

Sunday, April 8th, 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 liturgist 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 "Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies" Gerald Peterson Dr. Elizabeth Davis
CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP "Rejoice in the Day!" - Dan Dykema The Choir

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 Psalm 107 and printed in our bulletins?”

CALL TO WORSHIP (adapted from Psalm 107)

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, & his mercy endures for ever.

Let all those whom the Lord has redeemed proclaim that he redeemed them from the hand of the foe.

Some went down to the sea in ships & plied their trade in deep waters;

They beheld the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep.

Then he spoke, and a stormy wind arose, which tossed high the waves of the sea.

They mounted up to the heavens and fell back to the depths; their hearts melted because of their peril.

They reeled and staggered like drunkards and were at their wits' end.

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

He stilled the storm to a whisper and quieted the waves of the sea.

Then were they glad because of the calm, and he brought them to the harbor they were bound for.

Let them give thanks to the Lord for his mercy and the wonders he does for his children.

Let them exalt him in the congregation of the people and praise him in the council of the elders.

Let us worship God beginning with a short video bringing us the voice of Peter, 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? “Peter” **A Video**

Immediately at the conclusion of the video, the Liturgist will return to the lectern microphone and say...
PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Let us pray... Lord, whose word rebuked the wind and stilled the sea, whose trust in all that is eternal overcame the betrayal of friends and the cruelty of enemies, speak to us here in the midst of our own particular needs, and let that word abide in us with a transforming sense of peace that we can share with others. Gather our weakness into your strength, our smallness into your greatness, our need into your provision, our fears into your love, and our insecurity into your assurance. You alone are able, and in your faithfulness we trust. Amen.

Would all of you who are able please stand with me and join in singing our opening hymn, “All Creatures of Our God and King”, number 455 in our *Hymnal*.

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

***HYMN** “All Creatures of Our God and King” **The Hymnal #455**

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

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

How often have we been defeated or our witness diminished by fear. The One who loves us without condition and Who is greater than any enemy, invites us to seek his healing and forgiveness as we pray together the prayer of confession printed in our bulletins and then pause for a moment of private confession at its conclusion. Let us pray...

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

(In Unison)

Lord Jesus, we acknowledge how much easier it is to have faith when things are going well in our lives, but how much more difficult it is when the storms of life threaten us. We may try to deceive ourselves, that though others have trouble, it will not come to us. When a storm suddenly arises and we discover we are not immune, we are shaken and afraid. Although we have seen and experienced your love and power many times, like the disciples in the boat on the Sea of Galilee, we still encounter times when we fear for our survival. Forgive the weakness of our faith, and still the troubled waters in our souls. Restore us and reassure us with the peace that only you can give. Amen.

*SILENT CONFESSION

Pause for about 30 seconds of silence.

*THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The battle over sin and death has already been waged and won on our behalf. Jesus is the victor and in his name we too have the victory. Our sin is forgiven and the past has no more power over us!...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 we are reconciled to God, who does not count our trespasses against us. Having been reconciled to God, let us also be reconciled to one another & share the peace of Christ. 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 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.***

"How many of you have ever been in the path of a really bad storm?" Going on the assumption that not many children will raise their hands, ask them to remember a really bad storm. How did they feel? Did it rain hard? Was the wind strong? Did it blow down any trees? There are also storms not caused by bad weather and they also frighten us and cause a huge disturbances in our lives. What might some of those events be? (Possible answers might be moving to a new house or school, a friend moving away, the loss of a pet, the death of a family member, or someone they love with an illness. These things are like storms! Everything seems dark, cold and windy. When these things happen, we feel so helpless. What is one thing we can always do? Agree that we can pray: "Dear God, please help us to remember that in the storms of our lives, you are always with us. Thank you. Amen."

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

Would all of you who are able please stand with me and join in singing our opening hymn, “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”, number 356 in our *Hymnal*.

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

*HYMN

“Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing”

The Hymnal #356

After the hymn, the Liturgist will step to the lectern and say...

THE INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

God has made us victorious over death. Christ walks with us through difficult days and sleepless nights. The Holy Spirit meets us in our weakness with a love that will not let us go. All this we want to share with the world. Let us praise God with all we have to give 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 "With Palms Before Him Went" - Douglas E. Wagner 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... Our Father, we rejoice that your steadfast love is forever, and that there is never a moment when you are unconcerned for any of your people. In the midst of trouble you speak peace and act on behalf of the oppressed. We ask that you might follow these gifts we bring with your blessing, so that unbelief be turned to faith, ignorance to knowledge, sickness to health, and brokenness to wholeness. Move us beyond beyond the giving of our money to the giving of ourselves. 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.

THE ANTHEM

"Lamb of God" - Twila Paris/Craig Courtney

The Choir

After the choir finishes, the Liturgist will step into the pulpit & say....

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our first lesson this morning is taken from Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, the twelfth chapter from the second to the tenth verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page #1010 in your pew bibles. Listen now for the word of God...

"I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven -- whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise -- whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows -- and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses.

Though if I wish to boast, I shall not be a fool, for I shall be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong."

The liturgist will return to his seat in 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 Mark, the fourth chapter, beginning at the thirty-fifth verse. If you would like to follow along in your pew bibles, you can find it on page 871. Listen once more for the Word of God:

"On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."

And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great storm of wind arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already

filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?"

And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?"

And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?"

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

THE SERMON

"Who Is This Man?"

An eight year old boy and his ten year old brother misbehaved and their mother took them to the preacher. The preacher told the mother that he would talk the boys about God being everywhere, so they need to behave always in God's presence. He called in the 10 year old and asked him, "Son, do you know where God is?" The boy sat still and silent. The preacher asked the question again, "Son, do you know where God is?" The boy was silent. The preacher asked a third time. The boy jumped up, ran out of the office, grabbed his 8 year old brother, saying, "Wow! Are we in trouble! Let's get out of here. God is missing and they think we did it!"

God is not missing; he is within our reach. If He is in your boat, you have nothing to fear.

We are on a journey through the greatest story ever told. It is actually a story that isn't finished being written, which means you and I are characters in this story. God is challenging us to have the same kind of faith in him we have seen in the characters we have studied in the Old Testament and now the New Testament. God wants us to have courage enough to follow him, to align our life with the story he is writing. We are learning through the characters in these true stories principles about God that will help us to align our Lower Story lives with God's Upper Story vision.

There is, right here in America a small kingdom only 14.3 acres in total area. Located in three separate areas in the United States—part in Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Northern California—you can leave the United States and enter the Republic of Molossia. It is considered to be a micro-nation . . . a "nation within" our nation.

Molossia has its own flag, its own signs, and its own boundary markers. It even has its own tourist attractions.

Kevin Baugh is the president, or Sovereign, over his own little kingdom. His space program consists of model rockets. The basic unit of currency in Molossia is the valora. The valora is linked in value to Pillsbury Cookie Dough. Three valora has equal value to one tube of cookie dough.

There is a railroad—model sized. The national sport is broom ball. And although his nation is landlocked, he claims a navy that is merely an inflatable boat. You can visit anytime you like. But—although it sounds fun—don't think you can move there. He says there is not enough room. Kevin affectionately calls his nation "The Kingdom of Me."

Don't laugh too quickly. We may not have gone to the same extremes as Kevin Baugh, but we mostly live our lives as if we are rulers of our own kingdoms. What a surprise it is when we discover that we are living in a kingdom but it is not ours.

That's the message of Jesus.

The kingdom is his. He is its teacher, its doctor; he is its prophet, priest, and king.

His kingdom is not as a nation with armies and weapons but as a farmer who comes with seed and the seed falls on soil (Mark 4:3-9). Finding his kingdom is like finding a treasure in a field (Matt. 13:44).

And his kingdom is worry-free (Matt. 6:25-34). Best of all, this kingdom has a king who is in control (Mark 4:35-39).

Jesus said "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. . ." (28:18). Kings say things like that. Unlike Molossia, if you want to enter and live in this kingdom, there is room for everyone. That's not the problem. There is plenty of room in this kingdom for everyone.

But you have to know-- He is King!

In Mark 4, Jesus is dog tired. He has given of himself to the crowds around him to the point that he has nothing left to give. He needs rest. He needs to get away from the crowds, He needs to spend some time with his Father in prayer and reorient himself to the Upper Story vision and recharge his batteries. So he and his disciples have gotten into a boat and are rowing to the other side of the sea of Galilee, a distance of about 5 miles. Ordinarily, the fisherman in the boat knew they should be able to row the distance in a little over an hour. Their tired Master falls asleep on a ballast bag in the stern.

While he slumbers, a storm blows up that is so severe that the boat begins taking on water and no matter how hard they row, they are getting no where. They are now worn out because they have rowed too long, the storm is too big, and they are too far from the shore. Meanwhile, the water is coming into the boat and it looks like they are going to capsize. The disciples are scared, and in the darkness and the roll of the waves, they see their teacher still asleep. why doesn't he pick up an oar and help them?

So they wake up their sleeping Rabbi and someone asks, "Teacher, don't you care about us?"

Jesus tells the storm to "be quiet, be still" and the water becomes completely calm.

Lesson One: If Jesus is in your boat, you don't need to be afraid of storms.

A few years ago a lady in my last church went in for a checkup, and they found something suspicious on the X-ray. He was concerned enough to order a biopsy, and the pathologist and pulmonologist were right there to tell us on the spot what they saw.

As I sat there with her waiting for the doctors to come tell her the results, that waiting room was the equivalent of our boat. Everything was quiet, unlike the disciples where the waves were whipping and the wind howling. I remember Jesus' promise through Paul, "If we live, we live in the Lord. If we die, we die in the Lord. So whether we live or die, we are the Lord's." We read a few short passages of the Bible and reminded ourselves that Jesus has provided healing from death. We asked ourselves in this moment of turbulence, "Do we really believe this?" and, we did.

When the pulmonologist came in, he calmed the storm. He said, "It looks like a really big lymph node, and there doesn't seem to be any problem." When the doctor left, my sister in Christ looked to me and buoyed my spirits with the affirmation, from Psalm 121, My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth." The storm was past. The sea was calm. Jesus was and is and forever will be Lord.

Every time I find myself back in this boat, and the storm breaks out, because I have rehearsed the promises of Jesus, and gotten to know him more, because I have, like the disciples, spent more time with him, I'm finding myself with less and less fear. Maybe on the day when the storm that actually capsizes my boat or my wife's boat, I will be able to declare with the confidence of the Psalmist, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for your rod and staff comfort me."

After a second incident with the boat and a storm, Jesus walks on water and lifts Peter and his faltering faith out of the sea. In Matthew 14, we have another boat incident. This time the disciples are in a boat without Jesus, because Jesus needs some time apart from everyone, so that he can spend some quality time one on one with His Father. He sends the disciples on ahead in a small boat and tells them he'll meet up with them later.

But once again, while Jesus is off praying, the disciples are confronted by another sudden squall. The waters are covered with tall whitecaps that dwarf their little boat. The morning sun is about to break over the horizon. They are all remembering the lesson from the first battle of the storm, and are wondering, "Where is Jesus when you really need him?" And then off in the distance they see a figure walking on water towards them.

They first guess that it is a ghost. But Jesus calls out and tells them not to be afraid because it's him. Peter says, "Lord if it's you...tell me to come to you on the water."

Jesus said, "Come on out."

Peter steps out and by golly, he starts walking on water. And, as long as he keeps his eyes on Jesus and not the waves, he's good.

And while the disciples were rowing, Jesus was praying. Which leads us to **lesson #2: If you don't come apart, you'll come apart.**

Some of you needed to hear that. Jesus not only did it here, but read the gospels for yourself. You will see a pattern in the life of Jesus. Right before a big decision or right after a major event in his life, he got away from it all and spent time with his Father. If Jesus felt a need to do this, how much more do we need to do it?

Some of you are burning the candle at both ends. Some of you are faced with a major decision. Some of you have gone through some serious events in your life. As a Christian, you need to get alone with God and get yourself centered; get yourself anchored; get yourself refreshed.

And when Jesus has done something remarkable in your life or the lives of those around you, and you are left asking yourself, as the disciples did, "Who is this man?" remember that you already have the answer: **He is Lord!**

Jesus not only came to die for our sins, he came to show us how to live. Bathe yourself in the teaching and life of Jesus; know his way of life better than anyone else. Follow his example and, in no time at all, you too may be walking on water.

THE PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our faith in your power and in your providence, O God, is strengthened today in our reflection upon the experience of your disciples in the midst of the storm. Your word has reminded us repeatedly that you are greater than anything in this world that may cast its shadow across our path. Our dependence on chemicals to ease our pain or reduce our fears, problems with insufficient finances, broken relationships, and troubles of every kind that afflict us, can not hold up under the righteous application of your Word. It remains sharper than any sword, penetrating even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

From it, we take courage, for we know that all power is yours-- to be given, or to be taken away. Help us to be sustained in our sense of encouragement. Help us to be unafraid in our focus on the future. Help us to be reliant upon your equipping and your leading, and to trust in your will for us, for your church, and for the world.

Use us, dear Father, to support those who have no support, to care unhesitatingly for those who are the victims of others' carelessness. Help us to worship you with the witness of our works, so that we may be a blessing for those who would otherwise be overwhelmed. Never let us forget that You not only care-- You also act. As we go out into the world, grant that we may be anxious for nothing, and that by faith, we may be a reassuring presence and a commanding voice calming the storms that rage around us, through Jesus Christ our Lord, 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, "God of Grace and God of Glory", hymn #420 in our *Hymnal*.

*HYMN "God of Grace and God of Glory" *The Hymnal #420*

*THE BENEDICTION

*CHORAL RESPONSE "He Is Lord"

He is Lord! He is Lord! He is risen from the dead and He is Lord!
Ev'ry knee shall bow, ev'ry tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

*POSTLUDE

Dr. Elizabeth Davis