

Order of Worship

**All who are able please stand*

Please contact an usher or greeter to obtain an assisted hearing device

FOR REFLECTION

Did we not expand for thee thy breast, and lift from thee thy burden that weighed heavily upon thy back? And did We not elevate thy renown? For truly with hardship comes ease! Truly with hardship comes ease! So when thou art free, exert thyself; and let thy desire be for thy Lord.

Qur'an 94, Expansion, al-Sharh

PRELUDE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.

**You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.**

Even before a word is on my tongue,
O Lord, you know it completely.

**You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.**

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

**For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.**
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.

**My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.**

Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.

**In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.**

How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!

**I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end—I am still with you.**

***HYMN**

God, the Sculptor of the Mountains

#5

***GREETING OF PEACE**

May the Spirit of peace and wisdom be with you all.

And also with you.

Please greet one another with a sign of peace.

TIME WITH CHILDREN

*(After the children's time children are dismissed for Godly Play & Joyful Path;
Youth for Connections & Everyday Leadership)*

Parents: If this is your first time at Southminster Sunday School, please go with your children (age 3-4th grade) and sign them in. Thank you.

READING

Jeremiah 18:1-11

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: "Come, go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words." So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him.

Then the word of the Lord came to me: Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the Lord. Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, but if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will change my mind about the disaster that I intended to bring on it. And at another moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, but if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will change my mind about the good that I had intended to do to it. Now, therefore, say to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: Thus says the Lord: Look, I am a potter shaping evil against you and devising a plan against you. Turn now, all of you from your evil way, and amend your ways and your doings.

READING

The Christian Gospel for Americans

David Ray Griffin¹

In Germany in 1934, a year after the rise to power of the National Socialist (Nazi) Party, the movement known as the Deutsche Christen -- "German Christians" -- was created. The German Christians believed the program of the National Socialists would bring Germany the greatness it deserved. So they supported the Nazis, even though the latter wanted to make the church subservient to the state...

But a number of pastors and theologians, led by Martin Niemoller, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Karl Barth, among others, began a movement of Confessing Christians who said, in

their famous Barmen Declaration of 1934, that the support for National Socialism violated basic principles of the Christian faith, thereby created a status confessionis (confessional situation), meaning a binding doctrinal stance on sociopolitical questions....

Later in the century, some Christian bodies decided that the system of apartheid in South Africa could not remain a matter of indifference. One such body was the Lutheran World Federation. "Under normal circumstances," it declared in 1977, "Christians may have different opinions in political questions." But the system of apartheid in South Africa, it declared, is "so perverted and oppressive" that this situation "constitutes a status confessionis." The Christian faith required, therefore, that "churches would publicly and unequivocally reject the existing apartheid system...."

It is now time for Christians in America—actually, long past time—to engage in an extensive examination of the nature of the American Empire to see if it is so "perverted and oppressive" that Christians, individually and as churches, should "publicly and unequivocally" reject it....

American political, economic, and military leaders have long been engaged, since at least the end of the Cold War, in a "global domination project," similar to the Nazi project. Like the Germans, America has used its power toward bringing the whole world under its control. How could we fail to regard this American Empire's domination project—like the Nazi project—as wholly antithetical to Christian faith?

Our Christian faith at its best would lead us, both as individual Christians and as churches, to oppose the American Empire in the name of God. As long as the church does not explicitly oppose this empire, it is, by its silence, a de facto supporter.

ANTHEM

Chancel Choir

READING

Luke 14:25-33

Now large crowds were traveling with him; and he turned and said to them, "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions."

READING

The Cost of Discipleship

Dietrich Bonhoefferⁱⁱ

Through the call of Jesus men [and women] become individuals. Willy-nilly, they are compelled to decide, and that decision can only be made by themselves. It is no choice of their own that makes them individuals: it is Christ who makes them individuals by calling them. Every[one] is called separately, and must follow alone. But [people] are frightened of solitude, and they try to protect themselves from it by merging themselves in the society of their fellow[s] and in their material environment. They become suddenly aware of their responsibilities and duties, and are loath to part with them. But all this is only a cloak to protect them from having to make a decision. They are unwilling to stand alone before Jesus and to be compelled to decide with their eyes fixed on him alone. Yet neither father nor mother, neither [spouse] nor child, neither nationality nor tradition can protect [anyone] at the moment of [their] call. It is Christ's will that [they] should be thus isolated, and that [they] should fix [their] eyes solely upon [Christ].

SERMON

Decision

John Shuck

***HYMN**

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

*I have decided to follow Jesus,
I have decided to follow Jesus,
I have decided to follow Jesus,
No turning back, No turning back!*

*Though no one join me, still I will follow,
Though no one join me, still I will follow,
Though no one join me, still I will follow,
No turning back, No turning back!*

*The world behind me, the cross before me,
The world behind me, the cross before me,
The world behind me, the cross before me,
No turning back, No turning back!*

***AFFIRMATION OF LIFE**

Rumi

The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you.

Don't go back to sleep.

You must ask for what you really want.

Don't go back to sleep.

People are going back and forth across the doorsill

where the two worlds touch.

The door is round and open.

Don't go back to sleep.

TIME FOR MEDITATION AND NAMING

SUNG PRAYER

"Ubi Caritas" – (sing four times)

Ubi caritas

Et amore

Ubi caritas

Deus ibi est

("Where there is love and kindness, there is God").

CORPORATE PRAYER

Lord's Prayer

New Zealand Prayerbook

Eternal Spirit,

Earth-maker, Pain bearer, Life-giver,

Source of all that is and that shall be,

Father and Mother of us all,

Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe;

The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world;

Your heavenly will be done by all created beings;

Your commonwealth of peace and freedom

sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.

In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.

In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.

From trial too great to endure, spare us.

From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,

now and forever. Amen.

A TIME FOR OFFERING

INVITATION TO GIVE

MUSIC FOR OFFERING

***DOXOLOGY**

Through all our living, we our fruits must give.

Good works of service are for offering

When we are giving, or when receiving,

We belong to God.

We belong to God.

We belong to God.

We belong to God.

***PRAYER OF THANKS**

***HYMN**

Come! Live in the Light!

#749

***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE**

ⁱ David Ray Griffin, *The Christian Gospel for Americans: A Systematic Theology* (Anoka, MN: Process Century Press, 2019), pp. 411-3.

ⁱⁱ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, (New York: Touchstone, 1995), p. 94.