

Welcome to Niskayuna Reformed Church
August 15, 2021
12th Sunday after Pentecost
Tom McCrossan, Assistant Chaplain, City Mission of Schenectady

The Approach to God

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Welcome and announcements.

The Prelude: Prelude in G Bach

Votum: Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
Amen.

The Call to Worship: (*from Ps. 91*)

L: Those who live in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord,

P: My refuge and my fortress; my God in whom I trust.

L: Those who love me, I will deliver, says the Lord.

P: I will protect those who know my name.

L: When they call to me I will answer them, I will be with them in trouble.

P: I will rescue them and honor them, and show them my salvation.

A Hymn: Be Thou My Vision 303

The Salutation and People's Amen: Grace to you and peace from God our
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Call to Confession: Gracious God, today we approach your throne of grace with
confidence, so that we may receive mercy and grace to help us in our time of
need.

Prayer of Confession:

We confess that we have sinned against you and the people you love in
thought, word and deed; by what we have done and what we have left undone.

Forgive us when the fire of your Spirit touches us and we quench the
flame, afraid of the changes new life might bring.

Forgive us when the wind of your Spirit blows and we close the windows of our hearts, afraid the breeze will disrupt our ordered lives.

Forgive us for not trusting and loving you more.

Give us the courage to open our lives to your Spirit, that we may dream your dreams, and feel your strength that can make those dreams reality.

For Jesus' sake. AMEN.

Words of Assurance: John 3:16-17

Call to New Life: Romans 12:1-2

Special Music:

The Word of God

The Junior Sermon

The Prayer for Illumination: God of grace and love and wisdom, open our ears to hear and our hearts to receive the good news you have for us today through your written word and the Living Word, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Epistle Lesson: *Philippians 3:7-14*

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Lesson: *John 15:1-17*

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon: New Ambition

A Prayer for Blessing upon the Word

The Response of God's People

Hymn: Have Thine Own Way, Lord!

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The Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

The 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.

The Benediction (Please stand if you are able.)

The Postlude:

Gigue in G

Bach

Announcements

- With the delta variant taking off around the U.S., the federal government updated its masking guidelines for fully vaccinated people last week. The new advice is to mask up indoors if you live in a place with "substantial" or "high" coronavirus transmission. (The guidance for people who are unvaccinated remains the same: Always mask up indoors in public places.) Schenectady and Albany Counties, where many of our congregants live, are currently in the "substantial/high risk" category.

This masking requirement will be in effect until changes in our risk level, according to the CDC criteria, are made available to the Covid Safety Committee. The safety committee and the consistory will review the data on (at least) a monthly basis. No other changes in our current policies are being made at this time. Please note that the ushers cannot be responsible to enforce this change. We are trusting in your compassion and care for each other to do so. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation to keep us all safe.

- Our annual Flea Market will be on September 25th from 9am- 4pm. We still need folks to help with this event. If you can help or would be interested in becoming a vendor, please contact Ellen at office@niskayunareformed.org.
- The History & Archives committee will host two Revolutionary War cemetery tours on Saturday, October 2nd. The first tour begins at 10 a.m. and the second tour begins at 11 a.m. There are **no** advance reservations required this year. Please arrive 10-15 minutes prior to your tour time to check in, inside of Fellowship Hall. A \$5 donation will be collected at the door in support of the church's archives preservation projects. There will be complimentary cider, donuts, and cookies along with a video presentation for those who wish to stay indoors.
- Brooks BBQ will be this **Wednesday, August 18th, 3-6 PM**. Volunteers please show up at 2:30 pm! We will still be using the prepackaged cookies that Brooks will supply. If you can volunteer, please contact Kim Cerone @ 518-339-7504 or purdyka@aol.com. If you are unable to volunteer, the best way you can help us is to swing in and purchase a great meal.

Dinners (half chicken, baked potato, coleslaw, roll/butter, and cookie): **\$15.00**

Half Chicken only: **\$10.00**

Scripture

Philippians 3:7-14

⁷ Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ,^[a] the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ^[b] and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Pressing toward the Goal

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal;^[c] but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Beloved,^[d] I do not consider that I have made it my own;^[e] but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly^[f] call of God in Christ Jesus.

John 15:1-17

15 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ² He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes^[a] to make it bear more fruit. ³ You have already been cleansed^[b] by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become^[c] my disciples. ⁹ As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

¹² “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I do not call you servants^[d] any longer, because the servant^[e] does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶ You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷ I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.