

# **August 30, 2020**

*13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost*

## **GATHERING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

### **Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting, whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation. Amen.

*Silence is kept for reflection and self-examination.*

**Confession: Reconciling God, we confess that we do not trust your abundance, and we deny your presence in our lives. We place our hope in ourselves and rely on our own efforts. We fail to believe that you provide enough for all. We abuse your good creation for our own benefit. We fear difference and do not welcome others as you have welcomed us. We sin in thought, word, and deed. By your grace, forgive us; through your love, renew us; and in your Spirit, lead us; so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.**

**Absolution:** Beloved of God, by the radical abundance of divine mercy we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus, through whom we have obtained grace upon grace. Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope. For hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

### **GATHERING SONG** –“Will You Come and Follow Me: The Summons”

1 "Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,  
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?"

2 "Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?  
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare, should your life attract or scare?  
Will you let me answer pray'r in you and you in me?"

3 "Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?  
Will you set the pris'ners free and never be the same?  
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,  
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?"

4 "Will you love the you you hide if I but call your name?  
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?  
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,  
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?"

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.thelordoflife.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Summer-2020-Worship-Booklet.pdf>

5 Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.  
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.  
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.  
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

**GREETING (ELW p. 120)**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW p. 124)**

Let us pray. **O God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

**WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**FIRST READING: Jeremiah 15:15-21**

A reading from Jeremiah.

*Jeremiah's delight in the word of the Lord is contradicted by the heaviness of God's hand upon him and God's seeming unfaithfulness. God's tough love to Jeremiah says that if he repents, he will be allowed to continue in his strenuous ministry. Jeremiah is strengthened by the simple words, "I am with you."*

<sup>15</sup>O Lord, you know; remember me and visit me, and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors. In your forbearance do not take me away; know that on your account I suffer insult.

<sup>16</sup>Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I am called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts. <sup>17</sup>I did not sit in the company of merrymakers, nor did I rejoice; under the weight of your hand I sat alone, for you had filled me with indignation. <sup>18</sup>Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed?

Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail. <sup>19</sup>Therefore thus says the Lord: If you turn back, I will take you back, and you shall stand before me. If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless, you shall serve as my mouth. It is they who will turn to you, not you who will turn to them. <sup>20</sup>And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you, for I am with you to save you and deliver you, says the Lord. <sup>21</sup>I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked, and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 26:1-8**

Your love is before my eyes; I have walked faithfully with you. (*Ps. 26:3*)

1 Give judgment for me, O Lord, for I have lived with integrity; I have trusted in the Lord and have not faltered.

2 **Test me, O Lord, and try me; examine my heart and my mind.**

3 For your steadfast love is before my eyes; I have walked faithfully with you.

4 **I have not sat with the worthless, nor do I consort with the deceitful.**

5I have hated the company of evildoers; I will not sit down with the wicked.

**6I will wash my hands in innocence, O Lord, that I may go in procession round your altar,**

7singing aloud a song of thanksgiving and recounting all your wonderful deeds.

**8Lord, I love the house in which you dwell and the place where your glory abides.**

## **SECOND READING: Romans 12:9-21**

A reading from Romans.

*Paul presents benchmarks for faithful relationships with Christians and non-Christians. Love is the unflagging standard of our behavior. When we encounter evil, we do not resort to its tactics but seek to overcome it with good. While Christians cannot control the actions and attitudes of others, we seek to live at peace with all people.*

<sup>9</sup>Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; <sup>10</sup>love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup>Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. <sup>13</sup>Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. <sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup>Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. <sup>17</sup>Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup>If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. <sup>19</sup>Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." <sup>20</sup>No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." <sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## **CHILDREN'S SERMON**

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 124)**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

### **GOSPEL: Matthew 16:21-28**

The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*After Peter confesses that Jesus is "the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (16:16), Jesus reveals the ultimate purpose of his ministry. These words prove hard to accept, even for a disciple whom Jesus has called a "rock."*

<sup>21</sup>From that time on, [after Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah,] Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. <sup>22</sup>And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." <sup>23</sup>But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." <sup>24</sup>Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup>For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake

will find it. <sup>26</sup>For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? <sup>27</sup>“For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. <sup>28</sup>Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **SERMON (ELW p. 125)**

What a difference a week- or just a few verses can make...

Last week, we hear Peter being praised for his assertion that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. He is called blessed. He is given the keys to heaven.

And, now, Peter completely blows it, just a few verses later. In many ways, I love that Peter is included in the Biblical narrative because I can relate. One minute, I feel like I'm walking the Christian walk- well, pretty well. The next, I've messed up completely again, missing the entire point of everything Jesus is about.

Today, Peter misses the point of everything Jesus is about. He blows it so badly, Jesus calls him Satan and a stumbling block.

What was Peter's offense to deserve such a harsh rebuke? He didn't want Jesus to suffer and die.

That doesn't seem like something that should warrant scolding, does it? Isn't it good that Peter doesn't want Jesus to suffer?

Jesus makes it clear that, yes, it really is that bad to not want Him to suffer. Suffering for the sake of others is a crucial part of his ministry. With his words, Jesus makes it very clear that, though He is the Messiah, the anointed one from David's line that they have been waiting for, He isn't the kind of leader they were waiting for. He wasn't a king who would rule with brute and might. He wasn't going to squash Rome and those who ruled over the Israelites. Yes, Jesus the One they were waiting for, and, at the same time, he wasn't at all who they were waiting for. He wasn't what they were expected.

We might hear this and think, "Silly Peter. Poor disciples. They didn't get it." But Jesus, in His words in the Gospel today, is reminding the disciples and us that Jesus' way and our way as disciples isn't one of power, prestige and might. It's one of giving, suffering, and pain born from acts of love. How often do we, too, forget this? How often do we start chasing after exactly the opposite of what Jesus calls us to?

Now, this passage is one of many that are often misused and have been harmful to many in the past. Many have heard this passage as meaning they should endure

abuse and not stand up for their rights. But, when we look at the Bible as a whole, it becomes clear that these types of passages should not be understood in this way. Jesus wants us to have life and have life abundantly... abuse and mistreatment has no place in that. The Bible is clear that all of us are equal in God's eyes, and we should read passages like this with that grounding and understanding.

But, at the same time, it is evident today that suffering is a part of the Christian way. It is evident that power, prestige, greed and the "cushy" life are not considered the Christian way.

Dr. Audrey West writes the following:

"Temptations to glory

Security. Influence. Power. It is hard to resist their glorious lure.

Perhaps that is Peter's challenge. He cannot help thinking that his close association with the Messiah will right all that is wrong about the world.

But Jesus' announcement of the death-dealing events about to unfold in Jerusalem point to anything but the glory of security, influence, or power. What about the new church, and its authority to bind and to loose? What about withstanding the power of death ("the gates of Hades")? How can these things happen if God's own anointed one is to be tortured and executed?!

No wonder Peter protests. "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you!" Jesus' response is swift and to the point: "Get behind me, Satan!"

Even in translation, the similarity to Jesus' command to the devil in the wilderness is clear:

"Away with you, Satan!" (Matthew 4:10). Could it be that Peter's fervent wish, that God would prevent the horrors about to be visited upon Jesus, is something like the Tempter's offerings in the wilderness?

Satan dared Jesus to use his authority as Son of God for his own purposes instead of serving God's mission in the world. He tempted Jesus to set his mind on human things rather than on the things of God (see also Jesus' words to Peter, Matthew 16:23).

Jesus refused. Instead of hoarding bread made from stones to relieve his own empty stomach, he fed the hungry multitudes (Matthew 14:17-21; 15:33-38). Instead of claiming the privileges of Sonship to call on God's angels for his own benefit, he used his privilege to save, heal, and restore the lives of sick and marginalized persons. Instead of grasping after worldly varieties of power and authority, he opened the kingdom of the heavens to all who would follow after him in the way of righteousness.

Jesus refused to fall into the Tempter's trap and be diverted from God's mission. He showed the falsehood of the world's measures of authority. Along the way, he revealed what it looks like to serve in the ways of God.

At Caesarea Philippi, Jesus' response to Peter echoes his wilderness repudiation of the devil. He refuses to avoid the journey that lies ahead, despite the fact that pointless suffering, caused by human sin and violence toward an innocent one, will appear to win (as he outlines in this first of three passion predictions)."<sup>2</sup>

Loving suffering that leads to redemption is the path of Jesus. What does it mean to be followers of Jesus, therefore? What does it look for us to "... Deny ourselves, take up our crosses and follow Jesus..." I don't think it means that we suffer needlessly or go out looking for suffering. I think we, as individuals and as a community, are mindful of what we are suffering for and how we are suffering. If a form of suffering only leads to more suffering, not new life, it is not the way of Jesus.

But, we are called to suffering nonetheless.

What does it look like to suffer in the way of the cross?

What does it mean for our pocketbooks? Can we have all of the possessions we want *and* the church we want, the relationships and world we want all at the same time, or are we called to make sacrifices and hard choices?

Should Christians spend time being sure they are well regarded, revered and in a place of privilege in society, or are we called to the margins- wherever the despised and rejected are?

How does being a Christian lead us to engage in difficult conversations with those we think are being led astray- and how does being a Christian cause us to stand up for what we believe is right no matter what the cost?

Do we get to live with the assurance that everything will turn out how we want, or do we have to reconsider that what God wants for us and what we want might be very different? Do we have to do the hard work of changing our desires and wants to be open to what God has in store for us?

Are we mostly focused on having worship services, music, programs and events that meet our needs or are we willing to make sacrifices so those around us can better connect to the church and the Good News?

Do we fit church into our lives or do we shape our lives around the life and work of the church?

Recently, I found myself watching excerpts from Senator John Lewis' funeral, and, politics aside, I think many of us can say that he lived a life of meaningful suffering that led to hope and a better life for many. That is, he engaged in what he called "good trouble"

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=4565](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=4565). Dr. Audrey West. Accessed August 25, 2020.

by organizing protests and sit-ins. He didn't just decide to suffer under the perils of segregation. Instead, he knew that his "cross to bear" was to suffer on behalf of the fight for equality. He was a Freedom Rider and he helped lead the march across the Edmond Pettus Bridge in Selma in order to protest for voting rights. Senator knew what his crosses were, and by the strength God gave him, he was able to carry his crosses, leading to a better society that more fully reflects God's kingdom where all are equal.

What are your crosses? What does following Jesus look like for you? What sacrifices are you being called to make- are we being called to make? How can God work through these things to bring new life?

And that, in the end, really is the hope we go out with. That Jesus is the One who lovingly and willingly suffered for us, bringing us ultimate and everlasting new life. Death and sin has been conquered in the eternal sense, allowing us to be freed to work against death and destruction here and now. Jesus is the One who walks with and guides us as we try and fail to carry our crosses. Whatever crosses we bear, we never bear them alone.

### **MEDITATION - Silence**

*How good it is to be alive!* Yes, we feel the beat of our own hearts, the pulsing of life in our veins, the rhythm of our breathing.

We come into the silence of this time with gratitude for this day.

*(Silence)*

We come with our needs. And we come because we have gifts to share.

In our coming and in our going may we be strengthened in our bonds of love and peace.

*(Silence)*

### **HYMN OF THE DAY – “Open Our Eyes, Lord” (TFF 98)**

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,

To reach out and touch him, and say that we love him.

Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen.

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.

### **APOSTLES CREED (ELW p. 126)**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.\* On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

God of faithfulness, you bid your people to follow Jesus. Set the mind of your church on divine things. Grant us trust in you, that we lose our lives for the sake of Christ and thereby discover joy in life through him. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of wonder, the earth is yours and all that is in it. Heal your creation and give us eyes to see the world as you do. As the seasons change, pattern the rhythm of our lives in harmony with all creation. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of all nations, you call us to live peaceably with all. Give us ears to hear one another, even those we name as enemies. Fill all leaders with mercy and understanding, that they advocate and genuinely care for those who are poor and most vulnerable in their communities. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of salvation, you promise to deliver us. Give those who suffer a strong sense of your presence and love. Accompany those who are uncertain, raise the spirits of those who are despairing, and heal the sick (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of community, you call us to rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, and persevere in prayer. Make our congregation a workshop of your love. When we quarrel, bring reconciliation. Help us overcome evil with good. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of all grace, you give us everlasting life. In love we recall your holy ones who now live in your undying light (*especially*). In our remembering, give us a foretaste of the feast to come. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **OFFERING AND CGC MOMENT**

### **OFFERING PRAYER (ELW p. 129)**

Let us pray. **Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 134)**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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 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 and ever. Amen.**



**BLESSING (ELW p. 136)**

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace. **Amen.**

**SENDING SONG – “Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing” (ELW 545)**

1 Lord, dismiss us with your blessing, fill our hearts with joy and peace;  
let us each, your love possessing, triumph in redeeming grace.  
Oh, refresh us; oh, refresh us, trav'ling through this wilderness.

2 Thanks we give and adoration for your gospel's joyful sound.  
May the fruits of your salvation in our hearts and lives abound.  
Ever faithful, ever faithful to your truth may we be found.

3 Savior, when your love shall call us from our struggling pilgrim way,  
let no fear of death appall us, glad your summons to obey.  
May we ever, may we ever reign with you in endless day.

**DISMISSAL (ELW p. 137)**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

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