

Sunday, March 18th, 2018

A couple of minutes prior to the start of the service at 10:45am, the liturgist will enter and take his/her seat on the Chancel. The pastor will enter, offer a welcome, and make announcements....

The preacher will then ask...

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

PRELUDE

"Wondrous Love" - Dale Wood

Dr. Elizabeth Davis

After the Organ Prelude, the liturgist should step to the lectern & say,

“Would you join me in reading the responsive 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;

He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth;

Thus says God, the Lord, I am the Lord, 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,

As a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind,

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

Let us worship God beginning with a short video...

Let us worship God beginning with a video bringing us the voice of Joseph of Arimathea, answering the question that Jesus asks of us all, “Who do you say that I am?”

The video will begin immediately after this introduction.

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

“Joseph of Arimathea”

A Video

EXTINGUISHING THE FIFTH LENTEN CANDLE

Immediately at the conclusion of the video, the Acolyte will extinguish one votive candle.

The Liturgist will then return to the lectern microphone and say...

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Powerful God, whose voice penetrates the wilderness of our deceits, and whose transforming reality is symbolized in the act of baptism, take us once more to the River Jordan, that we might share Jesus' moment of surrender to your will to receive your Spirit in all its power. Move us to remembrance that we have been baptized, that your grace was poured out on us, not because we earned it, but because of your amazing generosity. Amid the wonder of it all, we would accept once more Christ's call to discipleship and take our place in your family of faith. Amen.

Would all of you who are able please stand with me and join in singing our opening hymn, “Baptized in Water”, number 492 in our *Hymnal*.

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

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

“Baptized in Water”

The Hymnal #492

After the hymn, the liturgist will step into the lectern and say...

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. We, who have received the gift of baptism, recognize our need for repentance and of God's amazing grace. Would you join with me as we pray together the prayer of confession printed in our bulletins, pausing at its conclusion for a moment of silent prayer. Let us pray....

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

(In Unison)

Heavenly Father, you have created us, but we have chosen to go our own way. You have reclaimed us, but we have, by our arrogant attitudes and actions, rejected the claim. You have sent your Holy Spirit

to break into our controlled and unimaginative routines, and we have not appreciated that burst of creative energy. We are ready to admit that our ways are full of dangerous byways. Our mistakes and failures have often come because, in our false pride, we have not listened to you. Save us again by your forgiving love. Remind us of who and whose we are through the grace of our Brother, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*SILENT CONFESSION

Pause for about 30 seconds of silence.

*THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

At his baptism, a voice from heaven said to Jesus: "You are my own Child, the Beloved; with you I am well-pleased." We, too, are beloved children of God and all who are truly sorry for their sin are relieved of its burden.....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 Christ, God was pleased to reconcile all things to himself, making peace through the blood of his cross. 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 step into pulpit 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 Pastor Mike."

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.

Put a baseball cap on your head, and ask the children to tell you what it means. Say that it means that you like to play baseball (or softball), and describe your favorite position. Then say that it also means that you are part of a team — a team that has one name and one identity, even though it is made up of many different types of players. Point out that the Christian church is a lot like a baseball team, in that we have one identity but lots of different players. Let them know that the apostle Paul says that our Christian team has "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (Ephesians 4:5-6), but at the same time we have lots of different kinds of players: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (v. 11). Ask them to tell you what is good about having one name and one identity, but also lots of different players. Point out that one identity pulls the team together, and keeps it "joined and knit together," but having different players means that you can cover all your different positions, so that you can be sure that "each part is working properly" (v. 16). Ask the children to tell you which position they like to play in baseball (pitcher, catcher, infield, outfield), and then ask them to tell you what they like to do in the church (sing, read, help other people). Close by encouraging them to play the position they like best, and to try to support the team in whatever way they can.

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

THE INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

We have nothing apart from God's gifts. Yet we have everything when we allow God's Spirit to work through us. In thanksgiving for all we have received, let us continue our worship with the presentation of our tithes and offerings...

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

THE OFFERTORY

"When He Cometh" - Dale Wood

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... Mighty Father, you have given us everything we have. You have granted us life. You have made us rich. You have blessed us by filling our lives with your all-sufficient grace. Accept these gifts returned to you from that bounty. Bless and multiply them so that they might be used in seeking the lost and redeeming your creation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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 & 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 choir finishes, the Liturgist will step into the pulpit & say...

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our first lesson this morning is taken from Romans, chapter eight beginning with the eighteenth verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page #983 in your pew bibles. Listen now for the word of God...

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies....For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

The liturgist will return to his seat with the congregation.

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

Our sermon text for today is taken from the Gospel of Matthew, the third chapter, beginning at the thirteenth verse. If you would like to follow along in your pew bibles, you can find it on page 837. 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."

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And he fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was hungry.

And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."

But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him to the holy city, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge of you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'"

Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him."

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

THE SERMON "It All Begins with Knowing Who You Really Are" Rev. Mike Morgan

A preacher entered a nursing home that specialized in caring for patients with Alzheimer's in it. He was there for his weekly visit with Annie Kilbride, a longtime member of his congregation who had been moved here by her family 15 months before. She had good days and bad days, and when he reached her room, he tried to ascertain what kind of day she was having. He squatted down beside her wheelchair and said, "Good morning Annie. Do you know who I am?" Her answer surprised and amused him when she replied, "No, but if you go to the Front Desk, they can tell you."

He had amazed the Rabbis at the temple with his wisdom at the age of 12. In spite of the rabbis' wonderment and the scholarship offers he must have received, he still knew he was just Jesus of Nazareth, Son of Joseph Jacobson.

Only days before he sought out his cousin, John, at the bank of the Jordan River, he had taken off his apron, put down his hammer and chisel and walked out of his family's carpentry shop forever. It was time for him to begin his Father's work, spoken of 20 years before.

How tongues must have wagged when Jesus approached and John took him straight to the head of the long line of those seeking forgiveness and repentance. "Just *who* does he think he is?!"

Their questions were answered moments later when Jesus stood waist deep in the water, and John poured three clamshells of water over his head. *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."*

In a flash the question of Jesus' real identity was answered once and for all. And the voice of God spoke out audibly identifying Jesus as his own beloved son, more for Jesus' sake than for the crowd's, because the Holy Spirit that descended upon him from God immediately drove him away from the crowds and out into the wilderness where he would fast and pray for 40 days.

On that fortieth day, the devil arrived. It was when Jesus was at his thirstiest, hungriest, loneliest, weakest point that the devil, *diabolos*, came to tempt him.

That word, *diabolos*, comes from a verb that means to divide. He was the divider, not of truth from falsehood, not of darkness from light, but the divider of men from God. He had been successful in his first appearance in the Garden of Eden. He managed to separate the first Adam from the God who made him--and from that moment to this, when the *diabolos* had returned to have a go at the second Adam, the story of humankind had been one of searching for their lost identity and the way back home to the God who loved them.

The Devil begins immediately to attack the identity of Jesus, "If you really are the son of God... prove it!! Turn these stones into bread.... Throw yourself off of this high building.... bow down and wor-

ship me!”

Jesus doesn't blink. He doesn't hesitate. He counters with “to live the abundant life, man is needful only of the Word of God..... it is never right to test the power or patience of God... I will worship and serve the one, the only true God, and you aren't him.”

Lord! He was good!

The devil knew he was beaten and left to wait for another opportunity to defeat him, like in the Garden of Gethsemane as he waited to be arrested.

Just because the devil was out of the picture, doesn't mean that Jesus didn't continue to be tested. He had his servants, scribes and pharisees and Saducees, to do that. In Luke 6, Jesus visits the temple on the Sabbath and comes upon a man with a withered hand. He knows the Pharisees are watching. He could easily have pretended not to notice and walk on by like we often do. He knew that the onlookers who surrounded him were looking for any pretense to kill him. He could have give in to temptation for several very good, very acceptable reasons. But, there was that identity thing-- that just wasn't who he was. He healed the man, and filled the Pharisees with renewed anger and determination to kill him. These men were religious leaders of their day. These were the priests and pastors, and preachers of the established church that were threatened by his power and determined to kill the chosen one of God.

But that didn't matter. Jesus knew who he was. He knew why he was there. He was the Son of God and his job was to bring his brothers and sisters back to his Father. He was the first born in a very large family. He didn't forget it. **And neither should you!**

I am pretty sure I have told you this story before. But this one bears repeating. First because it is 100% true, and not just another one of those stories preachers tell.

In the mid-1950's, shortly after finishing his PhD in Preaching and accepting a job at Phillips University to teach at their fledgling seminary, Fred Craddock was traveling with his wife, Nettie, through Gatlinburg, TN. One morning, they were eating breakfast at little restaurant, hoping to enjoy a quiet meal. While they were waiting for their food, they noticed a distinguished looking, white-haired man moving from table to table, visiting with the guests. Fred leaned over and whispered to Nettie, “I hope he doesn't come over here.” But sure enough, the man did come over to their table.

“Where are you folks from?” he asked in a friendly voice.

“Oklahoma,” they answered.

“Great to have you here in Tennessee.” the stranger said. “What do you do for a living?”

“I teach at a seminary,” he replied.

“Oh, so you teach preachers, do you? Well, I've got a really great story for you.” And with that, the gentleman pulled up a chair and sat down at the table without so much as a “by your leave” and began to talk.

“See that mountain over there pointing out the restaurant window. Not far from the base of that mountain, there was a boy born to an unwed mother. It was a hard time then -- the tail end of reconstruction. He had a hard time growing up, because every place he went, he was always asked the same question, ‘Hey boy, Who's your daddy?’ “Whether he was at school, in the grocery store or drug store, people would ask the same question, ‘Who's your daddy?’

He would hide at recess and lunch time from other students. He would avoid going in to stores because that question hurt him so bad. “When he was about 12 years old, a new preacher came to his church. He would always go in late and slip out early to avoid hearing the question, ‘Who's your daddy?’. But one day, the new preacher said the benediction so fast he got caught and had to walk out with the crowd.

“Just about the time he got to the back door, the new preacher, not knowing anything about him, put his hand on his shoulder and asked him, ‘Son, who's your daddy?’”

The whole church got deathly quiet. He could feel every eye in the church looking at him. Now everyone would finally know the answer to the question, ‘Who's your daddy’. This new preacher, though, sensed the situation around him and using discernment that only the Holy Spirit could give, said the fol-

lowing to that scared little boy “Wait a minute!” he said. ‘I know who you are. I see the family resemblance now. You are a child of God. With that he patted the boy on his shoulder and said, ‘Boy, you’ve got a great inheritance. Go and claim it.’

With that, the boy smiled for the first time in a long time and walked out the door a changed person. He was never the same again.

Whenever anybody asked him, ‘Who’s your Daddy?’ he’d just tell them, ‘I’m a Child of God’.” The distinguished gentleman got up from the table and said, “Isn’t that a great story?”

The professor responded that **it really was** a great story!

As the man turned to leave, he said, “You know, if that new preacher hadn’t told me that I was one of God’s children, I probably never would have amounted to anything!” And he walked away.

The seminary professor and his wife were stunned. He called the waitress over and asked her, “Do you know who that man was who just left that was sitting at our table?”

The waitress grinned and said, “Of course. Everybody here knows him. That’s Ben Hooper. He’s the former governor of Tennessee!”

It doesn’t matter what a bunch of bullies may try to tell you. It doesn’t matter even what a bunch of self-righteous, self-serving preachers say. You were chosen by God himself. You were called by God. You were given an inheritance that is yours and no one else’s. And he sent our older brother out to look for you, to free you from everything that holds you back, and to bring you home.

You are a child of God... and I can see the family resemblance.

Can’t you?

THE PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD’S PRAYER

Would you pray with me...

O God, our Father, we give thanks that every circumstance and situation, however great, is still subject to your power. Just as gladly do we give thanks that no event or person is so small that it escapes your notice and care.

Help us all to be one family of believers, brothers and sisters all. May we be able to argue and to differ without quarreling; allowing nothing to disrupt the family fellowship we share.

Help us always to give you the loyalty and the fidelity which family ought to give; and help us to prove our love by doing what you command us to do. Help us to be good examples to our younger siblings, that we may help them always to walk in the right way, and never make it easier for them to go wrong.

Make us ready to submit ourselves to your pleasure and sincerely resign our wills to your own. Grant us: Minds which are eager to seek; Memories which are strong to remember; Wills which are dedicated to obey; Hearts which are surrendered to love; and Lives which are committed to service., through Jesus Christ our Lord, 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.

Let all of us who are able stand & join in one voice to sing our hymn of dedication, “With Grateful Hearts Our Faith Professing”, hymn #497 in our *Hymnal*.

*HYMN OF DEDICATION “With Grateful Hearts Our Faith Professing” *The Hymnal #497*

*THE BENEDICTION

*CHORAL RESPONSE

“Go, My Children, With My Blessing”

Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone.

Waking, sleeping, I am with you. You are my own.

In my love’s baptismal river, I have made you mine forever.

Go, my children, with my blessing, you are my own.

*POSTLUDE

Dr. Elizabeth Davis