

Service of Holy Communion

September 6, 2020 setting 10

WELCOME

PRELUDE

ORGAN

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Faithful God,

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.**

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.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG #574 *Here I am, Lord*

1 "I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?"

Refrain

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
 I have heard you calling in the night.
 I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
 I will hold your people in my heart.

2 "I, the Lord of snow and rain,
 I have borne my people's pain.
 I have wept for love of them.
 They turn away.
 I will break their hearts of stone,
 give them hearts for love alone.
 I will speak my word to them.
 Whom shall I send?" *Refrain*

3 "I, the Lord of wind and flame,
 I will tend the poor and lame.
 I will set a feast for them.
 My hand will save.
 Finest bread I will provide
 till their hearts be satisfied.
 I will give my life to them.
 Whom shall I send?" *Refrain*

Text: Daniel L. Schutte, b. 1946

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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.

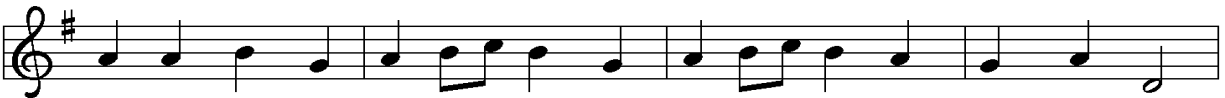
HYMN OF PRAISE



1 Glo-ry be to God in heav-en; peace, good-will to all the earth.
 2 Glo-ry be to Christ for - ev - er, Lamb of God and Lord of love.
 3 Ho - ly One we now ac-claim you; Lord a - lone, to you we call;



Might-y God of all cre - a - tion, Fa - ther of sur - pass - ing worth:
 Son of God and gra - cious Sav - ior, you have come from heav'n a - bove;
 Ho - ly One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:



we ex - alt you, we a - dore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.
 on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.
 Je - sus Christ, with God the Spir - it, in the Fa - ther's splen - dor bright.



Saints and an - gels bow be - fore you; here on earth our songs we raise.
 Hear our prayer; re - store, for - give us; in your prom - ise firm we stand.
 For the peace that we in - her - it, glo - ry be to God on high!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O Lord God, enliven and preserve your church with your perpetual mercy. Without your help, we mortals will fail; remove far from us everything that is harmful, and lead us toward all that gives life and salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

THE WORD

FIRST READING: *Ezekiel 33:7-11*

God appointed Ezekiel as a sentinel for the house of Israel. Ezekiel must faithfully convey God's warnings to the people. Remarkably, God – who is about to attack Jerusalem – gives a warning with the hope that repentance will make the attack unnecessary.

⁷So you, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸If I say to the wicked, "O wicked ones, you shall surely die," and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your

hand. ⁹But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

¹⁰Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel, Thus you have said: “Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?” ¹¹Say to them, As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

PSALM *Psalm 119:33-40*

³³Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end.

³⁴**Give me understanding, and I shall keep your teaching;
I shall keep it with all my heart.**

³⁵Lead me in the path of your commandments, for that is my desire.

³⁶**Incline my heart to your decrees and not to unjust gain.**

³⁷Turn my eyes from beholding falsehood; give me life in your way.

³⁸**Fulfill your promise to your servant, which is for those who fear you.**

³⁹Turn away the reproach that I dread, because your judgments are good.

⁴⁰**Behold, I long for your commandments; by your righteousness enliven me.**

SECOND READING: *Romans 13:8-14*

The obligation of Christians is to love one another and so fulfill the heart and goal of the law. Clothes make the person as we “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” and live today in light of the future God has in store for us.

⁸Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

¹¹Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹²the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? Al - le -
 lu - ia. You have the words of e - ter - nal life.
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL: *Matthew 18:15-20*

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the eighteenth chapter

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus offers practical advice to his disciples on how individuals – and the church as a whole – should go about restoring relationships when one member has sinned against another.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁵“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

There is some incredibly good news in today’s second reading from Romans 13. The thirteenth chapter of Romans is all about establishing and keeping a society of people in good, well-functioning shape – it’s about how we can live together in cities, congregations, and communities in ways that support our common life rather than tearing us down or separating us into raging, opposing camps.

At the beginning of the chapter, Paul talked about how to maintain good order in society. Pay what you owe. Treat one another with respect. Do what is good and right. Follow your conscience. His point is summed up in verse 7, the verse directly preceding today’s reading: “Pay to all what is due them – taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.” Those words lay the foundation for an efficient, workable society.

So far, this doesn't sound so much like incredibly good news as it does dry but necessary instruction. The instruction continues for another few verses. "Owe no one anything except to love one another; for the one who loves fulfills the law." And, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Last week we heard Paul telling us "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." This week he urges us to follow the law of love, which is loving action and consideration for everyone. That's good. That's a good direction for us to pursue in our day to day living. But we still haven't gotten to the incredibly good news. That comes in verse 11.

In the second half of verse 11, Paul says, "For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near." Salvation is nearer to us now than ever before. Salvation. Not judgment. Not doom. Not condemnation. Salvation.

Instructions, however wonderful they are, can be heavy and burdensome. In these days when we're physically separated so we can't receive the strength and renewal of seeing each other, singing together, catching up in person; these days when there is so much unrest in our nation, when everyone has an opinion on who is at fault and what should be done, when the lines between us grow more and more rigid and intolerant every day... it's hard to gear ourselves up for instruction that demands so much of us. "Overcome evil with good." How do we do that? "Love your neighbor as yourself." **Every** neighbor? Even the ones I don't like, the ones I think are dangerously misguided?

What might encourage us to follow these instructions, to do our best to embody them? Not threats. We have enough of those: "If so-n-so is president (fill in the name as you please), this nation will be destroyed." We have enough threats and dire predictions being forecast; we do not need more. They do not inspire; they weigh on us like impossible burdens. I wake in the mornings and immediately groan because it is another day, another day of wondering where all this will lead, another day of anger, frustration, and deepening divide. I am not inspired by such thoughts to get out of bed, much less make the effort to love my neighbors.

But what if salvation -- true, comprehensive salvation, was on the horizon, just 'there' where we could see it in the distance? What then? What if salvation is coming to everyone who's been shot in recent months **and** for the people who did the shooting? What if salvation is almost within reach of Black Lives Matter and the police and vigilantes and the government? What might that look like? What might that feel like? Imagine if salvation is coming for Democrats so desperate for a change, and for Republicans so determined to stay the course, and for everyone in between or confused or just done with it. Wouldn't that be something?

I wonder if we can hear the voice of Paul the apostle, the voice of God, above all the voices clamoring at us these days. Day after day we hear that we should be afraid of our neighbors, of someone who doesn't look like us or someone who doesn't think like us. I feel the fear; even though I try to block it out, it seeps into my mind and my gut. The fearful voices tell us all is nearly lost, the world is unsafe, and it will only get worse. But God's voice declares, announces, insists on something else. The end of the world is not just around the corner, salvation is. Your salvation, my salvation, ours together; salvation from COVID, from unemployment and poverty, from violent clashes

in the streets, from racism and from looting and from pointing the finger at everyone but ourselves. Salvation is coming.

It's not something we will achieve because we are right, or we have the answers, or we vote the "correct" way. Salvation comes from outside us, from the Creator of the Universe, the Life Force behind and within all things, the Holy Presence that shapes us and accomplishes its own holy will. Salvation comes as a gift, as a certainty beyond our doings. God brings salvation through Jesus Christ, and it is nearer today than it was yesterday. Look! Look and see. It is almost here.

We have to remember what we believe, what is finally true over all other truths and over all the lies. The truth is that this is God's world, the one God so loved, God sent Jesus, not to condemn or destroy the world, but to save it. We are not abandoned to violence, disease, and chaos. We are not left on our own to establish our worth as human beings. Jesus has done that for us. We are worthy, we are whole, we are beloved by God – every one of us.

Last Sunday I said I should post the words of Romans 12 on my mirror so I wouldn't forget what it means to love Jesus with more than my heart, but with myself. Those words were "Hate evil. Love genuinely. Pray constantly. Show honor. Welcome strangers. Live peaceably with all." This week I want to ask all of you to post a big sign on your bathroom mirror, or your refrigerator, or wherever you'll see it each day, saying "Salvation is near! The night is far gone, the day is at hand!" I'll do it, if you'll do it. We need to be reminded in these turbulent times, what is real.

What is *real* is that we are not doomed to chaos and death. Is there work to do? Yes. We need to work to make our society fair and open to all people. We need to work to listen to each other and understand, instead of trading pat, accusing answers to difficult issues. We need to examine ourselves honestly, all of us, and see where we need to change and grow. We need to forgive each other. And we need to find hope, together.

Here is the hope. Let's you and me awaken to that hope. "Salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near." Because of that, because of what God has done and continues to do for us, we can lay aside the voices of doom, and trust in what is good. We can live honorably, not in quarreling and jealousy. We can live in Jesus Christ, in his self-giving love for all people. Your salvation – the world's salvation – is coming; entrust yourself, your whole life, to that.

HYMN OF THE DAY #597 *My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*

1 My hope is built on nothing less
 than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
 no merit of my own I claim,
 but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

Refrain

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand.

- 2 When darkness veils his lovely face,
I rest on his unchanging grace;
in ev'ry high and stormy gale
my anchor holds within the veil. *Refrain*
- 3 His oath, his covenant, his blood
sustain me in the raging flood;
when all supports are washed away,
he then is all my hope and stay. *Refrain*
- 4 When he shall come with trumpet sound,
oh, may I then in him be found,
clothed in his righteousness alone,
redeemed to stand before the throne! *Refrain*

Text: Edward Mote, 1797-1874, alt.

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

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

Unite your church, O God. Grant us the gifts of repentance and reconciliation. Bless the cooperative work of churches in this community. Strengthen ecumenical partnerships; guide the work of the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Protect your creation, O God. Teach us ways that do not harm what you have entrusted to our care. Renew and enliven places suffering from drought, flood, storms, or

pollution, especially Louisiana from Hurricane Laura and California from the wildfires. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Turn nations and leaders from ways that lead to death. Shape new paths toward peace and cooperation, teaching us to recognize one another as neighbors. Guide legislators, civil servants, judges, and police toward laws that protect the well-being of all. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Tend to all in need of your compassion. Hear the cries of those awaiting justice and those yearning for forgiveness. Give community to the lonely and neighbors to the outcast. Shelter all who are vulnerable in body, mind, or spirit. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Sustain us in our work, O God, and give work to those who need it. Shape societies to ensure fair treatment for all who labor. Help us to love our neighbors in and through our work. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We raise to you the concerns and thanks of this congregation...

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through 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

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.
Amen.

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

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also 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

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, God of pow-er 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, 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

Come to the banquet table where Christ gives himself as food and drink.

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

We give you thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us with food beyond compare, the body and blood of Christ. Lead us from this place, nourished and forgiven, into your beloved vineyard to wipe away the tears of all who hunger and thirst, guided by the example of the same Jesus Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Glad you are with us this morning.

If you have anything for the Staff newsletter, please get it to Courtney by tomorrow. We are no longer sending The Staff by bulk mailing because that's not working well at the Post Office these days. Instead, if you have an email address you will receive it by email. Otherwise it will come to you as first class mail. You can always find the newsletter posted at our website: www.skllcsa.org.

We are in the process of getting the roof fixed. Our roofer says we do not need to replace the whole thing, but there are areas that need to be fixed. Also the air conditioner in the Fellowship Hall was not working properly. It has been repaired.

BLESSING

Mothering God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life.

Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #656 *Blest Be the Tie that Binds*

- 1 Blest be the tie that binds
our hearts in Christian love;
the unity of heart and mind
is like to that above.
- 2 Before our Father's throne
we pour our ardent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
our comforts and our cares.
- 3 We share our mutual woes,
our mutual burdens bear,
and often for each other flows
the sympathizing tear.
- 4 From sorrow, toil, and pain,
and sin we shall be free;
and perfect love and friendship reign
through all eternity.

Text: John Fawcett, 1740-1817, alt.

DISMISSAL

Go about your day in peace. Remember the poor.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

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