

October 15th, 2023

***Reflections on Inclusivity***

*I always say that as a Christian I cannot find any passage in the Gospels in which Jesus condemned homosexuality.*

*Troy Perry – founder of the Metropolitan Community Church*

Order of Worship

*(\*Please rise in body and/or spirit)*

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Prelude** Alle, Alleluia

Bruce Tippet

Candle Lighting

**\*Call to Worship**

Leader: May the Rock of our lives be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: I appeal to you to offer your hearts to God.

**People: We lift them to the One who heals their brokenness.**

Leader: Sing your songs of praise to our God.

**People: We join in choruses of joy and wonder.**

Leader: Love all people as if they were our siblings,

**People: for God seeks to weave us into one family.**

Leader: Be patient, rejoice, and never stop praying.

**People: Because we are God's people, called to lives which are different and which make a difference!**

**\*Hymn** We come to Celebrate

**Call to Confession**

Leader: God gifts us with God's open heart and listening ear. God invites us to confess our sin, and be vulnerable in truth-telling, trusting that God's purposes are to bless, not to harm.

### **Prayer of Confession (unison)**

**It is never easy for us to confess but deep down inside, we know that graced, we have trouble being grace-full to others; forgiven, we are eager to judge and punish all who hurt us; freed, we find ways to put restrictions on people we fear. Forgive us, Servant God. You show mercy more often than we deserve; you pardon us more times than we can count. And why? Because we are the Lord's - siblings of Jesus Christ, who died and lived again, so we might abide also in new life. Amen.**

### **Moment for Silent Reflection**

#### **Assurance of Pardon**

Leader: Persistently, patiently, lovingly, God pours out grace and joy into our lives, healing our brokenness, forgiving our sin.  
Loved, we are sent to love;  
forgiven, we are freed to forgive;  
graced, we can offer our gifts to everyone we meet.  
Thanks be to God. Amen.

### **Prayer of Illumination**

**First Scripture Lesson:** Psalm 147:1-5  
This is the Word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God!**

**Special Music**      Walk Hand In Hand      Johnny Cowell

**Children's Message**

**Noisy Offering**

**Sharing of Joys and Concerns**

**Prayers of the Church and The Lord's Prayer**

**Passing the Peace**

**\*Hymn**      God of Many Faces

**Second Scripture Lesson**

Romans 8:38-39

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks Be to God!**

**Sermon**

The Rev. Dr. David Williams

**Offering**

**Offertory**

Hold On to the Rock

arr Pepper Choplin

**\*Doxology**

**Prayer of Dedication**

**\*Hymn**

All the Colors of the Rainbow

**Benediction**

Leader: We will go now, as faithful people, so others might know God.

**People: We will seek to invite others into this community of grace.**

Leader: We will go now, as seeds of justice, so others might know Jesus.

**People: We will seek to welcome all who have been rejected by the world.**

Leader: We will go now, to be lights of hope, so others might know the Spirit.

**People: We will seek to illuminate the shadows of brokenness with peace and life.**

**Postlude**

I Have Had Singing

Ron Jeffers

*We welcome The Rev. Dr. David Williams who will be preaching this morning. Dr. Williams is pastor of Christ the Liberator Church, Cranbury, NJ, and Executive Director of the NJ Gay Men's Chorus. A career physician, he has traveled the world doing medical mission work and advocacy for LGBTQ+ communities. Raised in the Christian faith, Dr. Williams pursued his faith into ministry as one of many life pursuits that keeps him very busy and on his toes!*

**We welcome**



## **Worship Leaders**

<b>Pastor:</b>	<b>Rev. Katja Gruening</b>
<b>Preaching:</b>	<b>The Rev. Dr. David Williams</b>
<b>Director of Music Ministries:</b>	<b>Marcello Velame</b>
<b>Music Ministry:</b>	<b>New Jersey Gay Men's Chorus</b>
<b>Liturgist:</b>	<b>Carol Streeper</b>
<b>Ushers:</b>	<b>Sue Starke</b>
	<b>Cari Suarez</b>
<b>Zoom Hosts:</b>	<b>John Palframan</b>
	<b>Jim Wright</b>
	<b>Rich Vodhanel</b>

- We Come to Celebrate (See lyrics below - tune: St. Anne #687)

We come today to celebrate  
the life that Jesus gives,  
and welcome in God's loving grace  
that in the Spirit lives.

The Spirit sanctifies our lives  
and helps our darkest days;  
we hold each other close to You  
with voices joined in praise.

We celebrate diversity,  
as well as common ground,  
and will continue so to do  
while love and peace are found.

For Christ does not discriminate,  
but welcomes one and all;  
so we will seek to do the same,  
responding to God's call.

# God of Many Faces

Amy Cerniglia

SLANE  
Irish Melody, harm. Jack Schrader

God of man - y fa - ces, we of - fer our praise,  
God of man - y gen - ders, our world re - flects you,  
God of man - y names, we in - vite you to show  
God of man - y bod - ies, a - bide with - in ours,

sing - ing your glo - ry through all of our days.  
sun - rise and sun - set u - ni - ting our hues,  
us the new names that re - flect our true souls,  
shift - ing more each day through time and through scars.

Hear ev - er grow - ing voi - ces, once fra - gile, now strong,  
wo - ven in - to a ci - ty with jewels of all shades,  
Breathe with your ho - ly spir - it to give us the Word  
Come sanc - ti - fy our bod - ies, all fash - ioned by you,

car - ry - ing mel - o - dies in ex - pan - sive new songs.  
hou - ses of ru - by and walls rowed with jade.  
that will in - dwell dry bones, grant - ing new life once heard.  
ho - li - er ev - ery - day, still be - com - ing more true.

# All the Colors of the Rainbow

Carl P. Daw

ABBOT'S LEIGH

Cyril V. Taylor

1. All the co - lours of the rain-bow live un - seen in dai - ly light,  
2. All the bo - dy's parts are wan - ted, nor can one de - spise the rest:  
3. Ev - ery lang - uage gains more mu - sic when the words for peace ap - pear:  
4. Teach us, God, our need of oth - ers; through them help us ful - ly live.

but their splen - dors find ex - pres - sion when re - leased to hu - man sight;  
head and hand must work to - get - ther, as must eye and ear and chest;  
Pax, Sa - laam, Ei - ri - ni, Hei - wa, Pa - ce, San - ti, Frie - den, Mir.  
Wean us from our sel - fish hab - its; let us list - en, learn, for - give.

so the church re - veals most beau - ty where di - ver - si - ty is real:  
so the church needs all its mem - bers for a range of min - i - stries:  
Though our tongues make sounds that va - ry all be - speak a com - mon home:  
May we see your longed - for im - age in each hu - man heart and face,

breadth of race and class and gen - der, room for doubt and space to heal.  
var - ied gifts with one great mis - sion, "Do this for the least of these."  
long - ing for the end of con - flict and a new life in God's Sha - lom.  
and be - hold how those a - round us can be chan - nels of your grace.