

**The Presque Isle Congregational Church**  
**United Church of Christ**  
**September 17, 2023**

**Prelude**

Barbara Merryman

**Welcoming Music**

*You Are Welcome Here*

**Words of Welcome**

Jennifer Gillis-White

**Introit**

*Where Two or Three are Gathered*

**Call to Worship**

One: Bless the Holy One with our whole selves. Praise the Maker of our being!

**Many: Remember the mighty deeds and the good works of our God.**

One: The Sovereign One endows us with many gifts and equips us to do good work.

**Many: Remember the mighty deeds and the good works of our God.**

One: Holy Love entered the world without condemnation but with grace and forgiveness, mercy and compassion, redemption and restoration.

**Many: Hallelujah! We give thanks for the mighty deeds and the good works of our God!**

**Opening Prayer (Unison)**

God who calls, it is you who gathers us together and forms us as a community. It is you who makes us uniquely individual and who designs us for companionship. Let us journey together this day in your presence reminded of our interdependence with one another. May we see your glory and be inspired to demonstrate your goodness and care through our lives. Amen.

**Opening Hymn**

*Help Us Accept Each Other*

**Two-Minute Message**

Meg Hegemann

**Scripture Reading**

**Romans 14: 1-12**

Common English Bible

Welcome the person who is weak in faith—but not in order to argue about differences of opinion. One person believes in eating everything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. Those who eat must not look down on the ones who don't, and the ones who don't eat must not judge the ones who do, because God has accepted them. Who are you to judge someone else's servants? They stand or fall before their own Lord (and they will stand, because the Lord has the power to make them stand). One person considers some days to be more sacred than others, while another person considers all days to be the same. Each person must have their own convictions. Someone who thinks that a day is sacred, thinks that way for the Lord. Those who eat, eat for the Lord, because they thank God. And those who don't eat, don't eat for the Lord, and they thank the Lord too. We don't live for ourselves and we don't die for ourselves. If we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to God. This is why Christ died and lived: so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. But why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you look down on your brother or sister? We all will stand in front of the judgment seat of God. Because it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to me, and every tongue will give praise to God. So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

**Proclamation**

Meg Hegemann

**Reflective Music**

Barbara Merryman

**Prayer of Confession (Unison)**

God of grace, we need your strength in our weakness. We confess that we can be judgmental and hyper-critical of our neighbors, family, and friends. We project our own shortcomings on others in order to deflect attention from our mistakes. We withhold and condition forgiveness, mercy, and grace from those who wrong us at the same time we seek it for the wrongs we have done. Even still, we struggle to forgive ourselves. You have shown us the better way. Help us to follow your path—receiving and extending forgiveness in a world in need of an infusion of grace for transformation. In your mercy, O God, hear our prayer, and let us forgive as you forgive. Amen.

**Assurance of Pardon.**

Beloved, grace has always been part of God's relationship with humanity. God does not want you condemned or held captive by unresolved anger leading to bitterness. Rather, Creator desires you to be released as both forgiven and forgiver so that all may live a life that is whole, free, and flourishing.

**Blessing of Gifts**

Call: Romans 14:7 tells us, "We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves." We are in covenant with God and joined in community with one another. Let us give of our resources as those who live for the good and well-being of all.

**Response: Merciful God, receive our humble offerings as a testimony to your provision and a demonstration of our love. May they be magnified and multiplied for the benefit of our community and all creation.**

**Prayer of the People and The Lord's Prayer**

Our Creator, 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, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen

**Closing Hymn**

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

**Community News and Announcements**

**Benediction and Response**

*God Be With You*

God be with you till we meet again; By good counsel guide, uphold you.  
With a shepherd's care enfold you; God be with you till we meet again.