

Worship Service #3

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Neddy Astudillo, Tampa Bay Presbytery, Latin America Director for GreenFaith

*Welcome to this worship service which is offered to your congregation as a gift from the Presbytery of Southern New England. These worship services are designed to be flexible enough to allow your congregation to fit them in where needed, to allow for your pastor or worship leader to be able to take a break, and to continue online worship during this time of Covid-19. Our preachers for these worship services come to us from around the larger church and our focus for these services is to continue our learnings on anti-racism and equity as this is a ministry focus of the Presbytery. Today our worship leader is the Rev. Dr. Neddy Astudillo who is a member of Tampa Bay Presbytery and works for GreenFaith, which is an international interfaith environmental organization. She is their Director for Latin America. Welcome Neddy and come let us worship God!*

Call to Worship:

Leader: Our call to worship is from Micah 6:8. God has told you, O Mortal, what is good.

**All: What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?**

Leader: It is good to be together, God,

**All: together listening for your voice, united by your Spirit.**

Leader: In this time of worship

**All: tell us about your kin(g)dom of kindness so that we can seek it.**

Leader: Show us your justice.

**All: We want to walk with you, humbly, closely, daily.**

Music: Great is Thy Faithfulness (Westminster) Glory to God 39

"Great is Thy faithfulness, " O God my Father,  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not  
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"

Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—

"Great is Thy faithfulness, " Lord, unto me!  
Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"

Morning by morning new mercies I see;

All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—  
"Great is Thy faithfulness, " Lord, unto me!  
Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!  
"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—  
"Great is Thy faithfulness, " Lord, unto me!

We Confess our Faith/Belhar:

*Our prayer of confession is a portion of the Confession of Belhar which is the newest confession to be added to our Book of Confessions. The Confession of Belhar is a confession from the church of the Global South, originating in the Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa. This was the church formed after apartheid. Apartheid formed a racially stratified society. Those with the lightest skin tones were offered the greatest protection and opportunity. Racial separation was established by law and enforced through violence. Non-white citizens lived with constant and intrusive police presence and interference in the daily functions of life. Those who protested risked punishment, imprisonment, and even death. The roots of apartheid go back in South African culture and church for several centuries. The Dutch Reformed Church embodied racial separation when it formed three "mission" churches in the late nineteenth century, each categorized by its racial identity. The Dutch Reformed Mission Church was formed for people designated as "coloured" (biracial). The church's complicity with racial separation kept Christians from worshipping and coming to the Lord's Table together. The white Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) created an elaborate biblical interpretation and ideology that supported racial separation and then the formal apartheid policies. The Dutch Reformed Church's active participation and theological defense of apartheid moved the global church to name apartheid a status confessionis—a conviction that the Gospel was at stake and thus the faith needed to be proclaimed. Leaders of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church wrestled with this situation theologically and practically. One outcome of their struggles was the emergence of the Confession of Belhar in the early 1980s. The Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa (URCSA), the church that succeeded the Dutch Reformed Mission Church after apartheid, has offered the Confession of Belhar to the global Reformed family as a gift, believing that the themes of unity, reconciliation, and justice issue a call from God to the whole church toward holy action, transformation, and life.*

We believe, that the credibility of the Gospel message is seriously affected and its beneficial work obstructed when it is proclaimed in a land which professes to be Christian, but in which the enforced separation of people on a racial basis promotes and perpetuates alienation, hatred and enmity; and that any teaching which attempts to legitimate such forced separation by appeal to the gospel, and is not prepared to venture on the road of obedience and reconciliation, but

rather, out of prejudice, fear, selfishness and unbelief, denies in advance the reconciling power of the gospel, must be considered ideology and false doctrine. Therefore, we reject any doctrine and confess our complicity in, which, in such a situation, sanctions in the name of the gospel or of the will of God the forced separation of people on the grounds of race and color and thereby in advance obstructs and weakens the ministry and experience of reconciliation in Christ. Have mercy us on O God.

Assurance of Pardon:

God's love and mercy knows no bounds. Whoever we are, wherever we have been, whatever we have done, know this, you are loved. You are made new in Jesus Christ. In the Spirit we find our true communion and are whole. Go in peace, knowing you are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Music: God Be in My Head (Westminster)

Children's Sermon:

Scripture Reading:

Sermon: preacher

Offering/Offering Music: Esto es Digo (Westminster)

For the offering today, you are invited to give through your normal channels of giving to your local congregation. If you wish, you may also give to the Presbytery, to support our anti-racism and reparation work at [www.psne.org/donate](http://www.psne.org/donate)

Sending/Benediction:

Closing Music: God of Grace and God of Glory (Westminster) Glory to God #307

1 God of grace and God of glory,  
on your people pour your power;  
crown your ancient church's story,  
bring its bud to glorious flower.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage  
for the facing of this hour,  
for the facing of this hour.  
2 Lo! the hosts of evil round us  
scorn the Christ, assail his ways!  
From the fears that long have bound us  
free our hearts to faith and praise.  
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage

for the living of these days,  
for the living of these days.

3 Cure your children's warring madness;  
bend our pride to your control;  
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,  
rich in things and poor in soul.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
lest we miss your kingdom's goal,  
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.

4 Save us from weak resignation  
to the evils we deplore;  
let the gift of your salvation  
be our glory evermore.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
serving you whom we adore,  
serving you whom we adore.