

***SINGING OUR FAITH TOGETHER**

“For Such a Time as This”
 Text by Carol M. Bechtel (1998)

A hymn of joy today we raise
 for ministries and gifts,
 for all the ways you bid us join
 your cloud of witnesses.

For all the saints whose lives shine forth
 as templates of your grace,
 we give you thanks and pledge our lives
 in gratitude to trace.

Your faithful life, O Christ inspires;
 your brokenness makes whole;
 your resurrection calls us forth
 and opens long-closed doors.

Our world cries out to hear your name;
 the church in mission risks
 as men and women join to serve
 for such a time as this.

***BENEDICTION**

May the abundant grace of God, the embracing love of Christ,
 and the indwelling witness of the Spirit make us new creatures,
 so that old things pass away, and all things become new. **Amen.**

All sing:

May we bear witness to your grace
 As disciples of your Son
 May we who follow find our home
 In you, Eternal One.

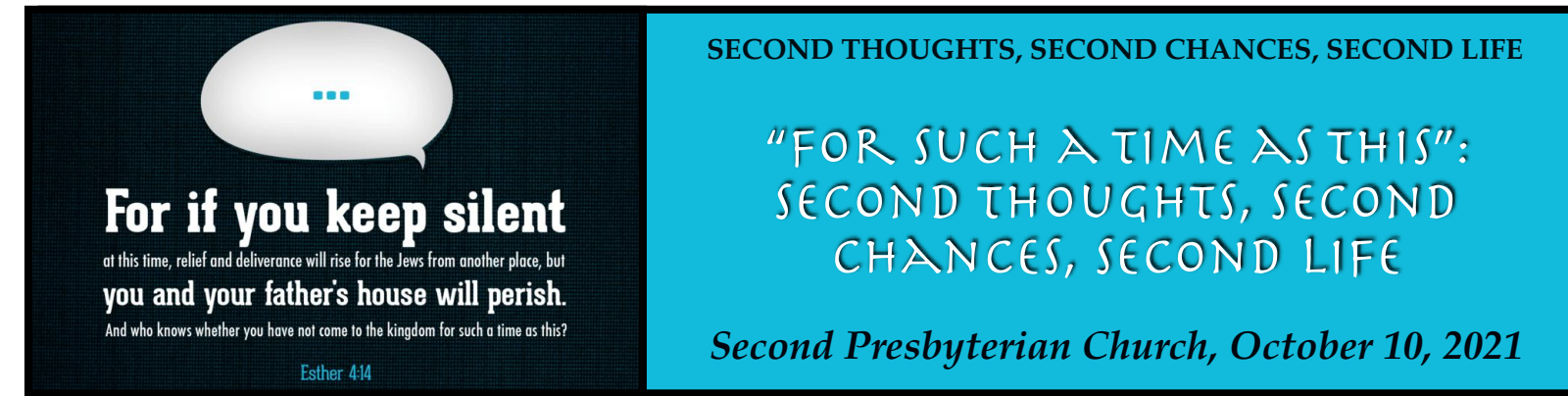
Thanks to the band for leading worship music this morning.

If you have a prayer request, please forward the request to the church office. We will include your request on the prayer request list for a month, unless you request for us to leave it on longer.

STAFF

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We Gather In Christ

“Open the Eyes of My Heart”
 By Paul Baloche (1997)

CALL TO WORSHIP

In the darkness of despair, depression, and loneliness,
We are called to bring light to the world.
 In the faint hope of dawn, when it seems foolish to believe,
We are called to be the light in the world.
 Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works
 and give glory to your Father in heaven. **Amen.**

WELCOME

***PASSING THE PEACE**

***SINGING OUR FAITH TOGETHER**

“Lord Most High”
 By Don Harris and Gary Sadler (1996)

Leader / All

From the ends of the earth / **From the ends of the earth**
 From the depths of the sea / **From the depths of the sea**
 From the height of the heavens / **From the heights of the heavens**
 (all sing) **your name be praised**

From the hearts of the weak / **From the hearts of the weak**
 From the shouts of the strong / **From the shouts of the strong**
 From the lips of all people / **From the lips of all people**
 (all sing) **this song we raise, Lord**

**Throughout the endless ages, You will be crowned with praises,
 Lord Most High.
 Exalted in every nation, sovereign of all creation,
 Lord, Most High, be magnified,
 Be magnified.**

Repeat from beginning

Whether we are old or young, whether we are first-time or longtime worshipers, whether we come full of doubts or confidence, joy or sorrow, in this place we all are family, because of what Jesus did for us on the cross. Welcome!

“We are told to let our light shine, and if it does, we won't need to tell anybody it does. Lighthouses don't fire cannons to call attention to their shining—they just shine.”
 —D.L. Moody

“Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.”
—Esther 4:14

We Recognize our Need to Grow Closer to God

*CONFESSING OUR SIN

Forgive us, O God, when we have closed our eyes and ears to your call. Forgive us when we have been so preoccupied with our challenges that we have ignored the gifts and blessings you have piled on us. Forgive us for the way in which we have been apathetic, and for the ways in which we have sold ourselves short. Forgive us, O God, when we have denied others, betrayed others, and hurt others with our words and careless actions. Loving God, call us back to Your ways of love, justice, and reconciliation. Amen.

*RECEIVING GRACE

There is no limit to God’s love and grace and forgiveness in Christ Jesus. Go forth, sharing the spirit of forgiveness and embracing the outcast, knowing that there is nothing that can separate us from God’s love in Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

*SINGING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

“The God of Second Chances”
By David Haas

**Come now, O God, of second chances;
open our lives to heal.
Remove our hate, and melt our rage.
Save us from ourselves.**

**Come now, O God, shake our resentment;
open our way to choose
the way of love over the revenge.
Show us a new way.**

**Come now, O God, release our demons;
open our eyes to see
the shame within, our guilt and pain.
Mend us; make us whole.**

**Come now, O God, and grant compassion;
open our hearts to love.
May we let go of all our hurt.
Help us to move on.**

**Come now, O God, and still our anger;
open our minds to peace.
Embrace our fear, and hold us close.
Calm the storm within.**

**Come now, O God, of second chances;
may we forgive ourselves,
may we become your living sign:
children of God’s love.**

We Hear the Word

TIME OF DISCOVERY

“We want our lives to make sense; God wants our lives to make a difference. A rich life requires the right premise.”
—Bob Goff

MESSAGE “For Such a Time as This”: Second Thoughts, Second Chances, Second Life
—Dr. Craig Wansink

SCRIPTURE LESSON Esther 4:5-17

5 Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king’s eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what was happening and why. **6** Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king’s gate, **7** and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king’s treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. **8** Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther, explain it to her, and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people. **9** Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. **10** Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mordecai, saying, **11** “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—all alike are to be put to death. Only if the king holds out the golden scepter to someone, may that person live. I myself have not been called to come in to the king for thirty days.” **12** When they told Mordecai what Esther had said, **13** Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not think that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. **14** For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father’s family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.” **15** Then Esther said in reply to Mordecai, **16** “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish.” **17** Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

We Respond in Humility

All sing:

**You’ve gathered us together now
To learn and serve and care,
As living echoes of your love
To your people everywhere.**

MISSION AND MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

WELCOMING OUR NEW MEMBER Linda Mathias

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

**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.**

“Some people have a warped idea of living the Christian life. Seeing talented, successful Christians, they attempt to imitate them. For them, the grass on the other side of the fence is always greener. But when they discover that their own gifts are different or their contributions are more modest (or even invisible), they collapse in discouragement and overlook genuine opportunities that are open to them. They have forgotten that they are here to serve Christ, not themselves.”
—Billy Graham