

**Welcome to  
Crestholme Presbyterian Church  
23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
November 8, 2020**

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**PRELUDE**

*"Peace in Our Time, O Lord"*

Stearnes/Sowerby

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-SghKM6X7zM>

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

This week we will celebrate Veterans Day. Veterans Day, observed annually on November 11, is a tribute to military veterans who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. Not to be confused with [Memorial Day](#), which honors those who died while in service, Veterans Day honors all military veterans, including those still with us. Let us pray for them.

Father,

Thank you for the many men and women that have given so much to help this country remain a democracy. We thank you for the ones who were able to return home from conflicts around the world. We ask that you would be with those families whose loved ones did not return. Bring peace to all families that are going through a separation because a family member is assigned away from home at this time. We ask this in Jesus Name.

**CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP**

*"My Country 'Tis of Thee"*

Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKj7FLq3WVA>

**OPENING PRAYER**

Father, whether we are at home or in church, thank You for uniting us in the Spirit so we may worship You in Spirit and in truth. Amen

**\*OPENING HYMN**

*"O Beautiful for Spacious Skies"*

Blue Hymnal, #564

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCQq6HzcXI8>

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Father, You have blessed us so much as a nation and as individuals. Please forgive us for not returning to You to thank You for everything You have given us. We have not loved our neighbors as You asked us to. We have not shared our good fortune with those less fortunate. Lord, we are like Israel when they grumbled in the wilderness and didn't believe You were leading them and caring for them. Forgive us Father and bring us back to You so we may have grateful hearts again.

**ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

L: Hear the good news: Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and so I declare to you: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

**All: THANKS BE TO GOD!! Praise his name!!**

**\*GLORIA PATRI**

Blue Hymnal, #579

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKL\\_IswBRbU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKL_IswBRbU)

**OLD TESTAMENT READING****Psalm 107:1-7**

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20107%3A1-7&version=NIV>

**NEW TESTAMENT READING****1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Thessalonians+4%3A13-18&version=NIV>

**ANTHEM*****"Battle Hymn of the Republic"*****Choir**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jy6AOGRsR80>

**GOSPEL READING****Matthew 25:1-13**

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+25%3A1-13&version=NIV>

**Josh. 24:1-3a,14-25****The Covenant Renewed at Shechem**

1 Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God.

2 Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your ancestors, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods. 3 But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates

14 "Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. 15But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

16Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the Lord to serve other gods! 17It was the Lord our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. 18And the Lord drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the Lord, because he is our God."

19Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the Lord. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. 20If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you."

21But the people said to Joshua, "No! We will serve the Lord."

22Then Joshua said, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the Lord."

"Yes, we are witnesses," they replied.

23"Now then," said Joshua, "throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel."

24And the people said to Joshua, "We will serve the Lord our God and obey him."

25On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people, and there at Shechem he reaffirmed for them decrees and laws.

Looking at Joshua 24:14 it seems to imply something more than just serving the Lord. The word serve is translated elsewhere in the Old Testament as enslaved, in bondage, or burdened. Some of the Israelites in Old Testament times could have viewed the relationship between God and humans as the same type of relationship that would exist between a master and a slave. The slave had no rights and had to do what the master said. Under that type of thinking, the only way out from under slavery would be to rebel against the master, which happened on more than one occasion.

Did God change His mind and become a loving God when He sent Jesus to show us how to form a relationship with God? I believe that the God portrayed in the Old Testament showed the same love for us that we see in the New Testament. It is in the Old Testament, Jeremiah 31:3, that we read, *The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.* God treated Abraham as a friend. In Genesis 20 God talked to Abraham about what He was going to do to Sodom and Gomorrah. God then listened as Abraham interceded for them, and He even agreed to do what Abraham asked if He were to find 10 righteous people. That was God being gracious and merciful.

This is just my opinion so you may take it or leave it. If the Israelites had realized that the relationship Abraham had with God, was the same one God wanted with all of them, they would have seen the grace and mercy of God, and would not have been so quick to rebel against His Laws. The Law said, love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. Today, we know that we can love God because God first loved us. God told the Israelites He loved them and He asked for them to return that love.

The relationship between us and the Lord is not one of master and slave. Jesus made that clear. *I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.* (John 15:15) As friends, it is a privilege to do things for one another. Sometimes we do things for our friends and family because we see a need and want to provide for that need. Sometimes we do things just out of love for others. Under the banner of friendship there is no need for one to rebel against the other as there would be under the master\slave scenario.

Under these conditions, serving the Lord becomes a joy and not drudgery. What about all those "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not" in the Old Testament? While talking to Dr. Baladez at our weekly get together, he says he views those as promises. If you look at the 10 Commandments, we see things like "thou shall not commit adultery." Carlos said he sees that as the Lord promising to change him so that he won't want to do things that God doesn't want him to do. It all comes back to love. God's love for us and our love for God and our neighbors.

Before Moses died, he laid hands on Joshua and put God's Spirit on him. This allowed Joshua to accept the leadership of the Israelites. It says, *"Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him."* The Spirit brought understanding and wisdom to Joshua. Because of that, I think Joshua understood more about the love of God

than most did in the Old Testament. That was why he could say, "as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

We have the Spirit of God with us. Jesus told His disciples that He had to go to the Father, otherwise, He could not send back the Comforter to be with them and remind them of all that Jesus had taught them. This is the same Spirit that was given to Joshua by the laying on of Moses' hands. It is that Spirit that lead him and the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob into the promised land.

We have that same Spirit. So we come back to that same question.

Whom will you serve?

Amen

**\*HYMN** *"Give to the Winds Thy Fears"* **Blue Hymnal, #286**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_i3kfUkGqaI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_i3kfUkGqaI)

**\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH The Apostles' Creed (traditional) Blue Hymnal, p. 14**  
I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

#### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord, as we lift up our requests to you, Hear our prayers. Bring people to our minds so we may pray for their needs. Lord, Hear our prayers.

(After you have prayed for your families, the church, and those whom the Lord brought to your mind, finish this time of prayer by saying 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

**\*HYMN FOR OUR NATION "Heal Our Land" Red Hymnal #800**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTm\\_rA54EGw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTm_rA54EGw)

#### **PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS**

**\*DOXOLOGY** **Blue Hymnal, #592**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8TkUuKIh84>

#### **\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Father, help us to joyfully return to You some of what You have bestowed on us. Take these gifts which we offer to You and use them to Your glory and honor. Amen

**\*CLOSING HYMN**

***"God of Our Fathers"***

**Blue Hymnal, #809**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZgFhAvCIZo>

**\*BENEDICTION**

Now to the One who is able to keep you from falling,  
and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of God's glory with rejoicing,  
to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

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The end of worship - The beginning of service

\*Those who are able please stand.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Welcome to worship with us this morning! We're glad that you're here! If you do not have a church home, we invite you to become part of our compassionate church family... ask an Elder about meaningful participation and membership!

We still need readers for the Advent season. You will be provided scripts to read in the service. We have readers for Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>, and Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>. We need readers for Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> and Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>. Please Dr. Baladez. (210-324-5665) if you would like to participate in one of these services.

Ruling Elder Fred Archer will lead our Sunday morning worship next Sunday. Welcome Fred!

**COVID-19 Reminder**

COVID-19 is still alive and, unfortunately, well. Therefore, as we worship, we are reminded to adhere to the rules of "social distancing", and facemask wearing. We have, to the best of our ability, cleaned and disinfected the sanctuary. Please cooperate by not sitting in the "skipped rows". Hymn Books, Bibles, and Bulletins are pre-distributed to indicate where to sit. Families are allowed to sit together.