

Home Service for November 14, 2021

Welcome and Announcements

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

In the presence of God, we find the fullness of joy. May this time of worship be full of joy, surprises, healing, and love.

Call to Worship:

Christ is waiting here for us. To welcome us. To show you the path of life. To love us. To hear our prayers. To be present with us always. Come and worship. We are here to praise the Lord! Amen.

Opening Prayer:

Holy One, there is no God like you. In praise and thanksgiving, we come before you ready to learn of your power, ready to follow your path for our lives. Through days of jubilation as well as dejection, help us realize your influence in the world. We ask simply for ears to hear, eyes to see, and minds to comprehend the blessings you bestow. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Rock of Salvation, you give children to the barren and strength to the feeble; you exalt the poor and lift up the needy. We praise your holy name from morning to night, yet we build walls that separate us: from you, from one another, from the world, even from ourselves. We place stumbling blocks in the way of goodness and truth. We are led astray by promises of earthly treasure. We confess our fallibility and seek solace in the mother of our joy. Teach us to pray and praise without pause, confessing hope ceaselessly. Guide us in our efforts to encourage one another, to work together for good in the world, and to prepare for the day of the Lord. Amen.

Words of Assurance: *Our hearts are sprinkled clean and our bodies washed with the water of God's love. Through the gift of Jesus Christ, God assures us that we are pardoned, forgiven, absolved, and released from our sin.*

Read Psalm 113

Praise the LORD.^[a]

Praise the LORD, you his servants;
praise the name of the LORD.

² Let the name of the LORD be praised,
both now and forevermore.

³ From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets,
the name of the LORD is to be praised.

⁴ The LORD is exalted over all the nations,
his glory above the heavens.

⁵ Who is like the LORD our God,
the One who sits enthroned on high,

⁶ who stoops down to look
on the heavens and the earth?

⁷ He raises the poor from the dust
and lifts the needy from the ash heap;

⁸ he seats them with princes,
with the princes of his people.

⁹ He settles the childless woman in her home
as a happy mother of children.

Praise the LORD.

Prayers of the People:

Lord God, heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts to You in prayer, trusting in Your help: You have promised to be our keeper – to guard our going out and coming in from this time forth and forever more, and so we ask that You would be with and uphold those who are ill. Grant them healing according to Your will. As we look forward to the day of Christ's return in glory, help us by Your Holy Spirit to remember Your holy law, statutes, and just decrees and walk in them according to Your will and in this way show reverence for Your holy name which You have bestowed upon us in Baptism. We ask Your blessing upon our national economy and upon our own jobs and financial well-being. Direct the unemployed to useful labor that will provide for their needs. Lead us to be generous to those who are suffering economic hardships. Sustain in us all a strong work ethic so that so that we might provide for our families, help those in need, and give generously for the work of the church. Help us to not grow weary in doing good. Give us an ongoing awareness that this world and the things of this world will not endure forever, but there will come a Last Day. In the midst of natural disasters and socio-economic

distress and political uncertainty help us to see these events as signs of the end so that day would not catch us unaware but that instead we would recognize that our redemption is drawing near. Bless Your church on earth. Protect us from false teachers who would deceive by Your name and lead us astray. Help us to always hold fast to the firm foundation of Your Word. In the midst of uncertain times, grant us the mouth and the wisdom to bear witness to Your Son Jesus Christ and the redemption we have in Him.

Dear heavenly Father, whatever else You see that we need—whatever is for the good of our neighbor and redounds to Your glory—we pray that You would grant to us, Your children. We ask it Jesus' name who taught us to pray:

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 1:4-20

⁴ Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. ⁵ But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the LORD had closed her womb. ⁶ Because the LORD had closed Hannah's womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. ⁷ This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. ⁸ Her husband Elkanah would say to her, "Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?"

⁹ Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the LORD's house. ¹⁰ In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly. ¹¹ And she made a vow, saying, "LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."

¹² As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. ¹³ Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk ¹⁴ and said to her, “How long are you going to stay drunk? Put away your wine.”

¹⁵ “Not so, my lord,” Hannah replied, “I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. ¹⁶ Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief.”

¹⁷ Eli answered, “Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.”

¹⁸ She said, “May your servant find favor in your eyes.” Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

¹⁹ Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah made love to his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. ²⁰ So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel,^[a] saying, “Because I asked the LORD for him.”

Read the Epistle Lesson: Hebrews 10:11-25

Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. ¹⁴ For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

¹⁵ The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:

¹⁶ “This is the covenant I will make with them
after that time, says the Lord.

I will put my laws in their hearts,
and I will write them on their minds.”^[a]

¹⁷ Then he adds:

“Their sins and lawless acts
I will remember no more.”^[b]

¹⁸ And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Mark 13:1-8

As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!”

² “Do you see all these great buildings?” replied Jesus. “Not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down.”

³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴ “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?”

⁵ Jesus said to them: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁶ Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many. ⁷ When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁸ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

Message

Our Epistle lesson tells us that Christ has shown us the “new and living way” of faith, hope, and love. As we travel together as disciples in Christ, striving to love God and one another, we must encourage and support our individual and corporate journeys. While there will be many challenges, both known and unknown, our strength and comfort are always in the Lord.

The text for today from Hebrews is about grace, the unmerited acceptance from God. Before Christ, God had developed quite a complicated system of sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. Ritual blood from sacrificed animals flowed freely around the altars of ancient Israel. As a priest, Christ made a single sacrifice for sins, and that was it. The sacrifice of Jesus was a sacrifice of grace. With the once-and-for-all-sacrifice of Jesus, all of those other sacrifices became unnecessary. The sacrifice of Christ became the final and only necessary sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins.

The sacrifice of Jesus is final. Even though we will all sin again, the price has already been paid; the sacrifice already has been made. We are fit for heaven and made perfect even before we arrive. All it takes is an honest effort to acknowledge our sins and seek forgiveness. There is no way to earn any more grace than we have already been given. Jesus has already done it. That's grace.

Remembering verse 22, we are to draw near to God as people who have been, are, and remain forgiven, with the dread of guilt no longer holding us back. When we sin, we are to draw even closer to God, we are to run to God with sincere hearts, with the full assurance of faith, repent, and move on.

We are the temples of the Holy Spirit of God. So we, imperfect as we are, have Someone Holy living inside of us and this Holy Spirit is putting the laws of God in our hearts, and writing them on our minds. So, if and when we do something that is not 'in step' with the laws of God, we feel a conflict inside of us. It causes us to return to the full assurance of faith. So God's grace provides us with faith.

And it also teaches us a lesson, for we are humbled and reminded of our constant need to rely solely on the grace and goodness of God, which like the Israelites in the desert, we can easily forget where our help comes from.

Thinking about verse 23, it is hard to see how any Christian hope could possibly exist apart from the promises of God. Because our hope is established on the promises that God has made to us. These promises are our daily bread. The Bible begins with the promise of redemption and it ends with the promise of final triumph! So God's grace provides us with hope.

We've already covered grace found in faith and hope, but there is more, there is love. Verses 24-25 tell us that we are to consider how we can spur one another on toward love and good deeds. This is the work of the Lord putting His laws in our hearts and writing them on our minds. We are called to love God and one another.

There is no greater command. Only love can awaken love, only humility and patience can stir up good deeds. We need each other!

In a nationwide poll, they asked the question, “What word or phrase would you most like to hear.” The results may be surprising.

The most often phrase people want to hear is “I love you.” Secondly, people want to hear, “You are forgiven.” And the third phrase people desire to hear the most is, “Supper is ready.”

What a picture of grace. Each of these needed phrases is a window into the heart of God. Through grace, those who need to hear “I love you” are reminded of God’s intentional love. God doesn’t just love because he happens to feel like it. He doesn’t just love because He has an opportunity to do so. God loves because that is what God is. God’s love is intentional. Remember John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son...”

Those who need to hear, “You are forgiven” are brought face to face with that forgiveness in God’s unlimited and unmerited grace. It is forgiveness with no conditions and no strings attached. It is free for the asking.

And finally, those who want to hear “Supper is ready” are eager to hear God unsurpassed invitation. It matters not to God who you are. Whoever you are, you are invited to come to the Lord’s Table and experience the love of God and the grace of the Lord Jesus. It doesn’t matter who you are – saint or sinner – you are invited to come to God to be forgiven, dusted off, cleaned up, and saved for all eternity. There is grace in Christ’s Body and we are all a part of this community and His Body.

We indeed have much to be thankful for. For most of us, material blessings are heaped up. We live in a great nation. We belong to a loving church. We have the freedom to speak and worship and make our opinions known. Of course I want you to remember all those things and be thankful. But most of all, I want you to be thankful for the grace of God which is seen most clearly in the person of Jesus Christ. It is grace: free and unmerited. It is lavish and poured out with love upon us each and every day. Grace the reason we are able to stand before God justified and saved. I hope we are thankful for that.

We are to draw near to God with sincere hearts in full assurance of faith. Oh, what needless pain we bear when we fail at this! We are to hold on to the hope we

profess and know to be true. We are to build each other up in love, and meet together and fellowship together, and worship together and study together.

Just look at the three graces in this Epistle: faith, hope and love. Praise God for the confidence we share through the blood of Christ!

Let us pray: Faithful God, give us such trust in Your promises that we may move unwaveringly toward You, seeking only what pleases You all of our days. In Jesus' name and for His sake we pray. Amen.

Benediction:

People of God, be encouraged, be hopeful, be faithful. Know that Christ is the Lord of our lives, the one who shares extravagant love. Go and do likewise. Go in peace serving others. Amen.