

Home Service for 6/6/2021

Welcome and Announcements

You might notice a few changes. You may also find listening to some of your favorite hymns helpful in worship.

God has searched us and known us. Before we speak, God knows our words completely. May god's hand be upon us, guiding us to high, divine knowledge, to vast and wonderful thoughts.

Call to Worship:

In the times of trouble, when all seemed hopeless, I cried out to God. And the Lord heard my pleas and answered me. When I felt lost and alone, I looked for God. And God found me and brought me home. When my life was filled with joy and blessing, I danced and praised God. And God danced and rejoiced with me. Thanks be to God. AMEN.

Opening Prayer:

Lord, we come this day, having seen the miracles of everyday creation in our world. We have enjoyed both the bright sunshine and the gentle rains. We have marveled over the beauty of flowers and the complexity of your creation. Make our hearts ready to receive your word for us, that we may go forth from this place ready to joyfully serve you all of our days. AMEN..

Prayer of Confession:

Lord, forgive us when we see your miracles all around us and still doubt your power, presence and love. Forgive us when we treat this world and each other with careless indifference or with malice. You, who have created the most wondrous things from the smallest of particles, can create in our hearts confidence and hope. From our lives you can fashion the most delightful miracles that can serve you through acts of mercy and kindness. Free us, Lord, to receive your blessings and , having received them, to find the numerous ways in which we can serve you. Heal our wounded hearts. Hear our cries. Come to us and bring us home. In Jesus' Name, we pray. AMEN.

Words of Assurance

Do not doubt God's power and might! It is God who has created all that is! It is God who has called to your hearts and spirits. God is with you. Praise be to God. AMEN.

Read Psalm 138

I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart;
before the “gods” I will sing your praise.
² I will bow down toward your holy temple
and will praise your name
for your unfailing love and your faithfulness,
for you have so exalted your solemn decree
that it surpasses your fame.
³ When I called, you answered me;
you greatly emboldened me.
⁴ May all the kings of the earth praise you, LORD,
when they hear what you have decreed.
⁵ May they sing of the ways of the LORD,
for the glory of the LORD is great.
⁶ Though the LORD is exalted, he looks kindly on the lowly;
though lofty, he sees them from afar.
⁷ Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve my life.
You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes;
with your right hand you save me.
⁸ The LORD will vindicate me;
your love, LORD, endures forever—
do not abandon the works of your hands.

Prayers of the People:

Lord, in this season of growth, open our hearts to grow in your love. Help us to truly trust in your creative process in our lives. We look around and we see the beauty of your world, the blossoming flowers and plants, the growth of children, the joy of celebrations of graduation and marriage, of receiving new life. And we also see the sadness and sorrow that has invaded the world when systems of injustice and hatred lay claim to people's lives. Prepare us, O Lord, to become

ambassadors of peace and hope. Help us to place our trust in you, so that when we are serving others, they may come to know your abiding love and power. Give us courage and great joy as we serve you. AMEN.

Lord's Prayer

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

Read the Lesson: 1 Samuel 8:4-20

So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. ⁵ They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead^[a] us, such as all the other nations have."

⁶ But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. ⁷ And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. ⁸ As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. ⁹ Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will claim as his rights."

¹⁰ Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king. ¹¹ He said, "This is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. ¹² Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. ¹³ He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. ¹⁴ He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. ¹⁵ He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. ¹⁶ Your male and female servants and the best of your cattle^[b] and donkeys he will take for his own use. ¹⁷ He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. ¹⁸ When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, but the LORD will not answer you in that day."

¹⁹ But the people refused to listen to Samuel. “No!” they said. “We want a king over us. ²⁰ Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.”

Read the Epistle Lesson: 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken.”^[a] Since we have that same spirit of^[b] faith, we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. ¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

5 For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Mark 3:20-35

Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. ²¹ When his family^[a] heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.”

²² And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.”

²³ So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan? ²⁴ If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. ²⁶ And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. ²⁷ In fact, no one can enter a strong man’s house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man’s house. ²⁸ Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, ²⁹ but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”

³⁰ He said this because they were saying, “He has an impure spirit.”

³¹ Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.”

³³ “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked.

³⁴ Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”

Message

While studying and reading today’s Gospel, one word seemed to be jumping out at me and some of my memories of some special people in my life. The word was family. We all know the traditional meaning of family and what it is supposed to mean. Family is usually meant to be mother, father, sister, brother, daughter, son with the extended family to include grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and as most of us know the all-important grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The family seems to always be growing as the children grow up, marry which adds another son or daughter to the family and they have or adopt children who add those all-important grandchildren or great-grandchildren to the family.

Families are supposed to be there for each other, they are supposed to be providing a safe and loving environment for all of the members. Members of a family are supposed to feel that they belong and that they are safe and that they are loved. When I read or watch the news I am reminded that in today’s society that this is too often not the truth. Children are joining gangs to have the feeling that they belong due to the lack of a functional family. Our foster systems are overloaded, because so many children are in need of a safe environment and they also truly need love, acceptance and guidance. It is not only children who have these needs, but all members of the families at all ages. Many times the vulnerable adults, be it physical or mental handicap, physical or mental illness, even the aging process that makes them vulnerable, find themselves in need of, but without the safety net of a functional family. I know we are not capable to help everyone, but I ask you to be open to those opportunities that God puts before you in which you can make a positive difference in someone’s life. Sometimes it can be as easy as a smile, a kind word or an invitation to church. Sometimes it is just being a friend and listening. Just take the time to listen to your heart as God speaks to you and let your heart lead you to action.

I mentioned earlier that memories were popping up too. The first was my Grandfather, who told me that, “God gives us children to love in many different ways.” I thought at the time that he was talking about adoption, but life has taught me that God gives us children to love in the classroom, on the athletic field, as a neighbor, as a child of a friend, as a child in need somewhere, as foster child and the list goes on and on. My Grandfather also said that, “Family was made of

anyone that you love as family, they do not have to be a blood relation.” My college roommate and I ended up call each other “sister” for that very reason for that is how close we became. Looking at the picture of the “Family” taken at my nephew’s wedding a few summers ago I realized my parents taught us that lesson well, for I can legally only claim two brothers, but there were an extra brothers and sisters and extra nieces and nephews in the picture that do belong there. I share with my cousin the idea of calling this type of extended family members using a very special title, “sister or brother or daughter or son of my heart,” for the love and closeness we feel for them is truly a gift from God. Maybe we should say a family can be any group that is brought together by common interests, beliefs, and love for one another. One of the best examples of this kind of family is the church, “the Church Family.”

Verses 31-35 are centered on Jesus and His earthly and spiritual families. When Jesus said, “Look, here are my mother and brothers. Whoever does God’s will is my brother, sister, and mother.” Jesus embraced everyone standing there as his family. He truly loved his earthly family and they were there with him at the Cross. His brother James believed the Jesus was the Son of God and became the Bishop of Jerusalem. In God, we are a new kind of family. Christianity is a process of re-familizing. We may be very lucky come from a strong functional and faithful earthly family, but God is expanding that family with many different people from many different background and places. If we come from dysfunctional, painful families, God then gifts us with a family we have always wished we had. For all of us are in a new family, the family of God, where love of God and the love for one and another holds us together. We are in a family in which Jesus Christ is our brother.

Members of different congregations use the name “Church Family.” right here in our congregation. The reason it is used is the fact that they feel that is a good description of how they feel about each other and how the church functions. The Love of God and the love for one another we feel for each other. As a church Family, when one has a heartache, we all share the tears, and we also rejoice in each victory a family member has, for each member is so dear. You and I love our families, but we also have a wonderful family of faith made up of brothers and sisters who love God and love one another. It is wonderful to be part of “The Family of God.”

Many of us take pride in our family history, be our church family or our personal family. Some may have even put together personal family tree. I want you to take a moment and think about the concept of a family tree. Many people have researched

their family and the trunk of the tree usually is the first members of the family they can remember or found in their research. It may even be great-great-great-grandparents and the larger branches represent their children who formed the next generation, which are extended by ever growing smaller branches representing their children's children and so forth.

In my mind I see the church's family tree starting with the Triune God as the truck of the tree with the large branches as the many denominations of Christianity, example Catholic, Lutheran, United Methodist, etc. each having branches growing off them until the final and the smallest branches being the individual churches. No matter what church we belong to, every believer is a member of the body of Christ and therefore is a member of God's family. As a branch, no matter of our size, we cannot exist without being connected to the trunk. As a church we know that we cannot function or exists without God and His presence. We look to God each day for His guidance.

Let us pray: Holy One, King and Brother, Teacher and Spirit, give us the vision to perceive you without our human limitations. Help us rethink our relationships: with you, with our church, and with your people on this earth. Help us understand that we are united as family- sisters and brothers together, mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles of children from other households. Help us perceive that we are one and beloved in a way that defies explanation and loved by You. Holy One, help us love this holy family so fully and so completely, that the grace and mercy of our love may defy explanation! In Jesus Christ, Amen.

Benediction:

Go now in peace, knowing the miracles that God has produced in your life. Be assured that there are still more miracles to come. Bear witness to God's love to all you meet. In the name of the Creator, the Holy One who resides with you always, go in peace. AMEN.