

Home Service for July 20, 2025

Welcome and Announcements

You may also find listening to some of your favorite hymns helpful in worship.

The righteous are like green olive trees in the house of the Lord. They will dwell in God's steadfast love forever and ever.

Call to Worship:

We come into God's presence, like green olive trees in the house of God. We drink deep from the waters of life, like young saplings in the courtyard of the Lord. We ripen in the light of God, like the fruit of God's vineyard. Come! Let us worship.

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, your presence in our lives is like a green olive tree; a joy to the heart and a blessing to the spirit. Your movement in our midst is like a basket of summer fruit; a delight to the eye and a pleasure to the tongue. Speak to us your words of life, that we may sit at your feet and know that we are yours. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

When the winds of life buffet us, O God, we need your hand to hold us and your love to make us whole. Speak words of peace to our aching hearts, that we might find the courage to embrace the fullness of life you place before us. Correct our sight when our vision fades, and lead in right paths when we lose our way. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

*In his mercy, we are united and reconciled with God.
Rejoice that we find abundant life in his name.*

Read Psalm 52

Why do you boast of evil, you mighty hero?

Why do you boast all day long,
you who are a disgrace in the eyes of God?

² You who practice deceit,
your tongue plots destruction;
it is like a sharpened razor.

³ You love evil rather than good,

falsehood rather than speaking the truth.^[c]

⁴ You love every harmful word,
you deceitful tongue!

⁵ Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin:
He will snatch you up and pluck you from your tent;
he will uproot you from the land of the living.

⁶ The righteous will see and fear;
they will laugh at you, saying,

⁷ “Here now is the man
who did not make God his stronghold
but trusted in his great wealth
and grew strong by destroying others!”

⁸ But I am like an olive tree
flourishing in the house of God;
I trust in God’s unfailing love
for ever and ever.

⁹ For what you have done I will always praise you
in the presence of your faithful people.

And I will hope in your name,
for your name is good.

Prayers of the People:

Lord, it is easy for us to sit here, reading the Gospel story of Martha’s hard work and Mary’s abandonment so that she could sit and listen to Jesus. We know what it’s like to try to get a house ready for company. We want everything to be just right and pleasant. We worry about so many details and seem to tie ourselves in knots. Martha claims our sympathy. She’s the one doing the majority of the work, so we think. She needs some help and there is her sister Mary who is sitting and listening to Jesus when she should be helping. Martha is angry, frustrated, and exhausted. Martha has not found sanctuary but rather slavery. She is a slave to her fears of not having everything done, of not being the good hostess, of feeling that the responsibility for everything rests on her shoulders. We would want Mary to get up and help, but Jesus offers Martha and us a reminder of what is important. He has come to see them, not to inspect the house and judge the hospitality. He has come to share the good news of hope and love. We need to take some time to listen to that news and to fully feel it penetrate our souls, flooding out the pressures and fears. Today we are encouraged to take this time, to breathe deeply of God’s loving spirit. Help us to be open to including Sabbath as a strong part of our lives. For we ask this in Jesus’ Name. 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: Amos 8:1-12

This is what the Sovereign Lord showed me: a basket of ripe fruit. ²“What do you see, Amos?” he asked.

“A basket of ripe fruit,” I answered.

Then the Lord said to me, “The time is ripe for my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.

³“In that day,” declares the Sovereign Lord, “the songs in the temple will turn to wailing.^[a] Many, many bodies—flung everywhere! Silence!”

⁴Hear this, you who trample the needy
and do away with the poor of the land,
⁵saying,

“When will the New Moon be over
that we may sell grain,
and the Sabbath be ended
that we may market wheat?”—
skimping on the measure,
boosting the price
and cheating with dishonest scales,

⁶buying the poor with silver
and the needy for a pair of sandals,
selling even the sweepings with the wheat.

⁷The Lord has sworn by himself, the Pride of Jacob: “I will never forget anything they have done.

⁸“Will not the land tremble for this,
and all who live in it mourn?

The whole land will rise like the Nile;
it will be stirred up and then sink
like the river of Egypt.

⁹“In that day,” declares the Sovereign Lord,

“I will make the sun go down at noon
and darken the earth in broad daylight.
¹⁰ I will turn your religious festivals into mourning
and all your singing into weeping.
I will make all of you wear sackcloth
and shave your heads.
I will make that time like mourning for an only son
and the end of it like a bitter day.
¹¹ “The days are coming,” declares the Sovereign Lord,
“when I will send a famine through the land—
not a famine of food or a thirst for water,
but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.
¹² People will stagger from sea to sea
and wander from north to east,
searching for the word of the Lord,
but they will not find it.

Read the Epistle Lesson: Colossians 1:15-28

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

²¹ Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of ^[a] your evil behavior. ²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— ²³ if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

²⁴ Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. ²⁵ I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— ²⁶ the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord’s people. ²⁷ To them God

has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

²⁸ He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Luke 10:38-42

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

⁴¹ "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but few things are needed—or indeed only one. ^[a] Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Message

I am using the last eight verses of our Epistle lesson which comes from a letter from Paul to the Colossian Gentile believers. For Paul was called to bring the Good News to the Gentiles, so this letter was also written to us, for we are also Gentiles.

I think that everyone loves a mystery. So we should realize the more that we hear, read, and study God's word the more we begin to understand the mystery of Scripture that is revealed. Scripture holds many mysteries that are not always easily, completely humanly understood. It is only by faith that we believe God's mysteries as revealed in God's holy word. Who fully knows the mind of God? In Colossians we are told Christ lives in us. This is a mystery that even though sin is alive and well in us, but now Christ is also alive and lives in us. We consider this as God's mystery.

Paul's audience was a new generation and nation of believers, Gentiles. They had been strangers to God. But now, God changed everything for these Gentiles. They were forgiven. There were no charges to be held against them. They were holy and blameless in God's sight. This was the gospel message that these Gentiles had heard and now believed. For Paul was a servant of Christ and had preached this gospel message in all of its truth and purity. Although this gospel was unknown to the Gentiles for generations. Now they had heard and now they believed. The mystery: Christ lived in them and now these Gentiles belonged to the Lord.

This is the marvelous, miraculous mystery Scripture declares to us with God's gospel. Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive

with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions for it is by grace we have been saved. We were dead in sin. But now by grace through faith we are made alive in Christ who lives in us. It is a divine mystery.

There is even more to our faith that just having Christ alive in us. Each of us has been redeemed and made alive for Christ. The Holy Spirit has called us to be his own. The Holy Spirit has commissioned us to be living members of the holy Christian church. Christ lives in us. Each one of us has been called by the gospel to be proclaimers of God's gospel. We know that the Jews prided themselves in being the children of Abraham, but Jesus reminded them that he could create stones to declare his praises. Well, today you and I are those living stones declaring the praises of our heavenly Father. By birth we are Gentiles. But now by faith we are God's children.

Christ lives in us. This is the marvelous, miraculous mystery explained in God's Word. Christ lives in us so that we may have eternal life. Christ lives in us to remind us just how much our loving Lord cares for each one of us. By faith our lives are changed. By faith we live changed lives because of God's great, great love for us. Remember that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in each of us, whom we have received from God. We are not our own; we were bought at a price. Therefore, we are to honor God with our body. Christ lives in us that we might honor him with our lives. This is a divine mystery that we believe and confess by grace through faith.

The apostle Paul had great joy in being a servant of the Lord, even during intense suffering Paul found great joy in freely proclaiming God's gospel. Paul was excited to proclaim that profound, powerful mystery, "Christ lives in you!" This was the message of God's saving gospel that all people needed to hear to be saved. Paul used God's word to teach and encourage all in God's wisdom. These Gentiles heard the Gospel. The Holy Spirit worked faith in their hearts. They believed. There was only one condition for these believers and for us to enjoy eternity. We like these early Gentile converts are to hold fast to God's word and stand firm in our faith.

Over the generations nothing has changed. As believers saved by God's grace we will always want to hold fast to God's word. We always want to stand firm in the Christian faith revealed in the Scriptures. God's word is still God's word. Man cannot destroy the truth of God's gospel. At times, we may find ourselves trapped by discouragement, despair, or even depression. After all, day after day the news only seems to get worse and worse. Everything seems to be collapsing all at once all around us. Why? Because we have put all too much hope and confidence in this life and/or the things of this life. Our thinking, actually our hearts are simply in the

wrong place. Focus on God and you will be able to rejoice, for Christ lives in us. This marvelous, miraculous mystery is truly our glorious hope in what seems to be a hopeless world.

God's word and promises never ever fail. Everything else around us will fail but not God's word. God's word is the solid foundation upon which we base our glorious hope. God's gospel hope is our glorious hope: an anchor for the soul, that is firm and secure. We can constantly come confidently and boldly before God's throne of grace. Christ, our perfect High Priest has paid for our sins and the sins of the whole world. We know the glorious riches of the mystery and the hope of glory, heaven is our home, now and forever.

Who can truly, fully understand the mind of God? Sin is still alive and well within each of us, but at the same time Christ is even more alive and well in each of us. Christ is far, far greater and more powerful than anything else in all of creation. It is a divine mystery that Christ would dwell with us and in us. But now this marvelous, miraculous mystery is also our glorious hope. CHRIST LIVES IN US. This is the simple, yet powerful saving truth of God's gospel for us and for all of creation, today and every day! Amen.

Benediction:

Go now in the blessing of Christ, the image of the invisible, Love-made-flesh. May God's loving presence surrounds you on every side, guiding you and empowering you to share God's loving presence with everyone you meet. Amen.