

First Lutheran Church, Morris MN

Order of Worship for Sunday, July 5, 2020—5th Sunday after Pentecost

Gathering

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” —Matthew 18:20

Prelude and Lighting of the Candles

Welcoming and Announcements

Hymn: “Come, Join the Dance of Trinity” #453

1. Come, join the dance of Trinity, before all worlds begun
the interweaving of the three, the Father, Spirit, Son.
The universe of space and time did not arise by chance,
but as the Three, in love and hope, made room within their dance.
2. Come, see the face of Trinity, newborn in Bethlehem;
then bloodied by a crown of thorns outside Jerusalem.
The dance of Trinity is meant for human flesh and bone;
when fear confines the dance in death, God rolls away the stone.
3. Come, speak aloud of Trinity, as wind and tongues of flame
set people free at Pentecost to tell the Savior’s name.
Let voices rise and interweave, by love and hope set free,
to shape in song this joy, this life: the dance of Trinity.
4. Within the dance of Trinity, before all worlds begun,
we sing the praises of the Three, the Father, Spirit, Son.
Let voices rise and interweave, by love and hope set free,
to shape in song this joy, this life: the dance of Trinity.

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Greeting:

You are the treasured people of the Lord, a people holy to the Lord our God.

*Keep the words of the Lord in your heart; teach them to your children. **Talk to them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.***

*One does not live by bread alone, **but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.***

“Scripture Song” pg 47 (blue hymnal)

Salvation belongs to our God and to Christ the Lamb forever and ever.
Great and wonderful are your deeds, O God of the universe;
just and true are your ways, O Ruler of all the nations.
Who can fail to honor you, Lord, and sing the glory of your name?
For you alone are the Holy One.
All nations will draw near and worship before you,
for your just and holy works have been revealed.

*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

*You are great, O God, and greatly to be praised. You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Grant that we may believe in you, call upon you, know you, and serve you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.***

Word

Reading: Zechariah 9:9-12

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war-horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

Reading: Psalm 145:8-14

The LORD is gracious and merciful, **slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

The LORD is good to all, **and his compassion is over all that he has made.**

All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, **and all your faithful shall bless you.**

They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, **and tell of your power,**

to make known to all people your mighty deeds, **and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.**

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, **and your dominion endures throughout all generations.**

The LORD is faithful in all his words, **and gracious in all his deeds.**

The LORD upholds all who are falling, **and raises up all who are bowed down.**

Reading: Romans 7:15-25a

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.

Gospel Acclamation Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Gospel: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30 (response after announcement of Gospel: **Glory to you, O Lord**)

“But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; the Son of Man came eating and drinking,

and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds." At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

*(response after reading of Gospel: **Praise to you, O Christ**)*

Hymn: "Morning Has Broken" #556

1. Morning has broken like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird
Praise for the singing, Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!
2. Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven
Like the first dew fall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
Sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.
3. Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning,
born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning,
God's recreation of the new day!

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Message

Hymn: "Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound" #779

1. Amazing grace! how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
was blind but now I see.
2. T'was grace that taught my heart to fear,
and Grace, my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!
3. Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.
4. The Lord has promised good to me;
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.
5. When we've been there ten thousand years,
bring shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we'd first begun.

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In Christ, you have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. We believe in him and are marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**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 again 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.**

Build yourself up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit.

Keep yourselves in the love of God; look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; Everything old has passed away; behold, everything has become new!

God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, let us be reconciled to God and to one another.

Gracious God, have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, know and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

Sharing the Peace

Sisters and brothers, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace. The peace of the Lord be with you always. And also with you.

Offering/Offertory

Prayers

Let us pray. God, our Creator, you open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living creature. With these gifts we bless you for your tender care. Help us to delight in your will and walk in your ways, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sermon for the Fourth Sunday after Pentecost, June 28, 2020 by Pastor Dan Belgum
Matthew 10: 40-42

I want to start by saying: I value the partnership that we share between Faith and First. I thank God for the ways we've been able to partner- like the Common Cup Coffeehouse, doing VBS together, and most recently, the Fusion Youth ministry for our Jr. and Sr. high school young people. Pastor Dell and I have known each other since we were counselors and led canoe trips at Camp Vermilion about 100 years ago. Seems like it now!

Recently, as I was driving through a town here in west-central MN, I read a sign, that caught my attention: "The time is always right to do what is right." That might be a theme line that weaves through all the passages read today. It may sound a little preachy. It is a challenge. And, I'd argue that there's truth in that statement!

Jeremiah was a prophet at the time when Israel was conquered by Babylon; many were taken into "exile" to Babylon. He is a true prophet. He challenges the false prophecy of Hananiah, who is prophesying peace, while this exile in Babylon will continue to "restrict" and "hamper" the Israelites for many more years. Hananiah is preaching "with rose colored glasses." He was not on the right wavelength to receive a word from God. Yet, Jeremiah was.

It reminds me of some of our politicians, pundits and others who prophesied that the Coronavirus wasn't a big deal; it wouldn't cause much problem; and further, it really was just a flu. Everything will be fine in a few weeks. Yeah, right! False prophets abounded in the days of Jeremiah, and there still around today. And further, as we read last week about Jeremiah, prophets often aren't well liked or treated well; and Jeremiah suffered for telling the truth. Prophets tell the truth. And people often don't want to hear the truth!

The time is always right to do what is right. Truth-telling by people with authority and power is an act of courage. And we need that today more than ever! I thank God for Dr. Fauci, and our best medical minds and disease specialists, as we muddle through this pandemic! I see them as having a God-given role - almost like a prophet. We may not want to hear what they tell us! Yet, they are putting politics aside, and giving us truth about how to best navigate through this challenge.

The time is always right to do what is right also "sums up" Romans chapter 6. I think we would do well to ponder these words of the Apostle for a spell. They speak to a truth about the human condition. "Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?" Paul asks "By no means!" he declares! Do we treat God's grace as an "open door" to do as we please!? It's easy to see how any of us could do this. "No! We shouldn't though," Paul implores. Earlier in Romans chapter 6, we read: "Do you not know that all who have been baptized into Christ, have been baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the power of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." Don't let sin have dominion over you - that is, Paul writes: don't let sin rule your life! We are given new life in Christ as a gift. A precious gift of God. We are to live as though we have the new life, which we do, in Christ!

Paul uses the metaphor of slave - a slave of either sin, or righteousness. Slave; I don't like that word! It's a very un-modern and repulsive word; one we cannot relate too; yet, a word and a reality that was common back in his time. Slavery was everywhere in the ancient world. Paul used this, because it was understood! He uses it as a metaphor. "Once you were Slaves to sin," Paul declares. Sin is deadly. Sin degrades life. It can tear at community, and even tear apart the Body of Christ itself. How does our separation from God's will still impact us? How does it impact others? In Lutheran understanding, we speak of simultaneously being "sinner and saint." And no matter how we try, in this life, we will sin - and this mars our lives and others' lives, from time to time. There are communal and individual impacts. Sin doesn't just impact one person - but many. So, we would do well, to reflect on this and ponder what that means for us now. Romans also is pointing to this: Grace abounds! God's love is real and powerful! It makes all the difference for us!

Jesus is risen and God has conquered sin and overcome death for our sake. God sets us free! To be “you and me.” We’re no longer bound by “the law”. We are bound to the “law of love.” Thanks be to God! Paul then urges us (the “church”) “present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present yourself to God as instruments of righteousness.” It’s always the right time to do what is right. This reminds me of the story I heard of a Sunday School teacher who asked her students: Does anyone know what we mean when we say ‘sins of omission’? A young girl replied: “Aren’t those the sins we should have committed, but didn’t?” Matthew’s Gospel chapter 10 is Jesus’ extended teaching to the disciples he had called, and by extension to us today; When he sends them out into a world with some perils, of the division that sometimes will arise (or ‘did arise’ for those first disciples). He wants us to be aware that not everyone will welcome those who bear witness to him. Yet, to those who do welcome them, there are rewards.

One of the beloved seminary professors in my seminary was Donald Juel; he used to say that the question most people ask when they read the Bible is: What does this text tell me to do? “The assumption being—of course—that the Bible is a rule book, a set of commandments, God’s little instruction book.” He would say: There are better questions to ask, since the Bible is not in fact just a set of commandments.” A better question – or questions – to ask is: “What does this text mean? And what does it mean for me?” One way we may read this passage of Matthew is as what we are supposed to do. Welcoming those God sends – prophets, the righteous, and “little ones” – which he was referring to as his disciples at that time. And how we will receive a reward by doing the welcoming of a prophet, or a righteous person, or a “little one”. And, in fact, to welcome others – for instance, to worship, or, to your homes, or to a conversation is a good thing! However, you’ll notice that it says “Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.” If we put ourselves in the place of “you”, then this is a promise of God. Then it means that when we put ourselves out beyond the walls of the church, into the world, and someone “welcomes” us – they are also welcoming Christ himself. When we are in the community, and really engage with people, and bear witness to God’s reign, and are welcomed by anyone – they are welcoming not just us, but Jesus Christ.

We’re sent out to bear witness to the love of God. That is really the sole purpose of the church. We are a community of believers being sent by God into the world each day. We need to allow others to welcome us. Some won’t; some will reject us. Some may not like us, and won’t welcome us. Others will welcome us. And when they do, we will be able to bring the “reign of God” into their midst. Because we will ‘bear’ the Christ and He bears the Holy God, within us. We are the ones God is sending. Do you and I realize it? May God help us! The time is always right, to do what is right. Amen.