

Service of Word & Sacrament

31 January 2010

4th Sunday after Epiphany

Order of Worship

Prelude

(We listen to music to prepare our hearts and minds for worship. After the prelude, please STAND for the Call to Worship and the Hymn.)

The people call one another to worship...

Call to Worship

Leader: We are a people created to sing praise to God!

People: **We praise the God who gives rivers in the desert.**

Leader: We worship the God who has said, "Yes!" to humanity in Jesus Christ.

People: **We give thanks to the God who gives the Spirit in our hearts. Glory be to God, Creator, Christ, and Spirit, giver of all good gifts.**

Hymn 1 – "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"

Welcome & Passing of the Peace

Minister:

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. Whether you are here for the first time or the one hundred and first time, it is God who has invited you, and you belong here. So for this next hour set aside your cares and worries, and let God love you. Let us offer our blessing to one another as we gather in God's name.

All: **You are a beloved child of God. May God give you abundant life and eternal love. May God make you extravagant in your welcome, courageous in your witness, and through you, transform the world.**

Minister:

People: **And also with you.**

(Please join us as we greet each other with a handshake or an embrace, saying, "Peace be with you." Then please BE SEATED.)

Old Testament Reading from the 1st Chapter of the Book of Jeremiah, Verses 4-10

Psalms 71, Verses 1-6 – New Century Hymnal, page 666

(The accompanist plays the response (*R*) the first time alone. The second time the congregation joins in song. Then the response (*R*) is sung again with accompaniment where indicated during the reading of the canticle.)

New Testament Reading from the 4th Chapter of the Gospel of Luke, Verses 21-30

(Please **STAND** before the reading of the Gospel and respond as follows.)

Leader: Listen to what the Spirit is saying to the people.

People: We listen, O Holy Spirit.

(After the Gospel, please respond as follows and then **BE SEATED**.)

Leader: This is our sacred story.

People: We praise you, O God.

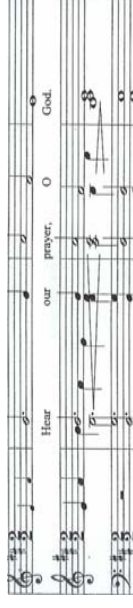
Sermon – “Shouldn’t the Psychic Friends Be the Ones to Call You?” ~ Floyd Jones

(Please **STAND** for the Hymn. During the Hymn the children may leave for Sunday School; afterwards those remaining in the congregation may **BE SEATED**.)

Hymn 358 – “God of the Prophets”

Pastoral Prayer & Lord’s Prayer

(Following the pastoral prayer, you are invited to light a candle as you offer a petition or thanksgiving, aloud or in silence. After each individual prayer, we sing the following response.)



All: **Our Father in heaven,
 Hallowed be your name,
 Your kingdom come,
 Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
 now and forever. Amen.**

Announcements (Please see page 4.)

The people rejoice!

The Offertory

Leader: God be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Open your hearts.

People: **We open them to God.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the living God.

People: **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

In a world that teaches hatred, selfishness, and injustice, God calls us to love, compassion, and justice. In our encounter with God today, may we respond to God's call by sharing the abundance of our gifts through this offering.

(After the offering basket is passed through the congregation, please STAND as the basket and the bread and wine are brought forward to sing the following Offertory Response and then BE SEATED.)

Song of Praise – New Century Hymnal 776

Remembrance

Minister: The prophets remind us that God desires steadfast love and not sacrifice ...

...Bless this cup, for as the grapes are fermented to make this wine, so we are transformed by joy and hope.

All: **Bless all of us as we eat and drink, that we may live in Christ and Christ in us. Amen.**

The Lord's Supper (Jesus' table is OPEN to everyone who wishes to share in this communion fellowship.)

(When the bread is offered, take a piece and hold it. When the cup is offered, dip the bread into the wine and eat it. After all are served and a period of silence has been observed, please STAND for the Prayer of Thanksgiving and REMAIN STANDING for the Hymn, Benediction and Commission that follow.)

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Leader: Please rise and join in the following prayer.

All: **We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Hymn 391 – "In the Midst of New Dimensions"

God is still speaking...

Benediction & Commission

Leader: Go in peace, and take peace into the world of human need. We are the body of Christ and members of one another. Serve and honor one another, that we may be strengthened to be Christ's body in the world. Amen. The service is ended.

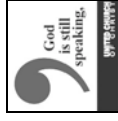
People: **We leave to serve the world.**

Announcements

- ❖ **New SOP Study Group: "The Seven 'Clobber' Passages of the Bible"** | Sundays, 7 - 28 February | 4:00 PM | Fellowship Hall @ First Unitarian | Discussion sessions will focus on the film *The Seven Passages* which highlights the 7 scriptural passages that many Christians believe condemn members of the LGBT community. If you are interested in participating even if you could not attend the movie presentation, please contact Lauryn (lauryn7808@gmail.com) or Glenda (ssgship@msn.com).
- ❖ **If you can volunteer** to be Sunday School Teacher, Worship Leader, Worship Space "Setter-upper" or Refreshment Provider some Sunday, please let **Derek** know (invisiblederek@rocketmail.com).

Spirit of Peace Church, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Pastor & Teacher: The Reverend Rita Wilbur (sopucc@sbcglobal.net)
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T H E C E N T E R F O R
P R O G R E S S I V E C H R I S T I A N I T Y

We are also a member organization of PRO San Antonio (www.prosanantonio.org), an association of progressive, gay-friendly religious communities in San Antonio.

THIS WEEK'S FEATURED BOOK*: *The Shack* by William P. Young, 248 pages, paperback

This book, a #1 New York Times Bestseller, was read and discussed by several people at Spirit of Peace a couple of years ago. The author's first book, he actually wrote it for his children, with no thought at first of publishing it. He is the son of missionaries, a graduate of seminary, and a devout believer who, obviously, spends a lot of time thinking about spiritual matters. The book has been very widely read, and is still discussed on some Internet sites. Some object to the depictions of God in the book, and others criticize the doctrines taught, but some find it life-changing. There is at least one later book written for the sole purpose of attacking and criticizing *The Shack*.

During a family vacation at a park in Oregon, the youngest daughter of the main character is abducted. Evidence found at a nearby abandoned shack leads law enforcement officials to believe that she was probably brutally murdered there by a serial killer. This leads the father into a life of unspeakable pain and anger with God which lasts for years, as neither the body nor the presumed killer is found. Four years later, he receives a mysterious note, inviting him to a meeting. The meeting is to take place at the same shack where his daughter was murdered. The note is apparently from God. Against his better judgment, he decides to go to the meeting.

As interesting and unusual as this a plot seems, the book is actually not about the story, but about its teaching. The plot is a vehicle for extensive teachings about God and life, and how such a tragedy can be allowed to happen if God is all powerful. It is in some of the long discourses about life, God, and the spiritual world that some controversy has arisen, but also where new insights have given some readers a renewed faith and understanding.

*Library Notes: Spirit of Peace has a growing library as books and other items continue to be donated. A complete list can be accessed from the "Reading Recommendations" link on our web site. If you would like to check anything out, just tell Tom (t.finlay@sbcglobal.net), and he will bring it to church for you.