

Thus says the Lord; Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.

Jeremiah 6:16

How are you finding rest these days? How is your soul doing? In any Youth Setting here and many places, we may ask our young adults and kids, “What are your highs and lows?” In many meetings on Zoom or in person lately many asked, “How is your soul? How are you doing?”

So, how are you doing? I do not know a person that has not had trouble or worry in these times. I, myself have been tired and weary and it seems it is hard to shake sometimes. It appears that most of us have something that might keep us up at night.

Yet, talking with people of God like all of you are we continue in the ancient times like the Prophet Jeremiah says we stand in the crossroads and find the ancient paths. Jeremiah knew heartache and pain and many times told God, “I am done with this, I am finished, take me now!” My words, yet he always and forever in his life continued to trust God, followed the ancient ways and paths and walked in them. You will find rest for your souls. That is what we live and breathe and have our being as we continue to have faith, continue to trust, continue to know God wants us to rest and lay the burden and pleas on him.

I pray that you are finding rest for your souls. I will be taking some time to rest and sit for a bit as I take time off for my soul. Again, continued thanks for those that have been helping in any way for our printed, on line, in the car, and In-gathering Worship for these strange but holy times. We continue to have a printed service mailed out, live on Facebook, First Lutheran Church Hinckley MN YouTube, and listen in your car and In Gathering to 50% capacity. We worship and thank God for all these opportunities and continue to spread the Good News.

Remember, you are a beloved Child of God, loved and forgiven in your good moments and in the not so good moments. We all have them. God has got us covered. Go back to the ancient paths; it will bring such relief and smiles. The good way.

Jesus loves me, this I know.

That is all you need to know, right?

Peace,

Pastor Brenda



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor Brenda Wicklund

July 26, 2020

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

“We are called by God to grow in faith together, sharing Christ’s love with each other and our community”



As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today’s gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God’s reign, the great surprise is that God’s grace finds us first!

Welcome

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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

C: Amen.

L: Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

L: Reconciling God,

C: 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.

L: 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.

C: Amen.

Song- "God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens" Red Worship Book 771

Greeting

Red Worship Book pg. 203

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

C: And also with you.

Kyrie

Red Worship Book pg. 203

C: Have mercy on us, Lord, and hear our solemn prayer. We come to hear your living word; it saves us from despair.

Have mercy on us, Christ, and wash away our sin. Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may begin.

Have mercy on us, Lord, make sin and shame depart. Renew us with your saving pow'r; create in us new hearts!

Canticle of Praise

Red Worship Book pg. 204

C: Come, let us join our cheerful songs with angels round the throne; ten thousand thousand are their tongues, but all their joys are one.

"Worthy the Lamb that died," they cry, "to be exalted thus!" "Worthy the Lamb," our lips reply, "for he was slain for us!"

Jesus is worthy to receive honor and pow'r divine; and blessings, more than we can give, be, Lord, forever thine.

Let all creation join in one to bless the sacred name of God who sits upon the throne, and to adore the Lamb.

Prayer of the Day

L Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

Because Solomon did not ask for long life, riches, or the defeat of his enemies, God gave him what he asked for: wisdom to govern the people well.

First Reading: I Kings 3:5-12

⁵At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, “Ask what I should give you.”
⁶And 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. ⁷And 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. ⁸And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?”

¹⁰It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹God 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, ¹²I 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.”

Psalm 119:129-136

L: Your decrees are wonderful;

C: therefore I obey them with all my heart.

L: When your word is opened it gives light;

C: it gives understanding to the simple.

L: I open my mouth and pant

C: because I long for your commandments.

L: Turn to me and be gracious to me,

C: as you always do to those who love your name.

L: Order my footsteps in your word;

C: let no iniquity have dominion over me.

L: Rescue me from those who oppress me,

C: and I will keep your commandments.

L: Let your face shine upon your servant

C: and teach me your statutes.

L: My eyes shed streams of tears,

C: because people do not keep your teaching.

These words celebrate the depth of God’s actions for us. Through Christ’s death for us and the activity of the Spirit praying for us, we are fused to God’s love poured out in Jesus Christ. Nothing, not even death itself, is able to separate us from such incredible divine love.

Second Lesson: Romans 8:26-39

²⁶The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

³¹What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³²He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³Who will bring

any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. ³⁵Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gospel Acclamation

Red Worship Book pg. 205

C: Alleluia! Lord and Savior: open now your saving word. Let it burn like fire within us; speak until our hearts are stirred. Alleluia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew

C: Glory to you, O Lord. (spoken)

Red Worship Book pg. 206

Throughout Matthew's gospel, Jesus and his disciples proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near!" Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people's lives.

Gospel: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

³¹[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³²it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

³³He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

⁴⁴"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹"Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." ⁵²And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

"The Gospel of Our Lord

C: Praise to you, O Christ. (spoken)

Red Worship Book pg. 206

Sermon

Pastor Jack Koch

What is it like, mom, dad? to fall in love; fly in a small airplane; to take a cruise? Has your child ever asked you a question like this? They are asking you to describe something you have experienced, but they have not. To tell them what it is like, we have to associate it with something they can relate to.

I saw a cartoon once where cowboys were sitting around a campfire eating supper. The caption said, "they say chicken tastes just like rattlesnake?" I think about that each time I hear someone trying to explain what a new food tastes like compared to what we know.

My brother-in-law said let's go out for snapping turtle. My first thought was "Why?" I told him I never had it and didn't know if I would like it. "It tastes like chicken" he lied. No, it doesn't. It has 7 different textures of

meat in different parts of the body. None taste like chicken. I did like it however, and had it many times before I headed off to seminary.

When Jesus is baptized the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended on like a dove. Oh! The Holy Spirit is a dove. No, it is not a dove. It was a statement trying to give us a mental picture of what it APPEARED to look like.

So how do we learn what things really are? First off you need to trust the one telling you about it.

Some of you may remember me mentioning that I make a family recipe rye bread. My mother was the only one in a family of eight brothers and sisters who made this bread. When I realized that my sister wasn't going to carry on the tradition, I asked mom to teach me. "Take a handful of this...and a pinch of that. whoa. I need more information. I listened and watched but I also made her put things into measuring spoons or cups before they went into the bowl. "How do you get the yeast to activate? I asked. "When the milk starts to scald on the side of the kettle, test it with your finger. When it feels right, add the yeast" Yeah, right. To add to the problem she used a cake of yeast. Remember those? I had to get them from the store every week. They cost 5 cents. If you remember that, you are as old as me. Mix in the other ingredients once the yeast was active and you made a loaf of yeast. NO YOU DIDN'T. The yeast is unseen. Only it's effect.

"Dad, pick the lesson for my wedding" my daughter said. I picked Matthew 13: 44-46. "Not a very good lesson for a wedding" she said. "Trust me" I responded. Neither her nor her husband to be were looking for a significant other when they were given a project at work. Things changed over the course of their project and something unexpected came from the project. A treasure, hidden, then uncovered. Isn't God amazing?

Jesus tells His disciples, and us, to listen and learn. He knows what the kingdom is all about, and what wonders it beholds. The disciples and locals were not special people, they were not always looking, they were just receivers of the gift He offers.

When my son brought his fiancée up for a visit I was working at the church. When we left Heather said "Let me take your pickup and you ride with Jason." The pickup had a manual floor shift and I didn't know if she could drive one. Yet I threw her my keys and went to the car. I thought "why did I give her my truck?" and my next thought was "I gave her my son, why would I withhold anything else?"

You're ahead of me, aren't you? Why would God the Father give us the kingdom and all that goes with that? You know.

Accept the free gift. It is like nothing you have ever experienced before. You cannot earn it, you cannot take it, you can only receive it as His gift of amazing grace.

The kingdom is like the greatest experience love can give, and it's yours. Amen

Song- "God When Humans Bonds are Broken"

HOD

Nicene Creed

Red Worship Book pg. 104

C: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son,* who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Offering Prayer

L: God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. Water and word, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Nourish us through these gifts, that we might proclaim your steadfast love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song.

C: Amen

Prayers of Intercession

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

A brief silence

L: Merciful God, your reign is revealed to us in common things: a mustard shrub, a woman baking bread, a fishing net. Help your church witness to the surprising yet common ways you encounter us in daily life. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

L: When your word is opened, it gives light and understanding. Increase our understanding and awe of your creation; guide the work of scientists and researchers. Treasuring the earth, may we live as grateful and healing caretakers of our home. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

L: As the birds of the air nest in branches of trees, gather the nations of the world into the welcoming shade of your merciful reign. Direct leaders of nations to build trust with each other and walk in the way of peace. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

L: Your Spirit helps us in our weakness and intercedes for the saints according to your will. Help us when we do not know how to pray. Give comfort to the dying, refuge to the weary, justice to those who are oppressed, and healing to the sick. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

L: You show steadfast love and direct us to ask of you what we need. Help this congregation ask boldly for what is most needed. Refresh us with new dreams of being your people in this place and time. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

L: In you our lives are never lost. Strengthen us by the inspiring witness of your people in all times and places. Embolden our witness now and one day gather us with all your saints in light. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

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

C: Amen.

Words of Institution

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

Red Worship Book pg. 208

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.

Song- "Sent Forth by God's Blessings"

Red Worship Book 547

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

the worship is ended ... let the service begin...



Prayer Concerns ~ (Names will be on for one month unless requested longer.)

Kay Conway, George and Joan Wells (brother/sister-in-law of Gary and Gail Wells), Eric Mettling (deployed for service), Gracie Edin, Kyalani Robbins, Jessica Lindahl, Rebecca Karp (Marina Vork's niece), David Stephenson and Annetta Eberlein (brother and sister-in-law of Kevin Stephenson), Carol Bostrom, Leigha Ness (Pastor Brenda's great-niece), and Barbara Ekberg (sister of Loretta Sprado.)

What's Happening:

9:30 am Sunday- In-gathering Worship; Radio broadcast in Church parking lot, Facebook or YouTube

9:30 am Tuesday-Women's Bible Study

7 am Thursday-Men's Text Study

You have 4 options for Sunday Worship Services:

1. In-person Worship in the Sanctuary at 9:30 am.
2. “Live” at 9:30 am on Facebook (firstlutheranhinckleyelca) or watch later on Facebook.
3. “Live” 9:30 am on YouTube (goggle First Lutheran Church Hinckley, MN) then play **or** watch it on our webpage (flchinckley.org) under events, YouTube.
4. You can come to the Church parking lot at 9:30 am, sit in your car, tune into 90.7 FM on your radio and listen to the Service live.

Please feel free to choose any of the following options.

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