

Welcome to Progressive Pathways Fellowship.
I'm Jim Hensley. I'll be leading worship today.

Does everyone know everyone else?

Let's review.

When I say "Let all the fellowship acclaim" What do you say?
"Amen"

When I say "Christ the Lord be with you" you say "And also with you."

Here's the hard one from the first service. Repeat after me. "May our prayers rise up and be heard."

I'll say "Let us pray in Christ's mercy" "May our prayers rise up and be heard."

Now for a new one. You say "We remember, we celebrate, we believe."
I'll say "Your people praise you." "We remember, we celebrate, we believe."

And now we're ready to begin.

PAUSE

Glory be to the one who loves us, the one who leads us and the one who guides us, as always before so now and evermore. Let all the fellowship acclaim.

Amen.

Christ the Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Listen now to the psalm.

I raise my hands to you in prayer.

Holy one, I wait for you from the dawn.
My soul thirsts for you.
My body longs for you.
I come to your sanctuary.

I raise my hands to you in prayer.

I will bless you throughout my life.
My mouth will sing your praises and rejoice.
I think of you in the morning.
I take joy in the protection of your wings.

I raise my hands to you in prayer.

SAY

Glory be to the one who loves us, the one who leads us and the one who guides us, as always before so now and evermore. Let all the fellowship acclaim.

Amen.

FIRST READER

Christ the Lord be with you.
And also with you.

A reading from the tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark by William Shakespeare, Act 4, scene 4.

Hamlet says,
How all occasions do inform against me
And spur my dull revenge. What is a man
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more. ...
why yet I live to say "This thing's to do,"
sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
To do it. Examples gross as earth exhort me:
Witness this army of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit with divine ambition puffed
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death and danger dare,
Even for an eggshell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honor's at the stake. How stand I, then,
That have a father killed, a mother stained,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep, while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men
That for a fantasy and trick of fame
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain?
Glory be to the one who loves us, the one who leads us and the one who
guides us, as always before so now and evermore.
Let all the fellowship acclaim.
Amen.

SECOND READER

Christ the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

A reading from the second book of Samuel, chapter 1 verses 22 through 27

Ye mountains of Gilbo'a, let there be no dew or rain up you,
Nor upsurging of the deep!
For there the shield of the mighty was defiled,
The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.
From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan
turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.
Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely!
In life and in death they were not divided; they were swifter than eagles,
they were stronger than lions.
Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you daintily in scarlet,
who put ornaments of gold upon your apparel.
How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!
Jonathan lies slain upon thy high places.
I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant have you been to
me; your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.
How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

Glory be to the one who loves us, the one who leads us and the one who
guides us, as always before so now and evermore. Let all the fellowship
acclaim.

Amen.

OFFERING

Let the first fruits of the harvest be gathered into the storehouse. Let those who have an offering or a contribution bring them forth for the good of the fellowship. Part of this offering will be donated to the Chapel of St. Philip Neri in gratitude for their generosity and the use of their sanctuary.

SERMON

It's all about being right. Isn't it? All of you have been students in your day. Successful students, I don't doubt. If you want to pass the class what do you have to do? You have to come up to with the right answers. You have to do the problem correctly. You have to write a working program. You have to deliver the goods, on-time, in order and with panache. Being right matters.

Being right is so easy when it's just a matter of the facts. Is the stove hot? Yes or No. Does the equation balance? Yes or No. Did I turn off the coffee pot? Yes or No. Simple. Questions of fact have only one correct answer. They're binaries, if phrased properly. If the stove is turned on then it is not off. Marvelous. Facts are wonderful things. We should have more of them about and handy in case we need them.

The bad thing is we want every question to be a question of fact with a right or wrong answer. Is this the best way to get there from here? Well, maybe. I am renowned for my short cuts. You might want to know. I never

call them short cuts because they're rarely short but I always get to see something I want to see and, eventually, I will end up where I want to go. People have been known to ask me if I'm going directly where-ever it is we are going. It isn't a question of not being able to figure out the shortest distance between two points. That's a question of fact. It's a question of how do I want to get there? What do I want to see along the way and how much time am I willing to spend before I arrive?

Being right isn't always a matter of getting my facts in order. There are books full of facts on any libraries' shelves and yet people still disagree about really important things. Is this fair? Is that just? Are we getting ripped off? Who's responsible? Why do we need to change? What difference does it make? They're all questions. They're not really questions that allow me to line up my facts and come up with an answer though.

That doesn't stop me or you or other people from acting as if they are. Being right should be simple. There is a right and a wrong and wrong is never right. Wouldn't it be nice if that were true. When we're outside the realm of facts and I make a decision that something is right and something else is wrong then I've got to face up to the fact that I have created. There are consequences for being right.

I am a big Harry Potter fan and this weekend the sixth Harry Potter book was released. In the fifth book “Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix” one of the minor plots revolves around a young man named Percy and his relationship with his mother and father. Their names are Molly and Arthur Weasley. Percy works for the government and the government has decided that Harry Potter and all his friends are making up whooping big lies to get attention. Not that they’re all not wizards that go to school in a huge Scottish castle and have half-giants and house elves for friends but that’s not really the issue. Mr. And Mrs. Weasley believe Harry and they’re working very hard to make sure Harry’s arch-enemy, He-who-must-not-be-named, doesn’t grow more powerful or do any harm. Percy doesn’t believe You-Know-Who is even on the scene. The government has made a decision that You-Know-Who was destroyed and couldn’t possibly have survived. Percy and Percy’s father, Arthur, work for the government. Percy can’t understand why Mr. Weasley would believe a fourteen year old boy when the entire wizarding government has decided the boy is a liar. Of course, in the end, Harry is proved right. The government becomes a laughing stock and the exciting conclusion to the fifth book ensues.

Now in book six “Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince”, Harry is staying with the Weasley’s and talking with his friends Ron and Hermione.

Percy is still not speaking to his parents even though things have changed and Harry is again a hero and there is no doubt he was right from the beginning. Harry asks if Percy has come around yet and Ron tells him no. Then Hermione says something very interesting. She says, “Dumbledore says people find it far easier to forgive others for being wrong than being right. I heard him telling your Mum, Ron.” “Sound like the sort of mental thing Dumbledore would say.” Ron answers. Hermione is the smartest witch of her age. We should listen to her and her quotes from the very wise Dumbledore, headmaster of Hogwarts School for Witchcraft and Wizardry. People find it far easier to forgive others for being wrong than being right

Well, so what. Those people are just wrong. Percy’s just wrong. Harry didn’t lie. The government messed up. They deserve it for being wrong. Well. OK. Maybe. Is that a fact? There are serious consequences when you’re right. It’s often a little bit more important down the road than picking the right answer on a multiple choice test.

Remember the reading from Samuel. David is lamenting because King Saul and his son Jonathan are dead. David is now King. Saul had hunted David and refused to allow David to become King even though the prophets had told both of them what to do. Saul felt that he had been promised the kingdom and God surely could not have had a change of heart.

David had fallen in love with Jonathan and sworn that they would always be friends even though Jonathan was next in the order of succession and should have become King after Saul. David would never do anything to hurt Jonathan even though the prophets said David was going to be King.

The prophets were right. Saul and Jonathan died in battle and David become King. It broke David's heart. Listen to his song again. "I am distressed for you, my brother, Jonathan; very pleasant have you been to me; your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen." The prophets were right and David paid a terrible price.

Being right doesn't solve every problem and it doesn't make everyone happy. Why can't Percy just admit he was wrong? Why isn't David glad to be King? Why don't Mr. And Mrs. Weasley write Percy off and forget about him? He's wrong, after all and they were vindicated.

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark is also lamenting. He's on his way to England and has uncovered the plot of his uncle, the King, to have him murdered. Along the way he crosses paths with the prince of Norway who is at war with the Poland over an insignificant piece of land that rightfully belongs to Norway but has been in Poland's hands for decades. Norway is willing to sacrifice 20,000 soldiers to get the land back. The size of which will not be large enough to bury all the dead solders that came to fight over

it. But Norway is in the right. It's their land and it was stolen from them.

"Rightly to be great is not to stir without great argument," Hamlet says, "but greatly to find quarrel in a straw when honor's at the stake." The prince of Norway is going to war over a tiny piece of land while Hamlet is on the run from an uncle that murdered Hamlet's father, stopped Hamlet from becoming King and married Hamlet's mother and has now hatched a plot to have Hamlet murdered on foreign soil. Hamlet's honor demands revenge but he wants to know why. Will it bring his father back? Will he be a better King than his uncle? Did his uncle really do it? Does his mother know?

Being right is a terrible, terrible burden. People get hurt. Options are taken away. The prince of Norway is right but he is going to sacrifice 20,000 soldiers. Is it worth it? He thinks so. Hamlet is not so sure. The prophets are sure David has been chosen to be King. What's going to happen to Jonathan then? David was a great King but he made horrible mistakes.

Let's wrap up. Am I saying that there isn't a right and a wrong? No. I'm not. Is it always easy to be right? No, it's not. Will being right make everything OK? No, it won't. So why bother? Let's just pretend that everybody's right and we'll all be happy. Well, no, because we know that there's a right and a wrong. Hitler was wrong. Osama bin Laden is wrong.

Fundamentalism is wrong. Everybody can't be right. It's not a matter of being right as much as it's a matter of being willing to face the consequences for being right and knowing that the consequences exist. If you were German and you opposed Hitler you ended up in a concentration camp. If you were Afghani and you opposed Osama bin Laden your family found your body in the alley behind the mosque. What are the stakes? What are the consequences? Is it a matter of fact? It might not be so much about being right as it is about doing the right thing for the right reasons. "Sound like the sort of mental thing Dumbledore would say." According to Ron. Well yes. It is. I hope he's right about that.

PAUSE

PREPARE THE TABLE

Christ the Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Let us pray.

Caring God, we thank you for your gifts in creation: for our world, the heavens tell of your glory; for our land, its beauty and its resources, for the rich heritage we enjoy.

We pray for those who make decisions about the resources of the earth, that we may use your gifts responsibly, Let us pray in Christ's mercy.

May our prayers rise up and be heard.

We pray for those who work on the land and sea, in city and in industry that all may enjoy the fruits of their labors and marvel at your creation. Let us pray in Christ's mercy.

May prayers rise up and be heard.

We pray for artists, scientists and visionaries, that through their work we may see the world afresh. Let us pray in Christ's mercy.

May our prayers rise up and be heard.

We thank you holy one for giving us life; for all who enrich our experience.

We pray for all who through their own or others' actions are deprived of fullness of life, for prisoners, refugees, the handicapped and all who are sick. Let us pray in Christ's mercy.

May our prayers rise up and be heard.

We pray for those in politics, medical science, social and relief work, and for this church and for all churches and for all who seek to bring life to others.

Let us pray in Christ's mercy.

May our prayers rise up and be heard.

For what else shall we pray?

We thank you, supreme and most high, by whose grace alone we have attained the light of your knowledge; holy name that must be honored, the one name by which our ancestral faith blesses you alone, we thank you who deign to grant to all a father's fidelity, a brother's reverence and a mother's love, along with any power that is sweeter, by giving us the fit of consciousness, reason and knowledge:
Consciousness, by which we may know you;
Reason, by which we may seek you in our dim suppositions;
Knowledge, by which we may rejoice in knowing you.

Your people praise you.
We remember, we celebrate, we believe.

And we who are saved by your power do indeed rejoice because you have shown yourself to us. We rejoice that you have deigned to make us for eternity even while we depend on the body. For this is our only means of giving thanks: knowledge of your majesty.

Your people praise you.
We remember, we celebrate, we believe.

We have known you, the vast light perceived only by reason.
We have understood you, true life of life, the womb pregnant with all coming-to-be.
We have known you, who persist eternally by conceiving all coming-to-be in its perfect fullness.

Your people praise you.
We remember, we celebrate, we believe.

And so Holy and Righteous One, we bring you these gifts. May they become for us the body and blood of Christ the Lord at whose command we celebrate this Eucharist.

On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks and praise. He broke the bread gave it to his disciples and said. Take this all of you and eat it. This is my body which will be give up for you. Do this in memory of me.

Your people praise you.
We remember, we celebrate, we believe.

When supper was ended he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks and praise. He blessed the cup, gave it to his disciples and said, take this all of you and drink from it. This is the cup of my blood. The blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.

Your people praise you.
We remember, we celebrate, we believe.

COMMUNION

Let us pray.
Worshipping with this entire prayer the good of your goodness, we ask only this, that you wish us to persist in the love of your knowledge and that we never be cut off from such a life as this.
Let all the fellowship acclaim.
Amen.

Christ our lord be with you.
And also with you.

May the blessing of the holy one,
the love of the righteous one,
the inspiration of the blessed one go with you and remain with you always.
Let all the fellowship acclaim.
Amen.

This celebration is ended. Go in peace.