

Home Service for October 5, 2025

Welcome and Announcements

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

Where do you see human suffering? How might you participate in World Communion Sunday in solidarity with those who suffer?

Call to Worship:

Destruction and violence are everywhere; strife and contention are all around the needs of the world are so great; O Lord, increase our faith. The law is slack, and justice does not prevail. The needs of the world are so great; O Lord, increase our faith. How many threats surround us; warfare, homelessness, loneliness, loss. The needs of the world are so great, but you, O God, are greater still; the One in whom all things are possible. O Lord, increase our faith in you!

Opening Prayer:

Holy and Triune God, your table transcends time and space. As your disciples on World Communion Sunday, we join our voices to the songs and prayers offered to your name throughout the world. Increase our faith and give us grace to love and forgive one another, as you have loved and forgiven us. We remember all your beloved children who suffer this day; especially the victims and refugees of war. We hear the echo of their broken lives in the songs of lament in today's scriptures. Help us bear witness to their suffering without fear. Give us the courage to live in love with you, in you, and for you. For the sake of all your beloved children, we pray. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Holy God, we need the witness of Timothy and the disciples, because we know what it is like to be short on faith, to be afraid of failure, and to avoid suffering. Holy God, we yearn for the encouragement of Paul and Jesus, because you still do mighty works through our tiny windows of faith. Your holy call on our lives depends on your grace, not our success. And your Holy Spirit gives us power to endure the suffering of our failures. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

Rest assured, God has saved us from the endless cycle of hatred and death-dealing—

*things we too often do when left to our own devices.
Thanks be to God for bringing us light and life,
through the saving love of Jesus Christ.*

Read Psalm 137

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept
when we remembered Zion.

² There on the poplars
we hung our harps,

³ for there our captors asked us for songs,
our tormentors demanded songs of joy;
they said, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”

⁴ How can we sing the songs of the Lord
while in a foreign land?

⁵ If I forget you, Jerusalem,
may my right hand forget its skill.

⁶ May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth
if I do not remember you,
if I do not consider Jerusalem
my highest joy.

⁷ Remember, Lord, what the Edomites did
on the day Jerusalem fell.

“Tear it down,” they cried,
“tear it down to its foundations!”

⁸ Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction,
happy is the one who repays you
according to what you have done to us.

⁹ Happy is the one who seizes your infants
and dashes them against the rocks.

Prayers of the People:

Generous God, it is easy for us to comfortably imagine so many other Christians praying today and receiving the elements of Holy Communion. We like to think of this as a nice event; yet you remind us that when we have received these gifts we are also called to use the strength that they provide to witness to others through acts of reconciling love. This Communion is not a “nice” service, meant for our

comfort. It is a challenge for us to truly accept the love of Jesus Christ, who gave to us his body and his blood, that we might be redeemed to do God's loving will. As we have gathered here this day, bringing our prayer concerns to you, O Lord, help us to remember that you hold each one of us gently and lovingly, offering your healing mercies. Give us courage to be your witnesses, seeking peace in this war-torn world. For we ask this in the name of Jesus the 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: Lamentations 1:1-6

How deserted lies the city,
 once so full of people!
How like a widow is she,
 who once was great among the nations!
She who was queen among the provinces
 has now become a slave.

² Bitterly she weeps at night,
 tears are on her cheeks.
Among all her lovers
 there is no one to comfort her.
All her friends have betrayed her;
 they have become her enemies.

³ After affliction and harsh labor,
 Judah has gone into exile.
She dwells among the nations;
 she finds no resting place.
All who pursue her have overtaken her
 in the midst of her distress.

⁴ The roads to Zion mourn,
for no one comes to her appointed festivals.
All her gateways are desolate,
her priests groan,
her young women grieve,
and she is in bitter anguish.

⁵ Her foes have become her masters;
her enemies are at ease.
The Lord has brought her grief
because of her many sins.
Her children have gone into exile,
captive before the foe.

⁶ All the splendor has departed
from Daughter Zion.
Her princes are like deer
that find no pasture;
in weakness they have fled
before the pursuer.

Read the Epistle Lesson: 2 Timothy 1:1-14

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,² To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.³ I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. ⁴ Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. ⁵ I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. ⁸ So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. ⁹ He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. ¹¹ And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a

teacher. ¹² That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

¹³ What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”

⁶ He replied, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you.

⁷ “Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’? ⁸ Won’t he rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink’? ⁹ Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’”

Message

Our Gospel and Epistle lessons for today address the issue of faith. In the Epistle lesson, Paul says to Timothy “I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.” While our Gospel lesson starts with the twelve apostles saying to Jesus, “Increase our faith!” And that is with an exclamation point.

How many times have you heard: “You just gotta have faith.” That is a popular sentiment in our society. By and large, people believe that faith is an important virtue worth having. The problem is that we get so caught up in determining what faith is, and if we have enough of it. This is nothing new. Jesus’ own disciples struggled with the very same issues. They often heard Jesus talk about faith. They knew it was something they wanted, but they were not quite sure what it was, or if they even had it.

Do you not agree that sometimes, we feel the same way. We wonder if we are truly faithful believers, and deep-down we long for some tangible, outward proof to assure us that we have enough faith. So, we say with the disciples, INCREASE OUR FAITH!

Have you ever felt completely inadequate for a task? Sometimes people ask things of us that we just do not think we will be able to accomplish. In the gospel for today, we find Jesus' disciples experiencing the same fear and anxiety. The reason is that Jesus had just given them some steep instructions. In the first four verses of this chapter, Jesus gives two directives: do not be a stumbling block to someone else's faith, and forgive others. Those are steep directives. And when the disciples looked at themselves, they insisted that they were not up to the challenge.

Still, Jesus is serious about this command. These words apply to us as well. Our example, whether in word or deed, should not cause others to be trapped in sin. And on the other side of the coin. Jesus says that when people are a stumbling block to us, when they are tempted by sin; we are to forgive them. It is never easy to forgive. But Jesus wants us to forgive and to do so even when it is difficult to do. When we consider Jesus' words, we soon find that the disciples were a lot like us. They felt that if they could have more faith, they could be better disciples. We think like this too. We often look at our life and we are not pleased at what we see. We get this sense that we could be doing better. So, we say to ourselves, "If only I had more faith. Then I could be a better disciple." And we say to God the same thing the disciples said, Increase my faith!

It is as if we say to Christ, "I am not able to do all of this. You did not give me enough faith!" But Jesus responds, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you." I do not think this was the answer the disciples or us were looking for. We might have expected Jesus to pray and to ask God to grant each of us more faith. Instead, Jesus gives us some irony to chew on. Jesus was implying that the disciples and we have faith at least as small as a mustard seed. It is as if he were saying, "You do have faith. And even if it is small, you can still do great things!" In other words, "We already have faith! We are not using it!" We and the disciples were asking for the wrong thing. We did not need to increase our faith, we just need to increase our faithfulness.

Faith is a gift from God. He gives us the amount of faith that we need and it never runs out. To ask God to increase our faith is kind of an insult. He has given us faith. The key is to go ahead and act in faith; to be faithful. To be faithful means to look to the Lord, to listen to his promises, and then to trust and obey him. If we spend too much time looking at the size of our faith we will be disappointed with what we see. Then when the Lord urges us to be faithful; to act in faith, we will try to excuse ourselves from doing what the Lord asks, saying, "Oh! My faith is too weak!" Jesus emphasized that even a little faith can accomplish much. What Jesus is saying is that the quantity of faith is not as important as whether faith is present

at all. You either have faith in God or you don't. If we do, then God will work amazing things in our lives. He will lead us to be faithful and forgiving of others.

This God-given faith is what enables us to be faithful; to live out the grace of God without regard for ourselves. In his grace God tells us that He loves simply because He loves us. We live by faith in that we believe this truth. God has proven his love for us. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. I am a sinner. Jesus saved me! Those words work and strengthen faith. We have faith because God is faithful. He keeps his promises. Heaven is yours and mine! When we have the faith and confidence to trust God's faithfulness, then we can dare to be faithful for him.

Our Savior urges us to simply use what we have been given. God's grace is all-sufficient. There is no reason for excuses. Rather, there are only opportunities. God places us among each other to serve as a source of encouragement and forgiveness. We are all weak and sinful. We say and do things that only hurt each other and ourselves. God recognizes this. And that is where his grace enters the scene. His faithful love compels us to love each other, even we who are so unlovable. It is faith in God's grace that enables us to do such things. That faith may be tiny as a dust spore, but it is faith in a great and gracious Savior-God. A faith that rests upon this foundation is strong, because God is its strength.

"You just gotta have faith." Those who say that often look to themselves as the foundation or basis for faith. That is not the case, though. The source of our faith, whether great or small, is Christ Jesus. Yet, it is true. We must have faith. Jesus insists, "You gotta have faith," but he does not leave us to look ourselves for the source of that faith. Instead, Jesus completes that important sentence, proving his grace. He says, "You just gotta have faith, and I have given it to you!" Amen.

Benediction:

Imagine what a mustard seed of faith might do this week in your life. Not a quart, nor a gallon, nor a truckload. Just a mustard seed. Imagine. Now go and live out that grace. Yes! Let it be so! Amen!