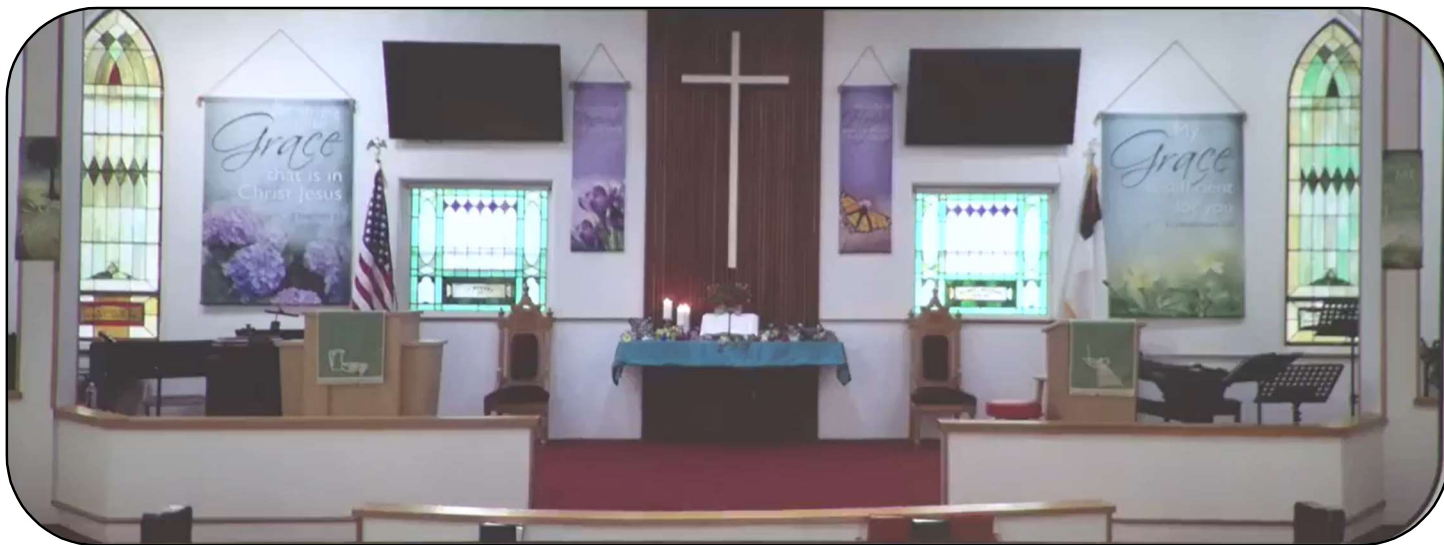


Straight from the "Hart"

July 3, 2022 – Independence Sunday

 HARTLAND

Sharing the journey
to know, love, and serve God.



Music Star Spangled Banner

Welcome Welcome to Independence Sunday, a day we begin by giving thanks to God for the freedom to give thanks to God without threat of official repercussions, among many of the blessings and opportunities we receive because we live where we do.

Opening/Offering Prayer Gracious God, you remind us that our hearts chase what we treasure. Enable each of us to gratefully place our treasure before you, so that our hearts will follow you to a new way of living. It is why we have gathered today -- to better know who you are and how we should live in this great land, and to receive the grace and strength to accomplish a way of life in which *you* will rejoice. We pray this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Responsive Call to Worship (L – Lay Reader, **C** - Pastor with Congregation)

L: Come with hearts are full of praise for all of the glorious things God has given to us. When we look upon His creation,

C: we realize that it reflects his glory.

L: When we experience the gift of a parent's love,

C: we are reminded of our heavenly Father's tender love for us.

L: When we worship in the great congregation of all who name Christ as Lord,

C: we are blessed to be counted among his children.

L: Come with prayers of joy and thanksgiving,

C: that God may sustain in us grateful hearts, that we might praise him eternally.

Adapted from © 2011 by Constance Cherry, in UM Worship & Song, Leader's Ed.

Special Music There is very little background information about the composer Helen Steele or her song. Therefore, I'll introduce it by topic.

I have read quote after quote from the early shapers of America who said – to put it in my own words – the country will rise and fall on the ability of its people from greatest to least -- to live with responsible integrity and good ethics. These foundational values — to treat each other fairly and justly — are taught by most, if not all religions –.

Some argue that we are in danger of losing appreciation of the sacrifices made by those who went before us, and in taking them for granted, we risk losing those values that drove them to do what they did so we can be free. True freedom becomes endangered when we are tempted to turn from responsible freedom to personal license, and to a sense that the world owes us, everything, for free. That is not what freedom is. I'm reminded of Paul's words as he quoted the Corinthians slogan – everything is permissible (everything is free, I have a right to do anything) – (1 Corinthians 6:12, 10:23) a slogan they used as a way to feel superior, and divide and take advantage of and even oppress others, but Paul refutes their slogan by saying, “yes, everything is free, but not everything is beneficial, everything is permissible, but not everything is constructive, and that we cannot be mastered by anything. (For what they were doing in the name of grace and freedom was actually what was enslaving their lives). He tells them, and us – that the freedom God gives is not a matter of personal privilege, but an empowerment — it grants us the freedom, the ability, to love and to build up others.

This song encourages us to strive for those values that cherish the land with which we have been blessed and to take care of it as good stewards, and exercise the values that bring peace and love and safety to our homes, and to our nations, and preserves the blessings that God has granted us in this land.



America our Heritage

High towering, mountains, fields gold with grain,
 rich, fertile farmlands, flocks on the plain,
 Homes blest with peace, with love, without fears:
 This is the heritage we've kept throughout the years.

Wide rolling prairies, lakes deep and broad,
 canyons majestic, fashioned by God.
 Life lived in peace, contented and free.
 This is the heritage forever to be.

Stout hearts and true, hold fast what is ours,
 God give us courage through darkest hours,
 God give us strength and guide with thy hand,
 America, our heritage, our homeland.

Pledges – Will you please stand as able for pledges to the flags and Bible.

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America
 and to the Republic for which it stands,
 one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag,
 and to the Savior for whose kingdom it stands.
 One Savior, crucified, risen, and coming again,
 with life and liberty for all who believe,
 uniting all humanity in service and in love.

I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy Word,
 I will make it a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path
 and will hide its words in my heart that I might not sin against God.

Music**America**

My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;
land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrims' pride,
from every mountainside let freedom ring!

My native country, thee, land of the noble free, thy name I love;
I love thy rocks and rills, thy woods and templed hills;
my heart with rapture thrills, like that above.

Let music swell the breeze, and ring from all the trees sweet freedom's song;
let mortal tongues awake; let all that breathe partake;
let rocks their silence break, the sound prolong.

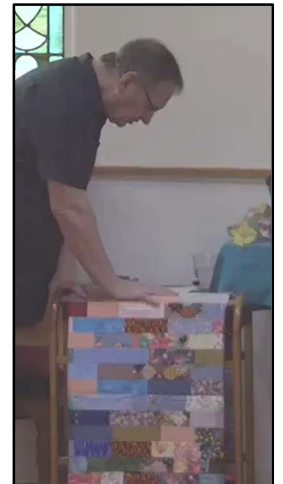
Our fathers' God, to thee, author of liberty, to thee we sing;
long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light;
protect us by thy might, great God, our King.

Prayer God of all nations, we thank you for the life and history of our country, for its vast beauty, its wilderness, and wealth of forest, mine, and sea. We praise you for its people, whether they have been here for generations, or have just arrived. We thank you for the wide variety of our traditions and cultures, the riches of our spiritual and religious heritages, the strength of our democracy. We pray for our nation, for our citizens, residents, and governments that working together we may face the future with confident hope and faith in your purpose for our nation and world.

We thank you that in your grace, you offer the free blessings of salvation to all who will trust in you through Christ, who took the curse of disobedience for us, so that by faith in his work on the cross, we can be reborn and restored. Therefore, as Christians and citizens of this nation, we pray that just as a tree in the forest becomes tall reaching for the light – that may we grow above the shadows of sin, fear, and doubt. As it gives shelter and shade to its friends of fur and feather, so may we help those brothers and sisters that surround us. As the tree sends down roots deep into the soil that it may be nourished, may we be as firmly grounded by the love of Christ and sustained by his grace. If a tree falls and decays, it provides nourishment for plants and gives its place in the sun for others. Our Lord and Savior died to make a new life and a new place for us. When a tree in the forest is cut down, its wood is used for shelter and fuel. Jesus taught that only when life is surrendered, when love is poured out, can we build his Kingdom and reflect the warmth of his spirit, and as a result, our nation will be blessed as well.

May your compassionate grace motivate us to trust your word, follow your will and bring honor to your name in every situation in our lives, and in the life of our nation. **Praises and Petitions** We lift to you those people who are facing a wide variety of situations, people you have placed on our hearts and minds. We continue to pray * for Marty Hansen, * for Vance McCabe, * for Janice Larsen, * for Sheila Daniel (heart bypass), * for retired pastor and friend of pastor Chuck and an online viewer - Jeff Paulson with heart a-fib issues, * for Rod Johnson, who had back surgery, * for a young man named Carson – no known specifics, * for Rick Talbot with a back injury, for Jerry Weaver's niece Lauren, who has stage 2 breast cancer, * and for Mike Sharlow's nephew, Angelo Sharlow, who fell off of a roof and suffered a traumatic brain injury and is in an induced coma. He is 32 with 4 children. and for Tina Dixon, our cleaning person who just came home from the hospital after blood clots and surgery, and for whom we now dedicate this quilt.

Quilt Lord we lift before you today Tina Dixon. We ask that you shower her with blessings and fill her with your Spirit. We ask that through this quilt, Tina is renewed in the faith, love and assurance offered by the prayers of this congregation---as well as in you. Let her feel the calm peace of your comfort as she wraps it around her, giving her confidence that the promise of your presence in our lives is real, through difficult as well as in joyous times. We ask that you give her your strength whenever she feels weak; and your patient understanding when she struggles on this road to recovery. In all things, let her feel the care we offer to and for her through you. Let her look forward in anticipation to her healing and wholeness and all the abundance of possibilities that you have planned for her life. We pray this blessing through the One who has gone before us and endures forever and teaches us to pray. **LORD'S PRAYER**



Theme

Let's begin the theme with an anonymous poem.

I know three things must always be
to keep a nation strong and free.
One is a Hearthstone bright and dear,
with busy, happy loved ones near.
One is a ready heart in hand
to love and serve and keep the land.

One is a worn and beaten way
to where the people go to pray,
so long as these are kept alive,
nation and people will survive.
God keep them always everywhere ---
the home, the heart, the place of prayer.

A minute ago, we sang that God authored our liberty with the holy light of freedom -- and we asked that God protect us by his might. If God is going to protect us by his might, we need to feel free to be loved and to love – free to create and maintain justice with integrity.

John Remy writes: The American Dream and generational progress is dependent on the freedom of religion. Failure to celebrate that freedom, and the sacrifices made to [acquire and] defend it, jeopardizes that very freedom, and when religious liberty is put on the line, so too are the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. If we lose our historical heritage and its values, the most significant being religious liberty, the American Dream becomes vulnerable.

Just as the Pilgrims endured hardship, motivated by the promise of religious freedom, so too must we never lose sight of the blessings bestowed on us by this great country. The ability to worship as we will is what separates America from [much of] the world; it is the foundation of progress and exceptionalism. In the act of celebrating and cherishing this freedom, we honor the sacrifices of bold generations, who pioneered the way for our liberties.

Or to put it another way and to move us toward today's worship series and sermon – William Bennett wrote that the health of the nation comes down to the character of its citizens, and then quoted a poem attributed to Alexis de Tocquerville, whom he calls one of the greatest observers of early American democratic life. She wrote:

I sought for the greatness and genius of America
in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers,
and it was not there;
in the fertile fields and boundless prairies,
and it was not there;
in her rich minds and her vast world commerce,
and it was not there.
Not until I went into the churches of America
and heard her pulpits, aflame with righteousness,
did I understand the secret of her genius and power.
America is great because she is good,

and if America ever ceases to be good,
America will cease to be great.

And hopefully, the church still helps us as individuals and as a nation to be “good”, because I believe no one has insight into goodness as much as our holy Creator God, and understanding his guidance is critical to us remaining a good nation.

Music Even in this country of great opportunity and blessing, navigating life can be challenging at times, but God has granted us his Word to guide us.

Thy Word

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.
When I feel afraid, think I've lost my way,
still you're there right beside me,
and nothing will I fear as long as you are near.
Please be near me to the end--.

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.
Now I will not forget your love for me and yet
my heart forever is wandering.
Jesus, be my guide and hold me to your side,
And I will love you to the end--.

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

Music What we discover when we allow his word to guide our journey, we discover that his beautiful words to us are wonderfully life giving.

Wonderful Words of Life

Sing them over again to me, wonderful words of life;
let me more of their beauty see, wonderful words of life;
words of life and beauty teach me faith and duty.

Refrain:

Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life.
Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life.

Christ, the blessed one, gives to all wonderful words of life;
sinner, list to the loving call, wonderful words of life;
all so freely given, wooing us to heaven.

(Refrain)

Sweetly echo the gospel call, wonderful words of life;
offer pardon and peace to all, wonderful words of life;
Jesus, only Savior, sanctify forever.

(Refrain)**Introduction to Bible Reading**

Paul references the words of Moses to demonstrate that when we live by faith according to the wonderful, enlightening Word of life, we don't have to earn our salvation by working our way up to Jesus, and we certainly don't need to rescue him by our works. Rather, we trust that God has brought our salvation near through Jesus so that we can call on him and believe in him. This is what he writes:

**Bible Reading**

But the salvation that comes through faith says, “You don't need to search the heavens to find Christ and bring him down to help you,” and, “You don't need to go among the dead to bring Christ back to life again.”

For salvation that comes from trusting Christ—which is what we preach—is already within easy reach of each of us; in fact, it is as near as our own hearts and mouths. For if you tell others with your own mouth that Jesus Christ is your Lord and believe in your own heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in his heart that a man becomes right with God; and with his mouth he tells others of his faith, confirming his salvation. For the Scriptures tell us that no one who believes in Christ will ever be disappointed. Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect: they all have the same Lord who generously gives his riches to all those who ask him for them. Anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. (TLB)

Sermon Covenant Living Established

Jesus also drew on these final words of Moses in Deuteronomy when he said, “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate

Two Choices

and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” (NIV) He is saying that there is a choice that we have to make. Eugene Peterson puts it this way in *The Message*, “Don't look for shortcuts to God. The market is flooded with surefire, easygoing formulas for a successful life that can be practiced in your spare time. Don't fall for that stuff, even though crowds of people do. The way to life — to God! — is vigorous and requires total attention.” (Matthew 7:13-14 (MSG))

The words from Deuteronomy that we will hear it a bit also became the basis for a New Year's Covenant Renewal Service, crafted by John Wesley, but most vividly described in Joshua 24. For natural watering and sunning reasons Mt. Gerizim flourished in greenery, while Mt. Ebal was rocky and barren. These two mountains were side by side, and inbetween them was the valley of Shechem. Joshua gathered the people in the valley of Shechem, a natural amphitheater between the two mountains. He divided up the priests who went up into the two different mountains -- and at the appropriate times, the priests on the green mountain, the flourishing mountain, called down the blessings of obedience, and the priests on the barren mountain called down the curses, the consequences, of disobedience. Talk about a powerful visual. Then the people were asked what they were going to do, and they promised to obey the Lord.

As we pick up the text in Deuteronomy, we have reached the point in Moses' address where he answers what happens if the wrong choice is made. Will cursing destruction be the final conclusion forever? For by the time we conclude 2 Kings, Jerusalem is in ruins, the Temple is destroyed, the kingship is demolished. There are thousands are casualties, and the cream of the survivors are exiled to Babylon far away from home. Those who lived in those consequences basically had 4 choices – that I'll mention.

Some resigned themselves to what their situation was and endured it. They changed not at all. They did nothing to try and improve or make the best of the circumstances in which they found themselves, and/or they were too proud to ask for help. They just kind of puttered through life. We've all been there sometimes, haven't we?

Endure through hopelessness

Even though the circumstances were beyond their control, some "soldiered on". The Finnish people have a special word for it called SISU (see-sue). A

Endure while working to make it the best we can be

determined, deliberate, fierce, perseverance that bravely moves forward when most people would have long given up before this. That is was Sisu is. Another way to look at it is: some of you may remember a song sung by Frank Sinatra, "That's Life" where we are *riding high in April, shot down in May...* Sometimes things just happen. But it is actually a positive song about persevering against people who "enjoy crushing your dreams", and you are *back on top in June.* (though most crises for most of us don't usually turn around that fast). But it is

about striving to get back to where we want to be, and where God wants us to be.

Other people chose a different path. I mentioned that in these ancient cultures, the general thinking was that whoever

Try other “gods”

won the battle in the war was presumed to have the stronger god -- so some of the exiles may have switched to the religion of the powerful Babylonians while they were exiled into that land. I wonder how many times disappointments of life cause us to *inappropriately* rearrange our priorities. We conclude that just because the choice wasn't popular or the results weren't as positive as we hoped, that our choice was wrong even though that isn't necessarily true, and we choose something else when we should be staying true. Sometimes we can do everything right and still not get what we expected or hoped for.

I was reading some biographical tidbits from the life of Bob Newhart. He originally studied in Illinois to be a lawyer. He left the field because as he participated in a required internship, they asked him to do things that were not ethical or legal. Then he then worked as an accountant and clerk but kept having to change jobs because the companies kept asking him to “cook the books”. He struggled economically for a very long time before he finally became successful as a comedian. How much easier it would have been to follow the priorities and practices of the powerful legal and business culture in which he lived, but he chose to remain faithful to his conscience.

And that is the final choice the people had when responding to struggles... These people (Daniel and the

Learn from experience

three firemen (as I like to call them -- Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego (See Daniel 3:8ff). They remained faithful; and others around them returned to God and tried to learn lessons from their disastrous circumstances in which they found themselves.

Not every negative thing in life is directly (or indirectly) sin-caused. Nevertheless, today's text is directed to those who are willing to humble themselves and to seek to learn from God and their life experiences. Hopefully that includes us, for who of us hasn't fallen short of God's perfect will and suffered consequences for our errant actions? Or simply experienced setbacks and challenges from which we can learn and hope to grow?

Now we are ready for the words of Moses as he tells the people what will happen in failure. He begins this way in this section of his speech:

The LORD will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your ancestors, if you obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

(Deuteronomy 30:9b-10 (NIV))

Even in the most serious of situations, we can have a certain hope in God's compassion, and on the basis of that loving grace -- we know he holds out a promise of redemption and restoration for any who turn or return to him. We cannot undo our past, but we can change our present, and that can lead to a new future (by his grace) ...a day of healing and wholeness and blessing. It is a consistent message not only through Deuteronomy but throughout the Bible. What God wants to see in his people is a new heart and new spirit that is characterized by a genuine love expressed as a willingness to follow his will.

Moses continues by anticipating and replying to the objections that everyone is bound to give, to say that following God's will is impossible. He says:

Objections

Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it. (Deuteronomy 30:11-14)

The first objection – or excuse – it is not yet spoken but Moses answers it because he knows it will come, at least in the minds: is that God cannot justly blame

We can't keep God's will because it is too hard

us for failing to keep the law because it is too hard to keep. It is true that the consistent practice of loving God and our neighbor can be challenging, but God looks at the desire and sincerity of our hearts more than how successful we might be in any given second. But we shouldn't lean on "good intentions" as an excuse either; proclaiming the theory of love in our hearts and thinking about what we should do while never bothering to even trying to practice it in our life. That is not what we are going after here. While we will never reach absolute perfection in performance, sincere love will work its way out in words and actions more and more as we grow in Christ. That is our goal and what we strive for.

We can't keep God's will because we can't know what it is

The second anticipated objection is that God's will is impossible to know. Yet to claim ignorance of the Law was not valid for it was in the mouth and heart. Devout Jews memorized and recited the Law throughout their history. God reveals his will to us.

In the pre-sermon reading we heard Paul's take on this passage -- answering Christians with similar objections. In the context of that passage, he allows that keeping the law was burdensome, especially when you include what the Pharisees had constructed from it. But Paul says God's self-revelation is not seen nor fulfilled by some superhuman effort of law-keeping, Or, as Peterson puts it in *The Message*, "no precarious climb up to heaven to recruit the Messiah [to bring him down close], no dangerous descent into hell to rescue the Messiah [from death by our own efforts and work]. But it is accomplished by accepting God's grace in his Son Jesus Christ who is already near to us, and whose life demonstrates what God's will looks like and who empowers us and shapes our hearts to live and love as we ought, and we'll see in the next verses that if we choose to do this, God's promise to us in Christ, like God's promise to them through Moses and the Law - is that if call on him, if we turn to him -- we will never be disappointed but we will be saved.

Having answered potential objections and excuses, Moses now calls them to choose.

See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction... [flourishing mountain – barren mountain] **This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life...** (Deuteronomy 30: 15,19,20a)



In the Old Testament, blessings related to the land and agricultural / material abundance that flows from it, and with a long life. In this context it is not individual, but national life. The calling of witnesses was a regular practice in antiquity. Normally it was done "before the gods of those making the contract", but the Israelites rejected this practice and instead called on all nature as a witness. The

plea is to choose life -- and choosing life consists of three things.

First – Love the Lord your God. It sounds so simple. And yet we are so easily distracted... In the popular

Love the Lord your God

movie, *Robin Hood, The Prince of Thieves*; Robin walked up to a young archer aiming at a target and asked, "Can you shoot amid distractions?" Just as the boy shot, Robin tickled his ear with the feathers of an arrow. The boy's shot went high by several feet. After those watching stopped laughing, Maid Marian asked Robin, "Can you?" And just as Robin Hood was about to release his arrow, Maid Marian leaned toward him and flirtatiously blew into his face. The arrow missed the target, glanced off the tree and nearly hit a bystander. Distractions come in all types, and whether they are painful or pleasant, the result is the same: we miss God's mark, which is a technical definition of sin.

So love the Lord your God. Secondly, Listen to his voice. People in love don't get distracted from what or who they

Listen to his voice

love (for long anyway). They want to please the one they love and so they carefully listen so they can do what the other desires. We will listen for and do what God wants because we know it will please him. And as a bonus, we will know it is in our own best interest as well, not only because he loves us, but because he knows our situation better than we do.

Does anyone remember Earl Weaver? the former manager of the Baltimore Orioles baseball team – back in the day – when the Orioles were good. His rule was that no one attempted to steal a base unless he gave the steal sign. Reggie Jackson was playing for the Orioles at that time, and he didn't like the rule because he felt he knew pitchers and catchers well enough that he knew when he could gain the base. One day he decided to break Weaver's rule and stole second base. He was easily successful, and he brushed himself off with a self-satisfied smile, thinking he knew more than his manager did.

Weaver pulled him aside after the game and explained why he hadn't given him the sign to steal. The next batter was their best power hitter (Lee May). By stealing second, first base was left open and the other team decided to intentionally walk Lee May, taking the bat out of his hands. Not only that, the next batter was not strong against that pitcher and that forced Weaver to send in a pinch hitter, weakening his bench strength when he might need it later in the game. Sometimes we only see the small picture – the catcher, the pitcher, my base and the next base – but God sees the whole game of life, and knows what is best for all of us together.

Love God with everything, listen carefully, and then hold fast, or cleave, to him. It is best to keep listening

Hold fast (cleave) to him

and doing what he says. One person lost their life savings in a corrupt business scheme. (This is a negative example). She went to the Better Business Bureau. They asked why she hadn't come to them to investigate the company *before* she invested, and she said, "The deal sounded so good that I didn't want to go to you because I was afraid you might say 'No.'" Sometimes, we don't pay attention to God because we are afraid that he might tell us "Don't do that." And we want to do it.

On the other hand, allegedly (I didn't get time to fact check it – so if it is not true, at least it still makes a good metaphor). Allegedly, a news crew was covering hurricane Andrew (this would be 30 years ago). At that time it was the worst hurricane to ever hit Florida. They went to one neighborhood that was completely wiped out except for one home. The owner was cleaning up his front yard. The reporter went to him and asked, "How did your house alone manage to escape all this severe damage?" The man answered, "The Florida state building code is written so homes can withstand a hurricane." I built this house myself, and I built it according to the code with the proper size trusses and hurricane clips and all the rest. I guess they cut corners on the rest of these houses. In Matthew 7:24-27, Jesus applies the same idea to the spiritual life when he talks about wise and foolish builders – one building on sand, and the other on rock (the rock being the teaching of Jesus) – and when the storms came, the one on the rock stood fast and the one on the sand fell splat. Remember the old Sunday School song? When the sun is shining and the skies are blue, building our lives on something other than the guidelines in God's Word – the spiritual building code -- can seem less costly and it is very tempting to cut corners. But there's always a potential hurricane coming to our lives. Even if no storm ever comes, it is still best for all that we choose to build our life solidly according to the code of the One who made us and remakes us every day. Choose life.

Communion

Invitation Communion reminds us that it is by Jesus' death that we are enabled to choose life and live in a covenant relationship with him, and as we keep our hearts and minds open, we will understand more and more what we can expect from him in this covenant and what are his hopes for us and from us in this covenant. Let's prepare our hearts by singing

Music**Open My Eyes**

Open my eyes, that I may see glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
 place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free.
 Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.
 Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Open my ears, that I may hear voices of truth thou sendest clear;
 and while the wavenotes fall on my ear, everything false will disappear.
 Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.
 Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Confession Let's continue to prepare our hearts by a time of confession.

Lord, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart or our neighbors as ourselves, or even ourselves – not always. We gamble with our health, we ignore right living, we choose indulgence over discernment. We separate ourselves from your people and fragment our lives, imagining that we can chase distorted drives and passions without hurting our spirits.

Assurance We need your healing and wholeness from the sin sickness that grips us. Speak your peace to us and we shall be healed, for through the work of Jesus Christ we have been forgiven. Amen. We are forgiven, therefore,

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you **And also with you.**

Lift up you hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

For God, you embodied yourself in humanity. You lived out your life among those who were sick physically, mentally, and spiritually. You reached out to touch them, you spoke words to comfort them, you performed miracles to forgive and heal them. We thank you that you shared Jesus with us so that we could find forgiveness and be saved. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit who guides us into all truth, we offer ourselves in praise and

thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Spirit on all who have gathered here, and on the gifts of bread and cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ that we may be the body of Christ together in ministry to the world until we feast together at his heavenly banquet.

All honor and glory is yours, almighty Father (God) now and forever. **Amen.**

Receiving the Bread and Cup

Jesus invited his disciples into an upper room on the night he was betrayed. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." [Take and eat].



When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." [Take and Drink]....

Prayer Now, Lord, through your acceptance and grace and forgiveness that is expressed through Communion, we cling to our relationship with you. Continue to crave to have our lives shaped by your will. Daily, be it sunny or stormy, encourage us to choose life, to choose love, to choose to listen and trust and obey. Amen.

Music

Trust and Obey

When we walk with the Lord in the light of his word,
 what a glory he sheds on our way!
 While we do his good will, he abides with us still,
 and with all who will trust and obey.

Refrain:

Trust and obey, for there's no other way
 to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at his feet,
or we'll walk by his side in the way;
what he says we will do, where he sends we will go;
never fear, only trust and obey.

(Refrain)

Blessing As you go, choose to build your life on the solid foundation of God's will and way, knowing that no storm can ever knock us down, or at least, keep us down. Live and love and cleave to the covenant relationship God has graciously established with us. Amen.

