

Worship Service from First Presbyterian Church of Magnolia

Sunday, June 12th, 2016

The liturgist should retrieve the supply preacher's honorarium check from the liturgist's box in the office. The liturgist should locate the guest preacher, Mr. Chuck Morgan, give him his honorarium and answer any questions he might have. At 10:45am, the liturgist and preacher will enter and take their seats. The liturgist will then step to the lectern, welcome everyone, 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."

The liturgist will take a seat.

PRELUDE

"Dialogue" - François Couperin

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 8 and printed in our bulletins?"

CALL TO WORSHIP

(adapted from Psalm 8)

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark to silence the enemy.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established;

What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.

You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Let us worship God beginning with prayer...

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Let us pray... Lord Jesus, we come as children, aware of our weaknesses and in need of your strength, asking you to gather us into your arms and to bless us. Draw us close and make the peace for which we long a reality in our lives. Help us to walk in love and acceptance through all our days, knowing that our times are in your hands. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Would all of you who are able please stand with me and join in singing our opening hymn, "All Things Bright and Beautiful", hymn number 267 in our Hymnals..

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

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

"All Things Bright and Beautiful"

The Hymnal #267

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

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will show us His grace, forgive us our sins, and remember our transgressions no more. In penitence and faith, let us confess our sins before God and one another, praying together the prayer of confession as it is printed in our bulletins and pausing at its conclusion for a moment of silent prayer. Let us pray...

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Our Father, you have made us and named us to be your children, and you love us with an everlasting love; but we are wayward and willful, following our own desires, unfaithful to the covenants by which we are joined to you and others. Forgive us for those times when we have ignored you; the times when we have acted as if we could do all things by ourselves. Pardon us for thinking we are more mature than we are, wiser than our experience would prove, and more independent than is good for us. Forgive us and welcome us into your graceful embrace that we may grow more like you each day. Amen.

*SILENT CONFESSION (*Pause for about 30 seconds of silence.*)

*THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The proof of God's amazing love is this... while we were still sinners, Christ died for 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

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 Ms. Karen."

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 front, the liturgist will step to the lectern & say,

Once more, let all those who are able, stand and join in singing our second hymn, "I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry", #2015 in our *Sing the Faith* hymnal supplements.

*HYMN OF PREPARATION "I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry" *Sing the Faith #2015*

After the hymn, the Liturgist will return to the lectern and say,

THE INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Please be seated. ... All of us, and all we own, come from God, the giver of every good and perfect gift. Let us demonstrate the depth of our gratitude as we give thanks to God for his many blessings and continue our worship with the presentation of our tithes and offerings....

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

Offertory

"Elevation" - François Couperin

Dr. Elizabeth Davis

*Doxology

The Hymnal #592

After the Doxology, the liturgist will return to the lectern and say...

Let us pray... In grateful appreciation of the gift of life, and all that adds to our enjoyment of that gift, we dedicate these offerings to proclaim you good news. As sisters and brothers of Jesus, we recognize the whole human family as flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. May these offerings help unite us in your service. 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 then take a seat.

SPECIAL MUSIC

“The Beatitudes”

Joanna Smith, soprano

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

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our first lesson for this morning is taken from Deuteronomy, the eleventh chapter, beginning with the thirteenth verse. I will be reading from the New International Version, but you are invited to follow along on page #162 in your pew bibles.

Listen now for the word of God...

¹³ So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul— ¹⁴ then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and olive oil. ¹⁵ I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.

¹⁸ Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ¹⁹ Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ²⁰ Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates, ²¹ so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

The liturgist will return to his seat either on the chancel or with his family and friends in the congregation.

Thanks so much for your help!

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

Our second reading this morning is taken from the Gospel of Mark, the tenth chapter, beginning with the thirteenth verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page #877 in your pew bibles.

Listen once more for the word of God...

¹³ People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” ¹⁶ And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

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

People: Thanks be to God.

THE SERMON

“Learning from Our Children”

Mr. Chuck Morgan

In our Gospel lesson, the disciples were neither boorish nor ungracious in their refusal to let children approach Jesus. They simply wanted to spare Jesus any unnecessary stress. Jesus had told them of the fate that awaited him in Jerusalem, and they knew the tension under which Jesus labored. The disciples didn’t want him bothered, and couldn’t imagine why he might want the children about him at such a time. But Jesus rebuked them saying, "**Let the children come to me.**"

It says a great deal about Jesus that in spite of the tragedy ahead, he could still smile easily and laugh joyously.

What was it that Jesus needed from the children at that moment?

What do we adults need from them? What can we learn?

- (1) **Humility.** A small child has not yet learned to think in terms of place and pride and prestige. He has not yet learned to discover the importance of himself.
- (2) **Obedience.** Children have not yet learned the pride and the false independence which separates us from one another and from God.
- (3) **Trust.** This is seen in two things:
 - (a) **It is seen in the child's acceptance of authority.** There is a time when every

child thinks his mom and dad and teachers know everything. They are endlessly inquisitive and seek answers to their infinite supply of questions, hungry for knowledge. Adults on the other hand find it easy to grow complacent in their own ignorance, telling themselves they if they don't know it they don't need it, and if they don't need it, they don't need to know it. Why learn to program my DVR if I can get my grandchild to do it for me?

- (b) **It is seen in the child's confidence in other people.** A child expects good and kindness from every one. A great man once said that the greatest compliment ever paid him was when a little boy came up to him, a complete stranger, and asked him to tie his shoelace. Sometimes that trust will lead him into danger, but that fact makes child's trust no less beautiful.
- (4) **The child has a short memory.** He has not yet learned to bear grudges and nourish bitterness. Even when he is unjustly treated --- he forgets, and forgets so completely that he does not even need to forgive. Indeed, such is the Kingdom of God.
- (5) **The child has not lost the sense of awe.** As we grow older we begin to live in a world which has grown grey and tired. The child lives in a world with a sheen on it in which God is always near and new discoveries are still to be found around every corner.

The truth is this simple --- kids receive the world with open arms. The word *receive* means "to welcome." Hands up and arms outstretched --- that's a picture of kids. Jesus will allude to the innocence and humility of children, but the accent here is on their posture of dependence and willingness to receive and believe.

Unfortunately for us parents (and other adults), children are like sponges, always soaking up and storing whatever they see, and hear, and experience. There is a story is about some children who were playing in the backyard. Every few minutes they would stop what they were doing and whisper to each other. Their mother was watching them and she said to them: **"What are you children doing?"** They said: **"We are playing church."** Mom said: **"Well, you are not supposed to whisper in church."** One of the children responded: **"It's O.K. Mom, we're in the choir!"**

Children celebrate Life.

They have the excitement,

zest, energy, enthusiasm, eagerness, delight ---

whatever we may want to call it ---

this special ability to celebrate life

that is so characteristic of children ---

and it is a great Christian quality.

Unfortunately, some folks lose that as they grow older. Robert Fulghum, who wrote the best-seller *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, tells in that book about visiting college campuses where people are at the end of the formal education process. He compared them with children in kindergarten, at the beginning of the education process. He writes:

"You go to a kindergarten class and ask, 'How many of you can draw?' ... and every hand will go up. They all can draw. You ask them, 'What can you draw?' ... and they say, 'Anything! You name it, we'll draw it for you.'

You ask them, 'How many of you can sing?' ... and all hands go up again. Of course we can sing.

'What can you sing?' 'We'll sing anything.' 'What if you don't know the words?' 'No matter. We'll make up the words.'

'How many of you can dance?' All the hands go up. 'What kind of music do you like to dance to?' 'It doesn't matter, any kind. Let's dance.' Right here? (Right now?) 'Sure why not?'

Their answer to anything you ask them to do is 'Yes.' Children are confident in spirit, eager to learn and they believe that everything is still possible for them.

But, Fulghum said if you go ask a college audience the same questions:

Can you draw?

Can you sing?

Can you dance? ---

only the smallest percentage of hands will go up ---

and even those will qualify their answer.

Why these limitations? Why are they so guarded? What happened between kindergarten and college?

They no longer see the world through the eyes of a child. The world is no longer new. It's so sad to see people become so beaten down by life

that they give up and give in

to bitterness and cynicism and crabbiness.

But on the other hand, it is so beautiful to see people who live many, many years and never lose their zest and vitality and enthusiasm for life. That is what Jesus gives us-- new life, a new spirit, a new heart, a new birth. Growing up is mandatory, but growing old is optional.

Children know how to believe. For example a little boy was told he could not go to the family picnic on Sunday because he had been "naughty." But along about Saturday his mother relented and told him he could go after all. "**It's too late,**" was his reply, "**I have already prayed for rain.**" In order to enter heaven, we must come by crawling into the kingdom as would a child.

Children are not the church of tomorrow --- **they are the church of today!**

The gospel of Jesus Christ is for our children! Acts 2:29 reminds us that "**The promise is for you and your children**". It always has been. Children always have been, and are, a vital part of God's covenant plan for his world.

Why was Jesus upset with the disciples' refusal to allow the children to come to him? The answer is that Jesus was troubled by his disciples' behavior for two reasons. First, it indicates that they do not understand the importance of the need for children to come to the Savior. And second, first century children had no value in the eyes of the world. They were viewed by everyone as the least. If Jesus could welcome them, make time for them, bless them-- then he might also welcome, make time for, and bless **me**. To make room for a child in the Kingdom, is to allow for the possibility that Jesus has made room for you.

The gospel of Jesus Christ always exists on the edge of extinction. It is always just one generation away from disappearing from the face of the earth. To kill the message of Jesus in your family, all you have to do is to keep it to yourself.

We don't have to be biblical scholars, or apologists, or theologians-- just witnesses. We have been called just to tell the things that we have seen Christ do in our lives.

From ancient times, the primary duty for evangelizing children has belonged to their parents. Parents dare not abdicate that responsibility to the church, the Sunday School teacher, the youth worker, or any other person. As they grow into ever higher levels of understanding, we are charged simply with introducing them to Jesus by word and by example, so that he can lead them to make the right choice between love and hate, life and death, heaven and hell.

And in this process, our children teach us just as much as we teach them. They remind us of what real trust looks like, of the peace that comes from a restoration of our lost innocence, and of the benefits of forgiving others. After all, for us to receive the kingdom of God, we adults must become like them.

This upside-down world we live in keeps pushing its children to act more like adults, but here

Jesus tells adults that they must come to see the world through the eyes of children. What does that mean? When adults look at a dandelion patch, we see a bunch of weeds that threaten to take over our yard. Children see flowers for Mom and white fluff you can blow away after you make a wish. We need to see the flowers again. We need to see our old world through their new eyes.

We need to smile more, sing more, dance more, and listen ever more closely so that we might hear the glad song of praise that all Creation sings to the Creator.

Childhood is difficult, fraught with peril, and full of hurt.

Childhood is the time of our lives when we are most fragile,
most vulnerable, most at-risk.

This was as true for the children Jesus scooped up into his arms

--- as it is for the children of today,
who daily run the world's gauntlet of cruelty and abuse.

Nevertheless, Jesus insists, it's those who are like children that will inhabit the kingdom of God.
For those who can see promise and possibilities,

instead of simply predicaments and problems;
who can find beauty in the midst of decay;
who can envision peace while bullets fly;
who can hear a symphony within the din of discord;
the kingdom of God lies at hand.

There will be no grownups in heaven. You must become as child.

Have you entrusted your little ones to Christ?

How do you do that?

By prayer, and as we learn in Deuteronomy 6,
by living your faith every day.

This is not hocus pocus religion

where an incantation or a touch by a holy man can bring salvation.

It is the faith of a parent or a loved one that says,

**I will bring this child to Jesus in baptism and in prayer,
as I hold him, as I rear him.**

As I teach him-- and as he teaches me.

Amen & Amen

PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

[The content of the Pastoral Prayer was not supplied]

... 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.

The guest preacher will introduce the final hymn saying....

"Let all of us who are able, stand and join in one voice to sing our closing hymn, "Jesus Loves Me", #304 in our *Hymnals*.

*HYMN OF DEDICATION

"Jesus Loves Me"

The Hymnal #304

*THE BLESSING

*THE CONGREGATIONAL 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