

Worship Service- January 8th, 2017

The liturgist will take his seat on the Chancel a couple of minutes prior to the start of the service at 10:45am.

The pastor will step into the pulpit, welcome everyone, and make announcements....

The preacher will then ask...

“Are there any other concerns of the church that need to be made known at this time?..... Thank you.”

The preacher will take a seat.

PRELUDE

Ms. Sharon Ard

After the Organist finishes, the liturgist will step to the lectern & say...

“Would you join me in reading responsively our call to worship, adapted from Isaiah 42 and printed in our bulletins.”

CALL TO WORSHIP

(adapted from Isaiah 42)

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights;

I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.

He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street;

A bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;

I have called you in righteousness,

I have taken you by the hand and kept you;

I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations,

To open the eyes that are blind, and to free from prison those who sit in darkness.

I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other,

The former things have come to pass, and I tell you of new things before they spring forth.

Let us worship God beginning with prayer...

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Let us pray... Gracious and loving God - you call to us across deep waters and dark places. Yours is the light which guides us and the voice which we follow. We pray that you would open up your heavens and send your Spirit upon us. As we worship you let us hear your voice once again. May those without hope be encouraged and those who are sad be given new joy. Indeed, O Lord, may all who hunger and thirst receive the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and may your name be glorified, both now and forevermore. Amen.

“Would all of you who are able, please stand and join in singing “Baptized in Water”, #492 in *The Hymnal*.

*HYMN OF PRAISE

“Baptized in Water”

The Hymnal #492

*CALL TO CONFESSION

Having been adopted by God as his own children, we have been set apart for glory. Yet we know how far we fall short of the standard set for us by our Lord. In penitence and faith, let us take the first small steps back to the path ordained for us as we confess our sins before God and one another, using the prayer of confession as it is printed in our bulletins. Let us pray...

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(In Unison)

Giver of every good and perfect gift, we confess the misuse of our power to choose. We confess that, although we have promised to serve you, we have readily chosen to serve ourselves whenever it became expedient or convenient. Deliver us from viewing our gifts as our property to be used for our own benefit first and foremost, without taking into account the needs of our brothers and sisters. Help us to find once more the true freedom found only in living in joyful obedience to your perfect will, through our Lord. Amen.

*SILENT CONFESSION

(pause for about 30 seconds of silence)

*THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

God not only assures forgiveness for all who turn from willful, self-serving ways to follow the way of Christ, but baptizes us in the Holy Spirit, re-creating us as a new and holy people, and calling us

again to live as Jesus lived and to love as Jesus loved. Friends believe the Good News!

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!

*GLORIA PATRI

The Hymnal #579

Glory be to the Father, & to the Son, & to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, World without end. Amen, Amen.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

God, through Christ, has reconciled us to himself and entrusted us with the ministry of reconciliation so let us share the peace of Christ with one another. The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Share the peace of Christ with others as you will.

After a few moments, the liturgist will return to the lectern and say...

“Please be seated. At this time I want to invite all of our younger friends to come forward for a message from the Lord prepared just for them by Ms. Karen.”

The liturgist will take a seat.

CHILDREN’S SERMON

(All Singing)

***Jesus friend so kind and gentle, little ones we bring to thee;
Grant to them thy dearest blessing. Let thine arms around them be;
Now enfold them in thy goodness, from all danger keep them free.***

What Will You Do with Your Gift?

Once upon a time, there was a good king who ruled wisely and who ruled well. One day the king called his three daughters together and told them he was leaving on a long journey. “In my absence I will leave the three of you in charge. Before I leave I would like to leave each of you with a gift; a gift I pray will help you learn how to wisely use your power to rule.” Then he placed in each of their hands a single grain of wheat.

The first daughter placed her grain of wheat in a beautiful crystal bottle and fastened it to a golden chain around her neck. Every day she looked at the tiny grain so that it might remind her of her father’s goodness and how big and powerful she was in comparison to the tiny grain.

The second daughter took one look at the common grain of wheat, and threw it away, wasting her father's mysterious gift.

The third daughter looked at her grain of wheat for a long, long time - until she finally understood what to do with it. She went outside and planted it in the ground. And it became a seed, and then a stalk of wheat, and then a thousand grains of wheat, and eventually turning into vast fields of hope and nourishment for those in her father’s kingdom.

When the father returned years later, he asked his three daughters what they had done with his gift. Though he was polite to his first two daughters, he did not respond to their explanations with much enthusiasm. It was only after the king saw the fields of grain resulting from his third daughter's wisdom that he responded with delight. Taking the crown off his head, he placed it on hers, saying, "Beloved, you alone have learned the meaning of power." From that day forward, the youngest daughter ruled the kingdom. She ruled long, and she ruled wisely, and she ruled well.

This day as we remember Jesus’ baptism, we are also called to remember his gift of love and life to us. And ask ourselves, what have we done with his gift. Have we used it as evidence of how important or special we are. have we thrown it away? Or have we planted it in the hearts of others so that it might become spiritual food for all the world.

Here are some seeds, I hope you will plant them, remember that God loves you and has called you to love and share with others.

As the children leave the front, the Liturgist will step to the lectern & say,

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

God has gathered us from the North and South, from the East and West, and brought us together as his family. It is now our time, to bring our best as tribute to his power and his grace, as an offering of

Thanksgiving. Let us bring the first fruits of our labors and the best of our talents and time as an offering of thanksgiving, as we continue our worship with the presentation of our tithes and offerings. Let us continue our worship with the presentation of our tithes and offerings....

Take your seat for the offertory.

THE OFFERTORY

Ms. Sharon Ard

*DOXOLOGY

(In Unison)

The Hymnal #592

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

After the Doxology, the liturgist will return to the lectern and say...

*OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray... O God, You have blessed our lives by revealing Your love for us in Jesus - Your beloved Son. We offer these gifts as tangible expressions of our joy and gratitude, and pray that through them and our witness and service - others may come to recognize and experience Your presence in the world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

Let us remain standing and reaffirm our Christian faith using the traditional words of the Apostles' Creed printed in our bulletins. Let us say what we believe...

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

“The Apostles’ Creed”

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into Hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick & the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The liturgist will invite the congregation to... “Be seated,” and then take his seat.

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Here I Am, Lord"

Joanna Smith, Soprano

As the soloist leaves the lectern, the liturgist will step to the lectern & say...

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our first lesson this morning is taken from Paul's First Letter to the church at Corinth, the Twelfth Chapter, beginning at the 4th verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page 999 in your pew bibles. Listen now for the word of God...

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free -- and all were made to drink of one Spirit."

The liturgist will return to his seat either on the chancel or with his family or friends in the congregation. When the liturgist finishes, the preacher will step into the pulpit & say...

Our sermon text this morning is taken from the Gospel of Matthew, the third chapter, beginning at the thirteenth verse. If you would like to follow along, the passage may be found on page 837 in the New Testament section of your pew bibles. Listen once more for the Word of God...

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented.

And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

THE SERMON

"Why Baptize Jesus?"

There were hundreds of varieties of super heroes in the toy stores, on movie screens, videos and books during this last Christmas season. All of them had one thing in common. They overcame "Evil" through violent destruction of the evil ones.

Walter Wink calls it the belief in "redemptive violence." Evil must be overcome with violence.

Our reading from the Prophet Isaiah this morning looks forward to the coming of the Messiah, and it proclaims a different kind of approach. There it says of the promised one:

He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice.

God wants this baptism for Jesus, for it will be the occasion for God to announce that the promised one has come who will set things right. Justice will be established through him, and people will be invited by him to live in right relationships with each other and with God.

Jesus receives his commission to do exactly that this day.

Jesus entered the muddy waters of the Jordan, not as a show of **his** repentance or of **his** need for repentance.

Just a few weeks ago, we heard God's word tell us that the child who was to be born, the man who stands with John in the Jordan would be, "Emmanuel, God with us."

Just how far would God go to keep his promise?

Would God address sinners from a safe distance? calling us to repentance from the clouds as it were, not soiling his hands with our sinful and tired world?

Would God send still more prophets to call us to himself?

No - God had already done that many times over to no avail.

The human response to our obstinacy would have been to throw up hands in disgust and proclaim, "Enough already!" and strike us all dead; to send in super heroes to beat up, and blow up, and destroy the wicked and evil people who have defied his will and trampled upon the lives and fortunes of the weak and innocent.

But our God is not a superhero of humanly invention.

Our God is completely different from us and our God surprises us - not by zapping those who have sinned - but by entering our flesh, taking on our human condition, - by identifying with us so completely that he even goes down into the water to mix with those people who are admitting they are sinners in need of redemption.

There must have been better people praying in the Temple that day who would have been more "worthy" of a divine visitation than those at the River Jordan. But instead of going to them, Jesus is immersed in the same water that has washed over sinners.

Who can resist a God like this?

How did Jesus set things right? How does he fulfill all righteousness?

His baptism shows us he would not use brute force to get us to be a just people - forgiven and right before God and just with one another.

By joining people in the waters of their own predicaments, God had taken the first steps in acknowledging their importance in the plan He has to set things right; to bring justice and right relations to all people.

Jesus has come for people who are broken reeds or "smoldering wicks." He has come to deliver all who have been defeated by the forces of this life, those who are ready to surrender to evil, those who can resist no longer.

He enters the waters where those who know their weaknesses have gone. They have gone out to John precisely because they can not make it on their own. They need to hear and experience that God has heard their distress and has come to breath a new Spirit into them.

This Spirit descends upon Jesus, but soon it will descend on all who follow him into his baptismal waters.

At the end of Matthew's gospel, as he takes his leave of his disciples, Jesus promised to be with us till the end of time.

He is still Emmanuel God with us.

He gives us his Spirit through our baptism so that we are not left alone throughout our lives to stumble along and get tripped up by sin and the unjust ways of our world.

Jesus' baptism shows us how close God wants to be with us, and our baptism establishes this closeness for all of our lives. So we gather today to remember and to draw closer to God and to one another in his name.

We gather today to be strengthened by the one who is different from our super heroes.

We gather to worship and follow the one who does not use violence to end violence - but who instead enters into our lives in every way and transforms us-- giving to us that which we need to be faithful servants of God.

Are we ready to live the just life this One makes possible for us through our own baptism? - that baptism in which we receive the same Spirit that Jesus did, - that baptism that makes us, like Jesus, a people beloved and pleasing to God?

Today's readings does not call us to do anything in particular-- other than to come. To draw close to the God who is with us now and always.

Let us remember that Jesus was baptized and remember our own baptisms, simple because baptism is an act which God proclaims to the world the high value he has placed upon us.

It is act in which we rejoice over the fact that God says to us and to whoever may come to the waters- as he said to our Lord and our brother, "You are my daughters, my sons, my beloved ones. With you I am well pleased."

And the wonder of it all is that each day God renews his loves for us each day he speaks tenderly to us of who we are and what we have done and what we can do and what he has called us to do.

Turn anew to God and to his word. Turn each day to your brothers and sisters in the faith. Show forth the love that God has for you by affirming one another as God affirms you. You are a beloved child of God, and God, in spite of your shortcomings-- and there are many--, and it pleases him that you are His beloved child.

And after doing that, pray and thanking God - and do it all again - knowing that this is how God greets you each morning of your life.

Only good can come of it. The good that we all seek - the good that we all need.

THE PASTORAL PRAYER

Father in heaven, who at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit: Grant that all who are baptized into his Name may keep the covenant they have made, and boldly confess him as Lord and Savior; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting.

Help us live up to our calling and potential, giving as needed whatever strength is ours, and asking in respectful awe for the power that you make available to your own for your work. Assist us as we spend time with you in prayer; allow us to bask in your love; and equip us to make disciples. Help us to remember, that we are your beloved children, that your words for us are words of forgiveness, of reassurance, of empowerment for service.

Sustain your servants who give evidence of their baptism in selfless service among the needy and afflicted. Receive our worship, made tangible in our lives.

Lord, we pray that in your goodness and mercy your Holy Spirit may descend upon us and upon

these gifts, sanctifying them and making them for us the bread of life and the cup of salvation, the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Grant that all who share this bread and cup may become one body and one spirit, through Jesus Christ, who became like us, so we might have the hope of being like him and who taught us to pray saying...

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

At this time I would ask our new officers-elect to come forward and to face you the congregation.

THE ORDINATION & INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

Within our common ministry, some members are chosen for particular work as ministers of the Word, as elders, or as deacons. In ordination, we recognize these special ministries, remembering that our Lord Jesus said: Whoever among you wants to be great must first become the servant of all, and if he wants to be first among you, he must be the slave of all people-- just as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life to set others free.

The minister and shall ask those preparing to be ordained or installed to stand before the congregation and to answer the following questions:

At this time, I would ask for Todd Connelly, Lauren Murphy, Todd Smith, Renee Connelly, and Chad West to come forward...

Todd, Lauren, Todd, Renee, and Chad, God has called you by the voice of the people of the church to serve Jesus Christ in a special way. You know who we are and what we believe, and you understand, generally, the work for which you have been called.

- a. Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through Him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
- b. Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you?
- c. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?
- d. Will you fulfill your office in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, & be continually guided by our confessions?
- e. Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?
- f. Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?
- g. Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?
- h. Will you seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?
- i. Todd, Lauren, and Todd, will you be faithful elders, watching over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service? Will you share in government and discipline, serving in governing bodies of the church, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?
- j. Renee and Chad, will you be faithful deacons, teaching charity, urging concern, and directing the people's help to the friendless and those in need, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?

The officers-elect having answered in the affirmative, an elder shall stand with them before the congregation and shall ask the congregation to answer the following questions:

- a. Do we, the members of the church, accept Todd Connelly, Lauren Murphy, and Todd Smith as elders, and Renee Connelly and Chad West as deacons, chosen by God through the voice of this

congregation to lead us in the way of Jesus Christ?

- b. Do we agree to encourage them, to respect their decisions, and to follow as they guide us, serving Jesus Christ, who alone is Head of the Church?

The Laying on of Hands

Would you who have not been ordained for the office to which you have been elected please kneel? (Lauren, Renee, and Chad)

Invite any elders or ministers to come forward for the laying on of hands.

Let us pray... Gracious God, as your word has ever been sent to call your chosen, so the hour strikes again when you summon a few of your children to serve your church as elders and deacons.

Accept now, we pray, the offering of those who have answered your call in this holy place. You know how they long to serve you unburdened by their sins and weaknesses. You know how they share with all of us the need of your forgiveness, the need of your love, the need of your power. Therefore we beg you to do for them what we can never do: to separate their talents from their inadequacies, and to lead them to that point of labor where their strength guided by you can meet the the greatest of challenges set before them.

We pray for your church, that she may accept with gratitude your gift of them who will equip her for her ministry. Grant that she may fail them neither by demanding of them too much nor by expecting of them too little. Taught by them as they are taught by you, may your church discover in her heritage both the cause to be humble and the warrant to be brave.

Hear this our prayer through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns throughout eternity. Amen.

The moderator shall then say to those ordained and/or installed:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, & by the authority committed to me in His church, I hereby declare that you are now elders in the Church of Jesus Christ and for this congregation. I now charge you in the name of Jesus Christ, who is the head of the church, Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in His name, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Amen.

I also charge you, the members of this congregation, to be faithful to these officers, whom you have chosen to rule over you in the Lord; and that you render them all due obedience, cooperation, and support, and follow them so far as ye see them follow Christ. And let God's people say, "Amen".

Then the members of the session, and others as may be appropriate, shall welcome the newly ordained and installed elders into their fellowship in ministry.

We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part in this office with us.

The minister will then turn to the congregation and say:

I would invite all of you, following the service, to welcome your new officers, to greet them with love, and to pledge your personal support to them as they seek to serve this church and our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Invitation

This is not a Presbyterian table. This is not the table of this congregation. This is the table of our Lord Jesus Christ, who invites us to rise above the things of earth and taste of the eternal.

Come, if you are fearful, to be made new in love.

Come, if you are doubtful, to be made strong in faith.

Come, if you are broken, and be made whole.

Come, old and young, male and female-- all who believe-- for there is room for all.

We are invited to come together around this table as those who belong to the household of Christ, brothers and sisters who in our baptized lives live out the death and resurrection of Jesus. We are the family of the reborn and the reconciled, made one in the waters of baptism.

The Words of Institution

On the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord took bread, and after he had give thanks, he broke it & gave it to his disciples saying: "Take, eat. This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In like fashion after they had eaten, he took the cup. After he had given thanks he gave it to his disciples saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, drink ye all of it."

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again in final victory.

The Distribution of the Elements

The Prayer After Receiving

Let us pray... Life giving God, may we who share Christ's body, live his risen life; we, who drink his cup, bring new life to others; we, whom the Spirit lights, give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us, so that we and all your children shall be free, and all creation live to praise your name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

As a sign of your renewed commitment to Christ, and as a token of your pledge to assist these new officers in fulfilling their duties as the servants of Christ in this congregation, I invite you all to stand with me and sing our closing hymn, "O Jesus I Have Promised", Number 388 in our *Hymnals*.

*HYMN OF DEDICATION

"O Jesus, I Have Promised"

The Hymnal #388

*THE BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you, make His face to shine upon you and give you his peace, in your going out and in your coming in; in your lying down and in your rising up; in your labor and in your leisure; in your laughter and in your tears; until you come to stand before Jesus on that day in which there is no sunset and no dawning. Amen.

*THE CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

"Go, My Children, Fed and Nourished"

Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me;

Grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.

Here my Spirit's power filled you, Here His tender comfort stilled you;

Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.

*POSTLUDE

Ms. Sharon Ard