

FPCM Worship Service Sunday, January 15th, 2017

PRELUDE

"All Creatures That on Earth Do Dwell" - Lani Smith

Dr. Elizabeth Davis

After the Prelude, the liturgist should step to the lectern and say,

“Would you join me in reading the responsive call to worship adapted from Psalm 42 and printed in our bulletins?”

CALL TO WORSHIP

(adapted from Psalm 42)

I waited patiently upon the Lord, who stooped to me and heard my cry.

He lifted me out of the desolate pit, out of the mire and clay;

He set my feet upon a high cliff and made my footing sure.

He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God;

Many shall see, and stand in awe, and put their trust in the Lord.

Great things are they that you have done, O Lord my God!

How great your wonders and your plans for us!

There is none who can be compared with you.

Oh, that I could make them known and tell them!

Burnt-offering and sin-offering you have not required, and so I said, "Behold, I come.

I proclaimed righteousness in the great congregation;

Behold, I did not restrain my lips; & that, O Lord, you know.

Your righteousness have I not hidden in my heart;

I have spoken of your faithfulness and your deliverance.

I have not concealed your love and faithfulness from the great congregation.

You are the Lord, let your love and your faithfulness keep me safe for ever.

Let us worship God beginning with prayer....

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Gracious Creator, you have made us for yourself, and, before we drew our first breath, you knew us and called us by name. Speak now through the pages of Scripture, and bend our lives once more in your direction; open our ears to your peculiar truth; and give us the courage not only to hear, but also to act on what we have heard. Give us glimpses of the future to which you call us so that we may recognize more fully the Lordship of Jesus and fulfill the discipleship to which he calls us; in His name we pray. Amen.

Would all of you who are able please stand with me and join in singing our opening hymn, “Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim”, number 477 in our *Hymnals*.

The liturgist should step back from the microphone for the hymn.

*HYMN OF PRAISE

“Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim”

The Hymnal #477

After the hymn, the preacher will step into the pulpit and say...

*CALL TO CONFESSION

The church of which we are a part has a long record of faithful discipleship. But, our human tendency is to become complacent and narrow our focus to our own immediate concerns. Let us repent of our self-seeking ways, confess our wanderings and wasted opportunities, and answer Jesus’ call to follow Him as we pray together the prayer of confession printed in our bulletins. Let us pray...

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(In Unison)

Lord, from the beginning, your disciples have been invited to leave all that they had and to follow you. You promised nothing but hardship, rejection, hostility, suffering and, finally, a cross to carry. We claim to follow you, but complain when it is difficult; worry when we cannot see where you are leading; question “why” when suffering inevitably comes; and choose to ignore the parts of the gospel that disrupt our sense of ease & safety. Forgive us, Lord. Forgive our selfish craving for cheap grace. Pardon us for claiming you as our Lord, but being unwilling to risk anything on your behalf. Keep us from expecting the joys of heaven without first experiencing the garden of Gethsemane. Remind us that we live not for ourselves but for the world, & that we are entitled to share in your joy only as we share also in your suffering. Give us bold-

ness & courage, by the power of your Spirit, to be your disciples in truth & deed, not just in word. Amen.

***SILENT CONFESSION**

***THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Jesus is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. In Him we receive pardon from sin and freedom to live as new creations. 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**

Through Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, we who were far off because of sin, have been brought near to God once more. Assured of forgiveness, we may be at peace with God and 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, liturgist will step into the lectern and say...

“At this time I want to invite all of our younger friends to come forward for a Word from the Lord brought to 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.**

As the children leave, the Liturgist will return to the lectern and say...

“Would all who are able, please stand and join in one voice to sing our next hymn, “Jesus Calls Us O’er the Tumult” which is printed in our bulletins.”

***HYMN OF PREPARATION**

“Jesus Calls Us O’er the Tumult”

Jesus calls us over the tumult of our life's wild, restless, sea;
Day by day his sweet voice soundeth, saying, "Christian, follow me!"

Jesus calls us from the worship of the vain world's golden store,
From each idol that would keep us, saying, "Christian, love me more!"

In our joys and in our sorrows, days of toil and hours of ease,
Still he calls, in cares & pleasures, "Christian, love me more than these!"

Jesus calls us! By Thy mercies, Savior may we hear Thy call,
Give our hearts to Thy obedience, serve and love Thee best of all.

After the hymn, the liturgist will return to the pulpit and say,

THE INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Please be seated... Remembering all we have spent for nothing and vanity, now is our opportunity to contribute something that will last, and befit God's wondrous deeds on our behalf. Let us answer Christ’s call with joy and generosity as we continue our worship with the presentation of our tithes and offerings...

The liturgist will sit down until the Doxology begins to play.

THE OFFERTORY

"Songs of Hope" - Lani Smith

Dr. Elizabeth Davis

***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. . . God of the saints in every place and time, we are grateful for the privilege of being numbered among them as we invest our gifts from you. Because of your generosity, we have not lacked for anything we need. Grant now that our words and deeds may follow our offering into loving service in your realm. Amen.

THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

"The Apostle's Creed"

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...

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 and 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.

Invite the congregation to... "Be seated," and take a seat.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Dr. David DeSeguirant

After the soloist finishes, the Liturgist will return to the lectern & say....

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our first lesson this morning is taken from the forty-ninth chapter of Isaiah, beginning at the first verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page 629 in your pew bibles. Listen now for the word of God...

"Listen to me, O coastlands, and hearken, you peoples from afar.

The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.
He made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me;

He made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me away.
And he said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified."

But I said, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;

Yet surely my right is with the LORD, and my recompense with my God."

And now the LORD says, who formed me from the womb to be his servant,

To bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him,

For I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength --

He says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant

to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel;

I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,

To one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations, the servant of rulers:

"Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves;

Because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

The liturgist will return to his seat either on the chancel .

When the liturgist finishes, the preacher will step into the pulpit & say...

Our sermon text today is taken from the first Chapter of the Gospel of John, beginning at the thirty fifth verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page #922 in your pew bibles.

Listen once more for the word of God...

"The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples; & he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

Jesus turned, and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?"

And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"

He said to them, "Come and see."

They came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, "So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter)."

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

THE SERMON

“Are You Called or Named?”

This week our country will matter-of-factly go about the task of enacting a political miracle. As we have 54 times before, we will swear in a democratically elected President of the United States. The miracle, of course, is that the government of the United States goes through this house-cleaning act every four years without bloodshed, violence, social upheaval or force.

When the Presidency turns, so too does the world's perception of us and our perception of ourselves. However improperly, we tend to identify national moods and trends by tagging them with the names of the president. Refer to the "Roosevelt years," and an entirely different kind of America comes to mind than the "Eisenhower," "Kennedy," or "Reagan" years. As we change presidents, we also leave a trail revealing this nation's concerns and self-images. The changing names are symbolic of our shifting national identity and purpose.

Taking a new name has always been an important way of revealing new information about a person's role and identity. People change their names for all kinds of reasons - when they get married, when they join a religious order, when they aspire to the celebrity cult, when they are adopted, when they convert to a new faith tradition.

This year, more than 120 million babies will be born on earth. Those who survive will sooner or later undergo the initiation process of receiving a name. Interestingly enough the name given at birth is only the first of several names a person will bear throughout life. When this happens, the new names are given either to mark important milestones in life or to reflect a new cultural identity hoped for or attained. For instance, how many of you would pay good money to see an action star in the movies named Roy Harold Scherer, Jr. But change that that name to Rock Hudson and you've really got something.

And ladies, if you were looking for a leading man with continental flair, charm, and devastating good looks would you be more likely to swoon over Archibald Leach,,,, or Cary Grant.

Caryn Johnson sounds like a good and proper name for a suburban soccer mom. But it hardly fits a dread lock wearing comedienne like Whoopi Goldberg.

We get pet names from those who love us, and names like dork, dweeb, jelly-belly, or slut from those who don't.

Sometimes we adopt new names to honor someone who has made a difference in our lives for the better. Lesley Lynch King Jr. really never knew his father, He met him only one time-- when he was about 16 years old. His father, charming as he could be, had a reputation for being a wife beater. When his mother had married his father, there was no clue of his violent nature. The first time his father hit his mother was on their honeymoon when she made the mistake of smiling at a kind conductor.

His parents had separated when he was about 2 weeks old after one of his father drunken rages, when he took a butcher knife and threatened to kill his mother, his nurse, and him! His mother remarried 3 years later to a man who was loving and supportive of his son's many activities such as football and scouting. When he was 22 years old, Les King Jr. had his name legally changed to reflect the debt of love the man who had raised him and been his true father, even if he wasn't so biologically., and Les King Jr. became Gerald R. Ford Jr. and took that name to the White House with him.

In 1931, Rev. Michael King Sr. received a call to a new church and felt called to go to Europe to study the Reformation and it's leaders that had accomplished so much for religious freedom. It was on that pilgrimage that he determined to serve God by leading God's people back home to freedom that was

as yet, still little more than a dream. To remind himself of this call, he took the name of the Reformation leader, Martin Luther, for himself and his 2 year old son, and became Martin Luther King.

This idea of a name shaping reality is nothing new. In bible times, *naming was often a way of marking someone as one's own*. The servant was declaring an awareness of being God's person and having been born for God's purposes. In the Isaiah passage, the servant tells why he was born: "the Lord ... formed me in the womb ... to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him ... [to be] a light to the nations, that [God's] salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

When God told Hosea to take a harlot for a wife and she bore the first two children of their marriage, they were not his. He named them, "This is not my kid" and "To this kid I will not show mercy". Later when all is forgiven and God and Hosea have reconciled Gomer, the child's names are changed to "This is my child" and "I will show this child mercy."

Jacob was infamous for his ability to take on new identities. He was the almost-firstborn - coming out of Rebekah's womb clutching the heel of his twin Esau. (Thus "Jacob," meaning "heel-clutcher.") Matured into an ambitious young man, Jacob tricked his brother out of his birthright (Genesis 25:29-34) and then took on Esau's name & characteristics to fool their dad Isaac into giving him Esau's blessing.

After having gained what he thought he desired most - the birthright and the blessing - Jacob had to flee for his own safety. After many years he heard God calling him back to the land of Canaan. On the way there Jacob encountered his famous midnight wrestling partner. Jacob and the antagonist wrestle all night long. The stranger finally calls out, "Let me go, day is breaking." But Jacob, who had sought his brother's birthright and his father's blessing in the past, now insists upon a blessing from this antagonist. "I won't let go of you until I have your blessing." The stranger asks Jacob, "What is your name?" Jacob answers. The stranger does not give what Jacob asks for, the blessing, but instead gives Jacob a new name. His name had been Jacob, heel-clutcher; from now on it would be Israel, God-clutcher.

On the very night when Jacob thought he was returning in triumph to Canaan - following a directive from God, no less, and bringing with him all the family and worldly goods he had worked for years to accumulate - on that very night Jacob underwent a name change exposing his true identity. Instead of grasping for things like birthrights and blessings, Jacob discovered the God who would not let him go beyond his watchful care, the God who would provide for his needs, the God who would love him in spite of being the greedy, grasping, good for nothing he had been. He would clutch God close to him and never again let him go. He was beaten and bloody, limping painfully, but he was exuberant.

This is the same destination Simon has arrived at when Jesus renames him Cephas or Peter, the Rock. As we all know from the Gospel stories, Peter was far from being a stalwart, dependable rock for Jesus at this point in his life. So why does Jesus declare this disciple, who will soon display all the fortitude of sand or squishy mud at best, to be his "rock"? Why? Because it too is a name to strive after, a name to wrestle with and struggle against. It is not a reflection of what is, but of what, by the grace of God, **will be**.

It is only after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection that Peter begins to truly inhabit his new name. And even as he stood firm and foundational for the emerging Christian church, Peter still knew that he had feet of clay. But Peter, like Jacob, had found God, and would resolve not to let him go. When those times arose when he fell short of the ideal strived to maintain, he knew that the battle wasn't over, and that his greatest ally, Jesus, was still fighting for him.

Living up to our names is one of the toughest jobs we ever make for ourselves. We falsely feel compelled to be "better than," "richer than," "smarter than" others we wrongly measure ourselves against. But God has given us a way out of that endless name-drain-- by giving us the one name that frees us from all other title-quests. The kingdom of God now has a human name and a human face - the name and face of Jesus Christ. It is through the power of that name that we can fully inhabit the names we have been given by the gift of the Christ - sons and daughters of God - and strive to live up to the other names we have been given by our parents and by ourselves.

Which brings us to the title question of our sermon-- Are you named or called? The answer is

simple -- both. When you are named by God, you are called. And when you have been called, you get a name that reflects that reality. We are called to come to Jesus. and finding him, like Andrew, we are called to bring others to him. That is our call.

But how about the name thing? Jesus didn't name all of his disciples. Sure Simon became Peter, and Saul became Paul, but how about the others and US?

For now he does for us what any good family does, we take on the new family name. Having been baptized, we are given the name Christian. And when our race is run, and our life in this earthly realm comes to an end, we receive a new spiritual body and a new name! A name only God knows. Listen to this from Revelation 2:17: "To everyone who conquers ... I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it."

Imagine that. God cares enough that he has another name for you, one that is known only to him. If your old name has been sullied by misjudgments, misdeeds, and mistakes then don't worry, because the day is coming, when you will stand with him. And God himself will give you the perfect name, the name that only he knows. He will write the name on a white stone and as he presses it into your hand, God himself will lovingly whisper your new name into your ear.

You have a name now, Christian, that should challenge you, inspire you. It should help you stand a little straighter, walk a little taller. But never forget, that is just for now, your future is so bright, so glorious, that God also has a new name picked out just for you and your old name just won't do. My prayer is that when we fall like Peter, when we disappoint and our feet of clay seem to work only in reverse, we won't give up; we won't stop; that each of you will be there when God whispers your name.

THE PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Would you pray with me...

We thank you Father for the gift of a name and all that it represents-- a place of belonging, our identity as your children, your promise of provision and protection, a share in the inheritance of all who belong to your family, and a sense of purpose. May we never forget our obligation to invite all who will to come and see, to meet our risen and triumphant Lord and find in him a bother and a Savior. Help us to so live that we may keep your name unsullied by our actions, and when we fail, grant us by your grace to begin again.

Clear the eyes and hearts for all who have been so overcome by earth's sorrows they cannot see Jesus with them. Shelter us within the crevice of your heart, so that as the shadows, darkness and hatred may be banished forever. Lord, if we are empty vessels that need to be filled, fill us to overflowing with your grace. If we are weak; strengthen us. If our affection for you has cooled; warm us. Help us all to remember that Jesus is Lord, and as such, we cannot confine him or define him, we can only follow him. Bring us to that place of deep peace, where we may rest in the confidence that our hand placed in the hand of the least of your beloved children is in the hand of Christ, 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.

Let all of us who are able stand and join in one voice to sing our hymn of dedication, "Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore", #377 in our Hymnals.

*HYMN OF DEDICATION "Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore" *The Hymnal #377*

*THE BLESSING

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE "Pass It On"

I wish for you, my friend, this happiness that I've found--
You can depend on Him, it matters not where you're bound;
I'll shout it from the mountaintop, I want the world to know:
The Lord of love has come to me, I want to pass it on.

*POSTLUDE

Dr. Elizabeth Davis