SOME THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION:

When during World War II the Netherlands were occupied by Germans the deacons of the Dutch Reformed Church assumed the care for the politically persecuted, supplying food and providing secret refuge. Realizing what was happening, the Germans decreed that the elective office of deacon should be eliminated. The Reformed Synod on 17 July 1941 resolved: "Whoever touches the diaconate interferes with what Christ has ordained as the task of the church... Whoever lays hands on diakonia lays hands on worship!" The What good is it, my Germans backed down.

Frederick Herzog 20th century theologian

Deacons... must become God's channel for mobilizing the members of his church to minister in the lives of others.

George Fuller

Presbyterian pastor and former president of Westminster Theological Seminary

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."

Matthew 25:34-40

"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Mark 10:45

brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?
Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

lames 2:14-18

God invented deacons to enflesh the example of Christ in tangibly and concretely loving and serving the congregation in our midst. Deacons are to embody Christ's own service of His people, especially as they administer mercy in the life of the local congregation... For Paul, the deacon-his job description-is that of a man who wants to concretely and tangibly show the love of Christ in the body of Christ. He wants to serve. The office of deacon is emphatically an office of service, not just in some generic sense, but really and specifically. The deacon is not out for power or prestige: he is a man who wants to serve, he wants to help when the people of God are hurting, and he wants to aid them. When the people of God are in need, he wants to comfort and assist them. He wants to make the Christian claims of love tangible.

Ligon Duncan

GOD SUMMONS US BY HIS GRACE

Leader: Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is

unsearchable. One generation shall commend your works to another, and

shall declare your mighty acts.

People: I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever.

Leader: The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works. The LORD is

near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

People: My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless his holy

name forever and ever.



Psalm 145

It is the joy of God's people to sing praises to him. There is none like him and one day his glory will be clearly seen and all people will come and worship him, acknowledging that he alone is God. Our worship this morning is a taste of that day.

GOD SANCTIFIES US BY HIS GRACE

God reminds us of what is good, of what he requires of us

Micah 6

"With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

The majesty of God's forgiveness is lost entirely when we lose what has to be forgiven. What has to be forgiven is not just what we do but who we are, not just our sinfulness, not just our choices but what we have chosen in place of God.

David Wells

We confess our frequent failures in what he requires

Holy Father, we confess that we are people who do not trust you. We are stubborn and rebellious, habitually unwilling to hear your loving, fatherly instruction. We have repeatedly despised your words, and even your incarnate Word, Jesus Christ.

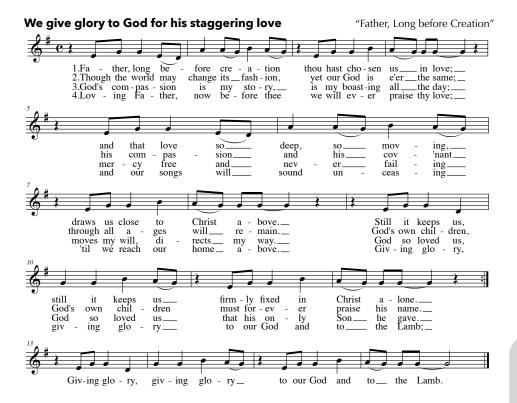
When we suffer, we lose confidence that you love us, experience spiritual amnesia, and live as orphans. We trust in our own resources for physical and emotional comfort, health, wealth, success, and intimacy. We often rely on the perverseness of abusing food, drink, sexuality, or other people to bring us peace. We fail to return to you, frequently do not rest in you, and consistently do not trust you. Father, forgive us.

Lord Jesus what a staggering love you have shown us in the midst of our weakness. You flawlessly trusted your Father on our behalf in your humanity. Because you took on our sin, becoming an orphan as you were abandoned by your Father, we will never be orphans again. Our sins, though like scarlet, are now as white as snow, washed in the cleansing, healing stream of the blood drawn from your veins.

Spirit of God, lead us to the crucified Christ in our weariness and sin. Awaken us to trust and find our refuge in his work on our behalf. Remind us that our true rest and freedom is only found in union with him. Amen.

God declares his love that washes us, cleanses us of our sin

Isaiah 1 1 Corinthians 6 "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD: "though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool"... You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.



In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. Ephesians 1

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." John 3



GOD SPEAKS WITH US BY HIS GRACE

²⁵And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" ²⁷And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

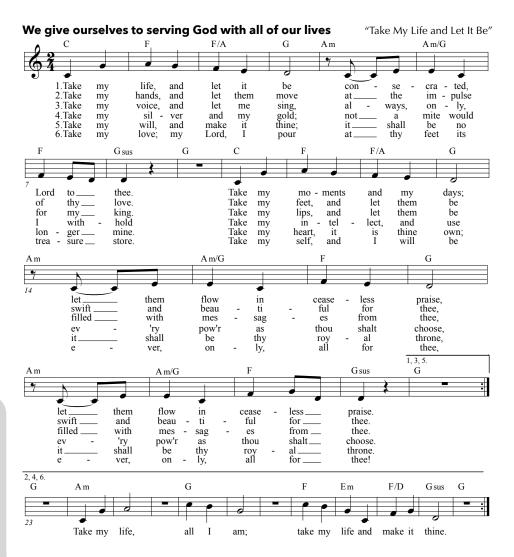
Luke 10:25-37

²⁹But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³²So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' ³⁶Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" ³⁷He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

Sermon Rev. Per Almquist

Deacons: Lead Servants
The Church that God Built

Preaching is how we learn to think God's thoughts after him in this world.

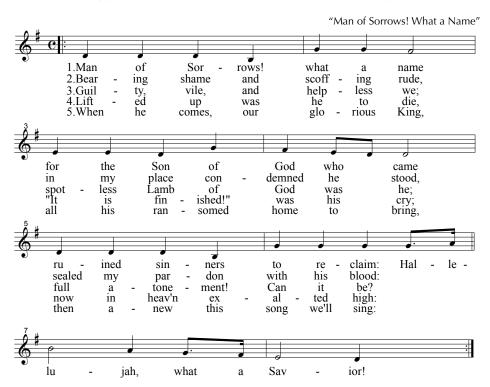


For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

GOD STRENGTHENS US BY HIS GRACE

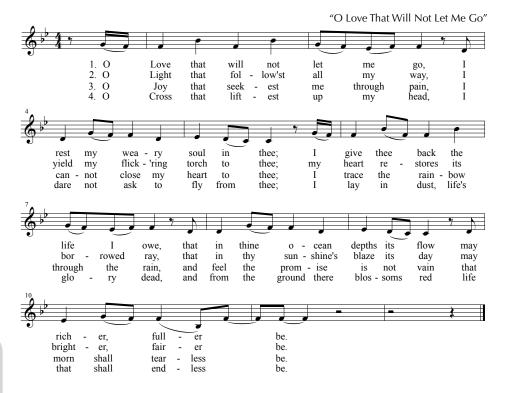
We celebrate the Lord's Supper experiencing the grace of God in the death of Jesus Christ that we may serve him proclaiming his death to the world around us

We celebrate God's free grace to us in Jesus Christ by observing the Lord's Supper each Sunday. We invite to the Lord's Table all those who are baptized followers of Jesus Christ, under the authority of Christ and his body, the Church. By eating the bread and drinking the cup with us as a visitor, you are acknowledging to our church that you are in covenant with God. You also acknowledge that you are a sinner, without hope except in the sovereign mercy of God, and that you are trusting in Jesus Christ alone for your salvation. If you have any doubts about your participation, please speak to one of the elders after the service. Wine and bread are the elements of the supper as instituted by Jesus Christ and so we follow his example.



For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Colossians 1



I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. Jeremiah 31

We serve God, loving him with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and loving our neighbor with his love

... as we give our tithes and offerings to him

We give our offerings to God as a public demonstration of our faith, putting our money where our mouths are. In this action we show what we claim, that our lives are organized around God and lived for him instead of ourselves.

... and as we come to him in prayer

During this time we live in faith, trusting in the power of his grace, placing our lives and our church in his hands.

We ask that he would work in us and through us for his glory.

Jesus is not telling us that we can be saved by imitating the Good Samaritan, even though he is clearly charging us to imitate his pattern. Rather, Jesus is seeking to humble us with the love God requires, so we will be willing to receive the love God offers. Tim Keller

GOD SENDS US WITH HIS GRACE



And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3

God promises that as we serve him, loving him and, through him, our neighbors, he establishes us in his good work

Leader: Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word... Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with vou all.

People: Amen

Please stay and join us for a time of refreshment and enjoying each other's company. This is a time to share in life together as the gospel calls us as we reconnect with those we know and as we meet someone new.

2 Thessalonians 2, 3

We do not end our service with a command or a well-wish, but with God's blessing reminding us of the beauty and power of God's promise to his people.



Welcome to Free Grace

We are a broken church full of broken people. We know we need God's free grace. Some of us have accepted this grace, some are exploring what it's all about. All of us are still trying to understand it. We are a church that seeks to proclaim this free grace of God with both our words and our lives. Not satisfied with simply talking about it, we want to live it out. We invite you to come, explore, and live God's free grace with us.

Our Connections



Free Grace is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), a family of churches that seeks to be faithful to the Scriptures, true to the Reformed faith, and obedient to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

Our Leadership

Free Grace is lead by her elders, men called by God and set apart by the church to care and lead her as individual members, families, and as a whole. Our elders are:



Rev. Per Almquist (pastor) Brian Cosgrove Ken Morris

Credits

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Shannon Van Dyke, voice; Connor Crawford, voice; Beth Almquist, voice, violin; Jacob Paris, guitar, bass; Wagner Sgobi, piano

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Deacons aren't ushers, janitors, and accountants, but men with spiritual maturity leading all of us in serving God as we make his love visible and concrete to each other.

broken people bound together in Christ for God's glory