



DOUGLAS UCC
A JUST WORLD FOR ALL

Order of Service for Sunday, July 23, 2023

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Thank you for joining us today.

For Announcements, Birthdays, Anniversaries, and Prayer List, [visit this week's E-Pistle here](#), where you can also subscribe to receive it by email, if you like.

*- **stand if you wish to, and are able.**

Congressional Responses in Bold

Prelude *Holy Ground*
Peter Black

(Please use this time for quiet reflection and preparation for worship)

Welcome & Announcements

Lighting of Altar Candles & Ringing in the Hour

Let us recognize the light of the world within us and ring in the hour of worship.

Introit (please stand) *No Matter*

*No matter who, no matter what, no matter where
you are in the journey of life,
you're welcome, welcome in this place.*

*No matter who, no matter what, no matter where
you are on the journey of life, accepted, welcomed by God's grace.*

(repeat after verse)

Call to Worship

Psalm 139

Reader: Jerry Coates

One: O God, you have searched me and known me.

Many: You know when I sit down and when I rise.

One: You discern my thoughts from far away.

Many: You search out my path and know all my ways.

One: Even before a word is on my tongue, O God, you know it completely.

Many: Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

One: If I ascend to heaven, you are there.

Many: If I settle at the farthest limits of the sea, you are there.

One: Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.

Many: Search me, O God, and know my heart. Amen.

***Opening Hymn,**

We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder
(Black New Century Hymnal No.500)
(Find Music at the end of this program)

Unison Prayer

Loving God, as I walk this journey of life, help me to practice taking just one step at a time. Walking with you, moment by moment, brings the power of your love to bear on all that I face. When challenges and obstacles arise, help me to feel the awareness of your abiding presence. Through prayer, I can tap into the wisdom of your Spirit, knowing that your Divine Light will illumine my way. Step by step, I trust in your guidance. Today, I give thanks that I am learning and growing, moment by moment, step by step. Amen.

Assurance of Grace and Peace

One: Peace be with you.

Many: And also with you.

One: Let us offer one another a sign of Peace.

Passing the Peace

The Peace of Christ is Yours

*Reach out your hands, accept the gift.
Reach out your hands, accept the gift.
Reach out your hands, embrace the gift,
the Peace of Christ is yours!
And it is free, free, free.
And it is free, free, free.
And it is free, free, free.
The Peace of Christ is Yours!*

Words of Integration & Guidance

Rev. Thomas Shepherd

In today's reading from Genesis, Jacob has a dream in which he envisions a great ladder reaching up to heaven. This is a wonderful and important image—both for Jacob and for us. Jacob, having manipulated his father Isaac to bestow on him the blessing that by law should have gone to his brother Esau, is fleeing from his brother's wrath. He is forced to leave all the material things—money, authority, power—that he had been struggling to claim as his own. He is alone in the wilderness, and only now can he 'remember' his true identity as an expression of eternal Spirit. Since the ladder has seven steps, many spiritual teachers have suggested that the ladder represents the seven chakras, which our Eastern siblings believe are the energy centers which run along the spine and lead towards enlightenment. Like the seven chakras, the seven rungs of Jacob's ladder lead you from earth to heaven by raising your consciousness higher and higher. There are indications throughout scripture—from the seven days of creation to the seven letters to the seven churches in Revelation—that there are consistently seven stages in our spiritual development while we are here in mortal form. We move consistently upward as we become more and more expressive of our true Spirit nature. In Jacob's dream, angels not only descend to him from God, but also ascend in the other direction. It's important to realize that the energy, like the angels, flows in both directions. We don't leave our lower charkas behind; we transform them through the spiritual awareness we receive as we move higher.

Step by Step

The Words of Holy Scripture

One: A Reading of Scripture from Genesis 28:10-19

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Many: Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Lesson

One: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew 13:24-30

Many: Glory to you, O Christ.

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

Many: Praise to you, O Christ.

Homily

“Step by Step,” Rev. Salvatore Sapienza

Offering & Offertory

“Higher Place”

Nancy Plantinga

Composer: Daniel Nahmod

Joys & Concerns/Tibetan Prayer Bell

One: Thanks be to God!

Many: Alleluia!

One: O God,

Many: Hear our prayer.

*Doxology

Give Thanks to the Lord

***Give thanks to the Lord for God is good
and God’s mercy will endure.***

***For God alone has done marv’lous things,
give thanks unto the Lord.***

***God made the earth and heaven
with a strong and mighty hand.***

God has moved us to sing, proclaim the song!

Give thanks unto our God!

***Celebration of Holy Communion**

One: God be with you.

Many: *And also with you.*

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: *We lift them up to God.*

One: Let us give thanks to God.

Many: *It is good to give God thanks & praise*

***Creation's Praise** *Holy, Holy, Holy*

*Holy, holy, holy, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full, are full, of your glory.*

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the One who comes, who comes, in God's name.

Hosanna in the highest.

(Please be seated)

Breaking of the Bread *There is Room for All*

*There is room for all in the shadow of God's wing;
there is room for all at the table of God's love.*

And I exalt and sing "We do this in remembrance of you."

There is room for all, there is room for all.

Sharing of the Bread & Cup

(grape juice only on both sides of the aisle)

Receive the Bread of Life. *Amen.*

The Cup of Love, the Drink of Compassion. *Amen.*

***The Lord's Prayer**

*Our Mother/Father, always and everywhere, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us
this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive
those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us
from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.*

***Hymn of Sending**

Now is the Time Approaching
(Black New Century Hymnal No.609)
(Find Music at the end of this program)

Benediction

Postlude

Higher Ground
Peter Black

Keep up with the Douglas UCC community
and the work of our service groups here:

www.douglasucc.org

<https://www.youtube.com/douglasucc>

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DISCIPLESHIP

500

We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder

Gen. 28:10-17

African-American spiritual

1 We are climb-ing Ja-cob's lad-der, we are climb-ing Ja-cob's lad-der,
2 Ev-ery round goes high-er, high-er, ev-ery round goes high-er, high-er,
3 Rise, shine, give God glo-ry, rise, shine, give God glo-ry,

we are climb-ing Ja-cob's lad-der, bear-ers of the cross.
ev-ery round goes high-er, high-er, bear-ers of the cross.
rise, shine, give God glo-ry, bear-ers of the cross.

Like many spirituals, this one uses a story from the Hebrew scriptures as its starting point and the element of the ladder as a creative device to draw us into the narrative. In like manner, the following twentieth-century adaption of the song by Carole Etzler employs the story of Sarah, the matriarch of the Hebrew people, and extends the direction of the pilgrimage from the upward climb of the ladder to the outward embrace of a circle.

Tune: JACOB'S LADDER 8.8.8.5.
African-American spiritual

Now Is the Time Approaching

609

*Jane Laurie Borthwick, 1859; alt.**Jer. 33:14-16; Isa. 11:6-9; 61:11*

1 Now is the time ap - proach - ing, by proph - ets long fore - told,
 2 Let all that now di - vides us re - move and pass a - way,
 3 O long - ex - pect - ed dawn - ing, come with your cheer - ing ray!

when all shall dwell to - geth - er, se - cure and man - i - fold.
 like mists of ear - ly morn - ing be - fore the blaze of day.
 Yet shall the prom - ise beck - on and lead us not a - stray.

Let war be learned no long - er, let strife and tu - mult cease,
 Let all that now u - nites us more sweet and last - ing prove,
 O sweet an - tic - i - pa - tion! It cheers the watch - ers on

all earth a bless - ed gar - den that God shall tend in peace.
 a clos - er bond of un - ion, in bless - ed lands of love.
 to pray, and hope, and la - bor till Christ's new realm is come.