

A Festival of Banners
First Presbyterian Church, Copperas Cove, Texas
Reformation Sunday, October 28, 2018

PRELUDE: *“The Church’s One Foundation”*
(Mike and Janice)

-Samuel John Stone

CALL TO WORSHIP *(from Narthex)*: Pass through, pass through the gates! Prepare the way for the people. Build up, build up the highway! Remove the stones. Raise a banner for the nations. The Lord has made proclamation to the ends of the earth: “Say to the Daughter of Zion, ‘See, your Savior comes!’” (Is 62:10-11)

Please stand if you are able to sing together the hymn of the church #275

*HYMN: #275

“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

(during this hymn, Jeff, Mary, Naomi and Alma process in. Jeff carries the PCUSA banner; Mary / Jeff take seats, Naomi /Alma take seats)

CALL TO CONFESSION: The proof of God’s amazing love is this: While we were sinners Christ died for us. Because we have faith in him, we dare to approach God with confidence. In faith and penitence, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(fr Prayers of Martin Luther)* **Waken our hearts, O Lord, our God; make them ever watchful to serve you and your purposes. Trouble us with the greatness of your command to make disciples of all nations and our own slowness to make you our greatest love. Trouble us with the brevity of our lives and time, talent, and treasure not invested in eternity. Comfort us, O Lord, with your unfailing mercy and the assurance of our salvation and unending glory with you. Rekindle in us a renewed desire for the coming of your glorious kingdom when all wrongs will be made right, when everything that is broken will be made whole, and when we will trade a cross for a crown. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen. *(silence for personal confession)***

DECLARATION OF PARDON: *(fr Ps 103)* *God removes our sins as far as the heavens are above the earth. Beloved in the risen Christ, we are forgiven. Alleluia! Amen*

*CHORAL RESPONSE #581

(Gloria Patri)

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen, Amen.**

Following, children 3rd gr & under are welcome to attend Children’s Chapel, if desired

WELCOME/INTRODUCTION

A FESTIVAL OF BANNERS

Naomi: In the Song of Solomon (2:1-4) we read these words:

I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys. Like a lily among thorns is my darling among the maidens. Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my lover among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste. He has taken me to the banquet hall, and his banner over me is love.

Alma: From ancient days the Song of Solomon was seen as an allegory for the covenant love between the Lord and Israel. It is not surprising that early Christians quickly identified the Rose of Sharon with Jesus Christ, whose banner over his bride, the church, is love. Indeed, as Isaiah said: “in that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples, the nations will rally to him.”

Naomi: Today is Reformation Sunday, a day to celebrate our Christian heritage. Throughout history God has seen fit to raise Christ’s banner over the Church by inspiring his people to concrete expressions of faith, especially during times of conflict or threat, when a bold statement on what we believe was necessary. The eleven confessions in our Book of Confessions are, as one eminent Presbyterian has said, “Landmarks of the Holy Spirit’s action in the life of the church.” As a book of landmarks, our Confessions signal for us the way of God in the world, showing us how for twenty centuries Christ’s banner over us is love.

Alma: Today, banners will be presented, symbolically representing the content and historical setting of eleven of our twelve confessions. Our newest Confession, the Belhar Confession, has yet to have a banner designed, and the single Westminster banner represents The Westminster Confession as well as the Westminster Shorter and Longer Catechisms. We give God the glory for the inspiring faith of our fathers and mothers, who have run the good race before us. As Psalm 20:5 says, “We shall triumph in your salvation and in the name of God we shall set up our banners.”

(Alma & Naomi sit down)

The Nicene Creed

Mary: Bring forth the banner for the Nicene Creed

MICHAEL brings in the Nicene Creed banner, turns around and faces the congregation.

Soon after the period of the church’s recorded history in the New Testament, many different teachings about God and the person of Christ developed. As years and generations passed, a clear, concise statement of belief was needed to unify the church and to guide Christians in their understanding. The Nicene Creed is a response to that need, the result of remarkable and sometime fierce efforts by passionate theologians. Especially were battles fought in the

establishment of Jesus's divinity and membership in the Trinity. The Council of Nicea was called by Constantine, the first Christian emperor in 325 AD. But the creed was really formulated at the Council of Constantinople in 381, and it was truly, finally recognized in 451 by a remarkable assembly at Chalcedon. For centuries the Nicene Creed has served to unite Christians of all kinds and nationalities in a high understanding of Christ and the Trinitarian nature of God.

The Nicene Banner

Jeff: Consider the banner for the Nicene Creed.

The cross, which is also a sword, is a symbol for the Emperor Constantine and his successors. He convened the Ecumenical Council that began the deliberations, which resulted in this creed. He was the first Christian emperor, and he began the tradition of imperial Christianity. The cross is central on this banner because the doctrine of Christ is central in the Nicene Creed. The green triangle and the three symbols with it stand for the doctrine of the Trinity formalized in the Nicene. The hand reaching down is a symbol for God the Father. The Chi Ro monogram is for Christ. These are the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ, and was used by Constantine on shields and helmets of his army. The dove is our symbol for God the Holy Spirit, since the gospels tell how the Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove from the sky in his baptism. The crowns on the banner speak of the rule and glory of God.

(MICHAEL takes the banner out)

Mary: Gail Batman and Dennis Kliza will now sing an ancient hymn set to a plainchant melody, "Of the Father's Love Begotten". (vss 1,2,4,5) The text was written during the era when the Nicene Creed was being codified. Listen to the beautiful affirmation of the fully human, fully divine Christ, the second person of the Trinity, the Incarnation of the living God!

(Mary & Jeff sit down);

SPECIAL MUSIC:#108 "Of the Father's Love Begotten"

-Prudentius

(Gail & Dennis with Janice)

The Apostles' Creed

Naomi: Bring forth the banner for the Apostles' Creed!

(Bennie brings in the Apostle's creed banner)

The Apostles' Creed is better known in American churches than the Nicene Creed, though it is probably used less widely among all branches of the church around the world. The origins of this creed go back to Rome between 160 and 180 AD. Persons who were to be baptized recited an early form of this creed as a personal statement of faith. Even now, our baptismal orders of worship include the reciting of the Apostle's Creed. The Creed reached its final form in the 8th century, a Trinitarian structure, and it continues to serve as a simple reminder of essential

matters in the Christian faith, expressing with unique clarity the faith of the church of the first apostles. The Apostles Creed exemplifies the belief that people lived and died for, the belief that people continue to give their lives for.

The Apostles' Creed Banner

Alma: Look to the banner for the Apostles' Creed!

The somber brown color reminds us of the difficulty and rigor of early Christianity under persecution. The purple arches suggest the entrances to caves or catacombs, where early Christians met in secret; and they represent the shape of church windows. The anchor cross symbolizes security in Christ, as found by the apostles, some of whom were fishermen. The fish is an ancient symbol for the Christian faith, perhaps a secret code. Letters of the Greek word for fish can be used as first letters in the phrase, "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior." The chalice is a symbol of the Lord's Supper, and thus of the earnest and simple fellowship of the early church. The upside-down cross stands for the apostle, Peter. Peter is said to have been crucified upside down because he thought himself unworthy of a death like his Master's. Let us stand and say what we believe using the Apostle's Creed as found on page 35 of your hymnals

(Bennie takes the banner out)

*The Affirmation of Faith: *The Apostles' Creed*

pg 35

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

(Naomi and Alma sit)

The Scots Confession

Jeff: Bring forth the banner for the Scots Confession.

(MICHAEL brings in the Scots banner)

The sixteenth century was the century of the Protestant Reformation. It was a stormy time and the reformation in Scotland was indeed a stormy affair, with much suffering, bloodshed and startling changes in the church's faith and practice. It is amazing that such a strong and articulate statement as the Scots Confession should emerge from this time and place. But such was the genius of John Knox, the outspoken and vigorous "Father" of Presbyterianism in Scotland. He and five colleagues wrote the Scots Confession in 1560 in just four days. The writing was commissioned by Parliament for the uniting of Protestants around a single statement of belief. For a hundred years this was the basic standard of belief for the Church of Scotland. American Presbyterians might call the Church of Scotland our "parent church," since

so many Presbyterian churches on these shores were started and led by Scottish people. In this role the Scots Confession pointed the way, often in angry terms, out of the excesses of medieval Catholicism and away from the tyranny of the throne, to a way of faithfulness to the Word, of self-discipline in the church, and of loyalty to God's Kingdom.

The Scots Banner

Mary: Look to the banner for the Scots Confession.

The blue of the shield is the background color of the seal of the Church of Scotland. As you will see, the cross appears in some form on all nine banners. The tartan, X-shaped cross represents the cross of St. Andrew, the apostle who became the patron saint of early Christians in that part of the world. The tartan, or plaid, is that of the Hamilton clan, in honor of the first martyr of the Scottish Reformation, Patrick Hamilton. The Celtic (*pronounced Keltic*) cross is another ancient form, associated with Christians in the British Isles. The circle on the cross may stand for the whole of life or the whole of the world for which Christ died. The ship symbolizes the church, whose nature is strongly emphasized in the confession. The Bible and the sword remind us how St. Paul called the word of God "the sword of the Spirit" and the sharpness of John Knox's preaching of the Word was a major power for reformation in Scotland. The burning bush that is not consumed reminds us not only of Moses' experience on Mt. Sinai but God's presence and call to service.

MICHAEL removes banner.

Jeff: With the Reformation came a revitalization of congregational singing. Often the Psalms or other scriptural verse were put to beloved folk tunes, as is still a common practice. Please listen to the Offertory which is Hal Hopson's setting of 1 Corinthians 13 to a beautiful Scottish folk song, dating to the 1600's.

And following this, as the Doxology today, please stand to sing Hymn #385. This favorite hymn is often referred to as the "Old Hundredth". The words are an adaptation of Psalm 100 by Scotsman, William Kethe in 1561. It is set to a tune written by Louis Bourgeois published in the 16th century *Genevan Psalter*.

Naomi: Let us now worship God with our morning's offering.

(Jeff and Mary sit, ushers come forward, Naomi passes them the plates; children are dismissed, if desired)

OFFERTORY: #693 "Though I May Speak" (Scottish folk tune—O Waly, Waly) -Anon/Hopson
(Vicky & Janice)

The Heidelberg Catechism

Alma: Bring forth the banner for the Heidelberg Catechism!

(MICHAEL brings in the Heidelberg Banner)

In the sixteenth century, Lutheran teachings and forms of church life had found ready response and warm reception in most parts of Germany. But in southwest Germany there was a pocket of lively Presbyterianism under the Elector, Palatine Frederick III. For us in teaching Christians in his territories, Frederick commissioned the writing of a catechism, which is a series of questions and answers. Two young theologians, Olivianus and Ursinas, wrote this catechism in 1563. They produced a uniquely warm-hearted, appealing, and yet soundly Biblical statement of faith as an expression of personal experience. As such, the Heidelberg Catechism has become popular and is widely used in German Reformed churches, in Holland, in the Netherlands, and around the world in many translations.

The Heidelberg Banner

Naomi: Consider the banner for the Heidelberg Catechism.

The regal red and gold constitute a tribute to the rule of Frederick III, who ordered the writing of the Catechism for the followers of John Calvin in Germany. The crown of thorns, the “German” cross, and the tablets are symbols of misery, redemption, and thankfulness -- the three basic themes of the Catechism. The tablets stand for the Ten Commandments, which appear in the Catechism’s instruction that obedience is the proper form of thankfulness to God. The two lights and the fire represent the Trinity, with the Hebrew name of God on the right orb, the Greek monogram for Jesus on the left orb, and the flame standing for the Holy Spirit. There is a lengthy discussion on the Trinity in the Catechism.

Alma: Please answer the first question of the Heidelberg Catechism as found in your bulletin:

Q. What is your only comfort in life and death?

A. That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ....By His Holy Spirit He assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for Him.

(MICHAEL removes the banner, Naomi & Alma sit)

The Second Helvetic Confession

Mary: Bring forth the banner for the Second Helvetic Confession.

(Bennie brings in the 2nd Helvetic banner)

Switzerland was the real birthplace of the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition. It is therefore appropriate that our Book of Confessions contains a statement of faith from that land. And it is appropriate also that this is a confession inspired by the work and teachings of John Calvin, who is called “The Father of World Presbyterianism.” The author of the Second Helvetic, or Swiss Confession, was Heinrich Bullinger, a friend of John Calvin and pastor in Zurich. As with all the Reformation confessions of faith, this statement charts a new course and very practical map for church life and Christian thought. The confession deals with specific issues of church work and administration. And it also outlines carefully a doctrine of salvation by grace, in keeping with Protestant objections to Roman Catholic teachings of that time.

The Second Helvetic Banner

Jeff: Attend to the banner for the Second Helvetic Confession.

The blue and white colors of the banner are heraldic colors of ancient Switzerland. The cross is dominant due to the confession’s extensive discussion of the meaning of salvation. The hand with the burning heart is a traditional symbol of John Calvin. The lamp stands for knowledge and discipline, two of the themes of the Helvetic which make it unique. The shepherd’s crook and the pasture symbolize the pastoral ministry and the flock’s care for its members. The chalice and the waves are symbols for the two sacraments, Holy Communion and Baptism.

Listen, now to the hymn written by John Calvin, himself in 1545, “I Greet Thee Who My Sure Redeemer Art” as presented by the FPC Choir. As one might expect the note of God’s sovereignty sounds clearly. But also note how this emphasis interfaces with the themes of mercy and grace.

(Bennie removes the banner, Jeff and Mary sit, the choir comes forward)

ANTHEM: *“I Greet Thee who my Sure Redeemer Art”*

-J. Calvin/L. Smith

Westminster Confession and Catechisms

Naomi: Bring forth the single banner for the Westminster Confession and the Shorter and Larger Catechisms.

(MICHAEL brings the Westminster Banner)

For most of the history of the Presbyterian Church, the Westminster documents of 1643 have endured as the single set of standards for the church’s theology. They were the only statements of faith in our constitution for 400 years. But with the adoption of a larger and more comprehensive Book of Confessions in 1967, these Westminster documents are no longer the single foundation stone. Yet they will continue to have a place of unique importance. Created by the Westminster Assembly of church leaders in London in an unpredictable phase of English history, the Confession and the Shorter and Larger Catechisms were accepted in 1648 by the

British Parliament. The thirty-five articles of the Confession and the questions and answers of the Shorter and Larger Catechisms still speak with power and vitality for the Church.

The Westminster Banner

Alma: Consider the banner for the Westminster Confession and Catechisms.

The three long panels and the maroon triangle symbolize the Trinity. The eye is a symbol for God's providence and sovereignty, God's control of all life and history, a dominant theme of the Westminster standards. The crown represents God's rule over life and over the world and the open Bible here stands for the authority of Scriptures, basic to this Confession's teachings. The Alpha and Omega at the bottom of the banner are the "A" and "Z" of the Greek alphabet, the first and the last -- referring to Christ as the beginning and end of all.

Naomi: Let us first answer the opening question of the larger Westminster catechism

Q. 1. What is the chief and highest end of humankind?

A. Our chief and highest end is to glorify God and fully to enjoy God forever.

(MICHAEL removes the banner; Naomi & Alma sit)

The Theological Declaration of Barmen

Jeff: Bring forth the banner for the Theological Declaration of Barmen.

(Bennie brings in the Barmen banner)

When a man named Hitler tried to play God, when National Socialism in Germany tried to take control of all the churches, and when the government tried to become the conscience of people in Nazi Germany, many Christians, most unknowingly, followed along with a multitude of people of that land outside the churches. However, some Lutherans, Reformed Christians, and Union Church leaders rushed into an emergency meeting to voice their opposition, to find strength in each other, and to form a new force against Nazism. Out of this gathering in May 1934, in the city of Barmen, came this theological declaration. It spoke to the immediate situation, calling into question the assumptions of Nazism on the basis of centuries-old doctrines of the sovereignty of God over the nations, the authority of Scripture and the role of Christ as the only Lord and Savior of humankind. The Declaration quickly became the basis for courageous Christian witness through the war years that followed. Now, "Barmen" stands among the great manifestos of the church, of Christian resistance to all forms of human tyranny.

Its boldness is exemplified in this statement: Jesus Christ is God's mighty claim upon our whole life. Through him befalls us a joyful deliverance from the godless fetters of this world for a free, grateful service to his creatures. We therefore reject the false doctrine, as though there were areas of our life in which we would not belong to Jesus Christ, but to other lords--areas in which we would not need justification and sanctification through him.

The Barmen Banner

Mary: Look to the banner for the Barmen Declaration.

The swastika crossed out and the cross rising out of the flames constitute a protest and witness against Nazi tyranny and any political effort to take the role of God and control of the church. The fire speaks of the suffering and death that follows from defending the faith against tyranny. It reminds us of how some of the Barmen signers did indeed pay, what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called, “the cost of discipleship.” Faith, however, survives such persecution and the crisis of war, and the cross rises out of the flames in victory!

Jeff: In 1930, Harry Emerson Fosdick was commissioned to write the text of our next hymn, “*God of Grace & God of Glory*”. In praying “for wisdom and courage in the living of these days” the hymn captures well not only the conflict between good and evil, a concept at the heart of the Barmen Declaration, but also the hope we have in Christ through his church. The tune was composed by John Hughes in Wales in 1907. Please stand for the singing of Hymn #307

(Jeff and Mary sit, Bennie removes the banner).

*HYMN:#307 “*God of Grace and God of Glory*”

-Fosdick

The Confession of 1967

Alma: Bring forth the banner for the Confession of 1967!

(MICHAEL brings in the banner of '67)

The 1960's was a decade of social upheaval and extremes. It was a fearful time with nuclear missiles 90 miles off our coast; it was an amazing time as we watched Neil Armstrong take that “giant leap for mankind.” It was a happy, prosperous time with Beatles and Stones, long hair, bell-bottoms, peace and flowers. It was a bitter, contentious time of war with burnt flags, and raw divisions between East and West, black and white, children and parents. It was hopeful time to ask “what you can do for your country” and to shout “I have a dream.” It was a tragic time with the shattering of hopes and dreams by bullets in Dallas and Memphis. But above all it was a time for Christians to raise again the banner of Christ's reconciling love. The Confession of 1967 spoke out to a decade and time in desperate need of a clarity. In the tradition of the Book of Confessions, it is not only an expression of belief but also a call to arms against the problems and evils among us and around us.

The Banner for the Confession of 1967

Naomi: Consider the banner for the Confession of 1967.

The blue, the red, and the gold are colors of the official seal of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. for which the confession was composed before the merger of southern and northern Presbyterians. The golden, down-reaching hand, repeated from the banner for the Nicene Creed, is the symbol for God, relating to his world. The crown, repeated from the Westminster banner, and the nail-scarred hand stand together for the death and the victory of Christ as He reconciled the world. The four hands of different colors, the clasped hands, and the green circle represent the reconciled world at the foot of the cross, since God's act of reconciliation is the starting point and the theme of the Confession of 1967. The stars and planets on the blue background suggest to us the space-age setting of this Confession.

Alma: Please join with me in affirming a portion of the Confession of '67. Note the themes of equality, justice and promised reconciliation.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: *(From the Confession of '67)*

The life, death and resurrection, and promised coming of Jesus Christ has set the pattern for the church's mission. His service to all commits the church to work for every form of human well-being. Jesus' suffering makes the church sensitive to all the sufferings of humankind so that it sees the face of Christ in the face of every kind of need. In the power of the risen Christ and the hope of his coming, the church sees the promise of God's renewal of human life in society and God's victory over all. Amen.

(Mary & JEFF sit down, MICHAEL removes the banner)

The Brief Statement of Faith

Mary: Bring forth the banner for the Brief Statement of Faith.

(Bennie brings in the banner for the BSF)

In 1983, the Presbyterian Church (USA) was formed by the reunion of the United Presbyterian Church of the United States of America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States. The proposal of a new confession was central to the reunion. Its primary objectives were to articulate and celebrate our common Presbyterian identity in all its rich diversity and to offer a fresh statement for use in worship as well as in Christian instruction.

Like all confessions, the Brief Statement of Faith draws extensively on Scripture. It is arranged according to Trinitarian blessing in II Corinthians 13:14. As such the grace of Jesus Christ has first place as the foundation of our knowledge of God's sovereign love and our life together in the Holy Spirit. This confession uniquely emphasizes the earthly ministry of Jesus and hence reminds us in an age of moral laxity and confusion that election is not merely for salvation but also service and obedience. This confession is also the first among our confessions explicitly to state that both women and men are called to all forms of ministry. Gender inclusiveness and care for God's creation also are reflected, while reminding us that always, in life and death, we belong to God and cannot be separated from his love in Jesus Christ.

The Banner of the Brief Confession of Faith

Jeff: Look to the banner for the Brief Confession of Faith. The cross of rainbow colors points to the centrality of Christ for our faith and celebrates the rich diversity of cultures and races living in Christ. The blue background of the banner symbolizes the universe as it bears witness to the Creator, who came, incarnate by the Holy Spirit, as the Light of the World. The earth is seen to be broken and cracked by human divisiveness and diversity, only held together by the hands of God who unites us by the grace of Jesus Christ in one universal church. At the lower part of the rainbow cross, we see the symbol of our own Presbyterian Church (USA). The symbols of the descending dove, open Bible, pulpit, baptismal font, and flames come together to make of a cross, rich in Reformed heritage. By placing the symbol at the bottom of the cross, we affirm with humility that our church has no other place or purpose than the one reconciling work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mary: The Brief Statement of Faith is the only banner that has its own special song. Please remain seated and let's sing the traditional spiritual as printed in your bulletin, "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." (*Mary, Jeff sit and Bennie removes the banner*)

HYMN:

"He's Got the Whole World in His Hands"

1. **He's got the whole world in His hands, He's got the whole world in His hands, He's got the whole world in His hands, He's got the whole world in His hands.**
2. **He's got the wind and the rain....**
3. **He's the tiny little baby**
4. **He's got you and me, brother, in His hands, He's got you and me, sister,...**

The Belhar Confession

Alma: The Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa had, as their standard for unity, Confessions from the 16 and 17th century, including the Heidelberg Catechism (1563). In their original European context these documents asserted that Protestant Christians were not anarchists, but were good citizens, willing to obey the government of the land. These confessions were however used in the 19th and 20th centuries in South Africa to justify obedience to a government that imposed strict separation of the races and domination by members of the white race. The system was called by its Afrikaans name, "Apartheid."

Naomi: In 1978, two years after uprisings and retaliatory killings in the country, students in the Dutch Reformed Mission Church theological seminary were challenged by their professor to find the theological essence of the judgment on apartheid." The class concluded: Apartheid is grounded in the irreconcilability of people of different racial groups. It is thus against the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is grounded in the doctrine of reconciliation. The DRMC Synod affirmed

this judgment and amid the sting of international judgement against apartheid took it to their Synod meeting as a protest against the Church. In the spring of 1982, the Church declared that apartheid was idolatry and heresy, and in 1986 they adopted a Confession which in Afrikaans is called the *Belydenis van Belhar*. It affirmed their identity of being white and black and authentically Reformed. In 2016, the Belhar Confession was adopted by the PCUSA. Using a portion of it, let us affirm what we believe by please standing, if able, and then remain standing for the hymn following

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: We believe: that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker, that God’s lifegiving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also irreconciliation, hatred, bitterness and enmity... We believe that the church is called to confess and to (live in a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world). To the one and only God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be honor and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

(Bennie, MICHAEL, Jeff and Mary may take their seats in the Sanctuary pews)

Naomi: Brothers and sisters, we are indeed blessed to stand on the shoulders of brave women and men of the Faith who were inspired, empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit to live in God’s way, no matter the cost. They provided for us a way that is not elaborate, not one which piles up religious rules and rituals that overwhelm, but one with simple gratitude for the goodness of God and a commitment to humbly serve.

Alma: They provided a way that knows that in the end, ALL is grace, that we need not earn the approval of God whose nature it is to love us as we are.

Naomi: The way is one which furthers God’s kingdom on earth, through acts of kindness and generosity, charity and justice.

Alma: It is reformed but always open to being reformed for it knows that God is forever doing a new thing. *Ecclesia Reformata, Semper Reformanda!*

Naomi: So quoting Hebrews 12:1, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and sin, which clings so closely, and run with perseverance the race that is set before us” Amen.

I want to thank all those who assisted in this morning’s service...narrators, banner carriers, Choir and other musicians. And for the gift from our sister church, Grace Presbyterian-Temple.

Let us now stand and sing vss 1-3 of our final hymn #331, “God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand”. We will sing the final verse following the Congregational meeting.

(Alma can take her seat in the Sanctuary pews).

*HYMN: #331 (vss 1-3)

“God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand”

Congregational Meeting

*HYMN #331 (vs 4)

“God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand”

Closing Prayer /Benediction:

Postlude

WORSHIP LEADERS

Readers: Alma Lucas, Mary Hampton, Jeff Hampton, Naomi Ingram

Banner Carriers: Bennie Lucas, Michael Addo-Safo

Pianist/Accompanist: Janice Kliza

Organist: Jane Sievers

Other Musicians: Mike Ingram (Trombone); Vicky Morris Watson (Flute); Gail Batman/Dennis Kliza (vocalists)

Choir Director: Gail Batman

Pastor: Naomi Ingram

Ushers: Marlin & Lisa Raley, Peg & Sherman Jennings

Toddlers/Nursery: Alexis Blackmon, Louise Wetli

Children’s Chapel: Ivanna Ahart, Kelby Wingert

MUSIC

PRELUDE: *“The Church’s One Foundation”*

-Samuel John Stone

(Mike and Janice)

*HYMN: #275

“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

SPECIAL MUSIC:#108 *“Of the Father’s Love Begotten”*

-Prudentius

(Mike, Gail & Dennis with Janice)

OFFERTORY: #693 *“Though I May Speak”* (Scottish folk tune—*O Waly, Waly*) -Anon/Hopson

(Vicky & Janice)

*DOXOLOGY (HYMN: #385)

“All People That on Earth Do Dwell”

ANTHEM: *“I Greet Thee who my Sure Redeemer Art”*

-J. Calvin

*HYMN:#307 *“God of Grace and God of Glory”*

-Fosdick

*HYMN:

“He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands”

*HYMN: #331 (vss 1-3)

“God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand”

*HYMN #331 (vs 4)