

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

Breath Prayer:

INHALE: Open my eyes *EXHALE:* Help me sow good seed.



Image by [Vincent van Gogh: The Sower \(Sower at Sunset\)](#)

August 9, 2026
Eleventh 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

* Call to Worship

One: Surely the Lord is in this place, and we did not know it.

**All: We do not know when and where
God's glorious presence will show up.**

One: Surely we are the Body of Christ.

All: We cannot say to one another, "I have no need of you."

One: Surely our God is a mystery that cannot be contained.

All: Let us worship our unpredictable and uncontrollable God!

*Presbyterian Hymnal 281 Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah

**Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but thou art mighty.
Hold me with thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me till I want no more;
feed me till I want no more.**

Prayer of Confession

One: Lord, you have searched us and known us, and called us to better things. You have set us in this world to love and serve you by loving and serving one another, to worship you by tending to those most vulnerable among us. When we fail, do not abandon us. When we go astray, call us back home.

All: Search us O God, and know our hearts. Test us and know our thoughts. Root out the wicked ways in us, and lead us in the way everlasting. Amen.

Assurance of God's Grace

One: Where can we go from God's spirit, or where can we flee from God's presence? Even if we take the wings of the morning or settle at the farthest limits of the sea, God's hand will find us and hold us fast. Proclaim the good news with me:

All: Our God does not abandon us to sin or brokenness. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and called back home. Thanks be to God.

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: Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us share signs of reconciliation and peace. The peace of the Lord Jesus 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: The creation groans with labor pains, waiting and longing for the children of God to be revealed. As God's people, called to be those children, let us give back a portion of what has been given to us.

All: Gracious God, you have sown good seed among us. Receive now the harvest of what you have planted, the good gifts of our lives, time and resources, to further your kingdom of heaven. 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 Genesis 28:10-17 (NRSVUE)

¹⁰ Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. ¹¹ He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. ¹² And he dreamed that there was a stairway^[a] set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³ And the LORD stood beside him^[b] and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring, ¹⁴ and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed^[c] in you and in your offspring. ¹⁵ Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." ¹⁶ Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it!" ¹⁷ And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

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

All: Amen.

Anthem

Second Reading Matthew 13:24-30 (NRSVUE)

²⁴ He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵ but while everybody was asleep an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and then went away. ²⁶ So when the plants

came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷ And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' ²⁸ He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' ²⁹ But he replied, 'No, for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both of them grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.' "

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

Thin Places and Good Seed

Rev. Shannon Kiser

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

Presbyterian Hymnal 324 Open My Eyes That I May See

Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;
place in my hands the wonderful key,
that shall unclasp and set me free.

Silently now I wait for Thee,
ready, my God, Thy will to see;
open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!

Open my ears, that I may hear
voices of truth Thou sendest clear;
and while the wave-notes fall on my ear,
ev'rything false will disappear.

Silently now I wait for Thee,
ready, my God, Thy will to see;
open my ears, illumine me,
Spirit divine!

Open my mouth and let me bear
Gladly the warm truth everywhere
Open my heart and let me prepare
Love with Thy children thus to share

Silently now I wait for Thee,
ready, my God, Thy will to see;
open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!

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.

We welcome Rev. Shannon Kiser to our pulpit this morning. Shannon serves as the Senior Director of Fresh Expressions North America, where she brings decades of experience training and coaching leaders in mission innovation. Shannon is the author of *Opening Space* and co-author of *Planting Hope Here*, and is a sought-after trainer, speaker, and coach for leaders navigating adaptive change and seeking to start missional initiatives. She also serves on the pastoral staff of Riverside Presbyterian Church in Sterling, VA.

Thanks to those leading us in worship

Hosts: Tania and Brad Boeddeker

Liturgist: Mary McKey

Prayer Notetaker: Brenda Ference

Technical Team: Mark Lorey

Nursery Volunteer: Lynne Coyle

Mission Elder: Kimberly Davis

Sanctuary Flowers: Sally and Jeff Dohse

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