

Covenant Congregational Church

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost

Service of Worship November 12, 2017 10:30 a.m.

PRELUDE *Blessed Assurance* arr. Bennett

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS Sheri Anderson

INTROIT *Holy Is the Lord* Schubert

*CALL TO WORSHIP (inspired by 1 Samuel 2: 1-10 NRSV)

There is no holy One, or no rock like our God
who causes my heart to rejoice and my strength to increase,
For the Lord is a God of knowledge, who judges our actions.
Who breaks the power of the mighty, and clothes the feeble with strength,
The Lord makes rich and makes poor, brings low and lifts up.
Raising up the poor from the dust and the needy from the ash heap;
Giving them seats of honor and guarding the feet of those who are faithful.
While the wicked and those who rebel against the Lord will be shattered.
We worship and praise God—judge of all the earth.
Our God is strong, like a rock.

We come to worship the God of justice and joy.

Our God cares for the ones the world forgets.

We come to worship the God of justice and joy.

Our God is the one who gives life, and who guards the future.

We come to worship the God of justice and joy.

Come, let us worship God.

*SONG *God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand* Hymn #730

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT Sheri Anderson

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Choral Offertory *I Surrender All* arr. Potts

Soloist, Judy Buck, Cello, Kristy Foye

*Doxology 48

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him all creatures here below;

Praise Him above ye heav'nly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

* Prayer of Dedication

*SONG *How Firm a Foundation* Hymn#437

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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 sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil,
for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

THE WORD OF GOD

Morgan Vasiliou

Old Testament Reading:

Ezra 4 NRSV

O.T. page #423

4 When the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned exiles were building a temple to the Lord, the God of Israel, ² they approached Zerubbabel and the heads of families and said to them, "Let us build with you, for we worship your God as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of King Esarhaddon of Assyria who brought us here." ³ But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of families in Israel said to them, "You shall have no part with us in building a house to our God; but we alone will build to the Lord, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus of Persia has commanded us."

⁴ Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah, and made them afraid to build, ⁵ and they bribed officials to frustrate their plan throughout the reign of King Cyrus of Persia and until the reign of King Darius of Persia.

⁶ In the reign of Ahasuerus, in his accession year, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

⁷ And in the days of Artaxerxes, Bishlam and Mithredath and Tabeel and the rest of their associates wrote to King Artaxerxes of Persia; the letter was written in Aramaic and translated. ⁸ Rehum the royal deputy and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to King Artaxerxes as follows ⁹ (then Rehum the royal deputy, Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their associates, the judges, the envoys, the officials, the Persians, the people of Erech, the Babylonians, the people of Susa, that is, the Elamites, ¹⁰ and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnappar deported and settled in the cities of Samaria and in the rest of the province Beyond the River wrote—and now ¹¹ this is a copy of the letter that they sent): "To King Artaxerxes: Your servants, the people of the province Beyond the River, send greeting. And now ¹² may it be known to the king that the Jews who came up from you to us have gone to Jerusalem. They are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city; they are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations. ¹³ Now may it be known to the king that, if this city is rebuilt and the walls finished, they will not pay tribute, custom, or toll, and the royal revenue will be reduced. ¹⁴ Now because we share the salt of the palace and it is not fitting for us to witness the king's dishonor, therefore we send and inform the king, ¹⁵ so that a search may be made in the annals of your ancestors. You will discover in the annals that this is a rebellious city, hurtful to kings and provinces, and that sedition was stirred up in it from long ago. On that account this city was laid waste. ¹⁶ We make

known to the king that, if this city is rebuilt and its walls finished, you will then have no possession in the province Beyond the River."

¹⁷ The king sent an answer: "To Rehum the royal deputy and Shimshai the scribe and the rest of their associates who live in Samaria and in the rest of the province Beyond the River, greeting. And now ¹⁸ the letter that you sent to us has been read in translation before me. ¹⁹ So I made a decree, and someone searched and discovered that this city has risen against kings from long ago, and that rebellion and sedition have been made in it. ²⁰ Jerusalem has had mighty kings who ruled over the whole province Beyond the River, to whom tribute, custom, and toll were paid. ²¹ Therefore issue an order that these people be made to cease, and that this city not be rebuilt, until I make a decree. ²² Moreover, take care not to be slack in this matter; why should damage grow to the hurt of the king?"

²³ Then when the copy of King Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum and the scribe Shimshai and their associates, they hurried to the Jews in Jerusalem and by force and power made them cease. ²⁴ At that time the work on the house of God in Jerusalem stopped and was discontinued until the second year of the reign of King Darius of Persia.

Response: The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON *Overcoming the Opposition* Pastor Jason

*RESPONSE SONG *Mighty to Save* Insert

*COMMISSION & BLESSING (based on Mt. 16:21-28, Rms. 12:9-21) Pastor Jason

Go now and follow Jesus in the way of the cross. **Rejoice in hope!**

Hold fast to what is good! **Persevere in prayer!**

Do not be overcome by evil, **but overcome evil with good.**

As far as is possible, **live peaceably with all.**

And may God hear your cries and deliver you;

May Christ Jesus repay you with fullness of life;

And may the Holy Spirit be with you always nourishing you in love and hope.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord, in the name of Christ. Amen.

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE *Go Now In Peace* Sleeth

*POSTLUDE *There Shall Be Showers of Blessings* arr. Patnan

*Please stand in praise to God, if able

CCLI #982653

Thank you for participating in our worship gathering! We are glad that you are here this morning and pray that this might be a meaningful faith-building experience for you and/or your family. We would like you to join us for fellowship and light refreshments after services today in the Fireside Room.



Overcoming the Opposition

Welcome to Covenant Congregational Church
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