

Service of Holy Communion

October 4, 2020

WELCOME

This is a service of Holy Communion; please have bread/crackers and wine/grape juice for the meal.

We will also be blessing the animals today early in the service. You might want to have pets with you or nearby as they are blessed, although wherever they are, they will still receive a blessing.

PRELUDE

Hand Bell Choir

"The Sheltering Rock" W E Penn/arr by Barry Braman

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 #654 *"The Church's One Foundation"* verses 1-4

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.

Text: Samuel J. Stone, 1839-1900

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.

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

In the beginning of God's creating, God made creatures of every kind: Birds and fish, ants and spiders, cattle, horses, pigs, dogs, and cats. Animals share in the fortunes of human existence and take part in our lives. God has often used of animals for blessing and salvation.

A dove brought Noah assurance that the flood was over. (*Genesis 8:11*)

The animals saved from the flood were made a part of the covenant with Noah.
(*Genesis 9:9-10*)

A giant fish saved Jonah; (*Jonah 2:1-10*)

ravens brought bread to Elijah; (*1 Kings 17:6*)

animals were included in the repentance of Nineveh; (*Jonah 3:7*)

and animals witnessed the birth of Jesus (*Luke 2:8, 16*).

We, therefore, invoke God's blessing on these animals.

As we do so, let us praise the Creator and thank God for making us stewards over all the creatures of the earth.

PRAYER OF BLESSING:

Blessed are you, Lord God, maker of all living creatures. You created the fish in the sea, birds in the air and animals on the land. You inspired Saint Francis to call them all his brothers and sisters. We ask you to bless these our pets. By the power of your love, enable them to live according to your plan. May we always praise you for the beauty in creation. Blessed are you, Lord our God, in all your creatures! Amen."

You may bless your pet(s) by placing your hand on their head or body and saying, "God bless you now and always."

HYMN OF PRAISE #835 "All Creatures Worship God Most High", vses 1, 2 and 6

All creatures, worship God most high! Sound ev'ry voice in earth and sky; Alleluia!
Alleluia! Sing, brother sun, in splendor bright; sing, sister moon and stars of night:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Sing, brother wind; with clouds and rain you grow the gifts of fruit and grain: Alleluia!
Alleluia! Dear sister water, useful, clear, make music for your Lord to hear. Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

O sisters, brothers, take your part, and worship God with humble heart: Alleluia!
Alleluia!

All creatures, bless the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Three in One: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Beloved God, **from you come all things that are good. Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

THE WORD

FIRST READING: *Isaiah 5:1-7*

The prophet sings a sad, parable-like love song about the relationship between God and Israel. In this song Israel is compared to a promising vineyard. Despite God's loving care, the vineyard that is Israel has brought forth "wild grapes" of injustice and distress, when fine grapes of justice and righteousness were expected.

¹Let me sing for my beloved my love-song concerning his vineyard:

My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

²He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it;
he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.

³And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard.

⁴What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it?
When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?

⁵And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard.

I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured;

I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.

⁶I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns;

I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

⁷For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel,
and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting;
he expected justice, but saw bloodshed;
righteousness, but heard a cry!

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

PSALM *Psalm 80:7-15*

⁷Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

⁸**You have brought a vine out of Egypt; you cast out the nations and planted it.**

⁹You cleared the ground for it; it took root and filled the land.

¹⁰**The mountains were covered by its shadow
and the towering cedar trees by its boughs.**

¹¹You stretched out its tendrils to the sea and its branches to the river.

¹²**Why have you broken down its wall,
so that all who pass by pluck off its grapes?**

¹³The wild boar of the forest has ravaged it,
and the beasts of the field have grazed upon it.

¹⁴**Turn now, O God of hosts, look down from heaven;**

¹⁵behold and tend this vine; preserve what your right hand has planted.

SECOND READING: *Philippians 3:4b-14*

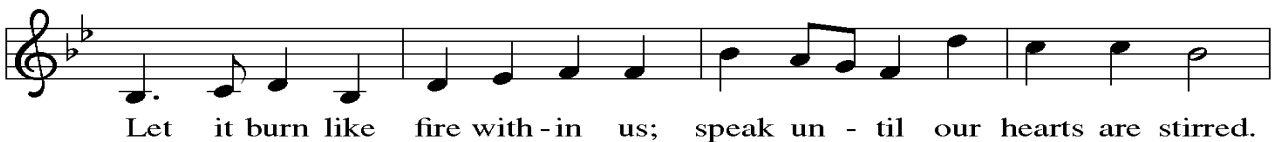
Paul reviews some of his supposed credentials, which no longer have any bearing in comparison to the right relationship he has been given through the death of Christ. The power of Christ's resurrection motivates him to press on toward the ultimate goal, eternal life with Christ.

[Paul writes:] ^{4b}If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

⁷Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹²Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**GOSPEL: *Matthew 21:33-46***

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the twenty-first chapter
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus tells a parable to the religious leaders who are plotting his death, revealing that their plans will, ironically, bring about the fulfillment of scripture.

[Jesus said to the people:] ³³“Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. ³⁴When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. ³⁵But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. ³⁷Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ³⁸But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ ³⁹So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” ⁴¹They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”

⁴²Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures:

‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes’?

⁴³Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. ⁴⁴The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

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

SERMON

We are in a courtroom today, brought there by the first reading from Isaiah 5. Also in the courtroom are the prosecuting attorney, a crowd gathered to listen, and a jury. The prosecuting attorney is slick, good at his job. He begins by telling a story. A certain person planted a vineyard with great care. The earth was turned and mulch added; the rows were neatly laid out; good seeds were sowed and watered, and vines began to grow. Not wanting deer or wild hogs to come and tear up the vines, the landowner built a high wall around the vineyard – too high for deer to jump over it and too strong for wild boars to smash through.

The landowner built a tower in the vineyard so workers could climb up and look for cracks in the wall, or digging underneath, or critters that might have gotten in and made a mess. It was a beautifully tended vineyard, and if you like good wine, you could have expected the best.

Yet despite the landowner’s painstaking work, when grapes formed they were small and hard and sour. They looked like wild grapes, sprouting from some half-eaten seed dropped in terrible soil.

We are the jury, by the way, and we have been listening. Our sympathies lie with the poor landowner. All that effort and he has nothing to show for it.

Suddenly, the prosecuting attorney turns and addresses us, the jury, directly. “What more could I have done for my vineyard!” he says hotly. We’re startled. “Watch what I’ll do to my vineyard. I’ll tear down the wall – let the deer and the hogs trample the vines. I’ll send no rain so the land dries up and chokes on its own dust. Anyone who passes-by can go in and light a fire or ripe out the vines.”

We are quiet, holding our collective breath, when the prosecutor points a finger at us and says, “You are the vineyard. God planted you with care, gave you everything, tended you and loved you. You lacked nothing. Yet, when God looked for justice, God saw bloodshed. God expected righteousness from you, but instead heard wails of despair.”

I’m in the jury with all of you. I don’t like hearing what the prosecutor is saying. I want to argue that I’m a pastor, and all of us here go to church and worship God, we pray and study scripture and do things to help the poor. I’d like to push the damning words away until they are aimed at other people; let them take the blame.

But deep inside, I know the prosecutor is right. I am not blameless, nor are you. Innocent blood is shed in our nation, day after day after day. Lies permeate the airwaves, are repeated in our conversations, and show up all over social media until we cannot recognize the truth. Greed is rewarded; those who have, get more. We shut people off – neighbors, friends – because they express ideas or opinions that offend us, until our circles of “acceptable people” grow smaller and tighter around us. I don’t want to be found guilty; I don’t want you to be found guilty either. But everything the prosecutor is saying is true. I know it and you know it.

So what do we do? We are living in a difficult age – lots of stress and worry, lots of violence and grief, lots of anger and finger-pointing. I try to resist the constant influence of those things; I imagine you do, too. But we get sucked in anyway, to the fears and the confusion and the groupings into “us” and “them.” What do we do?

If the reading from Isaiah 5 is the accusation leveled at us, the Psalm is our response. Think of the psalmist as our defense attorney; she speaks, and we nod our heads, thinking, ‘That’s right! That’s right!’

The prosecutor said, “What more could I have done for my vineyard that I did not do?” The implication is: “You’re guilty as charged.” Our defense attorney, the psalmist, doesn’t deny any of that, she simply tells a different side of the same story, reminding God who God is and what God has done.

“Don’t you remember, God? You brought this people, your vine, out of Egypt, made a place for them to live and take root. Under your care they grew and filled the land, across the mountains, through the forests, from sea to sea. They are *your* creation. **You** planted them. Why, now, have you let their protections fail, so that anyone who comes walks by can grab for themselves? Why have you let the greedy prosper, the lies get out of control, the killing go on and on and on? This people knows they are in desperate shape – aren’t you coming to help them? Turn, God. Look at the vine you planted, and preserve it with your strong right hand.”

After the weight of the prosecutor's words, it's a relief to hear our defense attorney make the case from a different angle. Have we, as a people, messed up? Yes. Is our world overrun with discord and rage and fear and conflicting accounts of truth until we don't know what is what? Yes. Are we responsible for the chaos – I don't mean you or me or someone else individually, but us as a society? Yes. Can we just "do better" and fix everything ourselves? No. We need God, the fierce and loving God who made us, who provides for us, who has rescued us from eternal death, and who accompanies us every day as Spirit. We need God to intervene, to shepherd us into real truth, into genuine caring community, into release from the hurt we have suffered and the hurt we have inflicted on others. "Turn, O God," we plead with the psalmist, "See what's happening here and act to preserve, to guide, to heal your people and your beloved creation. Help us!"

If only... if only God would turn and allow God's face to shine upon us, we would be saved. That's all we need – just the radiance of God's face on us and on all the land. That's how today's psalm begins in verse 7: "Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved." O God, we, today, are pleading with you: Restore us! Let your face shine on us all, that we may be saved!

We know the face of God. We have seen it: in each other, in the words of scripture, in songs and prayers, in the meal, in creation, and in the good things that are happening in this world even now. We know the face of God. It is Jesus' face. The face of Jesus, turned compassionately on all of us, is our salvation.

Jesus is here today, with us in this worship no matter where we are. Jesus, opens our minds and our hearts when we sing of him in our hymns. Jesus hears our confession and erases our debts and our wrong-doings. Jesus feeds us himself in the bread and the wine, giving us clean hearts, strengthening our faith, and blessing us with undying love.

God is turning to us, at this moment. God's face, the face of Jesus, shines upon you all. We are saved – right in the middle of today's anxiety and heartache – we are embraced, fed, and made new by God, whose love never fades and whose goodness leads us onward.

HYMN OF THE DAY #769 *"If You But Trust in God to Guide You"*

- 1 If you but trust in God to guide you
with gentle hand through all your ways,
you'll find that God is there beside you
when crosses come, in trying days.
Trust then in God's unchanging love;
build on the rock that will not move.

- 2 What gain is there in anxious weeping,
in helpless anger and distress?
If you are in your Savior's keeping,

in sorrow will he love you less?
 For Christ who took for you a cross
 will bring you safe through ev'ry loss.

- 3 The Lord our restless hearts is holding,
 in peace and quietness content.
 We rest in God's good will unfolding,
 what wisdom from on high has sent.
 God, who has chosen us by grace,
 knows very well the fears we face.
- 4 Sing, pray, and keep God's ways unswerving,
 offer your service faithfully.
 Trust heaven's word; though undeserving,
 you'll find this promise true to be.
 This is our confidence indeed:
 God never fails in time of need.

Text: Georg Neumark, 1621-1681; tr. composite
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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

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

A brief silence.

Holy God, you call us to work for peace and justice in your vineyard. Refresh the church with your life, that we may bear fruit through work and service. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Thank you for the abundant harvest of the earth. Bless and care for those whose hands bring the fruits of the earth to the tables of all who hunger. May we be inspired by your servants who cared deeply for your creation, especially Francis of Assisi, whom we commemorate today. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Curb the impulses of greed and pride that lead us to take advantage of others. Grant that world leaders seek the fruits of the kingdom for the good and welfare of all people. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Sustain all who suffer with the promise of new life. Assured of your presence, heal our pain and suffering, and equip us to embrace all bodies aching for wholeness of mind, body, and soul. We call to mind those who are struggling today. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all managers in our community and for all who seek employment. Give hope and a future to those who lack meaningful work, those who have been marginalized or abused in the workplace, and those who desire new opportunities. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, listen to your people praying...
Healing for Barbara, for Rick, for Jennifer...

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

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.
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.

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,

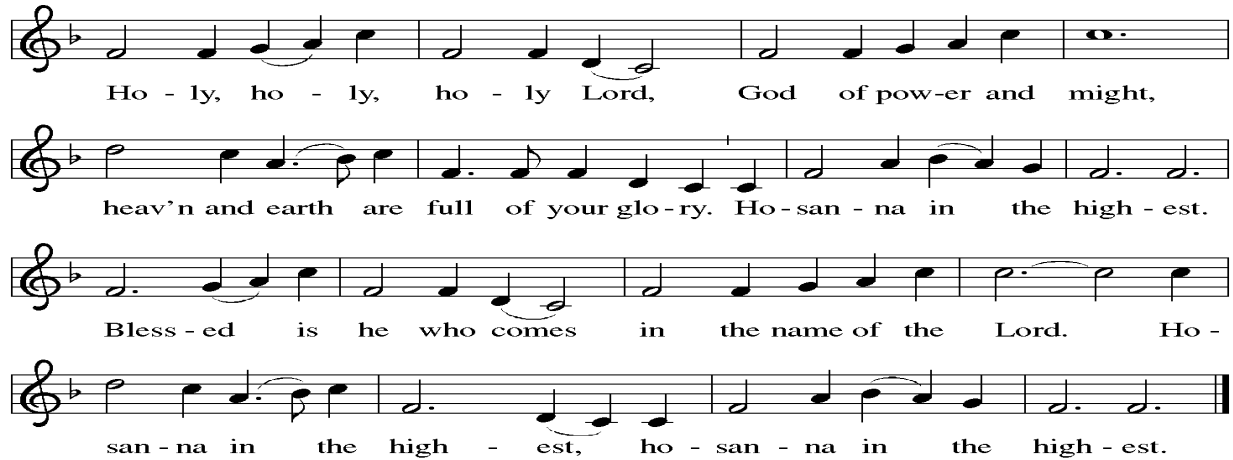
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.

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

Adult Ed Book Discussion begins on Monday, October 12, at 7pm. If you wish to participate, please let Pastor Kris know. You'll need to purchase the book "The Sunflower" by Simon Wiesenthal and read the first 40 or so pages for October 12th.

Outdoor prayer services begin the next day, on Tuesday, October 13, at 4:30. This will be a brief service of scripture reading, silence, and prayers. We'll meet in the Huth Garden; please bring your own chairs and wear a face mask.

Sunday, October 18, is the Feast Day of St. Luke, the physician. We will have a healing service as part of our morning worship that day. I will offer a blessing for all of you and then you, in your homes or wherever you are, will be invited to share a blessing with anyone else who's worshipping with you.

Build your Ofrenda for All Saints Sunday – Nov. 1. Take picture and send it to Courtney at church office via email or text.

We are looking for folks to write up an Advent or Christmas memory to share in the December Newsletter. Those, and the pictures of your ofrendas, need to be sent to Courtney no later than Monday, November 9.

BLESSING

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

Amen.

CLOSING HYMN # 796 "How Firm a Foundation"

- 1 How firm a foundation, O saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in Christ Jesus, the Word!
What more can he say than to you he has said
who unto the Savior for refuge have fled?
- 2 "Fear not, I am with you, oh, be not dismayed,
for I am your God and will still give you aid;
I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand."
- 3 "When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,
my grace, all-sufficient, shall be your supply.
The flames shall not hurt you; I only design
your dross to consume and your gold to refine."
- 4 "Throughout all their lifetime my people shall prove
my sov'reign, eternal, unchangeable love;
and then, when gray hairs shall their temples adorn,
like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne."

Text: J. Rippon, *A Selection of Hymns*, 1787, alt.

DISMISSAL

Go about your day in peace. Remember the poor.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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