

Home Service for August 24, 2025

Welcome and Announcements

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

Call to Worship:

The Lord is our rock and our refuge. God is our fortress in times of trouble.
The Holy One saves us from the hand of the wicked. God delivers us from our
foes. Christ heals us from our infirmities. The Spirit frees us from the chains that
bind us. Rest in the Source of our refuge and our strength.

Opening Prayer:

Great Healer, we are beaten down by life's suffering. Make us whole, O God,
and help us share your healing with the world. Free us from the demons that
shackle our spirits, and set us free from the chains that binds us, that we may help
break the chains of others. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Eternal God, you knew us before we were conceived. You called us as your own
while we were still in our mothers' wombs. Keep watch over us, we pray, for we
long to return to your ways. Restore our confidence in times of doubt, for we yearn
to be the people you would have us be. Grant us the confidence to go forth
unafraid, that we might bless the world through your presence in our lives. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

*Touch our mouths to speak your truths. Touch our lives to make your ways known
to the world. In this we are free. In this we are made whole. In this we shine as
your beloved children, strengthened for the journey.*

Read Psalm 71:1-6

In you, Lord, I have taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame.

² In your righteousness, rescue me and deliver me;
turn your ear to me and save me.

³ Be my rock of refuge,
to which I can always go;

give the command to save me,
for you are my rock and my fortress.
⁴ Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the grasp of those who are evil and cruel.
⁵ For you have been my hope, Sovereign Lord,
my confidence since my youth.
⁶ From birth I have relied on you;
you brought me forth from my mother's womb.
I will ever praise you.

Prayers of the People:

Summer is almost over and we wonder where the time went, Lord. We look at all the plans we had, those that we accomplished and those that are now to be put aside for another time. We look ahead to the busy year of witness and service and wonder if we are ready to truly work for you. The rest that we craved at the beginning of the summer now seems to have slipped rapidly away, leaving us breathlessly facing the upcoming autumn season. Help us, O Lord, feel your strengthening presence with us. Help us place our trust in you, knowing that you will empower and enable us to be in service. As we have brought the names and concerns of those who are dear to us to this service of prayer, seeking your healing, compassionate love; let us also be willing to place our needs and concerns before you. Give us a powerful sense of restoration and reconciliation to you, for we ask these things in the name of your Son, 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 Old Testament Lesson: Jeremiah 1:4-10

The word of the Lord came to me, saying,
⁵ "Before I formed you in the womb I knew^[a] you,
before you were born I set you apart;
I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

⁶“Alas, Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.”
⁷But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you.”⁸Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the Lord.
⁹Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “I have put my words in your mouth.”¹⁰See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”

Read the Epistle Lesson: Hebrews 12:18-29

You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; ¹⁹to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, ²⁰because they could not bear what was commanded: “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death.”^[a] ²¹The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, “I am trembling with fear.”^[b]

²²But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

²⁵See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? ²⁶At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.”^[c] ²⁷The words “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

²⁸Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, ²⁹for our “God is a consuming fire.”^[d]

Read the Gospel Lesson: Luke 13:10-17

On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, ¹¹and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. ¹²When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, “Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.” ¹³Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

¹⁴ Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, “There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.”

¹⁵ The Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Doesn’t each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? ¹⁶ Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?”

¹⁷ When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.

Message

As I was reading today’s Gospel my imagination was in over drive, I think. I could close my eyes and see the woman who was suffering for eighteen years bent over. I could imagine what she saw or could not see. Bent over she more than likely could not see people’s faces, she saw their lower body or maybe their feet. She could not look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon, the clouds or the mountain tops, she only saw the ground. Think how you would feel if that was you and this went on for eighteen years.

At the same time, 2 Corinthians 12:9 came to mind when the Lord told the Apostle Paul: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” The Greek word for sufficient means “to be content.” Basically, “sufficient” means grace that is enough, but not super abundant, fantastic, huge, or incredible. It is just the right amount, enough.

Sufficient does not say to us, “Grow up.” It does not say, “Get over it.” It does not say, “You will understand it better by and by.” It just says, “God’s grace is sufficient for you.” It is enough. It reminds us that Jesus has told us, “I am standing with you in this and every situation.” That’s really all we need to know.

Jesus showed the woman in the temple that morning that he was standing with her in her situation. Jesus could see beyond the law to the power of grace, kindness, caring and compassionate for those people suffering around him, for this woman.

When we think about it a whole lot had to happen for Jesus to even meet this woman in the synagogue, for the synagogue was a place for men to worship, and only men. There was a place off to the side for the women, for men and women did not ever mix there. Based on this fact, this woman should not have even been in the same room with Jesus and the other men, but she was. In my thoughts, that is amazing and I can only imagine her faith and her inner strength to have it happen.

I can almost hear her thought process and I think it must have went something like this. "I have been ill for many years. This new rabbi is not like the others. He seems to care. The other people accuse me or my parents of having a sinned or something that caused this condition, but I have heard that Jesus does not accuse, but he heals. Blind men, another women who was bleeding all were healed, so maybe just maybe, if I very quietly walk over the other side, he might see me and heal me. Although I know I shouldn't, what do I have to loose, I am going to give it a try."

So, she very quietly walks over to the other side. Staying in the shadows at the edge of the room hoping no one will see her, so she can get close enough to Jesus for him to see her. And Jesus sees her and says: "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." Then he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God.

Can you imagine her delight, her excitement at this event. She praised God for she knew her healing was a miracle from God.

Her thoughts might of been these: "Jesus healed me! He did it, he made me free! He healed me! He did not yell at me or accuse me of having a sin or my family of having sinned, no He just healed me. Period. I am free, praise God."

And I can only imagine that she walked over to the other side, showed the other women what happened, and then worshiped God praising Him for her healing and for this freedom of seeing the world and not just the ground, for seeing people's faces and not just their feet.

Healing comes in many ways. It could be like the lady at the temple, or it can be learning to accept our situation in life. I believe that Jesus is present in both kinds of healing.

Maybe healing comes by letting go of the hurt, the shame, the not accepting our situation and finally allowing the healing peace of Christ to enter our lives. May we realize that the stories of Jesus were more than a few miracles for a few people, but a way of life, a relationship with Christ that daily allows us to accept and to be free and comfortable in our own skin.

We pray for healing. The answer is often, wait to see. Sometimes our prayers may result in healing, perhaps miraculously or through the human knowledge and skills of the doctor, nurses, and medicines. Sometimes the best efforts of the medical team and our prayers are not enough and the wait to see becomes a "no". God is still there for us, we are not alone.

All of us at one point or another wish to be free from something. We pray, we beg, we try anything, but then reality sinks in and we know our wish will not be answered. So, we pray for the strength to live each day to the fullest with the peace, comfort and strength of Jesus Christ to lead the way!

Healing comes in many forms, and it just might be the ability to live with the reality of life and then to be comfortable in our own skins. Remember God says, "My grace is sufficient for you."

Jesus had and has a passion for people not rules and regulations. Yes, some rules are needed, but Jesus saw through all those artificial rules to the most basic rule that being kind to people and helping them is the most important rule.

Jesus gave only two commandments in the New Testament. We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind and soul and to love our neighbor as our selves. That is all Christ asks of us. That is it.

Loving God means to worship and to praise Him and to listen and read His Word as found in the Bible, to take time to communicate with Him through prayer and to relive God's actions on earth as seen through the life of His Son, Jesus.

Loving our neighbor means we are to reach out with the compassion of Christ that is in us to those around us who are hurting, no matter who they are.

Remember God's words for us today, tomorrow and every day, "My grace is sufficient for you!" Amen.

Benediction:

Go now in the blessing of God's love that cannot be shaken, trusting in God's promises as you work for a world of justice and mercy for all. Amen.