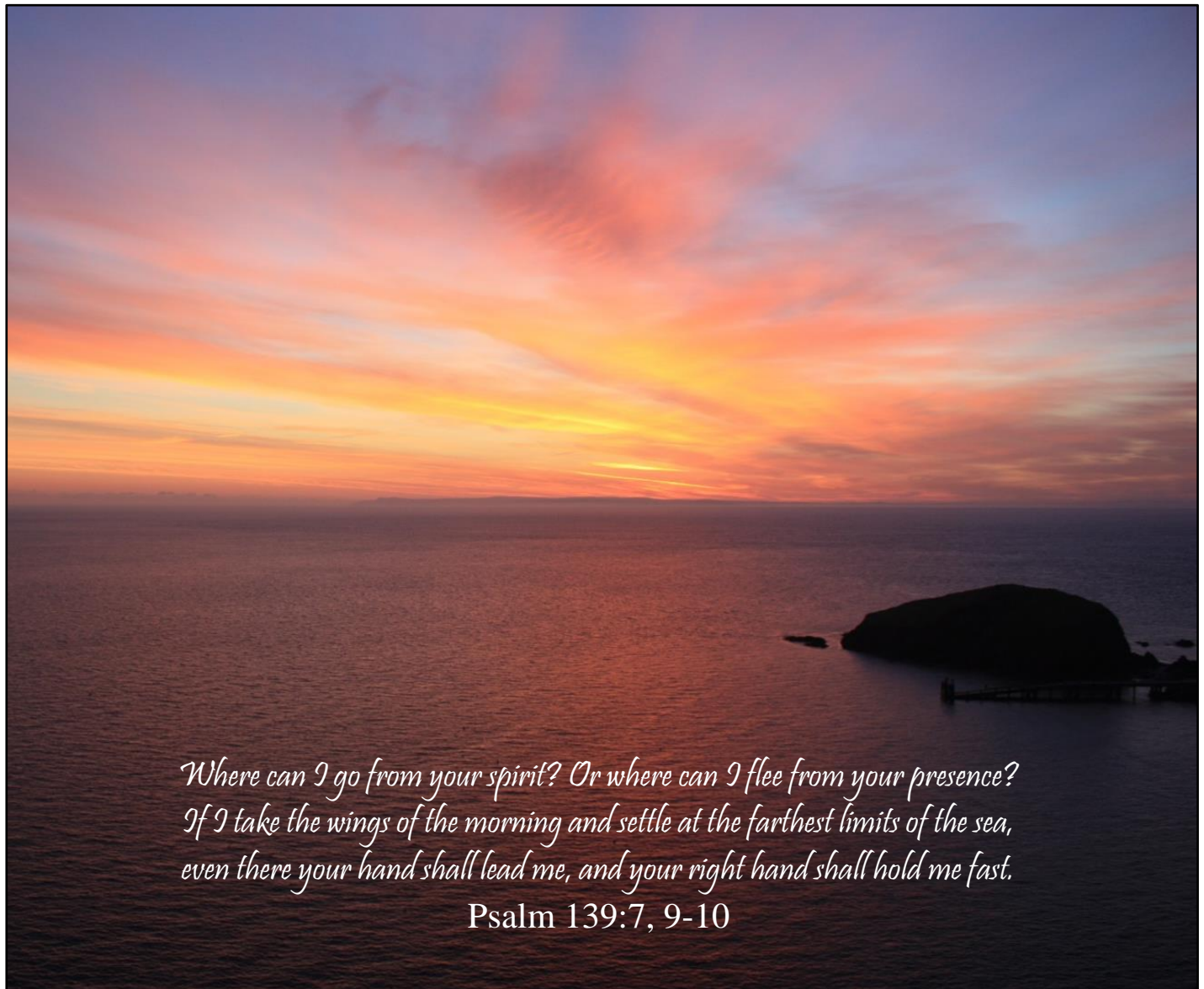


Christ's Reformed Church – United Church of Christ

~ growing people of faith who live in Jesus, love one another and bear abundant fruit ~



*Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?
If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.*

Psalm 139:7, 9-10

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JULY 23, 2017

9:30 AM

THIS MORNING'S THEME: *God Both Supports and Challenges Us*

“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.” – Frederick Buechner

Life-giving God, wash us clean. Restore our imaginations and our hearts. Let your courage and compassion flow through our veins until we love with abandon and our hands reach out in blessing, for the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God. Amen.

Lament:

Holy God...

holy and mighty, holy immortal One, have mercy on us.

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

Sisters and brothers, hear the word of the Lord. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God says unequivocally, irrevocably: “you are my own; you are forgiven; and I need you to be about my business in the world.”

Amen! Thanks be to God.

RESPONSE

God Will Make a Way

~ See Insert

~ LISTENING TO GOD’S WORD ~

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

O God, you love with a father’s tenderness, a mother’s zeal. Move now in our hearts.

Breathe through the words we hear, the songs we share, the burdens we carry, until we discover our purpose in your liberating love, for we long to join creation’s praise and to shine with the radiance of the Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalm 139 (NRSV)

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 (NRSV)

The Word of God for the People of God. **Thanks be to God!**

TIME ON THE STEPS

Judy Bowman

HYMN

I Know Whom I Have Believed

~ See Insert

SERMON

The Hound of Heaven

Rev. Fred Harris

~ RESPONDING AS GOD’S PEOPLE ~

SPECIAL MUSIC

Give Me Jesus/I’d Rather Have Jesus Medley
Soloist – Charlotte Trout

PASTORAL PRAYER, PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD’S PRAYER (DEBTS)

RESPONSE

Lord, Listen to your Children Praying

~ See Insert

GIVING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

God blesses us that we might carry that blessing into the world. Let us give with grateful hearts.

OFFERTORY

* RESPONSE

The Doxology

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God of mystery and grace, you have met us and blessed us with such abundant promise. In gratitude, we offer what we carry in our hearts and our pockets.

As we bring these humble offerings, we pray that you would bless them and use us, by the movement and direction of your Spirit in our lives. Amen!

~ GOING IN GOD'S NAME ~

* CLOSING HYMN

Be Now My Vision

Black 451

* SENDING AND BLESSING

Sisters and brothers, however dark the night gets—know that you are held by a love like this: the Creator who made you still claims you in covenant love. The Redeemer who died for your sake lives again by the word of God; the Sustainer of all creation yet breathes courage into your heart.

Sisters and brothers, the triune God still traffics in mercy, in comfort and in challenge. Knowing this, live, then, with boldness and joy. Go forth sowing the seed of God's new life, and give thanks, for God will supply the growth. **Amen!**

* CLOSING SONG

Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing

Black 77, vs. 1 only

POSTLUDE

Psalm 139 (NRSV)

¹ O LORD, you have searched me and known me.

² You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.

³ You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue,
O LORD, you know it completely.

⁵ You hem me in, behind and before,

and lay your hand upon me.

⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

⁷ Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

⁹ If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

¹⁰ even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.

¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light around me become night,"

¹² even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for
darkness is as light to you.

¹³ For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days
that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.

¹⁷ How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!

¹⁸ I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end—I am still with you.

¹⁹ O that you would kill the wicked, O God,
and that the bloodthirsty would depart from me—

²⁰ those who speak of you maliciously,
and lift themselves up against you for evil!

²¹ Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?

²² I hate them with perfect hatred;
I count them my enemies.

²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my thoughts.

²⁴ See if there is any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 (NRSV)

²⁴ He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. ²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷ And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' ²⁸ He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' ²⁹ But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'" ...

³⁶ Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." ³⁷ He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; ³⁸ the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, ⁴² and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!