

## Worship Service- August 6th, 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 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

**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 40 and printed in our bulletins.”*

### CALL TO WORSHIP

(adapted from Psalm 40)

When I waited patiently for the Lord, he inclined to me and heard my cry.

**He drew me up from the desolate pit and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.**

He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.

**Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.**

I have not hidden your saving help within my heart,

**I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;**

I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation.

**Let your steadfast love and faithfulness keep me safe forever.**

May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you;

**May those who love your salvation say continually, “Great is the Lord!”**

As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me.

**You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God.**

Let us worship God beginning with prayer...

### PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Let us pray... Our Father, you shelter your people amid their distress. You provide them with with a haven of security and rest. You comfort the afflicted, and rescue the persecuted. Your mercy flows like living water and your righteousness like a rolling stream. Your steadfast love and mercy extend to the ends of the earth. Through a fresh hearing of your Word and outpouring of your Holy Spirit, remind us of your faithfulness that has provided for the needs of your people from generation. Then may we trust you with our hearts and souls as you deserve and remain faithful to the covenant you have made with us through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

“Would all of you who are able, please stand and join in singing “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”, #464 in *The Hymnal*.

\*HYMN OF PRAISE

“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”

*The Hymnal* #464

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

### \*CALL TO CONFESSION

We have spent our money for that which is not bread and our labor for that which cannot satisfy. Even though we have bartered our birthright for that which yields only temporary relief, our Father welcomes all who will bring their hungers and thirsts to Him, admitting our faults and confessing our sins. Let us pray together the prayer of confession as it is printed in our bulletins, pausing at its end for a time of silent prayer. Let us pray...

\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(In Unison)

Lord, you are the giver of every good gift and have always provided for our needs. But our desire for what we do not have overwhelms our memory of your unfailing providence and leads us to cheat others out of what is precious and to waste the priceless things entrusted to us. We give you thanks that you remain ever faithful even when we are faithless. Teach us to wait on your provision and to trust in the abundance of your grace so that we may experience your peace and joyfully share all that we have with those whose need is greater, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

\*SILENT CONFESSION

*(pause for about 30 seconds of silence)*

**\*THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

While we were still weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. If while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, how much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by Christ's 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**

As we have turned from our paths of unrighteousness, may the God who has granted us His pardon also bring calm to our troubled souls. 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...*

“At this time I want to invite all of our younger friends to come forward for a message from the Lord prepared just for them by Pastor Mike.”

*The liturgist will take a seat until the children begin to depart.*

**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.***

Today's text offers an opportunity to tell the story of Jacob and Esau and also to play Let's Make a Deal. Give all the children something they can eat, or a small prize, but then offer them something else if they will give up their first treat. After each offer, see how all the children make their choice. Following this exercise, remind the kids that Esau made a decision that he regretted for a very long time, and that every time we make a decision we need to think carefully.

**SPECIAL MUSIC**

*As the soloist leaves the lectern, the Liturgist will step to the microphone and say...*

**INVITATION TO THE OFFERING**

As we have the opportunity, let us do good unto all people, especially unto those who are among the household of faith. So let every one of us give as we have determined in our heart; not grudgingly, or of necessity, but with gladness and generosity of heart; for God loves a cheerful giver. Let us continue our worship with the presentation of our tithes & offerings...

*Take your seat for the offertory.*

**THE OFFERTORY**

**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... O God, you have warned repeatedly that those to whom much is given, much will be expected. So grant that those of us who have received such a bountiful heritage may strive all the more to extend to others a share of the birthright we have received. Accept these offerings we bring as a token of our love for You and loyalty to Your Church. Follow them with your blessing that they may be used to bring glory to the Name of Him who died for us. 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.**

*Say to the congregation...* “While we remain standing, let us sing our next hymn, “Be Thou My Vision”, #339 in the *Hymnal*.

\*HYMN OF PREPARATION

“Be Thou My Vision”

*The Hymnal* #339

*After the hymn, the liturgist will invite the congregation to... “Be seated,” and then say..*

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our first lesson this morning is taken from the eighth chapter of Paul’s Letter to the Romans, beginning at the first verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page 982 in your pew bibles. Listen now for the word of God...

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin,<sup>[a]</sup> he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

*The liturgist will return to his seat on the chancel. The preacher will step into the pulpit & say...*

Our sermon text today is found in the twenty-fifth chapter of Genesis, beginning at the twenty-ninth verse. You can find this passage on page 20 in your pew bibles. Listen once more for the word of God.

Once when Jacob was boiling pottage, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. And Esau said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red pottage, for I am famished!” (Therefore his name was called Edom.)

Jacob said, “First sell me your birthright.”

Esau said, “I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?”

Jacob said, “Swear to me first.”

So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Our thanks be to God!**

## THE SERMON

“Selling Our Birthright”

The passage from today’s story in Genesis is a tale of failure on the part of two brothers to recognize the true value of the things entrusted to them.

Let’s start first with Jacob, the Grasper. God had already told his parents that contrary to tradition, this was to be the truly blessed child, that he would raise up whole kingdoms from his descendants, and that the older would serve the younger. Yet, unwillingly to trust God to deliver on this promise, Jacob and his mother, Rebekah, begin immediately with their scheming, manipulating, and planning to wrest themselves the birthright and blessing for the younger, Jacob, and away from the older brother, Esau. His mistake was in believing that because it was God’s will, anything he did to advance that was acceptable. The end would justify his means.

That having been said, Esau is no prize either. He is not the son who stays home and takes care of the family business, tending the flocks, dealing with the passing caravans, keeping the books, and looking after his elderly parents. No, taking care of business, falls to Jacob, the son, who simply because of the order of his birth, is destined to receive but a single share of the family estate. Esau is not prepared to take over the

business when his dad passes on. He hates business. He prefers spending time in the woods everyday, challenging himself, providing for himself with his own hunting prowess. He doesn't really need an estate anyway-- he can take care of himself. He didn't need the game, he had sheep and goats at home that he could eat. So it is no small irony that he lost what was most valuable, his birthright, because he had indulged himself in hunting to the exclusion of taking care of more important matters. His great sin, was in failing to connect privilege with responsibility.

Because he didn't spend time with the business, he didn't know how valuable and important to his future it was. So he traded his privilege for pottage.

Bad choices didn't end with Esau. They go on today. We miss church, fail to read our bibles, neglect the habit of prayer, and skip the sacraments, to socialize on Saturdays, or to play golf, or fish, or a thousand other pleasures. We ignore the priceless gift of faith, its care and nurture, in return for momentary pleasures, passing fancies, and even dangerous obsessions.

In his book, *When God Whispers Your Name?*, Max Lucado invites us to sit in the audience and watch the taping of a new hit game show.

"Welcome to What Is Your Price? -- the richest game in history," the host beams. "Someone today will walk out of here with a check for ten million!"

"The beautiful spokesmodel rotates a small drum filled with names, then stops, opens the small hatch on its side, reaches in and pulls out a card, before dutifully handing it to the host. He reads the name on the card, and in that moment, you go from spectator to player. Your kids shriek, your spouse screams, and a thousand eyes watch the beautiful spokesmodel come, take your hand, and walk you to the stage.

"Ever seen ten million dollars?" Asks the pearly toothed host as a curtain opens revealing a bright red wheelbarrow full of money-overflowing with money..

"It can all be yours. The choice is up to you. The only question you have to answer is, he pauses a moment so the audience can join in, 'What's your price?'"

Behind you a second curtain opens, revealing something like an electronic billboard. "What are you willing to give?" Is written on the top. The host explains the rules. "All you have to do is agree to one condition and you will receive the money."

"Ten million dollars!" You whisper to yourself.

You could be quite the benefactor with such a sum. Help a few orphanages. Feed a few nations. Build some church buildings. Put the kids through college. Suddenly you understand. This is the opportunity of a lifetime.

"Take your pick. Just choose one option and the money is yours.

A deep voice from another microphone begins reading the list.

"Put your children up for adoption."

"Become a prostitute for a year."

"Give up your American citizenship."

"Abandon your church."

"Abandon your family."

"Kill a stranger."

"Have a sex-change operation."

"Leave your spouse."

"Change your race."

"That's the list," the host proclaims-- **"Now make your choice."**

The decision is yours. No one can tell you what to pick.

I can tell you what others would do. In a national survey that asked the same question, many said what they would do. Seven percent of those who answered would murder for the money. Six percent would change their race. Four percent would change their sex.

25 percent would abandon their family. 25 percent would abandon their church. 23 percent would become a prostitute for a week. 16 percent would give up their American citizenship. 16 percent would leave

their spouse. 3 percent would put their children up for adoption.

Two-thirds would agree to at least one-- some to several-- of the options. The majority, in other words, would not leave the stage empty-handed. They would pay the price to own the wheelbarrow.

What would you do? Or better, what are you doing?

The amount may not have been the same but the choices are. Which makes the question even more disturbing. Some are willing to give up their family, faith, or morals for far less than ten million dollars. Some will trade their family for a bottle. Others their spouses for what they think will be a moment of private pleasure.

Jacob sold his brother's love for a birthright. Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of stew. David committed murder, and bartered away the peace of his family, the security of his kingdom, and his own self-respect so he could sleep with Uriah's wife. Samson traded his sight and his strength for Delilah's charms.

And you--- what have you traded away. What part of your birthright have you neglected to spend an extra hour a day in front of the boob tube? Have you risked the love and admiration of those important to you in exchange for a bottle?... a babe?... Did you trade your tithe for trinkets, your offerings for a mortgage larger than you could afford? Have you traded the joys of heaven and failed to proclaim God's love for you and others in return for the friendship of the world?

"How are we to escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"

Fortunately, we are not the only ones making trades, making choices. God has made a choice. He chose us.

"He has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

One choice or two or three, does not condemn us for all eternity, because of the choice God made for us. If we walk in the light, as his children, our choices will be different. We must look beyond the things of the flesh to those of the Spirit.

I would like to close this morning with a prayer found in the salvaged clothing of a little girl who perished in the gas chambers and was then consumed by the ovens of Ravensbruck. It is especially important for us to remember the depths to which we can fall when we place such high value on the material things and none on the spiritual matters of life. Apparently, the Nazis felt that the only thing about this little girl worth saving was the worn out rags she wore. Still she prayed for her captors and lived out a faith & trust in God which we should all desire for ourselves. This is her prayer...

O Lord, remember not only the men and woman of good will, but also those of ill will. Do not remember all of the suffering they have inflicted upon us: Instead remember the fruits we have borne because of this suffering; our fellowship, our loyalty to one another, our humility, our courage, our generosity, the greatness of heart that has grown from this trouble. When our persecutors come to be judged by you, let all of these fruits that we have borne be their forgiveness.

And may ALL God's people say.... Amen.

#### THE PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, your Word tells us that not even a sparrow falls without your notice. Help us to believe then, O God, that You are concerned not only with the planets in their orbits, but even with each of us, along with our our doubts and perplexities.

We remember all too well the bitter discoveries we have made when we have tried to run our lives our own way, when we have attempted to to steer our own vessel without your guidance. Remove from us the sophistication of our age and the skepticism that has come, like frost, to blight our faith and to make it weak. Bring us back to

a faith that makes our people great and strong,  
a faith that enables us to love and to live,  
the faith by which we are triumphant,  
the faith by which alone we can walk in your ways.

Give to us that faith that we can deposit in the bank of your love, so that we may receive the dividends and interest that you are so willing to give us.

And then grant us a clear light to shine upon our troubled way. Reorient our living at whatever cost to our pride & take away our stubborn self-will. For we know that in your will alone is our peace.

Father, send your Holy Spirit upon us and what we do here, that we and these gifts, may be signs of hope to us and to all the world. Make them for us the body and blood of Christ Jesus, and make us through them the body of Christ in the world. We ask it in his name, praying together as he taught us, 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**

God knows that we are sinners. Yet it is for you that he gave his body and his blood that we might be fed upon the bread of life and drink from the cup of salvation. Allow him to wrap you in his righteousness, to hide your sins beneath his own perfection, and then come. Come to eat your fill and drink deeply of his pardon, for this is his feast and you are invited, not because you are worthy, but because he loves you. He has set a place at His table for you.

### **The Words of Institution**

On the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord took the bread and gave thanks. After he had blessed it, he broke it and 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 and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, poured out for the remission of sins of the one and the many. As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again in final victory. These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

### **The Distribution of the Elements**

#### **The Prayer After Receiving**

Let us pray..... We thank you O God that you did not keep your own Son to yourself, but gave him up for all of us. By this we are sure that you will give us everything else. It is you, O God, who makes all things right and the Spirit who helps us in our weakness; we thank you for the Holy Meal that you spread before us, and for the life that you grant which is stronger than death, and for the love which makes us more than conquerors through him who loved us. May we never again barter away the priceless for the paltry or our eternal blessings for momentary concerns. In the same way, may we never again withhold the things of earth if they can lead anyone to the joys of heaven. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Let all of us who are able stand and join in one voice to sing our closing hymn, "Here, O Our Lord, We See You Face to Face", verses 1, 2 4, & 5 #520 in our *Hymnals*.

### **\*HYMN OF DEDICATION**

*The Hymnal #520*

"Here, O Our Lord, We See You Face to Face" (vss 1, 2, 4, & 5)

### **\*THE BENEDICTION**

Go in peace, knowing that nothing can separate you from the love of God. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ rest upon you; the love of God embrace you; and the presence of the Holy Spirit surprise and encourage you; both now and forevermore. Amen.

### **\*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**