

Worship Service from First Presbyterian Church of Magnolia

Sunday, November 8th, 2015

The liturgist and pastor will meet in the hall outside the choir room at about 10:40am. The liturgist will enter followed by the pastor. The pastor will step into the pulpit, welcome everyone, 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.”

The preacher will take a seat.

PRELUDE "The Heavens Are Telling" - Beethoven/Leatherman **Dr. Elizabeth Davis**
CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP "Rejoice in the Day!" - Dan Dykema **The Choir**

After the Choral Call, the liturgist should step to the lectern and say,

“Would you join me in reading the responsive call to worship adapted from Psalm 30 and printed in our bulletins?”

CALL TO WORSHIP (adapted from Psalm 30)

I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up, and did not let my foes rejoice over me.

O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me.

O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol, restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.

Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name.

For his anger is but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime.

Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

You have turned my mourning into dancing; & taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,

Our souls will praise you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

Let us worship God beginning with prayer...

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Let us pray... Loving God, as you opened the tomb and raised Jesus to new life, so open our hearts and minds by the power of your Word and Spirit. Pierce the veil of the familiar that blinds us to your presence. Turn us from ways that deny your rule among us. Awaken us from dull routines to worship that is alive with awe and wonder, spontaneity, and joy. Surprise us with a presence we cannot avoid, a summons we dare not evade, a mission we may not escape. Gathered by the love of Christ, may we be inspired and empowered to feed others as we have been fed, in Christ's name. Amen.

Would all of you who are able please stand with me and join in singing verses 1, 3, and 5 of our opening hymn, “Christ Is Alive”, #108 in our *Hymnals*.

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

*HYMN OF PRAISE “Christ Is Alive!” (vss. 1,3,& 5) *The Hymnal #108*

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

*CALL TO CONFESSION

God calls us to leave the old behind so that He can make us new creatures. Let us acknowledge our troublesome old ways and familiar routines, so that God can help us embrace the new life he offers. Let us 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

Risen Lord, you come to us when we least expect you, offering us a second chance to live the abundant life. You long to turn our mourning into dancing, even as we have failed to grasp the wondrous possibilities you set before us. We pretend faithfulness and prefer traveling our well-worn ruts to following you down new roads or into unfamiliar places. We confess our blindness that does not comprehend the magnitude of Easter; our deafness that does not hear heaven’s triumphant song of victory over death; and our short-lived faith that sings "alleluia" one moment only to return to our dull routines the next. Forgive the limitations of our vision and the weakness of our believing, and grant us a second chance to live as those called out of the world to reveal your glory to it. Amen.

*SILENT CONFESSION

(Pause for about 30 seconds of silence.)

*THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

If you have confessed with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you have been saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. 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

Having been reconciled to God through the grace of His Son, let us also be reconciled to one another and share Christ's peace. 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 **the Halo Club.**"

The preacher 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 step to the pulpit and say,

THE INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Our offerings involve all who give. They empower those who serve. They express our praise and thanksgiving while witnessing to the power of God's love at work in our midst. 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

"Andante con Moto" - Schubert/Williams

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 make this offering for the continuing work of bringing about the glorious day when your reign is fully established upon earth. We hope and pray for that new world when justice will prevail for all, and the healing of the nations is complete. Bless these gifts, and we who desire to faithfully work with you, to the glory of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

The liturgist will take a seat until after the Anthem.

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.

ANTHEM

"A Jubilant Song" - Mary Lynn Lightfoot

The Choir

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

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our first lesson for this morning is taken from the Book of Acts, the second chapter, beginning with the thirty-sixth verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page #949 in your pew bibles. Listen now for the word of God...

"Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him."

And he testified with many other words and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. "

The liturgist will take his seat. The preacher will then return to the pulpit and say...

Our Sermon text for this morning is drawn from the Twenty-first Chapter of John's Gospel, beginning at the first verse. You can find the passage on page 945 in your pew bibles. Listen once more for the Word of God. . . .

"After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tibe'ri-as; and he revealed himself in this way.

Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathan'a-el of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zeb'edee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out & got into the boat; but that night they caught nothing.

Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any fish?"

They answered him, "No."

He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, for the quantity of fish.

That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and sprang into the sea.

But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread.

Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught."

So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and although there were so many, the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord.

Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish.

This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs."

A second time he said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord;

you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep."

He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

Leader: ...This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

THE SERMON

“What Do We Do Next?”

The Scripture text for today is called an epilogue to the Gospel of John but don't let that fool you. This portion is as much a part of the story as Easter itself. It captures the mood and the dilemma of the church and of all the followers of Christ in the days immediately after the Resurrection. Just like the original disciples we find ourselves asking the question, “Is that all there is to Easter?... What should we do next?”

And Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing."

Lowell Ogden tells a story about a little boy who lived far out in the country at the turn of the last century. He had reached the age of twelve and had never in all his life seen a circus, so you can imagine his excitement, when one day a poster went up at school announcing that on the next Saturday a traveling circus was coming to the nearby town. He ran home with the glad news and the question, “Daddy, can I go?” Although the family was poor, the father sensed how important this was to the lad. “If you do your Saturday chores ahead of time,” he said, “I’ll see to it that you have the money to go.

Come Saturday morning, the chores were done and the little boy stood by the breakfast table, dressed in his Sunday best. His father reached down into the pocket of his overalls and pulled out a dollar bill—the most money the little boy had possessed at one time in all his life. The father cautioned him to be careful and then sent him on his way to town.

The boy was so excited; his feet hardly seemed to touch the ground all the way. As he neared the outskirts of town, he noticed people lining the streets, and he worked his way through the crowd until he could see what was happening. Lo and behold, it was the approaching spectacle of a circus parade!

The parade was the grandest thing this lad had ever seen. Caged bears, and lions, and tigers snarled as they passed, bands beat their rhythms and sounded shining horns, midgets performed acrobatics while flags and ribbons swirled overhead. Huge pachyderms carried the most beautifully dressed women he had ever seen. Dogs did flips and rolls and all kinds of tricks. One man had a burning stick in his hand while he marched and every so often he would put it in his mouth and put it out, only to belch fire a moment later and relight it. There was a woman who swallowed swords and jugglers and acrobats. Finally, after everything had passed where he was standing, the traditional circus clown, with floppy shoes, baggy pants, and a brightly painted face, brought up the rear. As the clown passed by, he handed the boy a balloon. The boy reached into his pocket, took out that precious dollar bill, handed the money to the clown, turned around, and began his long walk home.

What had happened? The boy thought he had seen the circus when he had only seen the parade!

How many of us can relate to this poor kid? How many of us think that we have seen everything that God has for us? Across the country, Easter Sunday brings in twice as many worshipers as any “ordinary” Sunday. But if one understands the Christian faith and life, then being here for Easter, and then absenting oneself from church until Christmas Eve or the next time the children are singing in church, is a little like watching the circus parade and then going home without seeing the real show.

Check the attendance records for Easter Sunday and the Sundays following and together they will form both the confession and the denial of the Christian faith. There was a time when churches planned very special events for Easter in order to build the crowds. Now churches expect the crowds to be there on Easter but they plan all kinds of special events for the Sunday after in order not to be hurt and embarrassed by the noticeable collapse in attendance and activity. And so on the Sunday after Easter, one church will bring in a professional athlete to speak or a beauty queen or a movie star. Another church may have a midget come to speak while another may get a magician to do some tricks, or perhaps some

fellow to yo-yo while reciting Scripture.

One is reminded of the childhood game of skipping rocks on the water. If the rock had the momentum it might skip all the way across the pond to the other side. But if it ever slowed down it would sink. I'm thinking just now of a number of churches that keep the ministers busy manufacturing momentum and enthusiasm. The plain fact is life is not one long ecstasy or a repeat of ecstatic moments such as that very first Easter. Life is lived in a rhythm of divine origin. Excitement ebbs and flows. And there will be days full of excitement spent on the mountaintop. But there are so many more that will be spent, working, tending, babysitting, scrubbing, fixing.

One day, you are telling everyone that, "He is risen!" And then what? You're asking yourself, "Is that all there is to Easter?... What do I do next?"

John, of all the Gospels, was most aware of the problems created by Easter. You see Easter is the resurrection of Christ to be sure. No one denies that. But John understood, more than any other writer, that Easter is also the departure of Christ. The Gospel of John consists of twenty-one chapters. The public ministry of Jesus ends at Chapter 12. And what is the rest? The rest is farewell, a farewell meal, farewell discourses, a farewell prayer, and then the farewell. The pathos in this portion of material is deep and real. "Let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God. Believe also in me. In my father's house are many rooms" (John 14:1-2, au. trans.).

What is he talking about? The disciples are like children sitting on the floor playing with their toys 'when suddenly they look up to discover that Mom and Dad are putting on coats and hats. The questions are always three and they're always the same. "Where are you going?... Can we go?... Well, who will stay with us?"

"Where am I going? I'm going to my Father and your Father." "Can we go?"

"Where I am going you cannot go now. You can go later." "Then who will stay with us?"

"I will ask the Father and he will send the Spirit and he will be with you always."

What do you do after Easter? Simon Peter and six others went fishing.

Easter was over. The whole life with Jesus of Nazareth seemed to be over. It was wonderful to be sure, but you can't squeeze a lifetime out of one moment. "I'm going fishing." And while they fished Christ appeared. And after breakfast he looked at Simon and said, "Simon, do you love me?"

Like the revival preachers I used to hear as a boy when I visited my grandmother. They would lead you right up to the presence of God and then call you up to the front of the church if you would say "Yes" to God.

I really think I'm a little intimidated by the question. Why do you just pick on me all the time? It's too much pressure to be enjoying this experience. In fact, I don't think you've asked me the right question. Ask me about Christology or ecclesiology or the Trinity. I like essay questions."

"But, Peter, it is the right question. What is to prevent your being arrogant when you're successful if you have not really answered this question? What is to prevent your being depressed at failure if you have not clearly faced up to this question? In the final analysis it is the quality of the relationship you have with me that will make all the difference in your life."

"Would you repeat the question?"

"Yes. Do you love me?"

"Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

"Then tend my lambs and feed my sheep."

In that assignment Easter is translated into life and resurrection morning is made meaningful every morning. I don't mean to get sentimental. It's a tough assignment. To tend my lambs is to face the fact that some are going to stay lambs for forty years and never become sheep. Feed my sheep; not simple at all. Some of them refuse to eat. Now what am I going to do?

"What I was doing," says Jesus, "I want you to keep doing. As the Father sent me so I send you."

All across the country there are churches trying to recapture Easter, trying to keep it going or to get it back. And there are many sincere church people feeling they have lost something, feeling guilty that they

do not remain excited by Easter all year long. May I suggest that the feeling of enthusiasm and exhilaration at Easter needs to be turned into common energy? Tend the lambs and feed the sheep.

Have you ever been to one of those meetings where you got excited about the problems of childhood poverty and then nothing specific was proposed? And you went home only to grow cold.

Have you been to one of those meetings where you became disturbed, heavily disturbed, about world hunger but nothing was proposed? And it was not long until you were back surfeiting off the fat of the land without any heaviness at all.

Have you ever been to one of those meetings where you became incensed and angry over black lives matter, or blue lives matter, or all lives matter, but nothing specific was proposed? And now it has been some time since you've given any thought to it. What's the answer? Go back to those meetings and see if you can get back the ecstasy, get back the guilt, get back the pain?

Suppose you have a ten thousand dollar bill. My goodness. Wow! A ten thousand dollar bill. Look at that. A ten thousand dollar bill! But after several days of admiring it, being in awe of it, showing it to your friends, what do you do with it? You don't go for coffee and say, "Here, I'll just take care of it out of this ten thousand dollar bill!" You don't say, "Let me pay for the hot dogs out of this ten thousand dollar bill." That ten thousand dollar bill will have meaning only after you have changed it into a sack full of concrete acts of grace.

What do we do next? Tend His lambs and feed His sheep.

THE PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Would you pray with me?... We thank you, God, that you do not leave us alone; that you do not leave us where we are or as we are, but in love you are ever calling us onward, turning us, and sending us. Help us to trust in your future, especially when following Jesus means that we must let go of familiar things that we may reach out to others, now strangers, with the love of Christ. Grant us patience and steadfast faith in times of change, of confusion and uncertainty.

Lord Jesus, you come to us you confront us about how we are living our lives just as you challenged Peter, and ask us to answer the same question-- more for ourselves than for you-- "Do you love me?" Help us dear Lord to answer the question as did Peter, not only with words, but by how we care for and look after one another. Make us disciples who are worthy of the title. Make us a people who actually follow you; who actually learn from you; and most of all, a people who actually do what you want us to do, to shepherd your sheep, both those within the fold and those who are still lost beyond its gates.

For those of us who would settle into the security of being ourselves saved, but who fail to see that conversion contains the inherent call to share the love of Christ, and serve others, shatter our complacency and get us off the Damascus Road and onto the way that leads to you. Disabuse us all of the notion that it is ever too late to change; too late to start again, to be forgiven, to build a new life, or to have new hope; even as you pour out your grace and blessing upon all of us who need to begin again on the way that leads to life, 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 and join in one voice to sing our hymn of dedication, "More Love to Thee, O Christ", # 359 in our *Hymnals*.

*HYMN OF DEDICATION "More Love to Thee, O Christ" *The Hymnal #359*

*THE BENEDICTION

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE "Freely, Freely"

Freely, freely, you have received. Freely, freely give.

Go in my name & because you believe, others will know that I live.

*POSTLUDE

Dr. Elizabeth Davis