing on the Word

Silent Meditation

RESPONDING IN FAITH

Affirmation of Faith (Heidelberg Catechism Q & A 45)
Leader: How does Christ’s resurrection benefit us?
People: First, by his resurrection he has overcome death, so that he might make us share in the righteousness he obtained for us by his death. Second, by his power we too are already raised to a new life. Third, Christ’s resurrection is a sure pledge to us of our blessed resurrection.

Prayers of the People
During the prayers each week, we remember our neighboring faith communities and their leaders. Today we are praying for the staff and congregation of Grand Rapids Bethel Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.

During the prayer:
Leader: Lord, in your mercy,
People: Hear our prayer.

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.
DEPARTING IN JOY

Hymn

“And Can It Be” (verses 1 & 4)
(You are invited to sing.)

Words: Charles Wesley, 1738, alt., P.D.
Music (SAGINA 8.8.8.8 D): Thomas Campbell, 1825, P.D.
Benediction and Blessing

Leader: Whoever you are, wherever you go in God’s wide world, Whatever happens to you of good or ill, always remember that . . .

People: Jesus is Lord!

Leader: May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you always.

People: Amen.

Postlude “Trumpet Tune” (Charles Callahan)
**WORSHIP NOTES**

**New to Central?** Thank you for joining us online today. Central Reformed Church is located on the corner of College and Fulton in the Heritage Hill neighborhood of downtown Grand Rapids. Our mission is to connect all people to God and to one another through scripture, sacrament, song, and service. We have been in ministry for almost 180 years and are a part of the Reformed Church in America, a Christian denomination that began in New Amsterdam (now New York City) in 1628. We look forward to being able to worship with you in person once the Covid-19 crisis is over. Until then, please stay safe.

**Second Hour:** During this week’s Second Hour, Monica Schaap Pierce will facilitate a conversation about the RCA’s Vision 2020 report, which was released last week. Participants will be invited into a dialogue on the three proposals and their implications, as well as how Central might respond. You are encouraged to read the report at: [https://www.rca.org/synod/vision2020/reformed-church-in-america-vision-2020-team-final-report/](https://www.rca.org/synod/vision2020/reformed-church-in-america-vision-2020-team-final-report/). A discussion guide and FAQ section are also provided online. Join us at 11 a.m. (or earlier, if you’d like to participate in the virtual coffee hour) by clicking on this link—[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87396021982?pwd=TklvVFlBTGxrUjU1SEpVbDRneEtLQTo9](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87396021982?pwd=TklvVFlBTGxrUjU1SEpVbDRneEtLQTo9)—or by going to www.zoom.us/join and entering the meeting ID (873 9602 1982) and password (050841).

**In Our Prayers:** our visitors (we thank God for you!); Ron Beuker, as he recovers from pneumonia; loved ones recently diagnosed with COVID-19; all those battling cancer; all those ministering to and caring for the sick and grieving; all who are unemployed; all those discouraged and anxious; those that are in the process of relocating.

**Sunday Morning Prayer:** You are welcome to join us in prayer on Sunday mornings from 9:00-9:15 am via Zoom, led by member Geraldine Pringle. To join, please click on this link—[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85675194544?pwd=Nkc0K3VIMVN5eDhwQ3RYYktqelhGZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85675194544?pwd=Nkc0K3VIMVN5eDhwQ3RYYktqelhGZz09)—or go to www.zoom.us/join and enter the meeting ID (856 7519 4544) and password (888874).

**Next Sunday, July 19:** Join us for our live stream worship service at 9:30 am. Preservice music will begin at 9:20 am. We continue our summer sermon series on the Book of Romans. Jeff Chu, teacher in residence, will be preaching with a sermon titled “Hope for What We Do Not See,” based on Romans 8:12-25. Please invite others to join you online.

**Media Connections:** Today’s service is available via live stream through our website at centralreformedchurch.org. Audio of past sermons is also available. Follow us on Facebook or Instagram: @centralreformed.

**Giving:** Thank you for your continued financial generosity to Central. As always, you are welcome to mail your gifts to the church office. (Staff check the mailbox a couple of times a week.) Online donations are also gratefully received. To make a one-time or recurring gift either via credit card or via your bank account, please visit [www.centralreformedchurch.org/give](http://www.centralreformedchurch.org/give) and click on the purple “Give Now” button, which will take you to Tithely, Central’s online giving platform.
WORSHIP LEADERS
Preacher and Liturgist: Rev. Steven D. Pierce
Principal Organist: Norma de Waal Malefyt
First Lesson Reader: Tanis Hooker
Vocalist: Carlos Lemagne
Video Tech: Alex Grigoriev
Sound Tech: Tom Smith