
SERVICE NOTES

UMH: *United Methodist Hymnal*, TFWS: *The Faith We Sing*, Girdwood Chapel's
CCLI Basic #: 11038417, CCLI Streaming License #: CSPL155734, NRSVue: *New
Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*

The Worship Helpers—Greeter: Mike, Tech Helper: Anna, Liturgist: Lisa, Preacher:
Pastor Hyunghee

Announcements:

- **Girdwood Food Pantry:** First Sundays 2-4p.m., 2nd&4th
Wednesday 4-6p.m.
- **2026 Summer Message Series “Mission and Evangelism in Our
Context”:** Throughout July and August, we will explore what mission
and evangelism mean in the unique context of Girdwood. Using the
Revised Common Lectionary, along with selected biblical passages
and insights from mission and evangelism scholars and
practitioners, we will reflect on how God calls us to live, serve, and
share the good news in our community today.



July 26, 2026 | Sunday Worship | 9:30 a.m.

** Indicates an invitation to rise in body or spirit.*

Welcome & Announcements (*back of bulletin*)

**Call to Worship (based on Psalm 139:7–10, 23–24)*

One: God invites us to seek not what fades away, but what gives life.

All: We come asking for hearts that listen and lives that love.

One: Christ calls us to dwell in his word with wisdom and gratitude.

All: We come ready to receive God's grace and truth.

One: The Holy Spirit forms us into people of compassion, kindness,
humility, and patience.

All: Teach us to listen to you, and to one another.

One: Come, let us worship the God who still says,
"Ask what I should give you."

All: We come with open hearts. Let us worship God.

**Opening Hymn "His Mercy Is More" by Keith & Kristyn Getty
lyrics on the screen*

Opening Prayer (*Unison*)

Gracious God,

you know our hopes, our fears, and the burdens we carry.

As we gather in your presence, quiet our restless minds

and open our hearts to your Spirit.

**Give us the wisdom to hear your voice, the humility to receive your
grace, and the courage to love our neighbors with attentive hearts.**

**May our worship shape us into people who listen well, serve
faithfully, and reflect the love of Christ in our daily lives.**

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Scripture Reading 1 Kings 3:5–12 (NRSVue)

5 At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God
said, "Ask what I should give you." 6 And Solomon said,

"You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David
because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and
in uprightness of heart toward you, and you have kept for him this great
and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne today.

7 And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.

8 And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted.

9 Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil, for who can govern this great people of yours?”

10 It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. 11 God said to him, “Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or for the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, 12 I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you, and no one like you shall arise after you.

One: This is the Word of God. **All: Thanks be to God.**

Message “Give Your Servant a Listening Heart”

Holy Communion: *All are welcome at this open table.*

Invitation to the Table; The Great Thanksgiving; Epiclesis; Breaking the Bread; Sharing the Bread and the Cup

Invitation to Generosity: Offering baskets are available on the side/back of the sanctuary. Or Mail your check: PO Box 1068, Girdwood, AK 99587, or give online; *scan QR code*→



Offertory Prayer (*Unison*)

Please join me in offertory prayer:

God of wisdom, as we return these gifts to you, we remember that the greatest gift we need cannot be bought or earned.

Give us listening hearts—hearts that seek your will, attend to our neighbors, and delight in your ways.

May all that we offer today, and all that we are, be used for your glory and for the good of the world. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Prayers and Celebration & The Lord's prayer

Concerns: “God in Your mercy” | **Response: “Hear our prayer”**

Joys: “Thanks be to God” | **Response: “Alleluia”**

*Closing Hymn “Jesus Paid it All” by Fernando Ortega
lyrics on the screen

*Benediction

*Sending Forth Song “On Eagles Wings” (CCLI Song #3127)

It is the tradition of the Girdwood Chapel UMC to form a circle, hold hands, and sing ‘On Eagles Wings.’

Our Sunday Worship at 9:30 a.m. year-round

Sunday Column July 26

– FAITHFULNESS HAS AN ADDRESS

I want to say something on behalf of small congregations. Not as a consolation prize for what we have failed to become. As a genuine argument for what we actually are.

The dominant narrative in American Christianity for the past several decades has assumed that bigger is better: larger congregations are more vital, more effective, more pleasing to God. Church health is measured in growth metrics. The assumption is so pervasive that pastors of small churches often feel they are failing, even when their congregations are healthy, loving, and genuinely engaged in their communities.

I do not think that narrative is correct. And I do not think it is particularly Christian.

Jesus did not operate on scale. He chose twelve people — not twelve thousand — as the inner circle of his movement. He spent most of his ministry in Galilee, a backwater region of a colonized country, not in Jerusalem, the center of power. The early church, for its first three centuries, had no major buildings, no cultural prestige, and no numerical dominance. It changed the world anyway.

What small congregations can do that large ones often cannot: they can know each other by name. They can notice when someone is missing. They can make decisions together rather than delegating them to professionals. They can be genuinely porous to their surrounding community, rather than requiring that community to navigate institutional complexity in order to be welcomed.

When one theologian describes the church as ‘sign, instrument, and foretaste’ of the kingdom, I think of small communities most naturally. A sign is visible, legible, particular. A community of

twenty to thirty people who actually know each other, who share meals, who notice each other’s grief and celebrate each other’s joy — that is a visible sign of something the world rarely offers. A foretaste is a sample, a preview. Girdwood Chapel at its best gives people a taste of what genuine community might feel like.

None of this means size is irrelevant or that we should never invite people to join us. But it does mean that the measure of faithfulness is not headcount. It is quality of love, depth of formation, and authenticity of engagement with the community we are already in. And faithfulness, it turns out, always has a specific address.

Every congregation occupies a specific place. Not a generic ‘church’ somewhere in the abstract, but this congregation, in this community, with these people. That specificity is not a limitation. It is the form the calling takes. A church that knows its particular place and has named its particular purpose within that place has something irreplaceable to offer — not because it is unique in its theology, but because it is rooted in a way that is genuinely local and genuinely its own.

When our congregation went through visioning conversations over the past year, something came out of that process that I believe is true and worth holding carefully:

“Our vision is to be a heartbeat of Girdwood — connected in love and committed to Christ, with faith that makes room for grace and honors differences.”

I want to notice what this vision does and does not claim.

It does not claim to be the only church, the best church, or the most theologically correct church. It claims to be a heartbeat — something small and regular and necessary, something whose absence would be felt. Not a landmark. Not a monument.

A heartbeat.

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There is something I want you to sit with for a moment. Girdwood Chapel's building sits at the physical center of this town. Not near the center. Not close to it. At it. When you drive into Girdwood, when you walk its roads, when you orient yourself in this community — this building is at the heart of the place. That is simply true, geographically. And I do not think it is an accident. I think it is a calling written into the ground beneath us. We do not have to become a heartbeat of Girdwood. We are already positioned as one. The question — the only question — is whether we will be alive there.

A heartbeat works in two directions at once. Physically, it is muscle and movement — the body actually sustained, blood actually circulating. A congregation that is a heartbeat is physically present in the life of its community: showing up, sharing meals, knowing names, noticing who is missing, caring for people in their actual circumstances. That is the body of the church doing what bodies do — being present, being local, being here.

But a heartbeat is also the animating center — the vital rhythm that keeps everything else alive. In the biblical tradition, the heart is not only a pump; it is the seat of devotion, desire, and will. 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart.' A congregation that is a spiritual heartbeat is the place from which worship rises, where prayer is practiced, where people are formed in the way of Jesus and sent back into the world shaped by something deeper than what they came in with.

Neither without the other. Physical presence without spiritual formation becomes community service without a center. Spiritual formation without physical presence becomes private religion without a body. The heartbeat holds both: we are here, in Girdwood, in the actual life of this community — and we are alive in Christ, in worship, in the practices that shape us toward love. That integration is what the vision is pointing toward.

Notice how the vision holds its three claims together without letting any of them stand alone. Connected in love: genuinely relational, genuinely present, genuinely caring about the specific people in this specific place. Committed to Christ: not simply to community in the abstract, not to a vague spirituality, but to the particular story of Jesus and the kingdom he announced — which is what gives the love its direction and keeps it from collapsing into sentiment. And faith that makes room — which is the hardest of the three, because making room for grace and honoring differences while holding real convictions is genuinely demanding. It does not mean having no center. It means having a center secure enough that you do not need everyone in the room to occupy it with you before you welcome them in.

These three things are not a list. They are a single posture: rooted deeply enough to offer something real, and open widely enough to offer it to everyone.

This vision belongs to Girdwood Chapel specifically. No other congregation has this exact calling in this exact place. And that particularity is the point. The kingdom of God does not arrive in general. It arrives at specific addresses, through specific communities, in specific seasons. When a congregation knows its address — when it can say clearly who it is trying to be and why, in this community, with these neighbors — it is already doing something that is both theologically significant and practically rare.

I think Girdwood Chapel is worth being. Not because of what we might become. Because of what we already are: a small community of people genuinely trying to be a heartbeat — physically present, spiritually alive, rooted and open — at the literal and living center of this place.

That is not nothing. That is actually quite a lot.

Pastor Hyunghee Kim
Girdwood Chapel