



The mission of GPPC is to embody God's love  
by cultivating community, practicing hope, repairing harm, and doing justice as Jesus did.

November 17, 2024

Twenty-sixth Sunday After Pentecost  
Commitment Sunday

11:00am

+ indicates you are invited to stand  
**Bold print** indicates congregation in unison

We are grateful to be gathered here in the Almond Creek-James River watershed, which we share with a diversity of plants and creatures, including the flowering dogwood, butterfly milkweed, striped bass, northern cardinal, and red fox.

We acknowledge that this land is the traditional territory of the Powhatan Confederacy. May we nurture our relationship with all our neighbors, and our shared responsibilities to this watershed where we gather today.

GATHERING

The act of assembling in Jesus' name bears witness to the Church's identity and mission as Christ's body in the world.  
Gather your thoughts and feelings. Entrust yourself to God's saving grace.

Prelude

Give Me Jesus

Marques L.A. Garrett

Greeting and Announcements

+ Opening Prayer

[Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman, 1953]

One:

Lord, open unto me. Open unto me –  
Open unto me –  
Open unto me –  
Open unto me –  
Open unto me –  
Open unto me –  
Open unto me –  
Open unto me –  
Open unto me –  
Open unto me –  
Open unto me –  
Open unto me –  
Open unto me –  
Open unto me –  
Open unto me –  
Lord, Lord, open unto me!

All:

**light for my darkness.**  
**courage for my fear.**  
**hope for my despair.**  
**peace for my turmoil.**  
**joy for my sorrow.**  
**strength for my weakness.**  
**wisdom for my confusion.**  
**forgiveness for my sins.**  
**love for my hates.**  
**thy Self for my self.**  
**Amen.**

+ Hymn 408 *There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit*

Prayer of Confession

Kenyan traditional

Leader: All:

Lis - ten, lis - ten, God is call - ing, through the Word in - vit - ing,  
of - fer - ing for - give - ness, com - fort and joy. — joy.

1.(lis - ten) | 2.

One: How long, O God?

Forgiveness, comfort, and joy can seem out of reach to people who are underwater.

**All: We confess where we feel that way: struggling to breathe ... to make ends meet ... to imagine a world where everything that's wrong will be made right, and all the sorrow deep inside us will go away.**

**You set before us the possibility of change.**

**Help us to let go of where we've been and move on from the place we're in.**

**By your Spirit, raise us up**

**and embolden us to be part of your change in this world.**

*Silent prayer*

Assurance of Forgiveness

+ Gloria (Hymn 582) *Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me*

**Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me, and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me, and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.**

**As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.**

**World without end, without end. Amen. World without end, without end. Amen.**

**World without end, without end. Amen. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.**

#### WORD

*Where the scriptures are read and proclaimed, Jesus Christ, the living Word, is present by the power of the Holy Spirit. ip  
God's Spirit also evokes our response. Through singing, affirmation, and prayer, with the help of God's Spirit,  
we discern Jesus Christ, receive Christ's grace, and resolve to follow Christ's way.*

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

Luke 17:20-18:8 (CEB)

Pharisees asked Jesus when God's kingdom was coming. He replied, "God's kingdom isn't coming with signs that are easily noticed. Nor will people say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' Don't you see? God's kingdom is already among you."

Then Jesus said to the disciples, "The time will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Human One, and you won't see it. People will say to you, 'Look there!' or 'Look here!' Don't leave or go chasing after them. The Human One will appear on his day in the same way that a flash of lightning lights up the sky from one end to the other. However, first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

"As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be during the days of the Human One. People were eating, drinking, marrying, and being given in marriage until the day Noah entered the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise in the days of Lot, people were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building. But on the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. That's the way it will be on the day the Human One is revealed. On that day, those on the roof, whose possessions are in the house, shouldn't come down to grab them. Likewise, those in the field shouldn't turn back. Remember Lot's wife! Whoever tries to preserve their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life will preserve it. I tell you, on that night two people will be in the same bed: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together: one will be taken and the other left."

The disciples asked, "Where, Lord?"

Jesus said, "The vultures gather wherever there's a dead body."

Jesus was telling them a parable about their need to pray continuously and not to be discouraged. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him, asking, 'Give me justice in this case against my adversary.' For a while he refused but finally said to himself, I don't fear God or respect people, but I will give this widow justice because she keeps bothering me. Otherwise, there will be no end to her coming here and embarrassing me." The Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. Won't God provide justice to God's chosen people who cry out to God day and night? Will God be slow to help them? I tell you, God will give them justice quickly. But when the Human One comes, will he find faithfulness on earth?"

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

Songs Rebekah Turner, soloist; Pinson Chanselle and Erica Angert, percussion; Gavin Mauritsen, bass

Reflections Danita Rountree Green

+ Hymn 731 Give Thanks for Those Whose Faith Is Firm

+ Affirmation of Faith [from A PCUSA Brief Statement of Faith]

**In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve.**

**We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life. The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church. The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls all kinds of people to all ministries of the Church. In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"**

**With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

+ Somos Uno (Hymn 322)

**We are one in Christ Jesus, all one body, all one spirit, all together.**

**Somos uno en Cristo, somos uno, somos uno, uno solo.**

**We share one God, one mighty Lord, one abiding faith, one binding love,**

**One single baptism, one Holy Comforter, the Holy Spirit, uniting all.**

Prayers of the People

#### EUCCHARIST

*Though we are not sharing the bread and cup today, we remember with thanksgiving (eukharistia) the grace (kharis) with which Jesus welcomes us to sit at his table, eat what will satisfy our deepest hungers, and feed others as we've been fed. We offer ourselves in response to Christ's wonderful offering of love.*

Invitation to Engagement

Doug Ramseur, Chair of GPPC's Stewardship Team

Offering



*As the choir sings, you are invited to bring forward gifts of money and pledges to support GPPC's ministry in 2025 with your money, time, and talents. Please place your gifts on the table at the bottom of the chancel steps. Ushers will also come down the aisle, in case you would like to make a gift or pledge but would rather not come forward.*

*Monetary gifts and pledges to GPPC may also be given online at <https://www.ginterparkpc.org/giving>, or by using the QR Code to the left.*

Offertory

I Will Bless the Lord

Carol Antrom

*I will bless the Lord at all times. On my mouth shall my praises ever be.*

*I will bless the Lord at all times. For the Lord, He is everything to me.*

*Though things don't seem to be what they should be, I will ever praise you.*

*And while confusion is all around me, I will praise your name.*

*Even though my poor heart is broken in two, I will magnify you.*

*And though there are times I don't know what to do, I will bless your name.*

Jessie Cooke, soprano

+ Doxology (Hymn 607)

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ, all people here below;  
praise Holy Spirit evermore; praise Triune God, whom we adore.***

+ Prayer of Thanksgiving and the 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.**

SENDING

*Our worship and service do not end with the postlude; we go forth to love and serve God in our daily lives.*

+ Hymn 799 *I Love the Lord, Who Heard My Cry*

+ Charge and Blessing

+ The Peace

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

+ Postlude

Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho

Fela Sowande

***We welcome you to join us for lunch in the Fellowship Hall!***

ABOUT WORSHIP

WORSHIP LEADERS: GPPC's Director of Music is Doug Brown. Liturgist is GPPC's Seminary Intern, Katie Carboni. Our lector is Mary Francis Hobbs. Our livestream operator is Chuck Webb. Steve Booth is lead usher.

OUR SPEAKER TODAY is Danita Rountree Green (*pen name, Rachel Satiafa*), an author and trauma healing facilitator, who conducts workshops addressing community trauma and race-related issues. A trained therapeutic art and restorative language specialist, Danita uses storytelling to unravel self-defeating narratives, helping people move through personal, community and historical trauma. As co-CEO of programs for Coming to the Table RVA, she facilitates the constructive yet often clumsy and uncomfortable conversations on race and the legacy of the American slave trade. Through five national tours, Danita has shared the stage with Iyanla Vanzant, Levar Burton and Dr. Bernice King. Her work has been featured in *Style*, *Essence* and *Richmond Magazine*, as well as *USA Today* and the *Wall Street Journal*. In 2013, she served as a chairperson for the 8th annual Arts in Society Conference held in Budapest, Hungary, where she presented her research on restorative language to delegates from 27 countries. Danita is best known for the *Love Locked Down* series, a collection of works that address the effects of prison culture, and *AND THEN There's Hope*, a multi-dimensional fine arts program targeting adverse childhood experiences. Her other titles include *Broom Jumping: A Celebration of Love*, and *Grandmother's Gift of Memories: A Keepsake Journal for African American Women*. Former community roles Danita has filled include being vice chair of the Richmond Public Library board of trustees and executive liaison for the Peace Culture Club, an artists consortium cultivating a generation of resilient non-violent youth. With degrees from both the University of Virginia and the Maryland University of Integrative Health, Danita believes language leads change.

HEARING ASSISTANCE DEVICES are available in the Narthex. Please see today's greeter or an usher.

PLEASE TAKE THE PAPER BULLETIN YOU HAVE USED home for reference and/or recycling. Thank you!

ANNOUNCEMENTS about events in the life of GPPC are available through a weekly e-newsletter. If you would like to be added to the distribution, please contact Karen Mitscherlich at [ginterparkpc@gmail.com](mailto:ginterparkpc@gmail.com).

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