

Flint River Presbytery Opening Worship

October 16, 2021

Celebrating with the Cloud of Witnesses

Our opening worship features several of our newest pastors, Brad Walker and Sarah McClelland-Brown, who are recent additions our presbytery. Please be intentional about welcoming them into our shared life!

The Prayers of the Saints, the Necrology Listing, and the Ordination Celebration are being offered by Sherrida Crawford of First (Valdosta), Glenn Gilstrap of Thomaston, Connie Happell of Edgewood, and Sharon McFarland of Americus. All are members of our Committee on Ministry (COM). Each of these individuals serve as “cluster conveners”, which means they call fellow committee members together to both pray for and address the needs of the churches within their geographic cluster. Their presence today is a visible reminder that this committee seeks to stay connected to each of our congregations in meaningful ways.

The Celebration of the Lord’s Supper is being led by John Akers, who will soon be honorably retired. He will be at the table with our Executive Presbyter as a means of giving thanks for his long pastorate among us.

*denotes “Please stand if you are able”

*Call to Worship

Brad Walker, First (Moultrie)

Remembering the Gift of Call based on Isaiah 6 and Revelation 11

One: I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted and the train of his robe filled the temple.
The Lord, the Mighty One, said, Go and tell this people!”

All: Above God were seraphs, each with six wings. And they were calling to one another: “Holy, Holy,
Holy is the Lord God Almighty! The whole earth is full of his glory!”

One: And the Lord God Almighty said, “Go and tell this people!”

All: At the sound of the seraphs’ voices, the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled
will smoke. And the Lord, the Mighty One, said, “Go and tell this people!”

One: And there were loud voices in heaven which said, “The kingdom of this world has become the Kingdom
of our Lord and of his Christ! And he shall reign for ever and ever!”

All: And the Lord God Almighty said, “Go and tell this people!” And I said, “Here I am. Send me!”

*Opening Hymn: "Here I Am, Lord"

*I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame, I will set a feast for them, My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide Till their hearts be satisfied. I will give My life to them. Whom shall I send?
Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard You calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if You lead me.
I will hold Your people in my heart.*

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 11:1-3

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.² Indeed, by faith^a our ancestors received approval.³ By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.^b

Unison Response to Scripture:

By faith, let us join those who have journeyed before us, until we reach the city built by God's own hands.

Hymn: "Will You Let Me Be Your Servant"

*We are pilgrims on a journey; we're together on the road.
We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.
I will hold the Christ-light for you in the nighttime of your fear.
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.
I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through. (*Repeat)*

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 11: 29-35a and Hebrews 12:1-2

Sarah McClelland-Brown, First (Warner Robins)

²⁹ By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. ³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. ³¹ By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient,^c because she had received the spies in peace.³² And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— ³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵ Women received their dead by resurrection.

12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely,^d and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us,^e looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of^f the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

Unison Response to Scripture:

And when from death we are free, may we join those who have lead the way rejoicing around your throne.

*Hymn "Holy, Holy Holy! Lord God Almighty!"

*Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty! God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!
Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee, Casting down their gold crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee, Who wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.*

Unison Prayer of Remembrance for the Saints and the Necrology (Calling out the Names of the Beloved)

Almighty and Eternal God,

we pause to remember brothers and sisters we knew and loved,

whose deaths leave a hole in the fabric of our lives.

We pause to acknowledge our loss and to lament – freely and fully. (*Silence)

We pause as well to remember the fruits they exhibited,

the lives they touched,

and the ways in which they were

clothed in Jesus Christ.

We give thanks for the ways in which they stood as witnesses to you and stand in humble gratitude for the gift of their lives.... (the prayer continues)....And thanks be to Jesus Christ our Lord who was dead, but is risen; and to whom be honor and praise, now and forever. Amen.

*Hymn "Holy, Holy Holy! Lord God Almighty!"

*Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty! God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!
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Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee, Who wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.*

Prayer of Celebration for the Saints who Continue to Serve in our Midst

Unison Response to Prayer: Come, let taste our future in God's Kingdom!

Hymn "Lord, Speak to Me That I May Speak"

O lead me, Lord, that I may lead the wandering and the wavering feet.

O feed me, lord, that I may feed your hungering ones with manna sweet.

*O fill me with your fullness, Lord, until my very heart o'erflow in kindling though and glowing word,
your love to tell, your praise to show.*

*O use me, Lord, use even me, just as you will, and when, and where until your blessed face I see,
your rest, your joy, your glory share.*

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

John Akers and Deb Tregaskis

Individual sealed packages of the bread and cup were available upon registration.

Pause deeply to give heartfelt thanks for these holy gifts and follow the instruction for opening. First, push the tab completely down. There are two tabs below. The first tab opens the seal for the bread and the second tab seal for the juice.

Gathering around the Table

Prayer of Adoration & Thanksgiving

Invitation

Words of Institution

Sending Prayer after the Meal (in unison)

In deep gratitude, for this moment, this meal, and our neighbors, near and far, we give ourselves to you, dear Jesus.

You have gathered us in at table. Send us out to live as changed people. We have shared the Living Bread and are witnesses to the reality that we cannot remain the same.

Ask much of us, expect much from us, enable much by us, and encourage many through us.

May we live to your glory, both as inhabitants of earth and citizens of heaven. We make all this prayer in your holy name. AMEN

Call to Offering and Prayer of Dedication

**Pam Moye, Volunteer Staff Associate for the Committee on Mission and Evangelism (CME) and
Rita Montgomery, CME moderator**

*Closing Hymn "Seek Ye First"

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Allelu, alleluia!

Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek, and you shall find; knock and the door shall be opened unto you.

Allelu, alleluia!

You shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Allelu, alleluia!

*****Our Moderator returns us to the Business of our Meeting with a blessing*****

