

Astoria First United Methodist Church
September 26, 2021

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

ORDER OF WORSHIP
*(*please stand if you are able)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mary Frances Gunn

CENTERING MUSIC

“Allegro Moderato”
by Lemoine

Kristin Hammond

WORDS OF WELCOME

Pastor Michael

***CALL TO WORSHIP** *(If you are able, please stand)*

Janet Todd

L: This week has been filled with joys and sorrows.

P: We have come here this day with burdens on our hearts.

L: God, who hears your cries, will offer you healing love.

P: Thanks be to God for such generous compassion.

L: Open your hearts to God’s infinite mercy.

P: We open our spirits to receive God’s love for us.

***OPENING PRAYER**

Pastor Michael

OT SCRIPTURE READING *“Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22”*

Janet Todd

So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. And on the second day, as they were drinking wine after the feast, the king again said to Esther, “What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.”

Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be granted me for my wish, and my people for my request. For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men, and women, I would have been silent, for our affliction is not to be compared with the loss to the king.” Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, “Who is he, and where is he, who has dared to do this?” And Esther said, “A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman!” Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen.

Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, “Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman's house, fifty cubits high.” And the king said, “Hang him on that.” So they hanged Haman on the

gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king abated.

And Mordecai recorded these things and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, obliging them to keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same, year by year, as the days on which the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Days of Elijah”
by Robin Mark

Kristin Hammond

PSALTER READING

“Psalm 124”

Janet Todd

If it had not been the Lord who was on our side—let Israel now say—if it had not been the Lord who was on our side when people rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us up alive, when their anger was kindled against us; then the flood would have swept us away, the torrent would have gone over us; then over us would have gone the raging waters. Blessed be the Lord, who has not given us as prey to their teeth! We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped! Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

CALL TO RECONCILIATION

Pastor Michael

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(congregation)

Janet Todd

Brother Jesus, Teacher of the Way, we come from a busy week of tasks and obligations. In this quiet time, we have a chance to reflect on how we have lived our lives this week. We have an opportunity to explore the hopes that you have—hopes for compassion for the weak, justice for the mistreated, and love for friends and strangers. We thank and praise you for your love and power. We rejoice that you have helped us to be like you; and we regret when we have not been like you. Pick us up where we have fallen. Touch us with your renewing grace, Healer on the Way. **AMEN**

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

(read by the Pastor)

Pastor Michael

Jesus forgives us when we wander. He raises us up to live with courage and hope and love. Praise be to our Brother and Savior! In the Name Jesus Christ our Lord, you are forgiven. In the Name Jesus Christ our Lord, we are all forgiven, always!

NT EPISTLE READING

“James 5:13-20”

Janet Todd

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

INVITATION TO OFFER OUR BEST GIFTS TO GOD **Pastor Michael**

The wonderful works of God surround us. How will we show our gratitude? The generosity of God exceeds all our limits. How will our manner of life reflect the abundance of God's mercy? Surely our offerings are one measure of our response. Let us present them with joy and thanksgiving.

***DOXOLOGY** **Congregation**
UMH#95

***OFFERTORY PRAYER** **Pastor Michael**

HYMN OF PREPARATION *(verses 1-4)* **Congregation**
"Have Thine Own Way, Lord" **UMH#382**
(We ask the congregation to please read (or hum) along as the piano plays)

GOSPEL LESSON ***"Mark 9:38-50"*** **Pastor Michael**

SERMON **Pastor Michael**
"God's Love and Favor: Undeserved, Yet Freely Given to All"

JOYS AND CONCERNS **Mary Frances Gunn**

PASTORAL PRAYER **Pastor Michael**

LORD'S PRAYER **Pastor Michael**
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom (kin-dom) come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, (kin-dom), the power, and the glory, forever. AMEN

***BENEDICTION** **Pastor Michael**

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Sunday, OCTOBER 3RD is Worldwide Communion Sunday.

**This is a Special Sunday with a special offering to help
United Methodist Leaders worldwide with educational loans.**

**We welcome to our friends from the Warrenton UMC
as they join us for worship.**

**We still need volunteers for liturgist each week.
Please call Sue Hicks or Mary Frances Gunn if you wish to help.
If you want to provide special music – let Mary Frances know.
We now have recordings of the worship services available as a link.**