

Sunday, May 21st, 2017

The liturgist and pastor will take their seats on the Chancel a couple of minutes prior to the start of the service at 10:45am. The pastor will step into the pulpit, welcome everyone, and make announcements....

The preacher will then ask...

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

PRELUDE

"Joyous March" - Harry E. Anik

Dr. Elizabeth Davis

After the Prelude, the Covenant Players will move to the front and deliver their dramatic call to worship:

“Would you join me in reading the responsive call to worship adapted from Psalm 145 and printed in our bulletins?”

CALL TO WORSHIP

The Covenant Players

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Let us pray... Loving God, your steadfast love never ceases and your mercies never come to an end. You have promised to meet those who seek Your face, so we pray that as we worship you with prayer and song, you would be present as we read and hear your Word. Attend us as we celebrate your love and ask your blessings upon all people. Bless us to be a blessing unto the family and the world you have given, this both now, and forevermore. Amen

Would all of you who are able please stand with me and join in singing our opening hymn, “For the Beauty of the Earth”, number 473 in our Hymnals.

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

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

“For the Beauty of the Earth”

The Hymnal #473

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

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. For all of us for whom the burden of sin has grown too heavy to carry, you are invited to come in penitence and faith, and lay your burden down as we pray together the prayer of confession in our bulletins, pausing at its conclusion for a moment of silent prayer. Let us pray...

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

(In Unison)

Eternal God and Father of all humankind, you know what families are like. Even on days like today, when we honor our mothers, we often take them for granted. We have whined to get our own way and ignored the needs of the people we live with. We have been angry at having to do more than our share of the work around the house and been blind to all the ways we have benefited from our family’s support. Our mothers have made sacrifices for us, and we have not recognized it. Reconcile us to our loved ones, O God, and forgive us the ways we have contributed to whatever tension is present in our homes. Help us to accept our family members as precious gifts and to love them and give thanks for them always. In the name of our elder brother, Jesus, we pray. Amen.

***SILENT CONFESSION**

Pause for about 30 seconds of silence.

***THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

“Do not be ashamed, for God has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of God's own purpose and the grace given to us in Christ Jesus years ago." By that grace we are 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**

If we would live in the peace of Christ that has been offered to us, let us be likewise gracious and forgiving and share the peace of Christ with one another. The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Share the peace of Christ with others as you will.

After a few moments, the liturgist will 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 the Covenant Players.”

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, “Honor Christian Mothers”, printed in our bulletins and sung to the tune of “Onward Christian Soldiers”.

*HYMN OF PREPARATION

“Honor Christian Mothers”

(To the tune of “Onward Christian Soldiers”)

Honor Christian mothers, instruments of God,
Raising faithful families, worshiping the Lord.
Foll’wing His commandments, showing us the way:
Love and faith and kindness, teaching us to pray.
Honor Christian mothers, instruments of God,
Raising faithful families, worshiping the Lord.

God be with our mothers who have gone before,
Certain of His promise, life forevermore.
In His many mansions, love again we’ll share,
He will take away all sorrow, wipe away each tear.
Honor Christian mothers, instruments of God,
Raising faithful families, worshiping the Lord.

Honor Christian mothers — Heaven’s gift of love.
Join with them in service to the Lord above.
Follow their example, let your lights so shine —
All will see your goodness, praise the One Divine.
Honor Christian mothers, instruments of God,
Raising faithful families, worshiping the Lord.

After the hymn, the Covenant Players will Invite the Offering,

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

The Covenant Players

The Players will sit down.

THE OFFERTORY

"Pastorale in F Major" - J.S. Bach

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... In response to your great love for us, gracious God, we joyfully and gratefully offer

the fruits of our labor and our lives in these gifts. Bless and multiply them, we pray, that the transformative power of your love will be a reality in our homes, our neighborhoods, and wherever there is need of your grace. Amen.

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

“The Apostles’ Creed”

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

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

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Cantilène" - René de Boisdeffre

Dalene Baer, violin

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

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our first lesson this morning is taken from the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Acta, beginning at the first verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page 963 in your pew bibles. Listen now for the word of God...

“And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer; but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren at Lystra and Ico'nium. Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

“As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions which had been reached by the apostles and elders who were at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.”

The liturgist will return to his seat either on the chancel or with family or friends in the congregation. Thank you for your service.

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

Our sermon text today is taken from the first chapter of Paul’s Second letter to Timothy, beginning at the third verse. You are encouraged to follow along & you can find the passage on page #1038 in your pew bibles.

Listen once more for the word of God...

“I thank God whom I serve with a clear conscience, as did my fathers, when I remember you constantly in my prayers. As I remember your tears, I long night and day to see you, that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lo'is and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you.

Hence I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control.

Do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, and now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, and therefore I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.”

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

THE SERMON

“There’s Always Something Left to Love”

We have come together this morning for two primary reasons.

First and Foremost is to honor the Lord Jesus Christwith our worship.

The other, is to honor our mothers,...our grandmothers and the mothers of our children.

“One mother achieves more than a hundred teachers” says a Yiddish Proverb

Abraham Lincoln said, “The greatest lessons I ever learned were at my mother’s knees.”

Napoleon was the sage who was quoted as saying, “The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.”

So this is a day for expressing our love and gratitude for those who raised us at home and at church.

It is also a day for remembering.

We celebrate the joy of motherhood, even if it is our joy in having our moms, rather than their joy in being moms, After all, I’ve heard that, "The joy of motherhood is what a woman experiences... when all the children are finally in bed.”

When my son was at Fort Benning, GA, for his basic training 15 years ago. His platoon had one kid who was a certain wash out. His bed was never made correctly, shoes never shined... He as the last to finish every task, every march, every test. He used any excuse to go on sick call,.... grumbled constantly about the food,and never made his bunk properly. His drill sergeant kept him permanently on report. But suddenly after six weeks of being the unit sad sack, everything turned around for this kid. He was a new man. His uniform was spotless, His bunk was a model for all the others in the barracks.

When asked to what he attributed the soldier’s change in attitude, the drill sergeant explained,

"Threats & punishment did not work,so I had to resort to the ultimate weapon: I called his mother!"

Paul’s adopted son in faith, Timothy, would one day become the Bishop at Ephesus, and one of the truly great leaders of the early church, not because of Paul, but because of his mother, Eunice and his grandmother, Lois.

Eunice and Lois were both good Jewish women, full of faith, wisdom, and a determination to keep their promise to raise Timothy in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It is likely that Eunice was a single, working mom, and according to early church legends, was most likely abandoned by her Gentile husband. He was neither Jewish nor Christian, just another unbeliever so common in Lystra and the rest of the Greek speaking world.

But having been deserted by him, she moves back home with her widowed mother to raise her young son, never fastening the sins of the father to the son she loved; never speaking an ill word against the man who had literally taken her youth, her virginity, her dowry, and left her to fend for herself.

How she could not look at the face of her young son and not be reminded of her own rejection and the betrayal of the man who had made so many promises at their wedding, and who had kept none of them.

She just went on loving, in spite of the hurt and the pain. That was undoubtedly the first and best thing she did for her son. She taught him that love was unconditional and that love shouldn’t stop, just because someone disappoints you, or even stops loving you.

In Laraine Hansberry’s Tony nominated play, *Raisin in the Sun*, an African-American family inherits \$10,000 from their father’s life insurance policy. The mother of the house sees a chance to escape the ghetto life of Harlem and move into a little house with flower boxes out in the countryside. The brilliant daughter of the family sees in the money the chance to live out her dream and go to medical school.

But the older brother has a plan that is difficult to ignore. He begs for the money so that he & his "friend" can go into business together owning & running a liquor store. He tells the family that with the money he can make something of himself & make things good for the rest of them. He promises that if he can just have the money, he can give back to the family all the blessings that their hard lives have denied them.

Against her better judgment, the mother gives in to the pleas of her son. She has to admit that life’s chances have never been good for him and that he deserves the chance that this money might give him.

As you might suspect, the so-called "friend" skips town with the money. The desolate son has to return home and break the news to the family that their hopes for the future have been stolen and their dreams for a better life are gone.

His sister lashes into him with a barrage of ugly words. She calls him every despicable thing she

can think of. When she takes a breath in the midst of her tirade, the mother interrupts her and says, "I thought I taught you to love him!" The daughter answered, "Love him? There's nothing left to love." And the mother responds, "There's always something left to love!. And if you ain't learned that, you ain't learned nothing. Have you cried for that boy today? I don't mean for yourself and the family because we lost all that money. I mean for him, for what he's been through and what it done to him. Child, when do you think is the time to love somebody the most: when they done good and make things easy for everbody? Well then, you ain't through learning, because that ain't the time at all. It's when he's at his lowest and can't believe in himself 'cause the world done whipped him so. When you start measuring somebody, measure him right, child, measure him right. Make sure you take into account what hills and valleys he came through before he got to where he is."

There's always something left to love! That's grace!... & that's what that dear woman had a heart of! Mothers understand this and are that's why it is so often their voice that lifts us up.... The voice of encouragement.

I visited with my mother regularly after she was diagnosed with the return of her cancer.

Shortly before her death she said "Mike, you seem like something is troubling you."

I shared with her that work was a little stressful but it was nothing to worry about.

She began to pray for me and continued for 10 or 15 minutes. And when she was done, I did feel like a load had been lifted.

Mother's who have a relationship with Jesus have a godly ability to love even in the midst of their own pain and suffering.

Now men, here is where you come in. You are a better person because of your mom. And You can pass that gift on. Love has no gender.

Bret Harte told a story about the change that took place in a mining camp in California. It started with a rather small but important action and spread. A woman of questionable reputation and the only woman in the camp, died. She left behind a small baby, and the men of the camp had to take care of the baby. The baby was lying in a box but the men felt it was not fit for a baby's crib. So they sent one of their men 80 miles on a mule to Sacramento to get a rosewood cradle.

When the cradle came, the rags in which the baby was sleeping seemed out of place.

So the man was sent back to Sacramento to get some lacy, frilly clothes for the baby.

Once the baby was dressed in the lovely clothes and placed in the rosewood cradle, the men noticed for the first time that the floor was dirty. So they scrubbed it. Then they noticed that the walls and ceiling were unsightly. So they cleaned them. Afterward, they repaired the windows & put drapes on them. And because the baby needed sleep, the men remained quiet & stopped their rough language and rowdy ways.

When the weather permitted, they took the cradle up to the mines. But they discovered the mining area had to be cleaned and flowers planted to make the surroundings lovely and attractive for the baby. Finally, the men began to improve their own personal appearance.

THUS When any of us are willing to act out of that SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY to those coming after us, everything gets changed, life may be made better for those who depend upon us, but they also get better for us who are willing to put love into action. You can not spread love around without getting some of it on you.

Brothers and sisters, in Roaring Camp, the coming of a baby made things right when things were so wrong. And the coming of a baby into our world was the only way to begin making things right in our world, when things had gone so terribly wrong.

How ever far gone you think you are? How ever sinful any of us may occasionally believe ourselves to be, because of Eunice and Lois and millions of women like them over the centuries, believing in Christ, determined to love as he loved, there is hope for every one of us. There's always something left to love.

THE PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

God of all creation, we are ever thankful for the women in our lives: our mothers, grandmothers,

godmothers, church ladies, and aunts. We thank you for teachers and mentors and youth leaders; for scout leaders and Sunday School teachers and choir members. For all the women in our lives who have nurtured us and loved us, strengthened us and sustained us, may we remember and emulate their virtues, even as we dismiss their faults as the human failings common to all of us. Make us worthy of their faithful love and belief in us. In all our relationships may we live the truth of your love for us which knows no bounds.

Buttress their faith and help them to see our children or grandchildren and church children through Your eyes, knowing that the palm of Your hand is the safest place they can ever be. Calm every doubt, and strengthen her confidence in the Only One who can bring good out of any situation.

Teach her that, while she cannot meet every need of her child's life, You can. Give her wisdom and guidance to train the precious children in her home, and in this church to walk in Your ways, and then to leave the results to You, Lord. Help her to love without limitations, to pray without ceasing, and to live without regrets. Bless her with such a sweet dependency on You that she will acknowledge her inadequacies, yet recognize and accept Your reward of praise—and Your sense of pleasure in having her as Your own beloved child.

Where prayers may still seem unanswered, and dreams are not yet realized, open her eyes to see beyond this world to a Hope that never disappoints, and to a Father who will never leave or abandon her. Give her courage to persevere even in the most difficult moments of her life. Bless her with honesty, integrity, and a playfulness that shows her children she is human, yet unswerving in her desire know You.

Let her joy be contagious; let her passion be pure; and let her life overflow with all the blessings she deserves—on special days like this, and on every day of her life.

We pray in the name of the Him who taught us what a life of love looks like, 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, "Faith of Our Mothers", printed in our bulletins.

*HYMN OF DEDICATION

"Faith of Our Mothers"

Faith of our mothers, living still in cradle song and bedtime prayer;
In nursery lore and fireside love, Thy presence still pervades the air:
Faith of our mothers, living faith! We will be true to thee to death.

Faith of our mothers, loving faith; fount of our childhood's trust & grace,
Oh, may thy consecration prove source of a finer, nobler race:
Faith of our mothers, loving faith, we will be true to thee till death.

Faith of our mothers, guiding faith, for youthful longing, youthful doubt,
How blurred our vision, blind our way, Thy providential care without:
Faith of our mothers, guiding faith, we will be true to thee till death.

Faith of our mothers, Christian faith, is truth beyond our stumbling creeds,
Still serve the home & save the Church, & breathe thy spirit through our deeds:
Faith of our mothers, Christian faith! We will be true to thee till death.

*THE BENEDICTION

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

"Blest Be the Tie That Binds"

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.

*POSTLUDE

Dr. Elizabeth Davis