

Home Service for October 3, 2021

Welcome and Announcements

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

Call to Worship:

Even when God allows us to be tested, we are called to give God thanks and praise. We share in the glory and inheritance of Jesus, who is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters. Amen.

Opening Prayer:

Holy Mystery, Protector of the faithful,
glorious Spirit of wonder, Bread of heaven,
you have made us a little lower than the angels
and crowned us with glory and honor.
You have called us to be your witnesses,
to proclaim the good news in good times and in bad.
Sanctify us and help us see ourselves in you,
the living body of the risen Christ,
broken and poured out to feed a hungry world. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Merciful Lord, you know that we are stubborn and willful. We believe that we know the right way to do everything and to heal all the troubles of the world. We resort to extraordinary means to provide healing only to find that we have not placed our trust in your redeeming love. Our efforts fall far short of the goal of reconciliation. Forgive us our stubbornness and arrogance. Heal our wounded souls and restore hope and compassion to our relationships with you and with each other. Lift us up and cause us to serve you by serving others in this world. AMEN.

Words of Assurance

God's love and restoring mercy are poured out for us. Receive these blessings, for we are loved by God and granted forgiveness and mercy. AMEN.

Read Psalm 26

Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide.

² Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

³ For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.

⁴ I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.

⁵ I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.

⁶ I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD:

⁷ That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.

⁸ LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

⁹ Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men:

¹⁰ In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.

¹¹ But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.

¹² My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.

Prayers of the People:

Patient God, we want to have things go well and to have everyone be happy and content, but all too often we stand in the way of peace and hope. We recognize that life is not a fantasy in which everything turns out just right. We know that there is strife and struggles and we stand in the midst of them. Our hearts and spirits carry the scars of the struggles and disappointments we have borne. Today we come to seek restoration, reconciliation, and relationship with you and with others. We want to overcome the barriers which prevent us from being people of compassion and hope. There is so much that needs to be done to aid in the cause of your peace and justice. Help us to become peacemakers and those who would bring hope. Give us courage to become disciples who follow your will and your way. For we ask this in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ. 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: Job 1:1; 2:1-10

In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.

² On another day the angels^[a] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. ² And the LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?”

Satan answered the LORD, “From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.”

³ Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.”

⁴ “Skin for skin!” Satan replied. “A man will give all he has for his own life. ⁵ But now stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

⁶ The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.”

⁷ So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. ⁸ Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.

⁹ His wife said to him, “Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!”

¹⁰ He replied, “You are talking like a foolish^[b] woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?”

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

Read the Epistle Lesson: Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. ³ The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ⁴ So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

⁵ It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. ⁶ But there is a place where someone has testified:

“What is mankind that you are mindful of them,
a son of man that you care for him?

⁷ You made them a little^[a] lower than the angels;
you crowned them with glory and honor

⁸ and put everything under their feet.”^{[b][c]}

In putting everything under them,^[d] God left nothing that is not subject to them.^[e] Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them.^[f] ⁹ But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

¹⁰ In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. ¹¹ Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.^[g] ¹² He says,

“I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters;
in the assembly I will sing your praises.”^[h]

Read the Gospel Lesson: Mark 10:2-16

Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”

³ “What did Moses command you?” he replied.

⁴ They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.”

⁵ “It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,” Jesus replied. ⁶ “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’^[a] ⁷ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,^[b] ⁸ and the two will become one flesh.’^[c] So they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹ Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

¹⁰ When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. ¹¹ He answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. ¹² And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.”

¹³ People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you, anyone who will not

receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”¹⁶ And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Message

This morning we are celebrating, not only communion, but World Communion Sunday. World communion Sunday began in 1936 and is celebrated by protestant churches around the world on the first Sunday in October. On This Sunday we celebrate our oneness in Christ Jesus in the midst of a world that we are called together to serve. Today also challenges us to remember just who Christ is. Think for a moment how would you describe or summarize who Jesus is?

I think we all like receiving gifts. Gifts are always exciting to open, don't you agree. I have a hard time thinking of anything more fun than watching a young child open a gift with all their excitement and energy. Now think, what is the greatest gift you have ever received? Our answer should be: The greatest gift that all of us have received is the gift of Jesus Christ given to us from God. We handle this gift with great care. We hold him gently, and we hold him close to our heart. For until we live with him, we cannot fully know him.

Who is this Christ that was born and given to us? The author of the Letter to the Hebrews unwraps this precious gift God has given us. To start with we realize that Jesus is the complete revelation of God. The author Hebrews tells us this in verses 1-3: In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

Before Jesus came, God spoke to us through the prophets. They were the spokesmen for God. You might even say that they were God's very own message service. They used many different ways to proclaim God's message to the people. Each prophet seemed to have a particular theme to the message that he was to deliver. Elijah and Elisha were the lightning and thunder during the darkest days of the reign of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. Isaiah was the princely prophet. Jeremiah was known for his tears and Daniel for his dreams. Hosea saw God as the husband with an unfaithful wife of Israel. Amos was the prophet of justice and Nathan was the one who confronted King David about his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, Uriah. There was Haggai who motivated the people to rebuild the Temple. And the list goes on.

But each of these was only a fragment of the revelation of God. Who would have thought that God would reveal himself in a tiny, fragile infant? God's final revelation did not come in a loud screaming voice. It did not come in a strong wind. Nor, did it come in an earthquake. The coming of this revelation did not dominate the conversation at the local gathering places. In fact, most likely those who heard of the experience of the shepherds probably accused them of being drunk. Besides, who would believe a story about angels appearing the sky and singing?

The writer of Hebrews tells us that if we want to know God, then we must look at Jesus. He is radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being. In the Gospel of John while in the upper room, Philip asked Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus told Philip and the others, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father...I am the in the Father and the Father is in me." Jesus' entire life was a revelation of God: the words he spoke; the miracles he performed; his concern for justice; even his death on a cross. Through the life of Jesus, we can see a complete picture of God.

We want to know God. We want to see Him. We want to hear His voice. We long to know what He wants us to do. We want a relationship with God. Jesus is God the Father. When we know Jesus, we know the Father. We do not have to look any further to find God and to know God. God is completely revealed in Jesus Christ.

The one reservoir of truth from which all Christian truth springs is that the one true personal God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Trinitarian view of God is the point at which Christianity separates from its sister religions, Judaism and Islam. Hebrews adamantly argues it is God the Son who supremely reveals God's Self to us.

Jesus is the creator and the sustainer of the universe. Look again at what the author of Hebrews said about him in verses 2 and 3: Through whom he made the universe... sustaining all things by his powerful word.

The author now takes us back to the very beginning of time as we know and understand it. He said that the Son was the agent through whom God created the universe. He seems to be echoing John's opening words in his Gospel: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Jesus is superior to all creation, even the angels. The writer takes precious space to emphasize that the Son is greater than the angels. He is not on the same level as they are. He is their creator. They are to worship the Son. Nothing in all creation is to come before Jesus. All creation is subject to him. Since he is the only Son of God, he is the heir of all things. (v. 2). God has placed everything in his control. Jesus is in control of all the activities of the universe. As we watch the evening news or read the newspaper, it may appear that Jesus has lost control of this world. But we can only see a fraction of reality. Too often we are not aware of the “rest of the story” as Paul Harvey would say.

We have numerous stories of people who came to know Jesus in jail or prison. We have heard stories of people who came to know Jesus when the bottle ran out and they found themselves with no place to look but up to God. We know people who have a closer walk with Jesus because of problems in their marriage or with their kids. Yes, there is a lot of evil in this world. But God is more powerful than any evil force and he will use it for his good!

Jesus is the high priest. The author makes it clear that we no longer need a human high priest to intercede for us. He tells us in verse 3 he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven and is interceding for us. We pray to God through Jesus, Christ. He has provided the necessary cleansing for our sin. We receive forgiveness through Christ. We are our own priest, but Jesus is our high priest.

Who is this Christ? Who is this person who came as an infant over 2000 years ago? He is the one and only Son of God; The complete revelation of God; The creator and sustainer of the universe; and Our high priest. This precious gift from God has been placed in our hands. Let us never forget. Amen.

Benediction:

Having been healed and made whole by God's love, now go out into God's world to be a healer and one who brings peace and hope to others. Know always that God is with you. AMEN.