

ORDER OF SERVICE

"You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you odd."

-- Flannery O'Connor

PRELUDE **Prelude BWV 933** -- J. S. Bach

INTROIT **Spirit of Love** -- Herbert Colvin

OPENING WORDS CHALICE LIGHTING (Grace McDonald, chalice lighter)

The flame of our chalice bears witness to the Life of the Spirit that dwells in us and among us. By its light we seek to give reverence to what is precious and beautiful, holy and just. We seek to support and sustain one another in all the circumstances of life. We teach our children what it means to be human. We help each other to live in right relationship and to honor the Mystery in which we live and move and have our being. Thus do we covenant one with another to seek what is good, true, just, wise, lovely and holy; and to live according to what they require of us. To this end we bind ourselves to walk together in the paths of love to grow our souls and to stand against everything that would diminish the human spirit. -- bc

* HYMN Number 358 (standing) **Rank by Rank Again We Stand**

RESPONSIVE READING (standing) **What We Trust** -- bc

(1) It begins as simple as this: life is dynamic, grows and changes. This gives us our own doctrine: revelation is not sealed.

THUS WE TRUST THAT THE BEST WAY TO LIVE IN THE WORLD IS WITH A QUESTIONING MIND, OPEN TO NEW TRUTH AND LIGHT. THE SPIRITUAL FRUIT OF OUR ONE DOCTRINE IS HUMILITY.

(2) We recognize our dependence upon a creative power and upon processes not ultimately of our own making. Life, consciousness, awareness, discernment and freedom are gifts.

OUR RESPONSE IS ONE OF GRATITUDE. THUS WE COME TO WORSHIP, TO GIVE WORTH TO WHAT IS HOLY AND GOOD.

(3) We believe in practical religion. Religion is not about what we get in another world, but what we give in this one. It is what we do that matters.

THUS WE AFFIRM THE MORAL OBLIGATION TO DIRECT ONE'S EFFORTS TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JUST AND LOVING COMMUNITY.

(4) We share the conviction with Emerson that, "Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind." Our mission is to institutionalize religious freedom.

THUS WE DELCARE THAT FREE INQUIRY IS THE DOORWAY TO APPREHENDING WHAT IS TRUE. AND THAT THERE CAN BE NO HONEST OR DEEP CONVICTION UNLESS IT SPRINGS FROM A FREE CONSCIENCE.

(5) We have faith in the human spirit—that inherent capacity to appreciate, to discern quality, to be compassionate, to be aware, to be responsive to others, and to grow in understanding.

THUS WE GATHER TO PROTECT AND NURTURE THIS SPIRIT AGAINST EVERYTHING THAT WOULD DIMINISH IT.

* SONG OF EXALTATION (standing) Genevan Psalter, 1551

**All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing ye to God with cheerful voice;
Come serve with mirth, God's praise forth tell.
Join ye together and rejoice. Amen.**

OBJECT LESSON FOR CHILDREN (As the children gather the Choir and River Ringers sing *The Welcome Song*, and upon leaving *Go Now in Peace*.)

* INTERLUDE **Phantasietanz** -- R. Schumann

READING John 3:1-10 (Do we need to be born again?)

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

MOMENTS OF SILENCE (A time for contemplation and prayer.)

ANTHEM **Shall We Gather at the River**

OFFERTORY **Sonate op. 164** (2nd mvt.) -- F. Schubert

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*HYMN Number 89 (standing) **Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life**

SERMON **Our Odd Gospel**
The Reverend Burton D. Carley

CHORAL RESPONSE **Benediction** -- Jason Shelton

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE **Till there was you** -- M. Willson

* Persons arriving late may be seated at these times.

Large Print or Braille Hymnals, and Assisted Hearing Devices may be requested from the ushers.

Web Site: Check out our web site at www.churchoftheriver.org. You will find relevant information about our church, including a calendar and the weekly newsletter.

To receive the newsletter and/or have a nametag, please visit the welcoming table at the back of the church to sign our guest register.

A Crying Room is available in the Beacon Room (library) of the Channing Wing. You can hear the service while rocking the little one.

The Care Coordinator for September is Suzanne Freeman at 662-487-2570.

SUNDAY MORNING GROUPS: The Quest Group meets in the Beacon Room at 9:30 a.m. to ponder "The Bible - Down and Dirty". The Questions of Faith group meets next week at 10 a.m. in the Chalice Room to discuss Channing's sermon *Unitarian Christianity*. For information contact either Liz Conway at 486-4872 or Natalie Parker-Lawrence at 461-8206. All welcome! The YRUU meets with advisor Tim Wheat.

What are you called to do? Four opportunities: (1) Soup Kitchen (Dan Bing at 763-2384); (2) COR meals-on-wheels (Jeane Umbreit at 374-9114); (3) Shady Grove Elementary School (Juliet Wischmeyer at 219-5817); (4) Hospitality Hub (Ellen Klyce at 323-0123).

SERMONS AVAILABLE: CD's for \$5 or on loan from the library. Print copies on the Welcome Table. PODCASTS on the website by Tuesday.

PLEASE JOIN US AFTER THE SERVICE IN THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER ROOM FOR A WELCOME BACK RECEPTION WITH REFRESHMENTS.

VISITORS AND GUESTS ARE INVITED TO THE BEACON ROOM TO MEET THE MINISTER AND CHURCH PRESIDENT AFTER THE SERVICE. QUESTIONS ARE WELCOMED. REFRESHMENTS SERVED.

Check out the old coils from the ancient air handlers replaced this summer. They are in the courtyard. Thanks for all who made this possible. Bluff repair work will take place this fall. Keep those pledge gifts coming in.

Please practice hospitality by leaving the back pew open for members and visitors who are physically challenged and those who arrive after the first hymn. Also we appreciate SILENT CELL PHONES.

GREEN TIP: Turn off one light bulb while you are at work, school, or sleeping, and save 208 kilowatt hours, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 35 pounds per year.

Wed. at 11 a.m. in the Memorial Garden there will be brief service and scattering of ashes for Amy Wood. All friends are invited.

Wed. at 2 p.m. the Shakespeare Readers will meet at the Main Library to finish *Timon of Athens*. Contact Gale Mason for information at 725-7924.

Wed. at 7:30 p.m. the Choir will practice in the sanctuary.

On Sat., Oct. 10 at 3:30 p.m. there will be a tribute to the Reverend James Madison Barr in the Mississippi River Room.

Wed. the 16th there will be a potluck for families with children in grades 1-6 at the home of Juliet Wischmeyer.

ADULT EDUCATION CLASS *The Bible for Unitarians* with Rev. Carley will begin on Tues., Sept. 29 and run for the next three Tues. evenings from 7:30 to 9 pm. The class will meet in the east Memphis home of the Jennings. Tuition is \$15 and scholarships are available. **READ THE GOSPEL OF MARK FOR THE FIRST SESSION.** Participants will decide the other three books to study. Register by calling the church office at 526-8631.

CHECK OUT OF THE NEWSLETTER FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE SUPPER CLUB. SIGN UP DEADLINE IS SEPT. 30TH.

THE ANNUAL WALK TO BENEFIT DIVERSITY MEMPHIS IS SUNDAY, SEPT. 13. Register online at www.diversitymemphis.org or at our display table at the church. The high school youth group will provide sack lunches for your donations so that you can grab a lunch, and make it to the Civil Rights Museum for the 1:30 start of this family friendly stroll through downtown Memphis. Multicultural entertainment at the Civil Rights Plaza will continue after the walk. Funds generated by our walk team support high school youth at Camp Freeland each summer. Join your Church of the River Friends to support the work of Diversity Memphis, making "Memphis better for everyone."