



## ORDINARY TIME | OCTOBER 25, 2020

### REFLECTIONS

"[Sarah's] laughter signifies two kinds of human disbelief – that of doubt and of uncomprehending joy."

VINOTH RAMACHANDRA | *SARAH'S LAUGHTER*

Nobody claims there's a chuckle on every page, but laughter's what the whole Bible is really about. Nobody who knows his hat from home-plate claims that getting mixed up with God is all sweetness and light, but ultimately it's what that's all about too.

FREDERICK BUECHNER | *PECULIAR TREASURES*

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader All who weep in fear, sadness, and doubt, hear these words:  
Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.  
**Together Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!**  
Leader Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,  
**Together shall come home with shouts of joy.**  
Leader If you hear the voice of the Lord today,  
do not linger in suspicion, but come quickly and rejoice.  
**All He is ready to save! He is able! Nothing is too hard for the Lord!**  
— based on Lk. 6:21, Ps. 126, Heb. 3:15, Gen. 18:14

### SONG OF PRAISE

COME CHRISTIANS JOIN TO SING / *CHRISTIAN BATEMAN*

1. Come, Christians, join to sing, "Alleluia! Amen!"  
Loud praise to Christ our King; Alleluia! Amen!  
Let all, with heart and voice, before His throne rejoice;  
praise is His gracious choice. Alleluia! Amen!  
2. Come, lift your hearts on high; Alleluia! Amen!  
Let praises fill the sky; Alleluia! Amen!  
He is our guide and friend; to us He'll condescend;  
His love shall never end. Alleluia! Amen!

3. Praise yet our Christ again; Alleluia! Amen!  
Life shall not end the strain; Alleluia! Amen!  
On heaven's blissful shore, his goodness we'll adore,  
Singing forevermore, "Alleluia! Amen!"

### PRAYER OF ADORATION

**Together** We praise you, God our Father!  
In you and through your Son, Jesus Christ,  
we find the beginning and end of all things.  
In him we find your "Yes" to all your promises.  
In him, we find hope, forgiveness, and the grace for new beginnings.  
Let the fresh winds of your Spirit sweep into our lives this day  
so that our act of worship may become a time of renewal  
and new faith in you, new hope for our world,  
and new love for our neighbors. **Amen.**

### SONGS OF PRAISE

PENSIVE, DOUBTING, FEARFUL HEART / *JOHN NEWTON*

1. Pensive, doubting, fearful heart,  
hear what Christ the Savior says;  
every word should joy impart,  
change thy mourning into praise.  
Yes, He speaks and speaks to thee.  
May He help thee to believe;  
then thou presently will see  
thou has little cause to grieve.

2. Fear thou not, nor be ashamed;  
all thy sorrows soon shall end,  
I, who heaven and earth have framed,  
am thy Husband and thy Friend;  
I, the High and Holy One,  
Israel's God, by all adored,  
as thy Savior will be known,  
thy Redeemer and thy Lord.

3. For a moment I withdrew,  
and thy heart was filled with pain;  
but my mercies I'll renew;  
thou shall soon rejoice again;  
though I seem to hide my face,  
very soon my wrath shall cease;  
'tis but for a moment's space,  
ending in eternal peace. *(continued...)*

4. Though afflicted, tempest tossed,  
comfortless awhile thou art,  
do not think thou can be lost,  
thou art graven on my heart;  
all thy wastes I will repair;  
thou shalt be rebuilt anew;  
and in thee it shall appear  
what the God of love can do.

**OCEANS (WHERE FEET MAY FALL) / HOUSTON, CROCKER, LIGHTLEM**

1. You call me out upon the waters  
The great unknown where feet may fail  
And there I find You in the mystery  
In oceans deep my faith will stand

**CHORUS**

*And I will call upon Your name  
And keep my eyes above the waves  
When oceans rise  
my soul will rest in Your embrace  
For I am Yours and You are mine*

2. Your grace abounds in deepest waters  
Your sovereign hand will be my guide  
Where feet may fail  
and fear surrounds me  
You've never failed  
and You won't start now

**BRIDGE**

*Take me deeper than my feet  
could ever wander  
And my faith will be made stronger  
In the presence of my Saviour  
Spirit lead me where my trust  
is without borders  
Let me walk upon the waters  
Wherever You would call me*

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**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

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**Together**

Father of Lights, every good and perfect gift comes for you.  
You brought us forth with your truth and daily offer us grace upon grace.  
Yet, we are prone to forget your kindness,  
and we are quick to laugh at your word.  
In so doing, we have sinned.  
Forgive our indifference to the brokenness in and around us.  
Forgive our refusal to relieve the suffering of others.  
Forgive our envy of those who have more than we have.  
Forgive our obsession with creating a life of constant pleasure.  
Open our ears to your truth anew, fill our mouths with the laughter of faith,  
and incline our hearts to you, so that we may desire what is good,  
love what you love, and do what you command,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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**SONG OF RESPONSE & ASSURANCE**

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**PSALM 126 / BIFROST ARTS**

1. Our mouths they were filled, filled with laughter  
Our tongues they were loosed, loosed with joy  
Restore us, O Lord; restore us, O Lord

**CHORUS**

*Although we are weeping, Lord, help us keep sowing  
The seeds of Your Kingdom, for the day You will reap them  
Your sheaves we will carry, Lord, please do not tarry  
All those who sow weeping will go out with songs of joy*

2. The nations will say, "He has done great things!"  
The nations will sing songs of joy  
Restore us, O Lord; restore us, O Lord

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**WORDS OF COMFORT & PEACE**

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Leader

This is what the Lord says: "Return to me with all your heart."  
Our God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. Now lift  
up your heads, look to the cross of Jesus Christ, and know that your debt has been paid in full  
because of love. Believe and be glad!  
*— from Joel 2:12-13*

**All**

**Thanks be to God!**

Leader

May the peace of the Lord be always with you.

**All**

**And also with you.**

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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\* Continue passing the peace to one another during announcements.

\*\* Check our website for the latest updates and ways to invest in the life of our church and city.

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## THE OFFERING & OFFERTORY

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If you're accustomed to giving during worship on Sunday mornings, please consider giving online and setting up a recurring or one-time gift through the Subsplash platform. (Subsplash has one of the lowest transaction fees and reduces our fees the more people give online.) To give online, visit <https://gracepasadena.org/give>. Questions? Email [info@gracepasadena.org](mailto:info@gracepasadena.org).

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## THE 1<sup>ST</sup> LESSON — GENESIS 18:1-15; 21:5-7

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<sup>1</sup> And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup> He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth <sup>3</sup> and said, "O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. <sup>4</sup> Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, <sup>5</sup> while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." <sup>6</sup> And Abraham went quickly into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quick! Three seahs of fine flour! Knead it, and make cakes." <sup>7</sup> And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to a young man, who prepared it quickly. <sup>8</sup> Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

<sup>9</sup> They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent." <sup>10</sup> The LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. <sup>11</sup> Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. <sup>12</sup> So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" <sup>13</sup> The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?'" <sup>14</sup> Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son." <sup>15</sup> But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. He said, "No, but you did laugh."

<sup>21:5</sup> Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. <sup>6</sup> And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh over me." <sup>7</sup> And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age." [ESV]

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## THE SERMON — MARC CHOI

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*Sermon Series: "Genesis: We Begin..."*  
*Sermon Title: "We Begin and End with a Laugh"*

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## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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Leader: In response to the Good News of God's love for us in Jesus Christ, let us pray for ourselves, city and world. Take a moment to name your desires, both big and small.

Almighty God, we long for the fullness of your kingdom, when your holiness will be known throughout the world. Grant us grace for the journey, patience for the fulfillment of all your promises, and faith-filled laughter as we press forward toward that great day. For this, O Lord, we pray:

**All Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: King of Kings and Lord of Lords, all authority belongs to you. Bless all earthly authorities in promoting mercy and justice everywhere. Guide our upcoming election by your perfect wisdom, and lead us in seeking the good of our city. May your Church speak your words of peace in these divided times, remembering that your word alone brings true life. For this, O Lord, we pray:

**All Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: Holy Spirit, your renewing power is stronger than our doubts and even the grip of death. Be a healer to the sick, a friend to the lonely, a comforter to the afflicted, a home to the wanderer, a refuge to the fearful, a provider for the poor. Surprise the barren with your fullness. For this, O Lord, we pray:

**All Lord, hear our prayer. Amen.**

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## A COMMUNION PRAYER

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**Together** Jesus Christ, you promise to meet us and feed us whenever we gather and eat from your table. Since we cannot break bread with you and one another, we ask that you would renew your presence in us and strengthen us spiritually. We long to feast with you and our church family. We long to welcome others into your presence and to experience your gracious hospitality together. In your mercy, make it so quickly. In your name, we pray. **Amen.**

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## CLOSING SONGS

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### COME YE SINNERS POOR & NEEDY / JOSEPH HART

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| 1. Come ye sinners, poor and needy,<br>bruised and broken by the fall!<br>Jesus ready stands to save you,<br>Full of pardoning love for all.<br>He is able, He is able,<br>He is willing, doubt no more!<br>He is able, He is able,<br>He is willing, doubt no more! | 2. Let not conscience make you linger,<br>nor of fitness fondly dream;<br>All that He requires of sinners<br>is to lean and trust on Him.<br>He will save you, He will save you,<br>'tis the Gospel's constant theme!<br>He will save you, He will save you,<br>'tis the Gospel's constant theme! | 3. Lo! Th' incarnate God ascended,<br>pleads the merit of His blood;<br>venture on Him, venture wholly;<br>let no other trust intrude.<br>None but Jesus, none but Jesus,<br>can do helpless sinners good.<br>None but Jesus, none but Jesus,<br>can do helpless sinners good. |
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### HOW GREAT THOU ART / CARL BOBERG; TRANS. STUART HINE

1. O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made;  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

#### CHORUS

Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee,  
how great Thou art, how great Thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee,  
how great Thou art, how great Thou art!

2. And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing;  
sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;  
that on the cross my burden gladly bearing,  
He bled and died to take away my sin.

3. When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation,  
and take me home what joy shall fill my heart.  
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration,  
and there proclaim, "My God, how great Thou art!"

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## BENEDICTION & SENDING

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Leader Stand alert and watch for the Lord! He has heard our cries; he is our strength and shield. He will fill our mouths with laughter, and may our unbelievable joy bless our neighbors, city and world. —from Ps.28; Ps. 126

All **Thanks be to God! Amen!**

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## ORDINARY TIME

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As Phillip Reinders says in *Seeking God's Face*:

"With all the big holidays and celebrations over, Ordinary Time offers us the space to find our place in God's story. We've celebrated and taken in the momentous life of Jesus; now we need a long stretch of days to absorb and assimilate it. In Ordinary Time, we fully take in the gospel, allowing it to take shape in our daily living, making connections between Jesus' story and our lives. 'Ordinary' doesn't mean boring or second-rate but simply 'everyday.' The Christian faith is not an otherworldly faith; it's about this creation, your life, these days. Ordinary Time gives us the space to consider all the implications of God's salvation in Jesus Christ for our day by day, week-in, week-out lives. As such, it is a time of listening to the story of God's people."

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## GIVING & BUDGET

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	<u>JAN-AUG</u>	<u>OCT 2020<sup>1</sup></u>	<u>MERCY<sup>2</sup></u>
OFFERINGS & CONTRIBUTIONS _____	<b>\$294,686</b>	<b>\$22,469</b>	<b>\$15,020</b>
BUDGETED GIVING _____	<b>288,000</b>	<b>36,000</b>	<b>---</b>
DIFFERENCE _____	<b>+6,686</b>	<b>-13,531</b>	<b>---</b>

<sup>1</sup>as of 10/23/2020; figures exclude directed gifts from outside donors  
<sup>2</sup>Year-to-date Mercy special offering contributions (for COVID-19 relief)