

Home Service for August 30, 2026

Welcome and Announcements

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

Call to Worship:

O give thanks to the Lord. We call on God's name. Make known the deeds of our Creator, singing them into the world. Sing to God, O people. We will sing praise—to tell of God's wondrous works, and give thanks for so many miracles. Come, and seek the presence of the Lord—and glory in God's holy name. Let the hearts of all who seek the Holy rejoice, for God brings strength to all the people.

Opening Prayer:

Pour your Light, Holy Spirit of God, into our hearts and minds. Help us to know more clearly and grasp more fully the Good News of Jesus. And help us then to know how to share it. We ask this through Jesus Christ, who with You and the Father, are One God. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Christ Jesus, our teacher and our friend, we have not listened for your word amid the clamor of words all around us. We are more pleased to repeat familiar tunes than to listen for new melodies and strange harmonies. We try harder to defend what we think we know than to reach for that which is beyond our grasp. Slow to trust, afraid of the unknown, we are cautious to hear and do your will. We pray for hearts to pay attention to the cries of our neighbor and to resonate with your Spirit. Silence us and instruct us until we learn afresh to sing the songs of faith, hope, and love. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

There is no greater joy in the heart of God than the moment when a child opens to the gift of forgiveness. God's Spirit reaches out to assure us of welcome in Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Amen.

Read Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45c

Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name;
make known among the nations what he has done.

² Sing to him, sing praise to him;

tell of all his wonderful acts.
³ Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.
⁴ Look to the Lord and his strength;
seek his face always.
⁵ Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced,
⁶ you his servants, the descendants of Abraham,
his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.
²³ Then Israel entered Egypt;
Jacob resided as a foreigner in the land of Ham.
²⁴ The Lord made his people very fruitful;
he made them too numerous for their foes,
²⁵ whose hearts he turned to hate his people,
to conspire against his servants.
²⁶ He sent Moses his servant,
and Aaron, whom he had chosen.
⁴⁵ that they might keep his precepts
and observe his laws.

Prayers of the People:

Lord of hope, we come to you this day. We have followed many paths and the one of hope leads to this doorway. Enter our hearts this day as we share our joys and concerns in prayer and in the actions and service that follows. We have lifted before you situations and people who are in need of your healing mercies and your peace. Help us to be those who would bring this peace to them. As our lives have encountered difficulties and concerns, so, too, are we blessed with great joys. We celebrate those moments of happiness and wonder with each other, lifting up joys and celebrations this morning. As we do so we praise your Holy Name with thanksgiving. Lord, bless all those whom we have named before you in our hearts and with our voices. Touch each life with the blessings and peace and mercy. Give us strength and empower us for the ministries of reconciliation, for it is in your name that we pray. 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: Exodus 3:1-15

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. ³ So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."

⁴ When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

And Moses said, "Here I am."

⁵ "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ Then he said, "I am the God of your father, ^[a] the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. ⁸ So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ⁹ And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. ¹⁰ So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

¹² And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you ^[b] will worship God on this mountain."

¹³ Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I am who I am.”^[c] This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you.’”

¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord,^[d] the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’

“This is my name forever,
the name you shall call me
from generation to generation.

Read the Epistle Lesson: Romans 12:9-21

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.^[a] Do not be conceited.

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,”^[b] says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary:

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”^[c]

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Matthew 16:21-28

From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life^[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

²⁸ “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

Message

Remember from last week’s Gospel, Jesus and His disciples were together and Jesus asked them, “Who do you say I am?” and Simon Peter answered enthusiastically, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!” It was one of the most dramatic moments in the disciples’ pilgrimage with Jesus. Jesus in effect said: “Peter, you have got it, that is right! This was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, on this confession of faith, I will build my church.”

In today’s Gospel Jesus changed the subject. He began to tell them that the crowds would soon turn against Him; He would be crucified, on the third day he would be raised. The disciples did not know what to make of all this. Simon Peter took Jesus aside: “Forbid it Lord that these things should happen to you.” Jesus rebuked Peter in strong language. The words are as harsh as any words in the New Testament: “Get behind me Satan! You are not on the side of God but of man.”

Simon Peter probably regretted trying to correct Jesus. Peter was reacting because Peter did not understand God’s plan. None of the disciples understood that the “mission” of Jesus was the “conquest of evil.” His journey to Jerusalem was an act of obedience. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 5:19: “just as the disobedience of one man (Adam) brought death to the human race so by the obedience of one man (Jesus) many will be made righteous before God.” Peter did not want anything to change, he did not want to lose Jesus, so Peter tries to stop Jesus from the journey to Jerusalem. The combined forces of Rome and Jerusalem were coming together against Jesus. He could have called 10,000 angels to rescue Him from the approaching trial and cross. He did not, He was obedient, so that His sacrifice would bring about our salvation. We are not to regard the cross as defeat and the resurrection as victory. Rather, the cross was the victory won, and the resurrection

the victory endorsed, proclaimed and demonstrated. It was impossible for death to keep its hold on Christ.

Now I will guarantee you that Peter and the disciples had no idea what a “church” was or would be. They had no idea of the true “mission” for which Jesus was born in Bethlehem. They had no idea that Jesus was going to sacrifice His life so that they might have their sins forgiven. They had no idea the “cost” God demanded for the removal of His Wrath against broken commandments. I am sure Simon Peter regretted trying to correct Jesus. But face it, we all say dumb things from time to time. We have all done it, said things at the least appropriate moment, we have blurted out something dumb. Simon Peter needed a second chance. Peter did not understand the “mission” and the “cost” of God’s plan. God’s eternal plan, since the days of Adam and Eve, was to restore peace and harmony with all human beings. Jesus became the sacrificial “lamb of God”. He was replacing the Old Testament sacrifices for the forgiveness of broken commandments.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote: “Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ living and incarnate.” Using the parables from a few weeks ago. Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it, a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods to buy it. It is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his fishing nets and follows Jesus. Costly grace is the gospel.

Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costed a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: “you were bought at a price,” and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not consider his Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God.”

God was willing to sacrifice His Son in order to reestablish peace between Himself and the people on this earth which includes you and me. Sacrifice is not a word we use much these days, is it? When was the last time you used it or thought about it in terms of your own life? Matthew 20:28 says it all, “The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” Jesus sacrificed his life for us. Jesus, first and foremost, is the Savior! His mission was to be born, live, die, and rise again in our place to take away our sins. This mission

was a must. Jerusalem was His destination. Listen again to Matthew 16:21: “From that time on Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” Did you hear it? Jesus used the word “must,” not should, but must which means: necessary.

God has integrity. His Word says, “The wages of sin is death.” He could not and cannot simply overlook our sin nor forget the promise of His Word. But He also knew that if a substitute would take the place of a sinner, then it would have to be God Himself, for He alone could be a perfect substitute and He alone could rise from the grave. In order for God to take our place He would have to be clothed in humanity. God would have to become flesh and blood. His sacrifice was the greatest act of love, Jesus the Son of God, clothed in flesh, suffered and died as our substitute, and rose as our champion. All of this was a “must” because of God's love for us. God wants us to be with Him forever.

The “church” has the same mission, to preach Christ crucified. To follow Jesus. To trust Jesus for our eternal life means that we serve the living God. We turn away from the act of breaking commandments to obeying the words of Jesus. In that moment Peter heard Jesus say that He would be crucified. His ears and mind did not hear “and on the third day I will be raised to life.” Jesus rebuked Peter because Peter did not understand God's plan; Jerusalem, the cross and empty grave would mean forgiveness and eternal life. We all make mistakes, because we are human, just like Peter. But Peter made up for it and used his second chance wisely for on the Day of Pentecost it was Peter who said: “Jesus was handed over ...by God's purpose and foreknowledge, put to death on a cross, but God raised Jesus from the dead.” And so today the “church”, you and I still proclaim that Jesus died for our sins, was buried and was raised from the dead so that those who trust in Him will live forever.” Amen.

Benediction:

Beloved, when the path is easy and when the path is rough, when God calls through a burning bush or a still, small voice or a loving rebuke, remember: you are not alone. May God bless you with the courage and humility to accept God's call and with the assurance that if God calls you, God will equip you. Amen.