

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends. Philippians 4:1

We keep plugging along in our lives at this time in the midst of so many changes that continue to happen. Do we shelter in place, only go out for essential business, work from home or go into work, or some of each, in school, distance learning or hybrid, listen to the dissention and heartache and ask ourselves, when will this be over and how to I go forward? It feels that in so many areas of our lives we have had a huge upset. It matters not what your job is, how old you are we are all in a place of limbo and anxiety. We ask, what will happen next?

The Apostle Paul gives hope in his letter to Philippians that he is writing from jail. He brings some hope to the people at the time that were faltering in their faith, who needed encouragement, who needed to see Jesus and the power of God. They needed as we do to hear the promise that we are encouraged as we pray and help each other with the help of Jesus Christ.

He continues, ***“Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not be worried about anything, but pray about everything.....And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”***

Philippians 4: 4-7

It is hard to pray about everything. Pray about everything, he says. When you run out of dish soap or ketchup, and when you are worried about someone’s health. When you are happy or sad. When you are anxious about your child in school, or after watching the news. When you wonder if things will be back to normal or if that will not happen. Pray about everything and the promise is that peace of God is promised to you. God is not going anywhere.

We took a two-week hiatus from In-Gathering worship, one week outside at the park and one week pre-taped ahead. We will be back on Sunday morning on October 11, 2020 at 9:30 am with radio transmitting to your car, in person, YouTube and Facebook live. October 12th we will resume Bible Studies. Confirmation and Faith in Action will be on Zoom or will provided to do activities at home. **We must be overly cautious at this time of Covid spread and must use utmost care as we gather at any time in the church.** Stay home if you are sick and do what is right and safe for you and your family. Wash your hands and wear your masks which are mandated in our state as we love our neighbor.

Many things we could think about may not be helpful. Paul continues to give us some things to keep our mind on: ***Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things. Philippians 4:8***

Thinking and praying on those things. Keep trusting in God my brothers and sisters in Christ.

Peace,

Pastor Brenda

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FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor Brenda Wicklund

October 11, 2020

19th 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”



In Isaiah we are given a vision of the great feast to come, when God will wipe away death forever. In Jesus' parable about a great banquet, those invited do not come, so the invitation is extended to others. In our liturgy God spreads a table before us. Even amid anxiety and hardship we rejoice in the peace of God which surpasses all understanding. With great joy we feast at the table of the Lord, and we go forth to share the wonderful invitation with others hungering and thirsting for the abundant life of God.

Prelude

Pat Anderson

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, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.

C: Amen.

L: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

L: Faithful God,

C: have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

L: God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of ☩ Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world.

C: Amen.

Hymn

“We Are Called”

Red Worship Book 720

1 Come! Live in the light! Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord! We are called to be light for the kingdom, to live in the freedom of the city of God.

Refrain

We are called to act with justice, we are called to love tenderly; we are called to serve one another, to walk humbly with God.

2 Come! Open your heart! Show your mercy to all those in fear! We are called to be hope for the hopeless so hatred and blindness will be no more. **Refrain**

3 Sing! Sing a new song! Sing of that great day when all will be one! God will reign, and we'll walk with each other as sisters and brothers united in love. **Refrain**

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!

Prayer of the Day

L: Lord of the feast, you have prepared a table before all peoples and poured out your life with abundance. Call us again to your banquet. Strengthen us by what is honorable, just, and pure, and transform us into a people of righteousness and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

After a hymn of praise acknowledging God as a shelter for the poor, the prophet portrays a wonderful victory banquet at which death—which in ancient Canaan was depicted as a monster swallowing up everyone—will be swallowed up forever. The prophet urges celebration of this victory of salvation.

First Reading: Isaiah 25:1-9

¹O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name; for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.

²For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt.

³Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you.

⁴For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm,

⁵the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.

⁶On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

⁷And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations;

⁸he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

⁹It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Psalm: Psalm 23

L: The LORD is my shepherd;

C: I shall not be in want.

L: The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures

C: and leads me beside still waters.

L: You restore my soul, O LORD,

C: and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

L: Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;

C: for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

L: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

C: you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

L: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

C: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Though writing from prison and facing an uncertain future, Paul calls on the Philippians to rejoice and give thanks to God no matter what the circumstance. God's peace is with us and binds together our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ, especially when things around us do not seem peaceful.

Second Reading: Philippians 4:1-9

¹My brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

²I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew

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

Red Worship Book pg. 206

Jesus tells a parable indicating that the blessings of God's kingdom are available to all, but the invitation is not to be taken lightly.

Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14

¹Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ²“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ ⁵But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. ⁷The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. ⁸Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ ¹⁰Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, ¹²and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴For many are called, but few are chosen.”

“The Gospel of Our Lord

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

Red Worship Book pg. 206

Sermon

***The Invitation:* Matthew 22:1-14**

Pastor Brenda Wicklund

When is the last time you were invited to an event? Wedding, party, gathering? Were you happy you were invited? Did you want to go? Did you try to get out of it when you heard who was going to be there or were you on edge to go? Of course, maybe you wanted to but something came up and you just could not get to it, because you know life happens that way. Life happens.

The parable of the wedding banquet is deemed as tough and hard to digest. Many theologians have dissected and argued about what this parable means throughout time. If you do not wrestle with the parable, you may be a problem. Jesus says, “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding for his son.” Yet no one came. Then he sent out servants and tell them the banquet has been prepared, the dinner is ready, come. Come to this banquet.

They still did not come, and even killed the servants that were asking them to come. Now the King says, just go ask anyone to come, off the streets, so good and bad people came. He might have wanted to save face. Now I am thinking I may not want to be there. The wedding hall was full. The king comes in and sees someone not dressed as if he should and is out. “Many are invited but few are chosen.” Matthew 22:14

Many questions come to mind when we hear Jesus sharing this parable. The King is powerful and angry. The King has prepared a banquet and has invited all kinds of people, making sure we know that anyone and everyone could participate, and no one comes until the people, even the people who are not good, are invited.

Everyone is invited. We may have troubles with that. We want our opinion in our life of Jesus Christ and our trust in God to be, well ours is right, correct? We find ourselves in times of division and mistrust, where we insist our way is the correct way, and oh, I am not sure I would want to go to the banquet, if “bad” people were attending. Is the king out of line to invite certain ones, and mistakenly those people didn’t even want to come to the feast and celebration for one reason or another, and now ordering, killing and chaos, just for the party?

So many questions and trauma at the time of Jesus sharing this parable, for the people that were walking with him and for us at these cross roads. We might slip our lives in at this time and place to be on chaos each day. We too, maybe are indicating that we may not want to take them up on this invitation to the feast. God offers this feast as the prophet Isaiah shares in our reading today as we hear the promise from God and an invitation. “On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.”(Isaiah 25:6) On this mountain a promise from God. Welcoming you to the feast. It sounds amazing. On second thought, I do not care who is there, because God is and he will protect. Thanking God for the promise.

The Psalmist goes on to these words of comfort and hope from Psalm 23: “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” I shall not want. When we hear this it may be when we have lost someone we loved, or at Easter when we hear how Jesus is our shepherd who died for us. What do you hear now? “You restore my soul and guide me along right pathways for your names sake.... Though I walk in the valley of deep darkness, I shall fear no evil. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.” Restoring and guiding in the right path. Even though deep darkness tries to overcome us, we shall not fear any evil. God promises again by preparing a feast, in front of our enemies no less, and who wants to eat with enemies, but this feast is wonderful, prepared especially by God, for you and me. This promise is so great that an enemy cannot touch us. Therefore, no matter the circumstances, I know this feast is for someone special from someone powerful and loving, granting protection and provisions.

This feast and promise from God and his Son Jesus Christ prepared for you. When you are scared or lonely, when you are down and discouraged, we remember the invitation and promise for protection and guidance from God. You are a beloved child of God, forgiven and freed, granted mercy and grace, always.

We hear the Word of God and the Gospel differently in these times. The promise rings true more now than ever in our lives and circumstances, and we find ourselves trusting even stronger in the message of hope, even in our wrestling.

I leave you with the words from the Apostle Paul and let them be your mantra as he encourages from jail: *Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4: 4-7*
Amen.

Hymn “Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life”

Red Worship Book 719

- 1** Where cross the crowded ways of life, where sound the cries of race and clan, above the noise of selfish strife, we hear your voice, O Son of Man.
- 2** In haunts of wretchedness and need, on shadowed thresholds dark with fears, from paths where hide the lures of greed, we catch the vision of your tears.
- 3** From tender childhood's helplessness, from human grief and burdened toil, from famished souls, from sorrow's stress, your heart has never known recoil.

- 4 The cup of water giv'n for you still holds the freshness of your grace; yet long these multitudes to view the strong compassion in your face.
- 5 O Master, from the mountainside make haste to heal these hearts of pain; among these restless throngs abide; oh, tread the city's streets again;
- 6 Till all the world shall learn your love, and follow where your feet have trod; till glorious from your heav'n above shall come the city of our God.

Nicene Creed

Red Worship Book pg. 104

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.

Prayers of Intercession

L: With confidence in God's grace and mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: Gracious host, fill your church with a spirit of joyous hospitality. We pray for bishops, teachers, church leaders, and all children of God as they invite others to your table of boundless grace. Lord, in your mercy, **C: hear our prayer.**

L: Gracious host, as creation waits with eager longing for redemption, protect your creatures that are mistreated. Restore valleys, mountains and pastures, and still and running waters. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

L: Gracious host, as you set a table in the presence of enemies, so bless the efforts of diplomats, international peace workers, and world leaders who navigate conflict. May they proceed with dialogue and understanding, so that justice and peace prevails. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

L: Gracious host, let your gentleness be known among those who are weary or ill (*especially*). Strengthen doctors, medical care workers, and caretakers who see to their needs. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

L: Gracious host, when we are quick to judge outward appearance, remind us how you clothe all in your mercy. We pray for ministries that provide needed clothing and other personal care assistance in this community (*local ministries can be named*). Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

L: Gracious host, as we remember those who have died and are gathered at the heavenly banquet, comfort us with your presence. Assure us of your peace at all times. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

L: Listen as we call on you, O God, and enfold in your loving arms all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Offering Prayer

L: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. You have set before us these gifts of your good creation. Prepare us for your heavenly banquet, nourish us with this rich food and drink, and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world, through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and 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.

Prayer

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.

Hymn-

“Sent Forth by God’s Blessings”

Red Worship Book 547

- 1 Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing, the people of God from this dwelling take leave. The supper is ended. Oh, now be extended the fruits of this service in all who believe. The seed of Christ's teaching, receptive souls reaching, shall blossom in action for God and for all. Your grace shall incite us, your love shall unite us to work for your kingdom and answer your call.
- 2 With praise and thanksgiving to God ever-living, the tasks of our ev'ryday life we will face—our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring, embracing God's children, the whole human race. With your feast you feed us, with your light now lead us; unite us as one in this life that we share. Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving give honor to Christ and his name that we bear.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

Thanks be to God.

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



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

Judy Smith, Peter Thorvig, 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, Carol Bostrom, Leigha Ness (Pastor Brenda's great-niece), Bob Pyle (friend of Dave and Kay Kadous) and Barbara Ekberg (sister of Loretta Sprado.)

Welcome to worship!

You are at a party for God's family! Look around at the decorations. What colors do you see? Are there candles? Is there going to be food? What are you going to do at this party? Now think about a party you have attended. What were the decorations like? What did you eat? What did you do? Imagine you are hosting a party for all of God's family.

The fabulous feast: Matthew 22:1-14

Today's gospel is about a huge wedding feast. The king invited everyone—even strangers! God is like the king in this story. Each of us is invited to be a wedding guest. Will you go to the party?



A fabulous feast

Holy Communion is a feast for all of us—friends and strangers. We share bread, wine, and blessings together at the table (altar), sing songs, and pray.



**People celebrate Holy Communion many ways.
How do you celebrate Holy Communion at your church?**



Thank you, God, for inviting us to your fabulous feast. Amen.

This week: Make bread together and invite friends to share it with you

We will be putting one or two of the Confirmands Faith Statements in the bulletins providing there is room.

Alyssa Alexander

I Alyssa Alexander do not know what I believe in. Is there a God? Is he always there for me? Why are there bad people in this world? Why do we get hurt? I don't know why. For everything I have been through God has always been there for me. For that reason I do believe in God. He has helped me through good and bad times with everything that goes on I go to school every day with a smile on my face. Because if I do not like to go to school with a frown I get asked these questions. Who hurt you? Are you ok? Do I need to hurt someone for you? So every day I go to school with a smile no matter what happens. This has also helped me get through my day. I don't like taking the path like some people. Like my Bible verse Psalm 1:1 "happy are those who do not follow the wicked or take the path sinners tread, or sit in the eat of scoffers." I'd rather have God by my side and do even more good in my life. Some places I've seen God is everywhere. I see him at school, church, speech meets, camp everywhere. I first saw God on my first mission trip to Duluth ever since then I have believed in him the father almighty and I hope all of you too.

Bryan Benjamin Blowers

My faith journey started with my baptism. I was baptized here at First Lutheran many years ago as a baby. I have gone to church for as long as I can remember. I have attended Sunday school, VBS, Faith in Action and I started Confirmation three years ago. Confirmation was very enjoyable.

In Confirmation we learned how to serve by being an acolyte and giving communion. We also got to know each other and become friends. Sometimes we would go places. We went to Elderwood to visit with the elderly. We also went to the food shelf, helped out and helped to stock shelves. Over this amount of time I learned new things including more about myself and God's plan for me that I did not know before I went to confirmation.

I feel connected to God when I serve my church. Serving my church is the best way I can use my gifts given from God. As I grow older, meet new people, try new activities, I will find new ways to share my gifts to serve God and my church.

The bible verse I am going to share is from 2 Timothy 2:7 – "Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything."

First Lutheran Church
301 Lawler Avenue South
P.O. Box 459
Hinckley, MN 55037

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