

First Lutheran Church, Morris MN

Order of Worship for Sunday, July 12, 2020—6th 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: “How Great Thou Art” #856

1. O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
Thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed;

Refrain:

**Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!**

2. When through the woods and forest glades I wander,
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze; [Refrain]
3. And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
That on the cross my burden gladly bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin; [Refrain]
4. When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration
And there proclaim: "My God, how great thou art!" [Refrain]

Text: Carl G. Boberg, Music: Swedish Folk tune © 1953 Manna Music Inc. Used with permission under One License #A-710041

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

Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with joy, live according to it, and grow in faith and hope and love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Word

Reading: Isaiah 55:10-13

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth, it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Reading: Psalm 65:1-13

You are to be praised, O God, in Zion; **to you shall vows be fulfilled.**

To you, the one who answers prayers, **to you all flesh shall come.**

Our sins are stronger than we are, **but you blot out our transgressions.**

Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your courts to dwell there! **They will be satisfied by the beauty of your house, by the holiness of your temple.**

Awesome things will you show us in your righteousness, O God of our salvation; **O hope of all the ends of the earth and of the oceans far away.**

You make firm the mountains by your power; **you are girded about with might.**

You still the roaring of the seas, **the roaring of their waves, and the clamor of the peoples.**

Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble at your marvelous signs: **you make the dawn and the dusk to sing for joy.**

You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous; the river of God is full of water. **You prepare the grain, for so you provide for the earth.**

You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; **with heavy rain you soften the ground and bless its increase.**

You crown the year with your goodness, **and your paths overflow with plenty.**

May the fields of the wilderness be rich for grazing, **and the hills be clothed with joy.**

May the meadows cover themselves with flocks and the valleys cloak themselves with grain; **let them shout for joy and sing.**

Reading: Romans 8:1-11

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

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

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

Gospel: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 *(response after announcement of Gospel: **Glory to you, O Lord**)*

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!" "Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

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

Message

Hymn: "Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil" #512

Lord, let my heart be good soil, open to the seed of your word.
Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is understood.
When my heart is hard, break the stone away.
When my heart is cold, warm it with the day.
When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.
Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

Text & Music: Handt Hanson. ©1985 Prince of Peace Publishing, Changing Church Inc. Used with permission under One License #A-710041

*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.

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 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

Sending

Hymn: "Build Us Up, Lord" #670

1. Build us up, Lord, build us up;
set in us a strong foundation.
Lead us to do your holy will;
form and shape your new creation.
Build us up, Lord, build us up;
as we guide and teach each other,
help us to share your love with the world;
every sister, every brother.
Growing in Christ, we plant seeds for the kingdom;
we follow in faith what's begun!
Lord, set in our hearts the power of your word
to spread the news of your Son!

2. Build us up, Lord, build us up;
let our lives reflect your glory.
Cast away all our doubts and fears;
help us tell the world your story.
Build us up, Lord, build us up;
help us bear good fruit for you,
Lord, give us vision and keep us sure.
Grant us faith that's steadfast and true.
Growing in Christ, we plant seeds for the kingdom;
we follow in faith what's begun!
Lord, set in our hearts the power of your word
to spread the news of your Son!

Text & Music: Mark Glaeser and Donna Hanna. ©2003 Augsburg Fortress. Used with permission under One License #A-710041

Benediction

Remember in your prayers

Mick Rose, those affected by COVID-19, those who serve in the military, families of victims of war, terrorism and violence, those in our nursing homes and those who are homebound. Continue to pray for the overseas missionary we support. Pastor Alex LaChappelle serving as a pastor of Nairobi International Lutheran in Kenya, Africa. Note: you may honor a loved one and support Pastor LaChappelle in Kenya. Contact the church office for information.

*Sermon for the Fifth Sunday after Pentecost, July 5, 2020 by Pastor Dan Belgum
Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30*

I'd like to begin with a Prayer from the Civil Air Patrol Book of Prayers: Defend, O Lord, this gracious land from misuse of power, distrust of neighbor and stranger, corruption of the marketplace, the illusions of wealth; and give unto those allowed to govern us a due respect for thy sovereign rule over all nations, including our own, that they may be guided always by thy compassion for all peoples, thy vision of peaceable towns and cities everywhere, thy claim upon us to be a servant nation for the sake of all the world. Then by thy strength enable us to enact in our lives a patriotism whose first allegiance is to thy laws and thy ways; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Fourth of July. I was trying to think of a story of my childhood and the 4th of July. Of course, there were picnics, softball with the extended family, and often fireworks. Fireworks came to mind. In MN we couldn't get them, except for sparklers. Yet, somehow a neighborhood kid, Brad, had gotten a hold of some. In fact, he had the remarkable, an incredibly rare couple of Silver Salutes. A powerhouse firecracker. We neighbor kids gathered in his backyard by the garage. There sat one of those old, galvanized metal garbage cans. Brad showed us his "Silver Salutes". He explained that he was going to light two of the Barrel-shaped firecrackers, place them into the garbage can and put the lid back on. And, that we should all step back. Meanwhile, he did as he said he would; and we stood back with rapt attention, amazed that this was happening. He lit the Silver Salute, quickly dropped it into the can, and put the lid lightly on.... KABOOM!!!

Up flew the metal lid -- high into the air -- and it seemed suspended -- between heaven and earth. Then we watched as it came down and careened off the ground with a crash like a cymbal! We were all impressed. The neighbors were not! We were expressing our youthful "independence"!

What defines July 4th for you? Picnics? Parades? Parties? Flags? In this pandemic we've had to pare down our plans. We need to protect our neighbors and practice Christian compassion. On Independence Day we celebrate the independence of the Founders from an oppressive power -- the King of England. We celebrate the American Experiment with Democracy, a form of government that is envied by many in the world. Yet, one that continually needs to be reformed and practiced by the people to make it sustainable.

We love our "independence" as individuals. We love to travel in our vehicles when and where we like to. We enjoy and celebrate freedom to assemble as we are now. We value our Founding Father's principle of "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." We know that's the understandable desire of every American regardless of their background: their creed, class color or constitution.

At the beginning of today's reading from Matthew's Gospel, we have what one person calls "the equivalent of a 'kids these days' parent rant." (Christian Piatt, *Surviving the Bible*, p. 244). Jesus describes that John the Baptist came neither eating or drinking (he was an ascetic), and was said to have a demon; and Jesus himself came eating and drinking and they say: "Look a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners."

Because of their practices, teaching, and demeanors, they were judged and rejected by many. Even though the truth was right in front of them, they didn't perceive it. Didn't recognize it. The same could be said of many today. "Yet, wisdom is vindicated by her deeds," Jesus is saying. His actions, his works, his teachings do vindicate his wisdom and point to him as God's anointed.

Later, Jesus declares that only those whom the Father reveals Jesus to will believe and follow him. "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'"

Then, a grand invitation: “Come to me all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest.”

We are invited to come to him; when we feel weighed down by obstacles, by a pandemic, by the changes and chances of life. We are invited to come to him when we are weighed down by sin or temptation. We are invited to learn from him – to embrace his “gospel way” and find life’s center and purpose in Him.

It is a call – in the imperative voice – that is: “Come to me.” An invitation with an edge of a command! Yet, an invitation, too. It is an invitation to “dependence.” Dependence upon God’s guidance and will. Dependence upon Jesus’ hope-filled assistance in living out God’s will for our lives. We are invited to come to him. And to “learn” from him. He will give us rest, and he will teach us what is important in life! The yoke we hear about had two slots for beasts of burden – bullocks or other animals to be fitted about their necks.

The image of the yoke was also used by other Teachers (Rabbis) in New Testament times to refer to obedience to the laws of Moses; obedience to God’s teachings. The yoke of the law of Moses involved, eventually, 613 laws and hundreds of interpretations. No doubt about it, this was a “burden” for Jewish believers. Jesus says his “gospel way” is lighter. “Love God and love your neighbor.” Jesus offers us help when we are burdened and rest when we are weary. Yet, also, we don’t want to miss that he also offers us “instruction” for life! We can learn from him.

As Professor Jennifer Kaaland writes: Jesus’ gentle instruction will enable you to find rest for your soul; to find wholeness and completion. Instructors are guides and Jesus’ guidance is not harsh or arrogant, and therefore obedience to the word should be easy. Jesus’ invitation is instructive. Wisdom enables self-reflection. Truth is the beginning of wisdom. It is a starting point for us to live fruitful lives. Of course, it is true that following Jesus involves a certain burden. We no longer live for ourselves, but with God as our guide. Still, the honest truth is: There is no guarantee we won’t experience suffering, pain, or injustice.

Meanwhile, on this Independence Day weekend, let it be known: As we grow in dependence upon him, I have found, and I believe, we will discover He provides what we need! “The Lord is my Shepherd, I have what I need.” He brings light to our darkness, and lightens our burden! As we follow, we learn from him to love God and to love our neighbor. While burdens in this life will never “disappear” no matter what anyone tells you, as we trust and follow him. Jesus, indeed, lightens those burdens...

For as he put it: “My yoke is light and my burden easy.” Amen.