

Worship Service- July 3rd, 2016

The liturgist and pastor will meet in the hall outside the choir room 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 these announcements....

The preacher will then ask...

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

The preacher will take a seat.

PRELUDE

"God of Our Fathers" - Lani Smith

Dr. Elizabeth Davis

After the Prelude, the liturgist will step to the pulpit & say...

“Would you join me in reading responsively our call to worship, adapted from Psalm 33 and printed in our bulletins.”

CALL TO WORSHIP

(adapted from Psalm 33)

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous and sing to him a new song.

The Lord loves righteousness and justice and the earth is full of His steadfast love.

Let all the earth fear the Lord and all people stand in awe of him.

The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing and frustrates the plans of the peoples.

The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage.

A king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.

The war horse is a vain hope for victory, and by its great might it cannot save.

Truly the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love.

Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and shield.

Our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name.

Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.

Let us worship God beginning with prayer...

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Let us pray... O Lord, our God, your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Give us grace to receive your truth in faith and love, that we may be obedient to your will and live always for your glory; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

“Would all of you who are able, please stand and join in singing “Lift Every Voice and Sing”, #565 in *The Hymnal*.

*HYMN OF PRAISE

“Lift Every Voice and Sing”

The Hymnal #565

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

*CALL TO CONFESSION

The proof of God's amazing love is this: While we were sinners Christ died for us. Because we have faith in him, we dare to approach God with confidence. In faith and penitence, let us confess our sin before God and one another, praying together the prayer of confession printed in our bulletins. Let us pray....

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(In Unison)

Merciful God, in your gracious presence we confess our sin & the sin of this world. Although Christ is among us as our peace, we are a people divided against ourselves as we cling to the values of a broken world. The profit and pleasures we pursue lay waste the land and pollute the seas. The fears and jealousies that we harbor set neighbor against neighbor and nation against nation. We abuse your good gifts of imagination and freedom, of intellect & reason, and have turned them into bonds of oppression. Lord, have mercy upon us; heal and forgive us. Set us free to serve you in the world as agents of your reconciling love in Jesus Christ. Amen.

*SILENT CONFESSION

(pause for about 30 seconds of silence)

*THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. I declare to you, in the name of Jesus

Christ, you are forgiven. May the God of mercy, who forgives you all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. 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

God, through Christ, has reconciled us to himself and entrusted us with the ministry of reconciliation so let us 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 return to the lectern and say...

“Please be seated. At this time I want to invite all of our younger friends to come forward to the front pew for a message from the Lord prepared just for them by Ms. Karen.”

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

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Freely you have received, freely give. Let us return to God the offerings of our life and the gifts of the earth as we continue our worship with the presentation of our tithes and offerings...

Take your seat for the offertory.

THE OFFERTORY

"America the Beautiful" - Charles Callahan

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 pulpit and say...

*OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray... Blessed are you, God of all creation; through your goodness we have these gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. Blessed be God forever. Amen.

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...

*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.

The liturgist will invite the congregation to... “Be seated,” and then take his seat.

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Celtic Communion”

Joanna Smith, Soprano

As the soloist leaves the lectern, the liturgist will step to the lectern & say...

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our first lesson this morning is taken from the ninth chapter of the the Gospel of Luke, beginning with the fifty-seventh verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page

#901 in your pew bibles. Listen now for the Word of God. . . .

"As they were going along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."

And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head."

To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

But he said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home."

Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow & looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

The liturgist will return to his seat.

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

Our second lesson for this morning are selected verses taken from Paul's Letter to the Galatians, the fifth chapter, beginning at the first verse. You can find the passage on page 1015 in your pew bibles. Listen once more for the Word of God. . . .

"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.... For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law.

Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Our thanks be to God!

THE SERMON

"The Myth of Self-Service"

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights-that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

When Thomas Jefferson listed the "pursuit of happiness" as one of humanity's "inalienable rights," perhaps he should have called it more accurately an "unattainable reach." Pursuing happiness, focusing solely on the self and its personal pleasures, will never bring genuine joy or the fulfilling happiness of peace. When we pursue happiness for the self, it is like looking for the ending point of a rainbow -- as soon as you think you've reached its end, your perspective changes, and the rainbow's end has moved again.

Self-serving is a myth! It is an oxymoron! And if that is what we use our gifts for, we will come up empty. Only when offering ourselves in sacrificial service for others will we run headlong into the "happiness" we pursue. The movement of the Christian life is from self-centeredness to centeredness in God.

Three thousand years before Thomas Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence, the Hebrew people suffered under bondage in Egypt. They yearned for freedom. God sent a man named

Moses who demanded of Pharaoh, "Let my people go!" When Pharaoh refused, God delivered.

A thousand years later, the people were again oppressed, both by the tyranny of the Roman Empire and by the powers and principalities of the world, and God sent a man named Jesus. He announced in his inaugural sermon that he had been anointed by the Holy Spirit "to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives. . .to let the oppressed go free."

And finally, when it had become apparent that mankind was his own worst enemy, and that his devotion to self had permanently enslaved him to sin, Jesus would say, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. . .so if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."

Freedom is an idea that originates in the very heart of God.

But Paul's letter to the Galatians indicates that the church was divided. There were those who believed that freedom meant license to do whatever you pleased and those who thought it imperative to adhere to the requirements of religious ritual, the most significant of which was circumcision.

Paul was passionately convinced that observing the ritual or not observing it really was of no consequence. According to Paul, "The only thing that counts is faith working through love."

Just as each generation of Americans must learn anew what our Pledge of Allegiance maintains--that civil liberty is a function of fidelity to justice, so each generation of Jesus' followers must learn anew that Christian liberty is a function of fidelity to the law of love.

The great 20th-century religious thinker Reinhold Niebuhr put it this way: "Basically love means . . . being responsible-- responsible to our family, toward our civilization, and now by the pressures of history, toward the universe of humankind."

To be free really means to be liberated from the prison of "me, myself, and I". To be truly free is to be able to move beyond the self and, as one who is wise has put it, to move into the risk of love and to give oneself to the demand of service. To be free is to be free **for** responsibility, not **from** responsibility.

Christ had everything in the world going for himself--power, status, safety-- and yet he chose freely to empty himself and take on the form of a servant for the sake of the world. Now that is freedom.

The Fourth of July is a good time to celebrate the paradox at the center of the Christian faith: We are most free when we are most bonded. Through Jesus Christ's supreme example of freedom in service, we all become the most free when we bind ourselves to Christ. That is why Jesus has been called "omnipotence in bonds." He freely divested himself of his divinity so that he could make the ultimate sacrifice for our sake and for our freedom. Understanding this principle led St. Francis of Assisi to pray:

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life. Amen.

Learned Hand was one of our country's most outstanding jurists. He once asked himself, "What is the spirit of liberty?"

In answer, he wrote these eloquent words:

The spirit of liberty is the spirit which seeks to understand the minds of other men and

women. . . It weighs their interests alongside its own, it remembers that not even a sparrow falls to earth unheeded. . . The spirit of liberty is the spirit of Him who, 2,000 years ago, taught humanity a lesson it has never learned, but has never quite forgotten: that there may be a kingdom where the least shall be heard and considered side by side with the greatest.

Sisters and brothers in Christ, may our pledge of allegiance this day be to that kind of kingdom on earth, as it is in heaven.

THE PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray. . . Awesome and gracious God, mold us into a more holy and helpful form; build us into a house of faith and freedom.

Make our foundation from the memories of your steadfast love woven through history -- do not let us forget how you have freed the oppressed, healed our wounds, set our feet on the narrow path, planted the stories of faith in our bones.

Make our walls of integrity and justice -- that we may ever stand tall and firm for truth and freedom.

Make our roof from the assurance that you hover over us to guide and to bless and that you long to shelter all your creation from the stormy blast and the terrors of night.

May our windows and doors be avenues to the Spirit, who brings light and truth.

Awesome and gracious God, build us into a household of hospitality and mission willing to embrace both love and law as you direct.

Remembering your gracious acts in Jesus Christ, we take from your creation this bread and this wine and joyfully celebrate his dying and rising. With thanksgiving, we offer our very selves to you to be a living and holy sacrifice, taking your yoke joyfully upon ourselves. So equip us through Word and Sacrament that we may not fail you or ourselves as we labor to spread your Good News and share your love, 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 SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Invitation

Every good and perfect gift comes from above. Peace, joy, love, and faith are not manufactured by our efforts, but were purchased at the cross for us by our Savior. He came not to meet the needs of the self-satisfied, but to fill the cups of the thirsty to overflowing with living water, and to satisfy the hungry with the bread of life. We do not deserve this gift, but it is no less ours as his free gift. So all who are hungry or thirsty, all who are weak or broken, all who are cast down or despairing, our Lord says, "Come. Take all that you need born of my love which will never forsake you."

The Words of Institution

On the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord took bread, and after he had give thanks, he broke it & gave it to his disciples saying: "Take, eat. This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In like fashion after they had eaten, he took the cup. After he had given thanks he gave it to his disciples saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, drink ye all of it."

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again in final victory.

The Distribution of the Elements

The Prayer After Receiving

Let us pray... Lord Jesus, thank you for filling us with joy and strengthening us for the tasks ahead through the meal we have shared at your table. Help us always to remember what you have done for us, that we may love and serve others in your name. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant

us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let all of us who are able stand and join in one voice to sing, "Make Me a Captive Lord", verses 1, 2, 4, and 5) of hymn #378 in our *Hymnals*.

*HYMN OF DEDICATION "Make Me a Captive Lord" (vss. 1,2,4, & 5) *The Hymnal #378*

*THE BLESSING

*THE CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE "Go, My Children, Fed and Nourished"

Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me;

Grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.

Here my Spirit's power filled you, Here His tender comfort stilled you;

Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.

*POSTLUDE

Dr. Elizabeth Davis