

Worship Service: BEAUTY

Welcome: Welcome! It's so good to be together to celebrate faith and community today. My name is ____ and I'll be leading our worship time. Today we'll be looking at the theme of **beauty**. Thank you for joining us. Please pray with me as we open our time together.

Opening Prayer: Great and loving God, we ask that your Holy Spirit bless our time together and to refresh us with your presence. In the midst of a world full of trouble and strife, we thank you for watching over us, guiding us, and especially forgiving us. Enable us to enter your presence joyfully and reverently, and let us depart today with the assurance that our sins are forgiven. Fill us, O God, with the peace which passes understanding. Amen.

Opening Hymn: Doxology, p. 1

Statement of Faith: Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting Psalm 23 together:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Hymns:

For the Beauty of the Earth, p. 2

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us, p. 3

Amazing Grace, p. 4

First reading: Isaiah 62: 1-4

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet,
until her righteousness goes forth as brightness,
and her salvation as a burning torch.

²The nations shall see your righteousness,
and all the kings your glory,
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will give.

³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

⁴You shall no more be termed Forsaken,
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate,
but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her,
and your land Married;
for the Lord delights in you,
and your land shall be married.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

Holy, Holy, Holy, p. 5

Jesus Loves Me, p. 6

Second reading: Luke [20: 45-47 – optional] and 21: 1-4

¹⁴⁵ While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, ⁴⁶ “Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. ⁴⁷ They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.”]

As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. ² He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. ³ “Truly I tell you,” he said, “this poor widow has put in more than all the others. ⁴ All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.”

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

Softy and Tenderly, p. 7

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms, p. 8

Interactive Homily: Let's talk more about beauty.

- I wonder what things you all consider beautiful ...
 - What we can see: nature, children, spouses, partners, flowers
- It's sometimes easier to "see" beauty, but let's think about all the senses
 - What *feels* beautiful?
 - What *smells* beautiful?
 - What *sounds* beautiful?
 - What *tastes* beautiful?
- What sorts of things prevent us from perceiving something beautiful?
 - being in a hurry; not appreciating "unusual" beauty; clutter (things and tasks); routine; cultural expectations
 - Renaissance: voluptuous women; today: very thin women ...
- What sorts of things may not be considered beautiful?
 - ordinary objects like a worn-out table or bowl; broken things; wrinkles!
- I wonder what makes "ordinary" or old things so beautiful?
 - history and stories behind them; *wisdom* and *experience*
 - God's hand is upon every single thing and especially every single person. *You are beautiful* because God made you exactly who you are! In German, the word "beautiful" is related to the word "shining" (*schön*, pronounced "shoon") – and all of you shine with the beauty of God's spirit in you.

Let's silently thank God for the gift of beauty.

(Silent Prayer) ... Lord, hear our prayers. Now let us say the Lord's prayer together:

Lord's Prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven, 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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

Hymns:

This is My Father's World, p. 9

It is Well with My Soul, p. 10

Standing on the Promises, p. 11

Third Reading: "Pied Beauty," by Gerard Manley Hopkins¹

Glory be to God for dappled things –

For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;

For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;

Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;

Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;

And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;

Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)

With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;

He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:

Praise him.

Hymns:

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing, p. 12

Shall We Gather at the River, p. 13

Fourth Reading: Quotes on Beauty²

Peace is the beauty of life. It is sunshine. It is the smile of a child, the love of a mother, the joy of a father, the togetherness of a family. It is the advancement of man, the victory of a just cause, the triumph of truth. –Menachem Begin

When I admire the wonders of a sunset or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in the worship of the creator. –Mahatma Gandhi

¹ <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/44399>. This site includes an audio recording, which helps to understand the poem's cadence.

² https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/topics/topic_beauty.html

Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it. –Confucius

In your 20s you can be pretty, but you don't accomplish real beauty until you find wisdom and depth. –Evangeline Lilly

People often say that “beauty is in the eye of the beholder.”
I say beauty is in the eye of the beer holder. –Kinky Friedman

Hymns:

Blest Be the Tie that Binds, p. 14

I Need Thee Every Hour, p. 15

Closing Blessing: (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Doxology, p. 23

Psalm 27: 4-6

One thing have I asked of the Lord,
that will I seek after:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord
and to inquire in his temple.

⁵For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will lift me high upon a rock.