

GATHERING OURSELVES TOGETHER

Welcome

Musical Prelude

PRESENTING OURSELVES TO GOD

*Opening Hymn *This Is My Father's World* 384

*Call To Worship

Leader: The gifts of the Spirit have come to us in Jesus Christ!

People: O Lord, you have led us to the wedding feast. You have led us to Christ.

Leader: The ways of God have been revealed to us in the life, death and resurrection of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

People: Give to us, Giving God, the gifts of the Holy Spirit according to Your need.

Unison: You have given us the Holy Spirit, Lord, through Jesus Christ.

Show us Your way in Your world, so we might be the image of Christ for others.

*Prayer for Forgiveness & Reconciliation

Precious Lord, we need, we want and we are left despondent over what we cannot have. And yet, You are the center of our lives. You are the one who has given us all things. Help us to live from the abundant gifts you have given us. Forgive us all the living we do from our desperation and sense of lack. Fill us with the good wine of Jesus Christ and bring us to Your wedding feast, O God. Help us to trust, to have faith and to be more giving to others. Have mercy on us, O Lord, and grant us peace in You. Amen.

*Moment of Silence

*Assurance of Forgiveness

*Gloria Patri

Announcements

Moment of Music

GOD'S WORD TO US

Offertory

*Doxology & Prayer of Dedication

*Prayer Hymn

The Solid Rock (vss 1,2,4)

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Sharing our Joys and Concerns

Call to Prayer & Response

Pastoral Prayer

O God, who sent gifts of the Holy Spirit to those first saints, We know you continue to send gifts to us, even though we do not claim them.

We confess that we have not always opened our gifts. We have often chosen to keep them packed away or buried.

Move us, by your Spirit, to pick up our presents, that you so freely give, to open them and to spend them lavishly on the stewardship of your world.

We pray On this day for...

HEALTH	JOYS	OTHER
	Birthdays --	Those who have died:
	Anniversaries --	Servicemen/women
	-- Safe travel	Churches
		Perry Family
<u>MOMENT OF SILENCE</u>		
<i>astonish us anew, O God! Our prayer is that you will claim us again and silence within us our desire to always have words for every occasion, that we might hear the whisper of the wings of your Spirit dove.</i>		
We pray as Jesus taught us - OUR FATHER...		
The Lord's Prayer		

Responsive Reading: Psalm 36

Leader: Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness to the clouds.

People: Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, Your judgments are like the great deep; You save humans and animals alike, O Lord.

Leader: How precious is Your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.

People: They feast on the abundance of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your delights.

Unison: For with you is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light. O continue Your steadfast love to those who know You and Your salvation to the upright of heart!

Epistle Reading *1 Corinthians 12:1-11*

Gospel Reading: *John 2:1-11*

Sermon: “*Spill the Wine: The Soul of Scarcity and the Soul of Abundance*”

For us as American Christians, I think we’re obsessed with doing things, doing them right, and making sure other people see that we’re doing it right, when in fact both 1 Corinthians 12 and John 2 are talking about how spiritual things function in this world, and how they operate in accordance with cosmic movements.

Jesus says in Matthew 28:18 - “*I have been given all authority over heaven and earth*”

John 1 begins with these incredible forces in the universe coming together in Christ. And so that the same thing is happening in this story as well but now it’s with human beings.

Just like the groom at the party, we’re participants in these forces with all of our feelings and our experiences.

If we can just remove ourselves just a little bit and understand that when we participate with God & Christ, the meaning of things changes radically.

The abundance of God is no longer a call on us to do something, it's a recognition of the present state of our participation.

And in the same way, when we've been emptied or were at an empty point, we're still participating -

we're a participant in the cosmic movement of God and Christ and the Holy Spirit

We are like the wine jars, and we're designed to hold far more than we think. We should be continually surprised that water jars in the ancient world were 40 gallon containers. That's an incredible amount of water changed to wine. There are 8 of them.

The abundance that's available from receiving God's gift is huge, and at the same time it's easy to get emptied out.

This is a story that takes place when things are emptied out.

So in the rolling and roiling aspect of the nature of the universe empty spaces are filled and full spaces are emptied all the time.

John Ch 1 shows Jesus has the power of the universe, the darkness and the light. Here, we have emptiness and fullness as forces of the universe.

When we have this sort of cosmic view of things we can let go of the shame, the potential failure of letting people down (cuz that's what the core of this story is about) and at the same time be filled with the best that God can give.

The gifts of God are an overflowing jug of wine into the community.

1 Cor 12.

Let's stop thinking about all the doing we think we are required to do as a follower of God and Christ.

What if our work as Christians were not about doing or not doing - instead, it is about emptying and filling.

Abundance is only known by what has been empty.

Emptiness is only known by having been full once.

Our participation in the life of faith is a cosmic participation in the flowing forces of the universe, the flowing forces of God and Christ and the Holy Spirit.

These forces, these beings, this God, can only be known in relationship to Him and to one another.

This, by the way, is why it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of the needle. The rich never understand the reality of emptiness as a call to fill up the community; they understand it as the hoarding of abundant resources for the sake of the individual.

We want to be seen, to be known for what we have done.

But look what happens in this story:

All of Jesus' work is in the background. The bride and the groom have no idea what is going on. Mother Mary and Jesus take care of the family in the background and notice

the bridegroom gets all the credit for the miracle

Jesus' first miracle happens in secret and in the background.

What might God be doing in the background of your life, after hidden conversations between the God of sparrows and hair and creepy crawly things and lilies of the field with the Son of Man, for your sake within your community of friends, family, or faith?

So we don't receive the gifts of God as listed in Corinth 12 to do things.

We do things because that's what the gifts of God do:

The gifts do stuff.

Augustine [writes](#) that this sign "*is not marvellous [sic] to those who know that it was God's doing. For He who made wine on that day at the marriage feast ... does this every year in vines. For even as that which the servants put into the water-pots was turned into wine by the doing of the Lord, so in like manner also is what the clouds pour forth changed into wine by the doing of the same Lord.*"

Think of our spiritual lives as the movement of cosmic forces, rather than "what do I have to do" or "What didn't I do"?

Now times of emptiness are not times of scarcity, they are opportunities to be filled up.

In our story, being empty is an opportunity for God's power through Jesus to be enacted, hidden, in the background, without fanfare.

And being filled up is not all about abundance,

it's about the opportunity to share what you've been given and participate in those cosmic forces that Christ participates in.

Imagine what the work of our lives would be like if it were not dependent on God's judgement

or

Imagine if we were no longer responsible for being the agent of life because we fear death

Or

the agent of darkness because we fear light and love and beauty.

What if our work were to merely participate in the Vast Powerful Forces that we are invited to participate in as followers of Christ?

In our story today, being filled up is an opportunity for the ... wait for it ...

the party to continue without any of those celebrating and being celebrated ever knowing

shame, humiliation, and trouble were almost upon them.

What a beautiful image for how we are called to be with one another.

What a beautiful image of the church.

John 1:16, "From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace."

Our souls move between and within those cosmic forces.

We hold so much more than we think we can, and, when we are emptied out for whatever reason, that's why it feels so much worse...

because we are designed to be vessels for the cosmic forces of emptying and filling.

Amen

*Closing Hymn

Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies

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*Benediction and Choral Response
Musical Postlude