



Laurel Presbyterian Church
Enter to Worship, Depart to Serve

Welcomes You!

Pentecost 3

June 14, 2026, 10:00 AM

Where Love is Known

PRELUDE

James Sudbury

RINGING OF THE HOUR

Janice Berger

WELCOME BELOVED ONES

The Rev. Dr. Roger Gench

GATHERING AROUND LOVE

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP

James Sudbury

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Beverley Shepherd

Leader: What shall we return to the Lord?

People: We shall see God in everyone and in your creation.

Leader: What shall we return to the Lord?

People: We shall commit to actively growing in Christ. Stretching beyond our comfort zones to know you and to live love.

Leader: What shall we return to the Lord?

People: We shall return to our Truth in you by being Christ in this world.

*HYMN

Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies

No. 662

RECEIVING LOVE

CALL TO CONFESSION

The Rev. Dr. Roger Gench

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of All, we are still star struck that you would join the human race in Jesus and show us a different way of living that does not condemn us to a life of hell. That in you there is abundant life. A life to love. A way to live love. We can become so mired down in the "ick" of the world and in our own "ick" that we think we are hopeless. But you invite us to live your truth as people who have been given grace upon grace to

embrace ourselves in you individually and corporately as this particular Body of Christ. Have mercy on us for not embracing this gift of your grace. Help us to let go of all the places where we are trapped and stop ourselves short from growing in you. Ignite a holy fire under us to live as the “freed slaves” that we are in Christ. For all these things we pray in the name of Jesus, who is, and was, and always will be, our Christ. Amen.

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION. . . AMEN.

FORGIVENESS OF SIN

Leader: Cherished People of God: Hear the good news! We are made from cosmic material, and because we are, we can always return again and again to recover our truth in you.

People: **With great gratitude, we return ourselves to you to reclaim our identity as your Beloved Ones—trusting you to form us into your love-Led people.**

*OUR RESPONSE

Gloria Patri

Hymn No. 581

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

PROCLAIMING LOVE

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

The Rev. Dr. Roger Gench

SCRIPTURE

Romans 6: 1-14 (NRSVue)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

MUSICAL DEVOTION

Bread of Our Souls

Laurel Choir

SCRIPTURE

Romans 6: 15-23 (NRSVue)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

“Cosmic Bullies “

The Rev. Dr. Roger Gench

RESPONDING IN LOVE

*HYMN

Do Not Be Afraid

No. 76

*PROFESSION OF FAITH

The Apostle’s Creed

Beverley Shepherd

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
the Creator of heaven and earth,
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He arose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,
from whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.**

*OUR RESPONSE

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Hymn No. 606

RECEIVING LOVE TO BE LOVE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Rev. Dr. Roger Gench

Leader: We pray that you would continue to invite us to receive your grace to live as a gift, as the "freed slaves" that we are, even in face of the evidence that we often refuse opportunities to embrace and grow in the truth of this love.

Silence.

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray that you would soften our hearts so we might "be opened" to your Love.

Silence

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray that we might continue to encourage and call forth the wonder of speaking Laurel Love and growing deeper into your image as a beloved community of faith.

Silence.

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray that we might “be instruments of your peace” when the world is shattering before us—even into our own discomfort.

Silence.

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray that we might be surprised by “joy” even when we know so much suffering—even into our own suffering.

Silence.

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray that we might “be love” even when challenged by our most challenging neighbors—even into our most unlovable places.

Silence.

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray that we might “trust” your goodness and grace at deeper and deeper levels so that the weight of our “ick” might be replaced with the joy of your delight in us.

Silence.

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray for all those who are recovering from surgeries, addressing harsh realities, enduring medical challenges, gripping grief, isolation, uncertainty, unforgiving timelines,

sleep deprivation, addiction, housing and food deserts, lack of resources for basic needs, and all the caregivers. We pray for those who are emotionally under the weather or feeling unloved—and we pray that you would hold us tenderly—surfacing tangible forms of comfort, while finding ways for us to be merciful.

Silence.

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: For we dare to pray all these things in the name of our Lord, who taught us to pray:

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; lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

BEARING LOVE INTO THE WORLD

*HYMN

Thine is the Glory

No. 238

*THE CHARGE AND BLESSING

The Rev. Dr. Roger Gench

*POSTLUDE

James Sudbury

*RECESSION AND GREETING

The Rev. Dr. Roger Gench

***Please feel free to stand and move during our worship service.**

****Please wait to greet each other until the minister have recessed down the aisle.**

Welcome to The Rev. Dr. Roger Gench: We are thrilled to welcome back to our pulpit, The Rev. Dr. Roger Gench, a national guru in our denomination and a local fan favorite at Laurel.

Gratitude to our Liturgist: Thank you to Beverley Shepherd for serving as our liturgist this week.

Gratitude for the Steady Presence of Laurel Love: Thank you to Carolyn Stinger for her copy editing, Billy Shepherd for tending to our church sign, Mary Scearce, Beverley Shepherd and Carolyn for our printing, Brenda MacRae, our website master, and Wayne Alvis, Tod Balsbaugh, Marshall Chamberlayne, Pete MacRae, Glenda Miller and Fran Tredway for tending to our building and grounds.

All Are Welcome! The signature gift of Laurel Love is our affection and love for God and for one another.

Our Scripture for Today: Romans 6: 1-23, NRSV updated edition

⁶ What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may increase? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, so we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For whoever has died is freed from sin. ⁸ But if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies, so that you obey their desires. ¹³ No longer present your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

¹⁵ What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶ Do you not know that, if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God that you who were slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted ¹⁸ and that you, having been set free from sin, have become enslaved to righteousness. ¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms because of your limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and lawlessness, leading to even more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, leading to sanctification.

²⁰ When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ So what fruit did you then gain from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. ²² But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the fruit you have leads to sanctification, and the end is eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Laurel Presbyterian Church

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Where Love Is Known

laurelpres.com

“You are precious in my sight and honored and oh so loved.” Isaiah 43:4