

**Grove Presbyterian Church**  
**November 1, 2009**

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**Prayer Before the Worship Service**

Send Lord Thy Holy Spirit upon us, whom Thou hast ordained to guard the fullness of Thy Church, that we, guided by Thy Word, strengthened and confirmed by Thy Sacraments, and serving Thee in the purity of life, may devise and do those things which shall be for the good of Thy Church and the glory of Thy name.

**Organ Prelude**

**Welcoming Words**

“We give thanks to God for this day and we welcome you to this worship service at Grove Presbyterian. We hope you will continue worshipping here. Let us take a moment to greet one another, get to know each other’s name, and welcome one another in the love of Christ Jesus, who has called us to belong to him.”

**Summons to Worship**

Isaiah 6: 1-5 -- Let us worship God!

**Choral Introit**

**Opening Hymn**

**Call to Confession**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In humility and faith let us confess our sin to God.

**Declaration of Forgiveness**

Hear the Good News! The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, that we might be dead to sin, and alive to all that is good. I do declare to you in the name of Jesus Christ: You are forgiven.

**Song of Glory**

**The Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God the Father Almighty  
Maker of heaven and earth

And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord  
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost  
Born of the Virgin Mary  
Suffered under Pontius Pilate  
Was crucified, dead, and buried  
He descended into hell  
The third day he rose again from the dead  
He ascended into heaven  
And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty  
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead

I believe in the Holy Ghost  
The holy catholic Church  
The communion of saints  
The forgiveness of sins  
The resurrection of the body  
And the life everlasting

Amen.

**Greetings and Invitation: no hand shaking**

1. Grace be with all of you. (Hebrews 13: 25) – Mugs/Pew Cards
2. All written down there so take time to read and consider participating
3. Dunces Day Party next Saturday
4. Remember Pledge Cards Next Sunday
5. Book Club tonight: Cat’s Cradle at Merry’s at 7 PM
6. Names of those in Armed Forces please
7. Life in a Jar : 11/7 1 PM at Trinity UMC
8. Ask for prayer concerns or thanksgivings?
9. If you are interested in finding out more about Jesus Christ or about this congregation (this community of faith), please speak with me or fill out a pew card. **[Then recite one of the following verses]:**

### Message for Young People

Gerry's story: weeds and flowers – why do I need to take care of my sin right away? Ignore it – week later, another week – can't see all the flowers for all the weeds

### Song of Praise

#### Prayer for Knowledge Worship Leader

God revealed in word, grant us your word and let us see in you the meaning and substance of our humanity. Teach us the wisdom born of faith and the virtues cultivated of the spirit of Christ.

### Old Testament Lesson Psalm 119: 105-112

**Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path.**

**I have sworn an oath and confirmed it,  
to observe your righteous ordinances.**

**I am severely afflicted;  
give me life, O LORD, according to your word.**

**Accept my offerings of praise, O LORD,  
and teach me your ordinances.**

**I hold my life in my hand continually,  
but I do not forget your law.**

**The wicked have laid a snare for me,  
but I do not stray from your precepts.**

**Your decrees are my heritage for ever;  
they are the joy of my heart.**

**I incline my heart to perform your statutes  
for ever, to the end.**

### New Testament Lesson and Reflection Matthew 22: 34-40

They wanted Jesus to give a summary of faith. Sort of like a mission statement. Without a logo. Only important Rabbis were asked to do this. So Jesus does, even though he knows they are gunning for him.

They press him to tell them not which commandment of all the 613 (248 positive, 365 negative) is best but rather what kind is the greatest.

**When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 'Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?' He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'" This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'**

What is the definition of the word, 'easy?' Answer: not involving great exertion, difficulty, or discomfort. Freedom from pain or agitation.

Which, if that is the case, nothing ever will change. Why change? Why choose pain and hardship? Got to be an idiot.

Easy Street  
Easy Rider  
Easy Listening  
Easy-going

How do we grow? When do we grow?

Growing means growing pains.

Birth from labor pains and blood.

Born of difficulties.

The difficult path. The road less traveled. Being honest about what we really love.

Others may promise the 'nice-nice.' That isn't the church.

Flint sharpened by the hammerstone chipping away.

Pearls from irritation.

Iron by smelting.  
And the anvil wears out the hammer.

Sailors know the way they survive the typhoon is by sailing straight into it. Can't run from it. Can't go around it. Can't duck it. Can't avoid. So you go right at it.

The way we beat suffering is by embracing suffering. Ours and His.

*The great illusion of leadership is to think man can be led out of the desert by someone who has never been there.*  
-- Henry Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer*

Only then can we be authentic.

If it is easy, watch out.

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How do you tackle the hard job? Let's say, you have to move a daughter from one apartment to another. What do you carry first? The couch. The box-spring. The dresser. You take care of the most difficult job first. You delay gratification. Sign of maturity. Delayed gratification.

We speak of the virtue of discomfort. It begins with the discomfort of dealing with your own soul. Examining yourself. Speaking to your sin rather than your behavior. Why do you behave the way you do? Name its source. Is it pride? Jealousy? Fear? If I am judgmental about my brother, where does that come from? My own self-justification, my own jealousy, my own self-righteousness?

Roy Hession in his book, *The Calvary Road*, wrote how a man was climbing a hill to attend a meeting. He heard steps behind him. He turned and saw a man carrying a heavy load up the hill on his back. He was full of sympathy for him and spoke to him. Then he notices how

scarred were the man's hands. He realized it was Jesus. "Lord," he said, 'are you carrying the world's sin up the hill?'"

"No," Jesus replied, "not the world's sins; just yours."

Delayed gratification, yes. And doing the dirty job right up front. Me: I too often set aside letters, visits, or phone calls that I suspect are bad news, news I'd rather ignore.

And the longer we postpone talking with the person with whom we've had an argument or hold a grudge, the more the distance, hurt, and fear calcifies, petrifies.

It doesn't help.

Time to get down on our knees and weed the garden. Welcome then to this hard fellowship of suffering. This fellowship of confession. This fellowship of redemption and spiritual refreshment, purchased in pain and honesty and trust. And you thought Christianity would be easy?

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Tony Campolo once talked about a little country church in the deep south where the pastor left. They all got together to try to figure out how'd they get their next pastor. But nobody had any idea. Nobody wanted the job. So one of the old-timers, a farmer, stood up and said, "I'll give it a whack. I'll give her a try."

Well now, to get to preaching, he got to reading the Bible, something he really hadn't bothered with much before. And the more he read the more he was surprised by what he read. So he started preaching what he read. About how we were to love each other and care for each other.

Now this was in the earliest days of the civil rights movement, lots of prejudice and racism; and having read the Bible the farmer preacher got to preaching about how we should treat each other. With respect. With love. As brothers and sisters. He was a'preaching the Bible.

One day Campolo asked him how it was going. The farmer replied it was going great. He had preached that church down to three.

For the rest wanted their Christianity the way they wanted their Christianity. Safe. Unchanging. Unchallenging. Untroubled. Unbiblical. They wanted an easy Christianity. Tepid and useless. Nothing special about it. We all know it takes hot water to make rich coffee.

If you love only those who are loveable, so what?

Watched that classic silent film yesterday: "Metropolis." With its allegory: the mediator between head and hands must be the heart.

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Now, if you'll thumb through some of the old hymnals (you won't find it in ours) you just might note instructions at the top of the page on how to sing these hymns.

*Slowly, with expression*  
*Spirited*  
*With dignity*  
*Slowly, tenderly*  
*With a positive joy*

How should we sing the lyrics of our living? Jesus says, "Do it lovingly."

But Jesus now, couldn't you have been more clear cut? How about a checklist or a method?

Here's one of those other great Laws of Life. It's called Weiners Law of Librarians. It says: there are no answers, only cross references.

Just like Jesus. Couldn't he have been more specific? He did. He says, "Be me."

*Jesus did not offer an ideology; he offers himself.*  
*--Nouwen*

Great. That makes it still tough. Well, it's supposed to be.

Why? Because your neighbor is pretty darn unlovable. They don't make it easy for you to love them. Lord knows, I don't make it easy for my wife to love me. Lord knows, I don't make it easy for me to love me.

Which is why the first commandment to love God is interpreted by the second commandment. We only show we love God fully when we love our neighbor as ourselves. On these two hang everything God tells us in the Bible. They are the main beam holding up the edifice of our daily faith-living. Everything hangs on how and what we love, the way a door hangs on a hinge. Or how a Savior hangs on a cross.

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Do it lovingly. Situation by situation. Person by person. Day by day.

Which is why I'm impressed by this statement from a young adult who wrote to me. He really gets it. He said:

*The most valuable lessons I have drawn from religion are: the right path is usually the difficult path, but it is always the most rewarding*

*and will lead to the greatest happiness; and if you lift others up before you, you will rise as well.*

He gets it.

So lets get back to that definition of ‘easy.’ The word ‘easy’ is of French derivation meaning comfort, pleasure – very likely originally referring to elbow room; that is, space of your own – space so you can avoid having to deal with people. If you have elbow room, you don’t have to mess with others.

But when you lack elbow room, when its all crowded and lots bo bumping into each other, when you have to deal with others, that’s when it gets difficult.

Which means: when you dare to live lovingly it will never be easy.

For when you bend to love and lift up others, guess who else rises?

### **Anthem**

#### **Prayers of Dedication/People**

Lord: bend that proud and stiff-neck I  
 Help me to bow the head and die  
 Beholding him on Calvary  
 Who bowed his head to me

Thank you Lord, yes even for our hardships. For they are the making of our faith.

Almighty God: who dost hold us to account for the use of all our powers and privileges, Guide we pray Thee the people of these United States in the election of their rulers and representatives, that by wise legislation and faithful administration their rights of all may be protected and our nation enabled to fulfill Thy purposes.

Bless those who called to the high calling of serving your people as politicians, this noble office of magistrate. Grant such honor and dedication to serve as your agents for the good of all.

Now, in prayers spoken and unspoken,  
 we call upon you for those who suffer the injustice of violence and want . .

We call upon you for those who carry heavy burdens . . .

We call upon you for those we love and those who love us . . .

For the sick, grieving, recovering . . .

For those packing up the past and moving to new homes

God hath not promised Skies ever blue, Flower-strewn pathways always for you. God hath not promised Sun without rain, Joy without sorrow, Peace without pain. But He hath promised Strength from above, Unfailing sympathy, undying love.

We thank you, Lord God, for all the benefits you have given us In your Son Jesus Christ, our most merciful Redeemer, Friend, and Brother, and for all the pains and insults he has borne for us; and we pray that we may see Christ more clearly, love him more dearly, and follow him more nearly; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. -- Richard of Chichester

Now receive what we offer from our hearts and souls and the labor of our days: ♦For we do not live by bread alone...

### **Offertory**

#### **Hymn of Dedication**

## **The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper**

1. elders process during singing of Hymn of Dedication
2. elders stand at table, elder 5 closest to choir, then 4, 3 (in middle), 2, and 1 (closest to Fellowship door)
3. elders remove linen (elders 1 and 5) and hand linen to Andrews
4. elders 2 and 4 hand cup and loaf to Andrews
5. elders retreat and sit in front pews
6. Hymn of Dedication ends

### **Words of Invitation**

**‘You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? – Matthew 5: 43-46**

### **Prayers of Thanksgiving**

God our Father: we than you for setting a table before us, and for calling disciples from every place to feast together. We praise you for love that binds, and for faith that makes us brothers and sisters. We glorify you for your spirit at work, building one holy church in the world, to serve Jesus Christ, the true vine and the bread of life, our Lord and living Savior, who bids us to pray together, saying...

### **Lord's Prayer**

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.

### **Words of Institution**

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. [I Corinthians 11: 23-26]

1. Andrews speaks about bread of life: *"I am the bread of life; they who believe in me shall never be hungry, they who come to me shall never thirst."*
2. elders come forward from pew and stand at table, and Andrews hands the plates to the elders
3. elders distribute elements then process and sit to receive bread from Andrews
4. Andrews speaks about vine: *"I am the vine, you are the branches; cut off from me you can do nothing."*
5. elders come forward from the pews and Andrews hands the trays to the elders, who distribute cup trays then process and sit to receive cup from Andrews

### **Communion Blessing**

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only...James 1: 22*

1. Hymn begins
2. Andrews hands linen back to elders
3. elders 1 and 5 recover the table with linen
4. Andrews recesses
5. Elders recess

## **Dismissal Blessing**

**For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?**

## **Choir Response**

## **Passing of the Peace (from Aisle)**

## **Organ Postlude**