



Church of the Hills
Presbyterian Church (USA)

“When God Throws a Curve Ball”

Revelation 21:10 and 21:22-22:5

Acts 16:9-15

Reverend Richard Stewart

May 22, 2022

We are a vibrant family of faith rooted in God's Word, gathering together to worship and equipped to share the love of Christ in the world.

Welcome

Jill Green

Music Meditation

Hanna Wo

****Call to Worship**

Jill Green

Leader: God's goodness is breaking into the world.

People: We do not expect the Spirit's movement.

Leader: God gathers in those we judged to be outsiders.

People: We witness this in-breaking as healing, wholeness, restoration, and peace.

****Opening Hymn**

“O Day of Rest and Gladness”

Purple Hymnal 393 (v. 1, 3)

O day of rest and gladness, O day of joy and light,
O balm for care and sadness most beautiful, most bright;
on you, the high and lowly, through ages joined in tune,
sing “Holy; holy, holy” to the great God triune.

On you, God's people, meeting, the Holy Scripture hear,
Christ's living presence greeting, through bread and wine made near.
New graces ever gaining from this our day of rest,
we reach the rest remaining to spirits of the blest.

**** Please stand for all hymns if you are able**

Invitation to Confession

Jill Green

Leader: Please approach the throne of grace with me.

All: We cannot earn God's grace or favor. It comes to us, not as something owed, but as a gift freely given. Confident in God's love for us, we confess our sins in faith.

Returning to the Lord through Confession

Jill Green

Leader: We are a people living in sin.

People: We are a people in need of God's vision, praying for our eyes to be opened.

Leader: We are a people in need of God's reversal, praying for our hearts to be softened.

People: We are a people in need of God's reconciliation, praying that our faces might be illumined by God's presence.

Leader: Let us claim our need of God, confessing our sin together.

People: Gracious God, we equate our judgment with your judgment, and often consider our ways to be your ways. We define peace as the absence of disruption, holding our comfort as your aim and thinking our preferences reflect your way.

Leader: Too often we act as if we are your authoritative witnesses, believing our worldview corresponds with your vision, and that our narrative contains your hope for the future.

All: O God, dislodge us from our sinful assumptions. Forgive our selfish views. Correct us with your truth and teach us by your Spirit. We surrender to You the sins that separate us from You and one another during this time of silence (Silence).

Leader: This we pray in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Declaration of Forgiveness and the Peace of Christ

Jill Green

Leader: It is the Lord who opens eyes to see.

People: It is the Lord who softens hearts to hear.

Leader: It is the Lord who returns us to God's presence. Peace, peace, peace – you are loved. You are enough. You belong. In Jesus Christ you are restored.

People: Thanks be to our God forever and ever. Amen.

Leader: The Peace of Christ be with those gathered here and those watching from home.

People: And, also with you.

Leader: Share the Peace of Christ with one another with a simple nod and wave.

****Response to Forgiveness** “Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks” Purple Hymnal 240 (v. 1)

(Refrain)

**Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord.
Alleluia, alleluia! Give praise to his name.**

Jesus is Lord of all the earth.
He is the King of creation.

(Refrain)

Prayer for Illumination

Jill Green

Leader: Please join me in the Prayer for Illumination.

All: God of mercy, you promised never to break your covenant with us. Amid all the changing words of our generation, speak your eternal word that does not change. Then may we respond to your gracious promises with faithful, and obedient lives; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

** Please stand for all hymns if you are able

And in the spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city of Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never be shut by day – and there will be no night there. People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Then the angels showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.” And she prevailed upon us.

Ministry of Music

“Keep Your Lamps”

Purple Hymnal 350
Performed by the Chancel Choir

Keep your lamps trimmed and burning; keep your lamps trimmed and burning;
keep your lamps trimmed and burning, for the time is drawing nigh.

(Refrain)

**Sisters, don't grow weary; brothers, don't grow weary;
children, don't grow weary, for the time is drawing nigh.**

It's our faith makes us happy; it's our faith makes us happy;
it's our faith makes us happy, for the time is drawing nigh.

(Refrain)

We are climbing Jacob's ladder; we are climbing Jacob's ladder;
we are climbing Jacob's ladder, for the time is drawing nigh.

(Refrain)

Every round goes higher, higher; every round goes higher, higher;
every round goes higher, higher, for the time is drawing nigh.

(Refrain)

Sermon

“When God Throws a Curve Ball”

Rev. Rich Stewart

****Response to Sermon** “They’ll Know We Are Christians By Our Love”

Purple Hymnal 300 (v. 2, 3)

We are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord;
We are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord,
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored:

(Refrain)

**And they’ll know we are Christians by our love, by our love;
yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.**

We will work with each other; we will work side by side;
we will work with each other; we will work side by side,
and we’ll guard human dignity and save human pride:

(Refrain)

Invitation to the Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Rev. Rich Stewart

****Doxology**

“Take My Life”

Purple Hymnal 697 (v. 4)

Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold;
take my intellect and use every power
as thou shalt choose, every power as thou shalt choose.

Prayers of the People and the Lord’s Prayer

Rev. Rich Stewart

All: 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.

** Please stand for all hymns if you are able

****Closing Hymn** "We Are Marching in the Light of God" Purple Hymnal 853 (v. 1)

We are marching in the light of God;
We are marching in the light of God.
We are marching in the light of God;
We are marching in the light of God.

We are marching --- Oh ---we are marching in the light of God.
We are marching --- Oh ---we are marching in the light of God.

****Charge and Blessing**

Rev. Rich Stewart

Leader: And the people of God say

People: Alleluia. Amen.

****Please stand for all hymns if you are able**

Biography of Today's Guest Minister, Reverend Richard Stewart

After an upbringing that stretched from a farm in Kansas to that historic Presbyterian seminary in Princeton, NJ; Rich Stewart's career in ministry has blessed him with experience in parishes large and small, in city and countryside, in rural towns, bedroom burbs, and mountain resorts. For 24 years he was anchored (by one foot—part-time) as a rehab chaplain at the world-acclaimed Craig Hospital in metro Denver. Since June 2005, he's been trying to learn retirement, testing the patience of his wife Jo. Mercifully for her, he gets out of the house regularly, for things like pulpit supply, Presbytery's Committee on Ministry, and on-call parish response at churches that need some part-time help—most notably at Green Mountain PC, Lakewood. He's also marketing a book of highlights from his years at Craig Hospital. He and Jo now have two grandchildren, in Southern CA.



Pastoral Care Representative:

Reverend Christine Beitzel will be our pastoral care representative until a new Pastor is installed; revchrisdb@gmail.com, 562-822-3887.

A General Note regarding Financial Solicitations:

Please remember that a church leader will never directly solicit you for funds or the transfer of funds. We will only ask for your support of the church through the traditional process of filling out pledge cards and fulfilling that pledge accordingly.

Office Hours:

The Church Office is open Tuesday – Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Peg and Toby normally go to lunch between 12 and 12:30 and are back by 1:30). Friday from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

A special thank you to Tate Allbritton, and Chase Allbritton for helping with the tech.

*Hymnals are indicated for those that may have them at home.

Blue - "The Presbyterian Hymnal"

Red - "Songs for Praise and Worship"

Purple - "Glory to God"

Yellow - "Hymns for the Family of God"

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Liturgy and reflections are provided by Lectionary Aids for 2021-2022, Year C, Volume 55.1,
PCUSA and Book of Common Worship, Westminster John Knox Press.