

# STONE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

September 3, 2023

*Faces of our Faith: Joseph of Arimathea*

From "Closure" by Amanda Gorman

To begin again  
Isn't to go backwards,  
But to decide to go.  
Our story is not a circle...  
We disembark both beside & beyond  
Who we were, who we are...  
Perhaps love is how it feels

To breathe the same air.  
All we have is time, is now...  
How we are moved says everything  
About what we are to each other  
& what are we to each other  
If not everything.

WELCOME

Pastor Ben

PRELUDE

*All Creatures of Our God and King*

Kathy Myers Geistliche Kirchengesäng

CENTERING POEM

*Who Can Spell Despair?*

Stacia-Fe Gillen

By Nikki Grimes

SONG

*Taste and See<sup>^</sup>*  
*(sing twice)*

James Moore

Taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Oh, taste and see, taste and see the goodness of the Lord, of the Lord.

RESPONSIVE READING Inspired by Psalm 34: 1-8 Stacia-Fe Gillen

One: I live and breathe God - blessing the Lord every chance I get.

**All: Praise continually fills my mouth!**

One: In all sorts of circumstances, my being expands with praise.

**All: Join us in spreading the good news!**

One: Together, let's get the word out: God is good!

**All: God hears us and is with us in our fears.**

One: We are not alone. God is faithful.

**All: There is space for all at God's table; God is good!**

One: Taste and see that the Lord is good!

\*SONG

*For Everyone Born<sup>^</sup>* Shirley Murray/Brian Mann

For everyone born, a place at the table,  
for everyone born, clean water and bread,  
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,  
for everyone born, a star overhead,

**Refrain:** and God will delight when we are creators  
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:  
yes, God will delight when we are creators  
of justice, justice and joy!

For gay and for straight, a place at the table,  
a covenant shared, a welcoming space,  
a rainbow of race and gender and colour,  
for gay and for straight, the chalice of grace,

**REFRAIN**

For young and for old, a place at the table,  
A voice to be heard, a part in the song,  
The hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,  
For young and for old, the right to belong,

**REFRAIN**

For everyone born, a place at the table,  
to live without fear, and simply to be,  
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,  
for everyone born, the right to be free,

**REFRAIN**

TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN

Pastor Cindy

SONG *I'm Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table<sup>^</sup>* African American Spiritual

I'm gonna sit at the welcome table;  
I'm gonna sit at the welcome table, Alleluia. *(twice)*

REFLECTIONS ON OUR WELCOME STATEMENT Martha, Joanne, C3, Dante  
*(with I'm Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table as directed)*

I'm gonna sit with my loving family;  
I'm gonna sit with my loving family, Alleluia. *(twice)*  
Here all the world will find a welcome;  
Here all the world will find a welcome, Alleluia. *(twice)*

\*SONG

*Draw the Circle*  
Henry Thurston-Griswold, Guitar

Mark A. Miller

Draw the cir - cle, draw the cir - cle wide. Draw the cir - cle,  
draw the cir - cle wide. No one stands a-lone, we'll stand side by  
side. Draw the cir-cle, draw the cir - cle wide. wide.  
Draw the cir - cle wide, draw it wid - er still. Let this  
be our song: no one stands a-lone. Stand - ing side by side,  
draw the cir - cle, draw the cir - cle wide. wide.

Chords: D, G/D, D, G/D, G, A, D, G, A, Bm, E, Em, A, Bm7, Gmaj7, A, D, Bm7, Gmaj7, E, A, D, G, D/F#, F#, Bm, G, A7, D, D/C#, D.

Draw the cir - cle wide, draw it wid - er still. Let this  
be our song: no one stands a-lone. Stand - ing side by side,  
draw the cir - cle, draw the cir - cle wide.  
draw the cir - cle, draw the cir - cle wide. Draw the  
cir - cle, draw the cir - cle wide.

Chords: G/D, D, A/D, D, G, D, E, A, D, G, D/F#, F#, Bm, G, A, D, F#, Bm, E, Em *molto rit.*, G, A, D.

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY		Pastor Ben
SCRIPTURE READING	Luke 23: 44-56	Harriet Kaylor
SERMON	Eager Anticipation	Pastor Cindy

\*LITANY OF DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT  
(ASL by Darlene)

Cyrus: God loves you. God loves me. God loves everyone.

**All: We renew our commitment to put this belief into practice.**

Bill: Inspired by the collaboration and cooperation that brought this creative work of art forth, we hope to live more fully into our own words. To live even beyond them.

Nina: Stone Church of the Brethren is a Christ-centered community which celebrates every individual as a unique and beloved child of God.

**All: We acknowledge that we do not all agree.**

Bekah: Our understandings and backgrounds are varied.  
What some celebrate, others may mourn.  
But we choose to see this as a gift as opposed to a liability.

**All: We commit to continuing to learn and grow together – trusting that with Christ as our center, we can move beyond simplistic divisions of “us” and “them.” We embrace questions and curiosity and wonder and awe.**

Eddie: We welcome all.

Bill: Regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race,

Bekah: ethnicity, physical or mental ability, economic circumstance, or current relationship with God.

Nina: This is a place of belonging. You belong here.  
You belong to God. We belong to each other.

Bekah: We will continue to cultivate this community to be a place where we hope and work toward transformation as opposed to a place where we take a stand against other children of God. Exploration and expansion are necessary parts of a faith journey and we aim to give space for all of us to flourish and contribute our gifts at every step, without judgment or condemnation.

**All: We invite your active participation in the life of this congregation, as together we continue to grow in grace and seek justice for God's creation.**

Eddie: We know that the seasons of life make it so that what we can do - changes over time.

Bill: We seek to support each other through those shifts - recognizing that we all have times where we carry and all have times where we are carried.

Nina: We seek to offer grace to each other and to ourselves through the ups and downs of life.

**All: The work of justice is never done.**

Bill: We commit to long term labor that moves beyond sound bites and quick fixes. We will pursue deep listening, steady presence, relentless self-reflection, and good self care as we work alongside those who are hurting.

Bekah: We pray for strength, courage, wisdom, boldness, humility as we keep striving toward the kin-dom of justice and mercy and love that God desires.

**All: May we keep looking around for the vulnerable, recognizing God's image in each one, and responding with compassion and love.**

Nina: May this quilt, this art, this Welcome Statement, keep inviting us toward inward reflection and outward action.

Cyrus: May it inspire us to keep thinking, keep growing, and keep remembering:

**All: God loves you. God loves me. God loves everyone.**

ANTHEM	<i>Child of God</i> <sup>^</sup>	Mark A. Miller
--------	----------------------------------	----------------

SENDING		Pastor Cindy
---------	--	--------------

POSTLUDE	<i>Postlude Fugato</i> Kathy Myers	A. Louis Scarmolin
----------	---------------------------------------	--------------------

<sup>^</sup>Music reprinted with permission under One License # A-723  
\*Please Rise, as Able, in Body or Spirit

**Let us know you were here!**

