



Ruth and Naomi, Yael Harris Resnick



Ruth and Naomi, He Qi

Our Service of Worship, October 23, 2022



Westwood First Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, OH
Gathering Around God's Word

Welcome and Announcements

[Please take a moment to silence all mobile devices and prepare for worship.]

Moment for Mission: *City Gospel Mission Partnership*—Karl Graham

Prelude: “*God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending*”—arr. Whitworth.

[Where indicated (*), those who are able are invited to stand.]*

Ring of the Tower Bell

Choral Introit: “*Call to Worship*”—Rutter

* **Call to Worship** (*Based on Psalm 16—Responsive*)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all!

And also with you!

Come, bless the Lord, in whom we find our refuge and safety.

You are our God; all the good things come from you alone.

Come, bless the Lord, who gives us a rich inheritance, and surrounds us with abundance.

You are our God; our lives are in your hands.

Come, bless the Lord, who guides us on the path to eternal life, whose presence strengthens and sustains us.

You are our God; we will not be shaken.

Let us worship God together!

Opening Prayer

* **Hymn No. 361 (vv. 1-4): “How Firm a Foundation”**

How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord
Is laid for your faith in God’s excellent word!
What more can be said than to you God hath said
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled

Fear not, I am with thee; O be not dismayed,
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid.
I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow,
For I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee, thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply.
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.



Invitation to Confession/Prayer of Confession (*Unison*)

Most Merciful and Sovereign Lord, too often we are hesitant in our proclamation; seeking safe and suitable opportunities to speak of our faith. Too often we are half-hearted in our service; reluctant to stand out or attract criticism. Too often we dependent on our own resources, skills and insights. Forgive our meager efforts and fragile faith, and open wide our hearts and minds to the immanent presence of our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ. For it is in His name we pray. Amen.

A Moment for Silent, Personal Confession

Assurance of Forgiveness (*based on Romans 8:34—responsive*)

Hear the good news! Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ, and Christ died for us, Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us. Friends, believe the good news of the gospel. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

Thanks be to God!

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. May the God of mercy, who forgives us all our sins, strengthen us in all goodness, and may God, by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life—and may the peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Announcements and Prayer Requests



October WestFed Food Pantry needs: Peanut Butter, jelly, bars of soap



Flowers are given by:

- ♥ Bill Seitz, III, in honor of his seven grandchildren—Margaret, Jack, Hattie, Sophia, Anna Maria, Gabriella & Leo.
- ♥ Roberta Mattimiro in memory of Nick Mattimiro.



We will be hosting a gathering for the Princesses Ballet on Friday October 28, from 6-8pm. There will be food, and an opportunity to meet these exceptional young ladies, parents, and the incredibly dedicated volunteers. If you’d like to help out, or attend, please let Pastor Jeff or Linda Gardner know.



On November 6, we will be celebrating All Saint’s Day, and we will be remembering all those who have died since the last All Saint’s Day. Please have the name of a loved one you wish to be included in the service to me by 3:00pm on Wednesday, October 26.



Prayers are requested for:

- ♥ The family of Janet Zeigler, who died this past week.
- ♥ Jacqueline Holton, with heart issues that will require surgery.
- ♥ Bridgette Rothhaas, at Mercy West Hospital.
- ♥ Elizabeth Durrell recovering from a broken hip.
- ♥ Diane Ringshauser, who is undergoing chemotherapy.
- ♥ Kyle Kimball, Bob and Donna’s son, undergoing tests.
- ♥ Jan Rice and Kristine Von Holle, friends of Sandy Morris.
- ♥ DJ Hines, Sandy Morris’ brother-in-law.
- ♥ Bonnie Shuman, Heather’s sister, recovering from recent health issues.
- ♥ Ruth Peck, a friend of Barb Nieman, as well as Barb’s cousin Claudia.
- ♥ Vicki Schickner and her family, in the wake of John’s passing.
- ♥ Bob Peters, a friend of Denny and Beth Richmond.
- ♥ Walt Albers, Linda Gardner’s brother, facing cancer surgery.
- ♥ Linda Kugele who continues to deal with breathing issues.
- ♥ Our homebound members and friends.
- ♥ Our Scouting units, their families and leaders.
- ♥ Our Session, our committees, and the discernment team.
- ♥ Our partnership with City Gosel Mission’s Princesses Ballet.

Moment for Meditation: The Story of the Book of Ruth

The Book of Ruth in the Old Testament is very short. It is a charming account of how Ruth, a Moabite who had married one of Naomi's sons, accompanied her mother-in-law back to her ancestral home in Bethlehem after both her husband and her sons had died on their homestead in Moab. More than anything else, the story of Ruth emphasizes devotion to the God of Israel and the importance of strong family ties. Clearly Ruth has a rare devotion to God, and a rare devotion to the woman who had taught her how to worship Him.

It is this intensity of devotion to faith and family that animates the entire Book of Ruth. As women with no means of support, both Ruth and Naomi live on the knife-edge of poverty. It is only Naomi's secure knowledge of the Lord's will regarding widows in Israel, and her trust that a good man will do God's will, that enables her to guide Ruth to a solution, for Ruth did not yet know the full importance of family responsibility among the Jews.

Most readers will probably remember the Lord's command that when a man died, his widow should not be cut off, but the man's brother or other near kin should take her to wife and raise up an heir for the one who had died. It is just this combination of love for God and family piety—indicating a deep and well-ordered concern for the common good—which is at work in the Book of Ruth.

These actions and attitudes were particularly important in a culture in which women had few ways to make their own way, but they were even more deeply rooted in respect for God's gifts, especially the gift of children, and respect for the families within which these gifts are nurtured to bear fruit in the sight of the Lord.

It only enhances the impact of this book that the last chapter informs us of one more thing: Through Ruth, Boaz became the father of Obed, Obed the father of Jesse...and Jesse the father of David.

How strange these realities of life under the Old Covenant must seem in a culture which knows little beyond the untrammelled liberty of the individual! No wonder our modern culture produces so many disoriented, insecure, and despairing individuals—men and women who are well-acquainted with the emptiness of mere pleasure but have only rarely, if ever, experienced the security of real love.

One of the great and enduring purposes of the Book of Ruth is to place before us the proper and essential grounding of our personal and social existence—to make us know beyond doubt our rootedness in both Divine and familial love.

~ Dr. Jeff Mirus

* **Response: Gloria Patri** (*Unison*)

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be.
World without end, amen, amen.**

Proclaiming God's Word

Prayer for Illumination

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 12:46-50*

⁴⁶ While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to him. ⁴⁷ Someone told him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." ⁴⁸ But to the one who had told him this, Jesus replied, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹ And pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!" ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

Scripture Reading: *Ruth 1:1-18*

¹ In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and two sons. ² The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion: they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there.

³ But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴ These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. When they had lived there about ten years, ⁵ both Mahlon and Chilion also died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

⁶ Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had considered his people and given them food. ⁷ So she set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah.

⁸ But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back each of you to your mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹ The LORD grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband." Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. ¹⁰ They said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people."

¹¹ But Naomi said, “Turn back, my daughters. Why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? ¹² Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, ¹³ would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying?”

“No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the LORD has turned against me.” ¹⁴ Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her. ¹⁵ So she said, “Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.”

¹⁶ But Ruth said, “Do not press me to leave you, to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people and your God my God. ¹⁷ Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do thus to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!” ¹⁸ When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.



Sermon: “*Family Redefined*”

Responding to God’s Word

Invitation to Stewardship

[*No offering will be collected. Please place your offerings in the baskets located at the entrances to the sanctuary. Thank you for your generosity—now and always!*]

Offertory Prayer (*Unison*)

Generous God, our lives are renewed as we remember your goodness. You have made us in your image and placed in our hearts the memory of your love made flesh in Jesus Christ. That memory calls us to give and to embrace your world as we offer the gifts of our time, talent and treasure. May our lives invested through our offerings create a new reality and extend your grace in remembrance of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Offertory Anthem: “*All the Beauty of the Lord*”—Gwyneth Walker
Chancel Choir, Heather MacPhail, Director

Pastoral Prayer and The Lord’s Prayer

[During the prayer, everyone will have an opportunity to offer a joy or concern aloud. During the pause, feel free to call out the name of someone for whom prayer is requested, or briefly, a joy or concern on your heart. The prayer concludes with 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.

Bearing God’s Word Into the World

* **Hymn No. 282:** “*If Thou but Trust in God to Guide Thee*”

If thou but trust in God to guide thee, with hopeful heart through all thy ways,
God will give strength, whate’er betide thee, and bear thee through the evil days.
Who trusts in God’s unchanging love builds on the rock that nought can move.

Only be still, and wait God’s leisure in cheerful hope, with heart content
To take whate’er thy Keeper’s pleasure and all-discerning love hath sent.
No doubt our inmost wants are clear to One who holds us always dear.

Sing, pray, and swerve not from God’s ways, but do thine own part faithfully;
Trust the rich promises of grace, so shall they be fulfilled in thee.
God never yet forsook at need the soul secured by trust indeed.

Charge and Benediction

Choral Response: “*Lord, Let Us Now Depart in Peace*”—Whitworth

Postlude: “*Arrival of the Queen of Sheba*”—Handel

Leading Worship This Morning

Rev. Dr. Jeff Colarossi, *Pastor*

Heather MacPhail, *Organist/Director of Music Ministries*

Jason Dennison, *Videographer/Director of Technology*

Karl Graham, *Lay Worship Leader*