

Service of Holy Communion

August 23, 2020

WELCOME

PRELUDE

"Ariosa" J.S. Bach

Piano

OPENING

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

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

Amen.

THE 23RD PSALM

We're going to take a few weeks to open worship with a word of trust and confidence in God. Please join me in the words of the 23rd Psalm...

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in right pathways for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil. For you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

GATHERING SONG *"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"*

- 1 Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not;
as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.

Refrain

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided;
great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

2 Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. *Refrain*

3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! *Refrain*

Text: Thomas O. Chisholm, 1866-1960

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GREETING

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.

HYMN OF PRAISE *“This is the Feast”*



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al - le - lu - ia.



1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



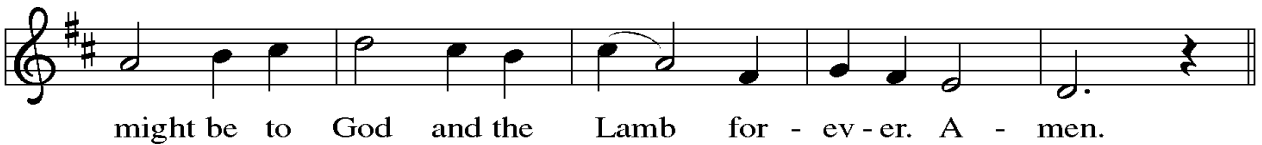
free to be peo-ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and



strength, and hon - or and bless-ing and glo - ry are his.



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al - le - lu - ia.



PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, with all your faithful followers of every age, we praise you, the rock of our life. Be our strong foundation and form us into the body of your Son, that we may gladly minister to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

THE WORD

FIRST READING: *Isaiah 51:1-6*

Just as God had called Abraham and Sarah and given them many descendants, so now God offers comfort to Zion. God's deliverance will come soon and will never end.

¹Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the LORD.

Look to the rock from which you were hewn,
and to the quarry from which you were dug.

²Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you;
for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many.

³For the LORD will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.

⁴Listen to me, my people, and give heed to me, my nation; for a teaching will go out from me, and my justice for a light to the peoples.

⁵I will bring near my deliverance swiftly, my salvation has gone out and my arms will rule the peoples; the coastlands wait for me, and for my arm they hope.

⁶Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and those who live on it will die like gnats; but my salvation will be forever, and my deliverance will never be ended.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: *Psalm 138*

¹I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing your praise.

²I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name, because of your steadfast love and faithfulness; for you have glorified your name and your word above all things.

³When I called, you answered me; you increased my strength within me.

⁴All the rulers of the earth will praise you, O LORD, when they have heard the words of your mouth.

⁵They will sing of the ways of the LORD, that great is the glory of the LORD.

⁶The LORD is high, yet cares for the lowly, perceiving the haughty from afar.

⁷Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe; you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies; your right hand shall save me.

⁸You will make good your purpose for me; O LORD, your steadfast love endures forever; do not abandon the works of your hands.

SECOND READING: *Romans 12:1-8*

In response to God's merciful activity, we are to worship by living holistic, God-pleasing lives. Our values and viewpoints are not molded by the time in which we live but are transformed by the Spirit's renewing work. God's grace empowers different forms of service among Christians, but all forms of ministry function to build up the body of Christ.

¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by

the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God— what is good and acceptable and perfect.

³For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. ⁶We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; ⁸the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL:

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the sixteenth chapter
Glory to you, O Lord.

Matthew 16:13-20

At a climactic point in Jesus' ministry, God reveals to Peter that Jesus is "the Messiah, the Son of the living God," and Jesus responds with the promise of a church that will overcome the very gates of Hades.

¹³Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you

bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”²⁰ Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Several years ago, shortly before five young people were confirmed here at Shepherd King, I asked them to write a Creed – like the Apostles’ and the Nicene – but in their own words. They knew that a Creed was a statement or confession of faith. They had passed the quizzes and tests I’d given on that subject and others. They knew the Apostles’ Creed by heart. But when I asked them to write their own Creed – as a group – they stared at me blankly.

We broke it down into the standard three parts of a Creed – one about God who creates, one about God the Word made flesh, and one about God the spirit moving among us. It took some prodding, but eventually they did write their own creed.

The “Jesus” part was challenging. What did they want to say about Jesus? What aspects of his life were most important? What did they really believe about Jesus? They mentioned how Jesus taught, how he healed and fed people. That he forgave sins. And that he was crucified for our sins and raised on the third day. They finally got the words down on paper, and I was proud of them. We used their creed in worship the Sunday they were confirmed.

As someone who earned a degree in theology in college and then spent four more years studying Bible and Church History and Worship and Doctrine in seminary, I understand what it’s like when your teacher says, “Tell me in your own words who Jesus is.” A student’s aim is to learn the material so she can give the correct answer. And the correct answer is the one your teacher has taught you. So to hear, “In your own words” can be disconcerting. You’ve spent all this time learning other peoples’ words on the subject, and suddenly you’re supposed to have your own?

Jesus’ disciples had been listening to Jesus teach, asking him questions, trying to puzzle out his sometimes metaphorical answers. They’d seen him feed thousands, and heal hundreds. They’d heard him in the synagogues out-teach the local scholars, and noticed how astonished people were at that. Although they didn’t understand everything he said, they believed in him. They tried to incorporate his teachings into their daily lives. But now...

Jesus and the disciples arrived in Caesarea Philippi, a city on the trade route where many cultures crossed paths. It was also an ancient religious site for the pagan god Pan. In countless little niches in the cliff side, people had made mini altars to multiple gods. It was a cosmopolitan, eclectic place. In that multifaceted setting, Jesus stopped and asked his friends: “Who do you say that I

am?” They didn’t yet have a Creed to recite, so they had to answer for themselves.

What would you have said, if you had been there? What would you say today, if Jesus asked “Who do you say I am?” It’s interesting that Jesus uses the word “say” rather than “believe.” “Belief,” at least in our culture, has the implication of something private, something you keep in your mind and your heart, but is not really anyone else’s business. “Say,” however, assumes that you and I speak about Jesus to others, that we confess our faith in our words and our actions. “Who do you say that I am?” That’s a question to make us think before we answer.

We’ve come to the participatory part of today’s sermon. Imagine you came across someone who knew nothing about Jesus. What would you say to that person to introduce him to Jesus? In the blank space below (*or a separate slip of paper*), write down what you would say. Don’t think too much about it, just write what comes to mind. I’ll wait a moment. (*space intentionally left blank*)

I did this exercise in preparing for this sermon. I took out paper, titled it “Describing Jesus to someone who never met him,” and I wrote. The subject was so wide-open it was almost intimidating. I could say anything, but I also wanted to give a clear picture.

How did it feel for you? There’s comfort in having a clear “right answer” to the questions we’re asked. Not having a prescribed answer, pushes us to wrestle with our hearts and our minds, and try to express what we find there. You’re welcome to put some of your thoughts on the comments in the Facebook live-stream if you wish.

Back in Caesarea Philippi, when Jesus asked “who do you say that I am,” eleven disciples stayed quiet. Either they couldn’t think of anything to say or they were afraid to express their thoughts aloud. Peter took a chance and spoke for all of them, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” It was a good answer; it was a confession from the heart, not something he knew to say by rote.

David Lose, senior pastor of Mt. Olivet Lutheran in Minneapolis, wrote his personal response to Jesus’ question. It was a good summary. He said Jesus shows us the heart of God – a heart that aches with those who suffer, a heart

angry and upset an unnecessary deaths, a heart that loves us as only a parent's heart can.

Lose went on to write "I think Jesus also came to show us what's possible. And so rather than give in to the threat of disease, Jesus healed. Rather than surrender people to demons, Jesus showed compassion. Rather than let people starve because there's not enough to go around, Jesus fed people who were hungry. Jesus refused to be satisfied or limited by the status quo and invites us to do the same, because if Jesus' life and death show us how much God loves us, Jesus' resurrection shows us that that love is more powerful than hate and fear and even death."

That's who Jesus is: the heart of God, who came to show us what's possible. Things that do not seem possible, **are** for God: living through COVID, becoming better neighbors to one another during COVID, treating people compassionately regardless of their politics, or their sexual preference, or their looks. Even in these days when so much seems impossible, in Jesus everything good can be accomplished.

I think part of the reason Jesus asks us, today, "Who do you say that I am" is that he wants us to search ourselves, to find what we truly believe, and let that shape us. More than seeking a correct answer, Jesus wanted his friends to go deeper, deeper in faith-understanding, deeper in their relationship with him, deeper in their trust that Jesus is alive and at work in us. Jesus' question calls us to plant ourselves in a specific posture toward him, to say something we will have to live with, but will also have the chance, by the grace of God, to live into.

Here we are, in a world of commerce and politics and arguments about science, in the midst of a pandemic that has left our neighbors hungry and unemployed, in a world that is confused over what "truth" is. Here we are on this day, in this place. Who do you say that Jesus is?

HYMN OF THE DAY *"The Church's One Foundation"*

- 1 The church's one foundation
is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
she is his new creation
by water and the word.
From heav'n he came and sought her
to be his holy bride;
with his own blood he bought her,
and for her life he died.
- 2 Elect from ev'ry nation,
yet one o'er all the earth,
her charter of salvation

one Lord, one faith, one birth:
 one holy name she blesses,
 partakes one holy food,
 and to one hope she presses,
 with ev'ry grace endued.

3 Though with a scornful wonder
 this world sees her oppressed,
 by schisms rent asunder,
 by heresies distressed,
 yet saints their watch are keeping;
 their cry goes up: "How long?"
 And soon the night of weeping
 shall be the morn of song.

4 Through toil and tribulation
 and tumult of her war,
 she waits the consummation
 of peace forevermore;
 till with the vision glorious
 her longing eyes are blest,
 and the great church victorious
 shall be the church at rest.

5 Yet she on earth has union
 with God, the Three in One,
 and mystic sweet communion
 with those whose rest is won.
 Oh, blessed heav'nly chorus!
 Lord, save us by your grace,
 that we, like saints before us,
 may see you face to face.

Text: Samuel J. Stone, 1839-1900

APOSTLES' CREED

With the whole Church let us 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 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 THE PEOPLE

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.

Lord our rock, you are our foundation in Jesus Christ, your Son, whom we confess as the living God. Prepare your church for its mission in bearing witness to Christ, both here at home and throughout the world. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You call forth praises from the far reaches of the universe to the smallest of creatures. Join our songs to theirs, that a spirit of praise and thanksgiving will arouse us to cherish this wondrous home you give us. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord. Direct the leaders of countries, legislators and magistrates, mayors and councils, to walk in your ways. Help leaders regard those in need with mercy and fulfill your loving purposes in the governance of peoples. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Though we walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve us, deliver us, and fulfill your purpose for us. According to your steadfast love, grant healing and wholeness to those who are bereaved, in trouble or adversity, or sick and in need of care. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You call us into this community of believers, where we, though many, are one in Christ. May we recognize in ourselves and in one another the unique gifts you have given us for the building up of the church for the sake of the world. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Blessed Savior, listen to your people praying...

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.

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

THE DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
 praise him, all creatures here below;
 praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
 praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637-1711

OFFERING PRAYER

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.

Amen.

(Please have the bread and wine/juice ready for Holy Communion)

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

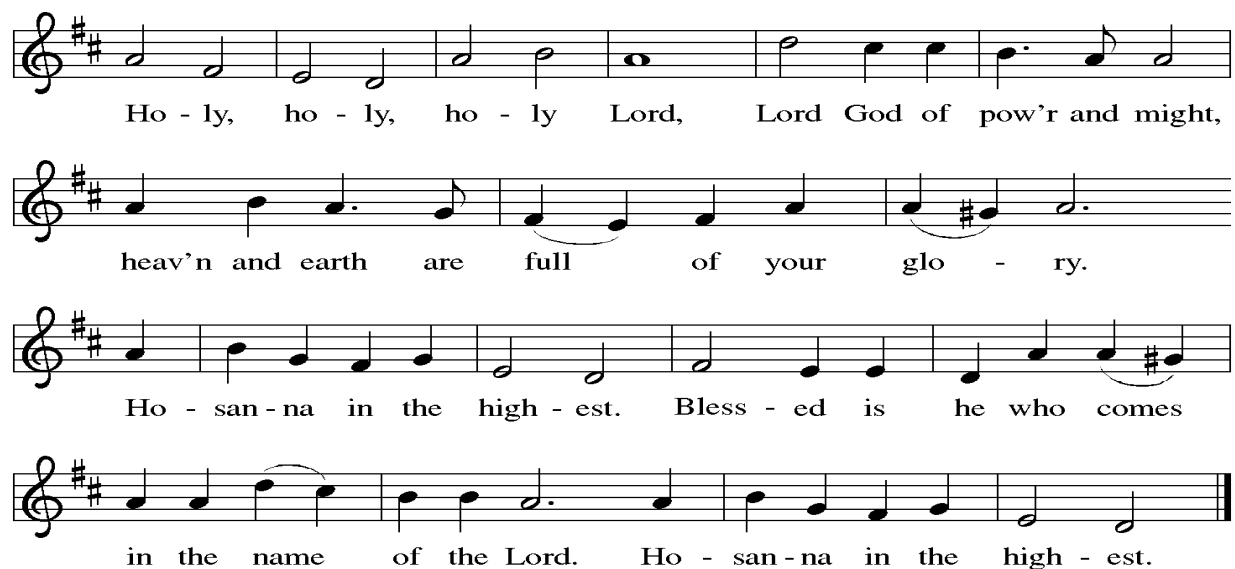
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE FOR SUNDAYS AFTER PENTECOST

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ;
who on this day overcame death and the grave,
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

“Holy, Holy, Holy”



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

God of marvel and might, from chaos and disorder, you created the heavens and the earth. You formed humans from dust and gave them the breath of life. You brought a weary, abused people out of slavery into the freedom of the Promised Land. And when the time had come, you sent your Son, not to condemn, but so that the world might be saved through him. We celebrate his life, death, and resurrection, as we remember...

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 in remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER

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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Friends of Jesus, come to the table. Receive nourishment for your journey.

Take the bread and eat, this is the body of Christ, given for you. (*please consume the bread*)

Take the cup and drink, this is the blood of Christ, shed for you. (*please drink from the cup*)

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

The body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of the welcome table, in this meal we have feasted on your goodness and have been united by your presence among us. Empower us to go forth sustained by these gifts so that we may share your neighborly love with all, through Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you for joining us for worship this morning. Your presence builds up the body of Christ.

Council meets this afternoon at 3pm, via Zoom.

Regina Caeli, the home schoolers, will begin meeting in our building tomorrow; they will be here on Mondays and Thursdays. New carpet has been installed in the nursery and we are having the carpet and all the chairs in the Fellowship Hall cleaned in preparation for the new school year.

BLESSING

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love.

Amen.

CLOSING HYMN *“Take My Life, That I May Be”*

- 1 Take my life, that I may be
consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days;
let them flow in ceaseless praise.
- 2 Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love;
take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee.
- 3 Take my voice and let me sing
always, only, for my King;
take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee.
- 4 Take my silver and my gold,
not a mite would I withhold;
take my intellect and use
ev'ry pow'r as thou shall choose.
- 5 Take my will and make it thine,
it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is thine own,
it shall be thy royal throne.

6 Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure store;
take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879, alt.

DISMISSAL

Go about your day in peace. Christ is with you.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

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