Service of Worship To Celebrate Our Sesquicentennial Year

September 26, 2021

First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Wilson, NC
First Christian Church at Worship

September 26, 2021

Gathering Music                                               Casey Childers, piano

Come, Just As You Are arr. Mark Hayes

Welcome, Announcements and Recognitions                    Rev. Gary Walling

Prelude                                                  Joe Brinson, trumpet

Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring by J.S. Bach

(During the Prelude, members of the Sesquicentennial Planning Committee will process and present historical items and memorabilia from First Christian Church’s first 150 years.)

Choral Introit                                                Sesquicentennial Choir

Bless This House arr. Casey Childers

Verse 1 — Original text
Bless this house, O Lord we pray, make it safe by night and day.
Bless these windows shining bright letting in God’s Heavenly light.
Bless the people here within. Keep them pure and free from sin.
Bless us all that we may be fit, O Lord, to dwell with thee.

Verse 2 - Text by Todd Brame
Seeking You, God, wonder see, make us love You would be.
Bless, O Lord, our future bright, make us shining beacon lights.
Bless us all, who dwell with Thee, ours in awe and wonder be.
Lift us Lord, in what we need, blessings come from You indeed.

Verse 3 – Text by Rev. Jack Clifford
May the years that lie ahead, more and more be Spirit led.
Sear our hearts with gospel flame. Make us bold in Jesus’ name.
May His hopes our lives fulfill. “Follow me” inspire us still.
May our lives so incomplete, now, forgiv’n, new purpose greet.

Call to Worship                                    Curtis Ray
Enter this house with thanksgiving. Come into this place with praise. Come with your hurt and your healing. God gathers us here today. Worship our God with gladness. Worship in joyful song. For it is God who made us. It is to God we belong.

Chorus: So rejoice, everybody! Rejoice, God is here Love that lasts forever; Faithful through the years.

Open your heart to receiving. Open your hands to share. Open your mind to believing God goes with us everywhere. (Chorus)

A Litany of Journey Members of the Sesquicentennial Planning Committee

Gary: We have come to this service to lift up our celebration of the fullness that has been – to give praise for all that has been given to us. It is a journey that we have taken by design – our first steps coming one evening this past April to mark 150 years since that day our 17 Founders put pen to paper to sign their names. And now we have added to this journey we celebrate – 150 years plus another 150 days.

Theresa: We began by honoring our Founders and all of those on whose shoulders we now stand. We summoned all of the people who have shared in the journey in years past.

Bob: We have considered what it means to exist at a crossroads, and we have opened ourselves to awe, wonder and love. We have turned to the Psalms and walked in God’s creation. We have played with history and trivia. We have measured ourselves against our highest hopes and aspirations.

Patsy: It has been a journey that is richer for my having taken it with these marvelous souls who have gathered with me to create and imagine.

Casey: It has been a journey in which I have been blessed by taking in the embrace of the ones I love, seeing my children enfolded in the care of my church family.

Kathy: It is the journey itself that has meant The most to me because it has been hard, making our way in the midst of a pandemic. But I have learned again that often, the hard work is the best work.
Jeannette: Yes, these past 150 days mark a journey that we have pursued by design, with a beginning and an ending. But that is hardly the way our individual journeys can be described. We may not have been able to point to a moment in time when we began. We just realized one day that we had been traveling, in the company of Another.

Doug: Some of us were born into the journey; some of us confessed faith and joined the journey; some of us married into the journey; some of us were befriended into the journey.

Linda: For this journey we have shared has been shown to have many trails and paths. My journey here began many years ago, and then the trail led me elsewhere. And I find myself blessed that now after some time, I have been permitted to return to it.

Cathy: But to stop and take it all in, we are persuaded more than ever that it is a journey that does not come to an end. It did not for those whose lives and faith have prompted our thanksgiving more than once. And it shall not end for any of us who have embraced the adventure of this journey we share.

Todd: For if we have learned anything, it surely must be that nothing can separate us from the love of the One who first called us to this adventure. Not life. Not even death.

All: Yes, for have we not discovered again that what was important is still important? We have learned anew that the reward has never been at the destination but rather in the traveling, and that what has defined our days at these crossroads is what we still hold to be most dear.

Invocation

Curtis Ray

Children’s Moment

Jeannette Etheridge

Pastoral Update

Rev. Gary Walling

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer

Rev. Gary Walling

_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._
Hymn of Centering

As We Gather Draw Us Nearer by Andra Moran
(Written in honor of the Sesquicentennial Celebration of
First Christian Church, Wilson, North Carolina)

As the seagull boldly soaring sings a song in wordless flight,
As a mother rocks her baby humming hope’s sweet lullaby,
As the stones cry out, “Hosanna,” as the rising of the tide,
may our hearts find natural rhythm, singing praises with our lives.

As the redwoods reach for heaven, we extend ourselves to You.
As the strings stretch on the fretboard, let us pull ourselves in tune.
As a child draws her family, favorite crayon in chubby hand,
Each encounter of Your glory a new way to understand.

As we gather, draw us nearer, in our hunger, find Your feast.
Deepest longings now are sated by Your presence and Your peace.
In the wideness of Your mercy, may we find ourselves at home.
Warmly welcomed at Your table where we never eat alone.

Invitation to Offer Our Gifts Carol Steffa

Offertory Joe Brinson, trumpet
Casey Childers, organ

Processional on “Hyfrydol” arr. Mitchell-Wallace
(During the offertory, feel free to bring forward your gifts and place them in the offering plates)

Blessing of the Gifts Rev. Gary Walling

Invitation to Communion Rev. Gary Walling

Prayer of the Elder Tish Scott

Words of Institution Rev. Gary Walling

Music for Communion Come to the Table Again Encounter

We’re all welcome. We’re all invited.
We’re all loved ones, as we come to the table again. (Chorus)

Come on in to worship, Come on in and share God’s love,
Come on in let’s get together in the place that unifies us.
We’re all chosen. We’re all God’s children. 
We’re all hopeful as we come to the table again. (Chorus) 
We’re all grateful. We’re back from where we’ve been. 
We’re all able to come back to the table again.

Scripture

Psalm 151

To the choirmaster: recited to music by Pete Seeger.

1 Forever, Our Father, we will praise you as our founder, 
and we will call upon you always to lead us.

2 In every way, you have delivered us through centuries, 
and your good works on our behalf are beyond measure.

3 Raise, O Lord, our beloved elders awake from the ground 
and loose their souls in heaven to cheer us.

4 Stir their remembrances of the covenant they made, 
so they may know we continue to multiply their hopes.

5 Trim our attachments to the comforts of our own existence, 
and release us from the unyielding vanity of our holiness.

6 Celebrate with us, O Lord, our birth from the dust of wilderness, 
and sanctify all those who tilled the sacred earth beneath our feet.

7 Have we not magnified your holy name this year in pleasing ways, 
and overcome fear and sickness to shout with gladness?

8 Remain beside us, Father, as we fancy new designs for your church, 
and smooth from our faces wrinkles of doubt for the future.

9 In your grand design that continues to conceive goodness in the universe, 
imagine us seated at your table as a congregation of great profit.

10 Sustain in us the confidence that prospects for your blessings are endless, 
and teach us that your joy comes upon our release of selfish delight.

11 Tolerate our foolishness, O Lord, when we behave as a madding crowd, 
and whisper your holy cadence as we walk in step with our neighbors.

12 Inspire in us magnificent dreams for your church that race the pulse, 
and freshen our energy to be your dynamic and tireless ministers.

13 At the crossroad of awe, wonder and love, bind us with your grace 
as we bind ourselves to you with our promise sown in hope.

14 Now, let us go forward into the world in peace, holding fast to what is good, 
but whatever you do, Father, never let us go. Never let us go.
Concertato on “Holy, Holy, Holy” by Robert Lau

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee;
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
which wert and art, and evermore shall be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see.
Only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty;
God in three persons, blessed Trinity! Amen

Waves—A Video Reflection

Sesquicentennial Prayer

During our Sesquicentennial, Lord, shake the dust of 150 years from our church. Shake us hard. Consecrate us afresh – body, soul, and spirit – to Your purposes. Lord, awaken us to the complacency of our old age. And set us free. Refresh in us Your ways and Your love. Raise up a passionate new generation in our church, Lord, to demonstrate for one another and for our neighbors your eternal Grace. With awe, wonder and love, we pray these things in the name of Christ. Amen.
Choral Benediction

*Choral Benediction* by Robert Lau
*(Commissioned by the Music Ministry of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Wilson, North Carolina in recognition of the congregation’s Sesquicentennial Anniversary.)*

A congregation striving to grow continually and reach out
at the crossroads of awe, wonder and love.

Go in peace, go in peace.
God be with you till we meet again; by his counsels guide, uphold you,
With his sheep securely fold you; God be with you till we meet again.
May God’s grace be with you friend, both now and when we meet again.
Till we meet at Jesus feet; God be with you till we meet again.
Go in peace, till we meet again.

Postlude

*Sinfonia from the Cantata, "Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir", BWV 29*

by J.S. Bach

Translation: “We thank you, God, we thank you.”

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Light Refreshments will be served on the Church Lawn

We now invite you to join the members and friends
of First Christian Church as we share in a time of fellowship
on the lawn outside the sanctuary.

Prayer Concerns

Peggy Almond, Keith Brenner, Ricky and Wanda Brown, Jack and Jackie Clifford, Jeannie Daniels’ mother, Sue Ferrell, Robert Group (Kathleen Ujlaki’s nephew), Larry Gunn (Dawn Gunn’s husband), Wimpy Jefferson, Elaine Batts Percival, Issac Perry (Janice Whitehurst’s father), Janet Robbins, Anna Jane Ruffin, JC Steelman (Theresa Mathis’ father), Ron Taylor (former organist at FCC), Witold Tulodziecki (Husband of SuSu Gordon), A J Walston, Sim Wooten (William Wooten’s brother)
Music Notes—Commissioned Pieces
By Casey Childers

Choral Introit: The first piece of music that was sung in the new sanctuary was “Bless This House” with text by Helen Taylor and music by May H. Brahe. It was written in 1927. In honor of the Sesquicentennial Anniversary, I used the original melody layered with 21st century harmonies. We then placed an ‘all call’ to several members of the congregation to write new text for this timeless melody. The ones that were chosen by the Music Task Force were texts by Todd Brame (verse 2) and Rev. Jack Clifford (verse 3).

Hymn Commissions: Musician and composer, Andra Moran, has composed at least 8 pieces in our Chalice Praise including a communion favorite, “Come to the Table Again.” Based out of Nashville, Tennessee, Andra Moran is a performing artist, worship designer and songwriter whose songs are sung in churches across the country. She serves The Bridge at Woodmont Christian Church in Nashville as the Creative Director, organizing musical and artistic content shared in weekly worship. She is well known within the Disciples of Christ community, often sharing her gifts in leadership at General Assemblies. I reached out to Andra to commission a praise work based on this anniversary. During this time, we connected as moms both with a young one during this pandemic. With delight, she came back with a splendid original work (Faithful Through the Years) that commemorates this anniversary as well as an original hymn text (As We Gather, Draw Us Nearer).

Choral Benediction: One of the things I wanted was to have a piece commissioned that represented our total body of believers. As a unified service that now worships in full, together, I thought about things that were ‘staples’ of both services. In our Wellsprings service, a frequent dismissal work that always felt like ‘home’ was “Go In Peace.” Likewise in our later service, the benediction, “Till We Meet Again” was often a favorite. I asked Dr. Lau to prayerfully combine aspects of both pieces to fully capture the unifying aspect of our body of Christ now. Dr. Lau holds degrees in music from Lebanon Valley College, the Eastman School of Music and Catholic University of America. An active composer, Robert Lau has over 150 choral and organ works published by the leading music publishing companies of the United States. For his published choral music, he has been awarded several Special Awards by ASCAP. He is also the uncle of Gilda Cauley and Cecilia Avery.

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<th>SESQUICENTENNIAL CHOIR</th>
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<td>Annette Glover</td>
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<td>Andrew Childers</td>
<td>Elizabeth Winstead</td>
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We Extend Our Deepest Appreciation to:

- The members of the Sesquicentennial Planning Team who have given countless hours during the past year making plans for these 150 days of celebration and bringing these events to life: Doug Boone, Todd Brame, Casey Childers, Kathy Daughety, Jeannette Etheridge, Patsy Ferrell, Bob Kendall, Cathy Mount, and Linda Walling.
- Bob Kendall who served as our unofficial research historian and wordsmith. Bob authored the Sesquicentennial Prayer and Psalm, researched our church history and divined the trivia questions, and in many areas, his words made a beautiful event even more beautiful.
- Keith Tew who designed our new logo.
- Anita’s Marketing for wise suggestions and generous support that undergirded the creation of our publicity.
- E B Sports for designing our shirts and caps.
- Mayor Carlton Stevens who presented a proclamation declaring April 27, 2021, as First Christian Church Day.
- Christy Proctor and Chick Fil-A who provided box lunches for our Sesquicentennial Kick-off event.
- Carla Aday, Senior Minister of Country Club Christian Church in Kansas City, Missouri, who led our reflection session on the Psalms.
- Linda May who served as the Guide for our walk at the Wilson Botanical Gardens.
- Grant Roberson who edited our “Waves” video.
- The members of the Facilities and Maintenance Team and all of the folks who showed up on work days to enhance the appearance of our building and grounds.
- And lastly, we are grateful for those who put in time and effort to prepare for events, which were not able to take place this weekend: Tim and Steffanie Sharp and Wade and Phyllis Leary who already had pans out to cook our Saturday breakfast; President Douglas Searcy and Barton College who were working to host our Saturday Banquet; and Dr. Stephanie Paulsell of Harvard Divinity School who was to be our Preacher for this morning’s service.

Thank-You to our Donors

We are grateful for the gifts, which have made this Celebration possible:

Special “150 Gifts” have been made by Dale and Peggy Almond, Todd Brame, Kathy and Morgan Daughety, Jeannette and Glenn Etheridge, Patsy Ferrell, Leigh and Don Kirkman, Valerie Melvin, and Lester and Janelle Palmer.

Additional gifts have been made by Paul and Betsy Brewer, Earl and Faye Boykin, Barbara Brinson, Charles and Gilda Cauley, Allan and Libby Daniell, Kathy and Morgan Daughety, Patsy Ferrell, Tricia Ferrell, Mary Louise Gray, Dick Gurkin, Leah Martin, Jennifer and Mike McHarg, Christy Proctor and Melissa Denton, Kathy Sandifer, David and Tish Scott, and Darcelle Vance.

Special Funds provided by Keith and Sherry Brenner, and Boots Philyaw were designated to be used in our Sesquicentennial Journey.

The Christmas Ornaments that are your gifts for sharing in today’s celebration have been provided by Gary and Linda Walling.

The expenses for the editing of “The Waves” video was made possible by a gift from Todd Brame.
Sesquicentennial Month Mission Opportunities

Hearne Elementary School—Our goal is to collect 150 items to provide to the teachers and administrators.

Week of Compassion—Funds raised will provide relief to hurricane flooding victims and Afghan refugees.

Music for Hope—Money and food items raised at the concert will support the ministry of Hope Station.

Church Calendar

Today, September 26
11:00am Disciples Class (in the Parlor)

Wednesday, September 29
7:00pm Chancel Choir (Fellowship Hall)

Sunday, October 3
10:00am Worship: Live and Livestream (also recorded for later viewing)
11:00am Disciples Class (in the Parlor)
11:11am Small Group Book Study