



Laurel Presbyterian Church

Enter to Worship, Depart to Serve

Welcomes You!

14th Sunday After Pentecost

August 30, 2026, 10:00 AM

Where Love is Known

PRELUDE

James A. Sudbury

RINGING OF THE HOUR

Janice Berger

WELCOME BELOVED ONES

The Rev. Dr. Ann D. Cherry

GATHERING AROUND LOVE

MUSICAL CALL TO WORSHIP

James A. Sudbury

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Beverley Shepherd

Leader: Give thanks to the Lord!

People: We will dwell on all of God's wonderful ways.

Leader: Let the hearts rejoice of all those seeking the Lord!

People: We will sing joyfully to the Lord! (adapted from Psalm 105: 1-3)

*HYMN

His Eye Is on the Sparrow

No. 661 (Red Hymnal)

RECEIVING LOVE

CALL TO CONFESSION

The Rev. Dr. Ann D. Cherry

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Unwavering God, whose mercy is bottomless and whose wisdom timeless, hear our prayers today as we bring our lives before you. You give us a hard mandate—to pick up our cross and to follow you. That sounds fine on Sunday mornings, but Mondays? It is nearly impossible. Reality creeps in and we find ourselves up against the powers and principalities we navigate. Like Peter, there are moments when we do see clearly but clearly there are moments when we are stymied. We don't want to give up what we know for something we don't. Losing our lives for your sake sounds empty when we are facing the consequences of living our faith out. Have mercy on us when we

don't risk following. Give us the strength to follow you even when the naysayers shout out and we are afraid. Give us the courage to return ourselves to you at the risk of losing all that we have gained. For we pray all of these things in the name of Jesus, the true Sign of Jonah, who is, and was, and always will be, our Christ.

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 give ourselves back to you to be reformed in your image—trusting you to take our offering of love and deepen us into your love-led people.**

*OUR RESPONSE

Gloria Patri

Hymn No. 581 (*Red Hymnal*)

*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. Ann D. Cherry

SCRIPTURE

Romans 12: 9-21 (*The Message*)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

MUSICAL DEVOTION

James A. Sudbury

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 16: 21-28 (CEV)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

"Daring Greatly"

The Rev. Dr. Ann D. Cherry

RESPONDING IN LOVE

*HYMN

Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling

No. 418 (*Red Hymnal*)

*PROFESSION OF FAITH

A Brief Statement of Faith

Beverley Shepherd

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

*OUR RESPONSE

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

No. 606 (Red Hymnal)

SATURATED IN LOVE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Rev. Dr. Ann D. Cherry

Leader: We pray that you would give us the courage to *dare greatly* even when we fear losing everything for your sake by living out the mandate of the gospel that sometimes presents as the losing team and a futile ending.

Silence

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray that you would teach us how to live in uncertainty. Give us your wisdom as you draw us in closer to you. Remind us that you are as close to us as our own breath.

Silence

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We thank you for all that is lovely, gracious, and true. Empower us to chase wonder in all of your glory.

Silence

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray that you would continue to help us express “Laurel Love” in real ways—by helping us to grow deeper and deeper into your image as a beloved community, so we might live as Christ to one another and to your larger world.

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 shatterings.

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 for all those who are recovering from surgeries, healing from cancer, carrying all the burdens, 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 for 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 Greatest Sign of Jonah—Jesus, 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

I Danced in the Morning

No. 157 (*Red Hymnal*)

*THE CHARGE AND BLESSING

The Rev. Dr. Ann D. Cherry

*POSTLUDE

James A. Sudbury

*RECESSION AND GREETING

The Rev. Dr. Ann D. Cherry

***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.**

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

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 Searce, Beverley Shepherd and Carolyn for our printing, Brenda MacRae, our website master, and Tod Balsbuagh, Marshall Chamberlayne, Glenda Miller, Steve Searce, Billy Shepherd, 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.

Romans 12: 9-21, *The Message*

Love from the center of who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle.

Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder. Help needy Christians; be inventive in hospitality.

Bless your enemies; no cursing under your breath. Laugh with your happy friends when they're happy; share tears when they're down. Get along with each other; don't be stuck-up. Make friends with nobodies; don't be the great somebody.

Don't hit back; discover beauty in everyone. If you've got it in you, get along with everybody. Don't insist on getting even; that's not for you to do. "I'll do the judging," says God. "I'll take care of it."

Our Scriptures tell us that if you see your enemy hungry, go buy that person lunch, or if he *or she* is thirsty, get *them* a drink. Your generosity will surprise *them* with goodness. Don't let evil get the best of you; get the best of evil by doing good.

Matthew 16: 21-28, Contemporary English Version

From then on, Jesus began telling his disciples what would happen to him. He said, "I must go to Jerusalem. There the nation's leaders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law of Moses will make me suffer terribly. I will be killed, but three days later I will rise to life."

Peter took Jesus aside and told him to stop talking like that. He said, "God would never let this happen to you, Lord!"

Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Satan, get away from me! You're in my way because you think like everyone else and not like God."

Then Jesus said to his disciples:

If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross and follow me. If you want to save your life, you will destroy it. But if you give up your life for me, you will find it. What will you gain, if you own the whole world but destroy yourself? What would you give to get back your soul?

The Son of Man will soon come in the glory of his Father and with his angels to reward all people for what they have done. I promise you some of those standing here will not die before they see the Son of Man coming with his kingdom.

Laurel Presbyterian Church

The Rev. Dr. Ann D. Cherry, Minister

James A. Sudbury, Director of Music

You can contact Ann Cherry at (804) 873-1990 or at laurelpres.cherry@gmail.com

You can reach James Sudbury at (661) 466-7347 or at jamesandrewsudbury@gmail.com

Open your camera to capture the QR code to make a safe online donation to Laurel.



Growing Deeper Together

laurelpres.com

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