

Clifton Presbyterian Church is a welcoming Christian Community driven by compassion, generosity, resilience and service to others.

Breath Prayer:

INHALE: You are with me, God *EXHALE:* in all new beginnings.



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August 23, 2026

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

WE GATHER TOGETHER TO WORSHIP GOD

*Words in **BOLD** indicate the congregation reading together. Words of the worship leader are in PLAIN type. An asterisk * indicates that the congregation may stand, as you wish.*

Gathering Song GtG 399 God Welcomes All

**God welcomes all, strangers and friends;
God's love is strong and it never ends.**

Time of Prayer and Care

Prelude

Welcome and Opening Words

*** Call to Worship** *from Psalm 85*

One: The gospel is good news for every age and every stage.

All: Let us worship together, the young and the old.

One: The good news is proclaimed in God's words,
and also with crayons, songs, snacks, and rest time.

All: Let us worship together, every generation.

One: We bring all of our gifts and share all of ourselves.

All: Let us worship together, with our family of faith.

One: We bring our joys and our tears, our hopes and our fears,

All: Let us worship together, united in Christ.

***Hymn GTG 401**

Here in This Place *vv 1, 2, 4*

**Here in this place the new light is streaming;
now is the darkness vanished away;
see in this space our fears and our dreamings
brought here to you in the light of this day.**

**Gather us in, the lost and forsaken;
gather us in, the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken;
we shall arise at the sound of our name.**

**We are the young; our lives are a mystery.
We are the old who yearn for your face.
We have been sung throughout all of history,
called to be light to the whole human race.**

**Gather us in, the rich and the haughty;
gather us in, the proud and the strong;
give us a heart, so meek and so lowly;
give us the courage to enter the song.**

**Not in the dark of buildings confining,
not in some heaven, light years away:
here in this place the new light is shining;
now is the kingdom, and now is the day.**

**Gather us in and hold us forever;
gather us in and make us your own;
gather us in, all peoples together,
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.**

Prayer of Confession

One: Trusting in God's forgiveness, let us confess our failings and acknowledge our part
in the pain of the world.

All: O God, before you and before your people, we confess to turning away from you, in the ways we wound our lives, the lives of others, and the life of the world.

(Silence)

Forgive us, renew us, and enable us to grow in love. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

One: God created us and gave us life, the love of Jesus remakes and restores us, and the Holy Spirit strengthens and sustains us as we continue our journey. We are not alone, but thanks to God's grace we can live new and true lives.

All: Thanks be to God. Amen.

Sing Praise GtG 609 Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God, all creatures high and low. Alleluia, alleluia!

Praise God, in Jesus fully known: Creator, Word, and Spirit one.

Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

The Peace of Christ

One: Let us share signs of this peace in the name of the One we follow.
The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Let us share that peace with one another.

Those in the sanctuary are invited to greet those around you.

Those on zoom are invited to offer greetings in the chat.

Offering Our Gifts to God

For those who would like to make a physical offering, the offering plates are available in the middle of the sanctuary. Donations can also be made online. www.cliftonpc.org

One: In the self-giving life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God gives us the gift of life - new life and true life and life in abundance. In gratitude, let us offer back from what God has so graciously offered to us in Christ. Let us pray.

All: Loving God, you come to us in Jesus and teach us your way. Use our gifts and use our lives to do your good work and to bring us all closer to the world you long for. Amen.

WE HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

Prayer for Illumination 322 Spirit of the Living God

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Melt me; mold me; fill me; use me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

First Reading Romans 13:8-10 (NRSVUE)

⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not murder; you shall not steal; you shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

One: God be in our listening, God be in our understanding.

All: Amen.

Anthem

Second Reading Matthew 22:34-40 (NRSVUE)

³⁴ When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵ and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" ³⁷ He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

One: For the Word of God in scripture, for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us,

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

You & Me? We're Neighbors

Diane Walton Hendricks

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD AND ARE SENT TO THE WORLD

Litany of Blessing and the Lord's Prayer

One: It is the beginning of a new school year,
and God is a God of new beginnings and new creations.

All: We give thanks for a new year and for new beginnings.

One: In the year ahead, we might have days when we get overwhelmed by tests and homework, activities and tasks, responsibilities and assignments.

All: Grant us confidence and calm, and help us to ask for help when we need it.

One: Our teachers, parents, and friends and our colleagues,
leaders and coworkers will sometimes frustrate us, and things will feel unfair.

All: Give us peace in the midst of the storms raging around us and inside us.

One: We will be measured and tested in our school work.

All: Remind us that you have already made us worthy and called us by name.

One: We will see darkness in injustice, mean-spiritedness, and bullying,
and will be tempted to join in.

One: We will want to fit in, and might wish to be different from who you created us to be.

One: We will learn and grow and find new passions.

Thank you for growing us in love and knowledge.

All: Give us patience and kindness to love our neighbors as ourselves.

One: We will accomplish new things and face challenges.

One: These are our prayers, our fears and our frustrations,
our hopes and our dreams for the year.

One: God, we ask your blessing on this coming year.

All: 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Song The Greatest Commandment *by the Porter's Gate*

**[Verse] Let us be known, let us be known By the way we love
Let us be known, let us be known By the way we love**

**[Chorus] Love the Lord your God With all your heart and soul and mind
And love your neighbor as yourself Love the Lord your God
With all your heart and soul and mind And love your neighbor as yourself**

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Prayers of the People and 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Minute for Ministries

Ringling of the Bell

Charge and Benediction

Benediction Response GtG 539

We Will Go Out With Joy in the Spirit
We will go out with joy in the Spirit; we will go out with God.
We will go out with joy in the Spirit; we will go out with God.
Alleluia! We will go out with joy. Alleluia! Alleluia!
We will go out with joy in the Spirit; we will go out with God.
We will go out with joy in the Spirit; we will go out with God.

Thank you for joining us for worship this morning. We can be reached at office@cliftonpc.org

Liturgy from Presbyterian Outlook Worship Resources

Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from One License #A- 721138 and CCLI License 20618208.

Thanks to those leading us in worship

Hosts: Barbara Brown and Pat Swanson

Liturgist: Brian Cress

Prayer Notetaker: Rene Law

Technical Team: Steve Landry

Nursery Volunteer: Phoebe Peterson

Mission Elder: Kimberly Davis

Sanctuary Flowers: Steve & Maureen Landry in honor of Wedding Anniversary

CPC STAFF

Rev. Dr. Diane Walton Hendricks, Pastor | John Kim, Music Director

Hannah Harris, Lead Vocalist | Debbie Kilpatrick, Office Administrator

Kate Trussell, Preschool Director | Sue Ferguson, Director of Community Outreach and

Intergenerational Ministry | Rev. Dr. Lynn Stanton-Hoyle, Pastor Emerita