

Sunday, August 27th, 2017

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 liturgist will enter and take his/her seat. The pastor will follow, 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 **"Come, Let Us Sing to the Lord" - Robert Lau** **Dr. Elizabeth Davis**
CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP **"Rejoice in the Day!" - Dan Dykema** **The Choir**

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 138 and printed in our bulletins?”

CALL TO WORSHIP

(adapted from Psalm 138)

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart.

Because of your love and faithfulness, we will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your Name.

For you have glorified your Name and your word above all things.

When we called, you answered us and increased our strength.

All the kings of the earth will praise you, O Lord.

We will sing of the ways of the Lord.

We will shout that great is the glory of the Lord.

Though we walk in the midst of trouble, you keep us safe;

You stretch forth your right hand against my enemies to save me.

The Lord will not abandon the work of his hands.

He will make good his purpose for me;

For His steadfast love endures for ever.

Let us worship God beginning with prayer...

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Let us pray... Holy Lord, as you opened the dim eyes and mind and heart of your disciple Peter to your glory, so we pray that you would open ours. Through your word and Spirit, place in our hands once more the keys to your kingdom, a living faith that bears the fruits of peace, joy, hope, and love in the face of every circumstance. Challenge us to greater faithfulness. Grant us the strength and courage to deny ourselves, to take up our crosses, and to follow Jesus always. Amen.

Would all of you who are able please stand with me and join in singing our opening hymn, “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name!”, number 142 in our Hymnal.

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

***HYMN OF PRAISE** **“All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name!”** *The Hymnal #142*

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

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

We may confess with our lips that Jesus is Lord, but how we live tells a different story. The mistakes we make are due to our failure to make a total commitment to Jesus’ way. In penitence and faith, let us confess our sins before God and one another by praying together the prayer of confession printed in our bulletins, pausing at its conclusion for a brief period of silent prayer. Let us pray...

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

(In Unison)

We confess, O God, that we have not yet decided who you are. We are delighted that you want to be our Savior and bail us out when we get into trouble over our heads. We realize that there are times when we lose our way a bit and could use a shepherd. We confess that we would rather claim that you are on our side, rather than making certain that we are on yours. We want you as a friend, but not if it costs us our other worldly companions. Deliver us from our delusions that you will be our Savior if we refuse

to acknowledge you as Lord. Forgive us for allowing ourselves to be shaped by society, trading peace in our hearts for public approval. Forgive our expedient choices and foolish excuses, that keep us from living the abundant life you offer. Help us to live lives that proclaim you as Lord, with every thought, act, and deed that results from following you. Amen.

*SILENT CONFESSION

Pause for about 30 seconds of silence.

*THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Jesus the Son of God came to us who are sinners that we might know God does not condemn us, but in love sets us free from the burden of our guilt. The gospel we proclaim is one of forgiveness in Christ Jesus that brings new faith, new life, and eternal hope. 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

The promise of God is that all who make a good confession receive His forgiveness. May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 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 Pastor Mike.”

The liturgist will take a seat.

CHILDREN’S SERMON

"Broken is Still Valuable"

(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.***

Object: Crumpled and torn Dollar Bill

Good morning.... I want you to take a look at this dollar bill. It has really been badly treated hasn't it. It is all worn and wrinkled - and it has been torn in half. Suppose you went to the store and tried to use this to buy something. What do you think the cashier would say?

Some people might look at and say - that's no good now. It is in too bad a shape. But most wouldn't - because our Government has made a promise about this dollar bill. Do you know what that promise is??? Their promise is that it keeps it's value no matter what condition it is in. If it is not fit to be used anymore the Government will replace with a brand new one. No matter what has happened to it - as long as you can offer all the pieces to a bank the government promises that it will still be worth five dollars. That is good news to folk who don't always keep good care of their money - it is always worth what it says it's worth - even if it is torn and broken.

Today I want you to think about yourselves and about God. Sometimes we are like this dollar bill. Our lives are a mess. We feel that we are aren't worth anything because of some of things we are done - or because of some of the things that have happened to us.

But it isn't so. We are always valuable, no matter what we look like, or what we have done, or what has happened to us. No matter what condition we are in - God promises that if give ourselves back to him that he will treat us just like those who look perfect - those who are not broken and crumbled. Our prayers will count just as much as theirs - and one day, much as the government does with crumbled and torn money - he will give as a shiny new body and remake our souls so that with Jesus, our brother, we shine like the sun.

Let us pray... Dear Lord God - we thank you for your love. - We thank you that how we look - and how we feel - and what we have done or not done - doesn't change your love for us. - We thank you that

you care for all who come to you - and that you listen to all who call on you - and who trust in you - and do their best to obey you - day by day. Amen.

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, “The Lily of the Valley”, which is printed in our bulletins.

*HYMN OF PREPARATION

“The Lily of the Valley”

I have found a friend in Jesus, He’s everything to me,
He’s the fairest of ten thousand to my soul;
The Lily of the Valley, in Him alone I see
All I need to cleanse and make me fully whole.
In sorrow He’s my comfort, in trouble He’s my stay;
He tells me every care on Him to roll. *[Refrain]*

*He’s the Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star,
He’s the fairest of ten thousand to my soul.*

He all my grief has taken, and all my sorrows borne;
In temptation He’s my strong and mighty tow’r;
I have all for Him forsaken, and all my idols torn
From my heart and now He keeps me by His pow’r.
Though all the world forsake me, and Satan tempt me sore,
Through Jesus I shall safely reach the goal. *[Refrain]*

He will never, never leave me, nor yet forsake me here,
While I live by faith and do His blessed will;
A wall of fire about me, I’ve nothing now to fear,
From His manna He my hungry soul shall fill.
Then sweeping up to glory to see His blessed face,
Where rivers of delight shall ever roll. *[Refrain]*

After the hymn, the liturgist will return to the pulpit and say,

THE INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Please be seated. . . We are invited to give with generosity, to minister in caring ways, to lead with diligence, to teach with wisdom and enthusiasm. We cannot be all things to all people, but we can give from the many gifts of which we have been given by God and do our best to live up to our call. 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

"The Lord Is My Shepherd" - Robert Lau

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... Lord Jesus, your words and ways have always run counter to the popular religion of the day, yet you have continued to heal, to advocate justice, to feed the hungry. We make this offering that your works of mercy may continue among the poor, the oppressed, and the needy. Receive and bless the little we bring so that our own commitment to you may be increased and that your love may be made real to all, through Christ our Lord. 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.

THE ANTHEM

The Choir

"Sing to the Lord a New Song" - Kenneth T. Kosche

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

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our first lesson this morning is taken from the twelfth 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 986 in your pew bibles. Listen now for the word of God...

“I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

The liturgist will return to his seat.

The preacher will step into the pulpit & say...

Our sermon text today is taken from the sixteenth chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, beginning at the thirteenth verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page #850 in your pew bibles.

Listen once more for the word of God...

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?"

And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Eli'jah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

And Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you."

But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men."

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

THE SERMON

“Who Do YOU Say Jesus Is?”

Identity is crucial to our existence. A whole underground industry has grown up around folks whose soul purpose it is to steal identities.

Jesus has come to the point in his ministry where he is no longer moving away from Jerusalem, but toward it. He is moving out of the preaching, teaching, and healing mode, and into the dying mode.

At this point, there have been little flashes of recognition in the minds of his disciples. When he stilled the wind and waves, the disciples had a lightning flash of recognition as together they said to Jesus as they worshipped him, "Truly, you are the Son of God!"

But their memories are short as in this passage, when Peter tells him with one breath that he is "the Messiah, the Son of the Living God," and with the next he is correcting God, and presumptuously telling his newly recognized God, that he doesn't know what he is talking about, that there is absolutely no reason for him to die!

Peter reminds me of the story of the drunk guy walking down the street who, upon seeing a nun in her habit approaching him on the sidewalk, suddenly runs up to her, socks her on the chin knocking her flat on her back on the sidewalk. As he stands over her supine form, he puffs out his chest, put his fists on his hips, looks down at the poor woman and says, "You don't look so tough now, do you, Batman!?"

There is nothing more important in the life of a Christian than getting the answer right to Jesus' question, "Who do you say that I am?"

What do you want to be when you grow up?

What do you want to do with your life?

Will you go to the dance with me?

Will you marry me?

Will you love, honor, and cherish her forever?

What would you think if I told you I was pregnant?

Yep. There will be lots of other important questions. But the grandest of them all of them is an anthill compared to the Everest that Jesus asks his disciples here.

Who do you say that I am?

He doesn't ask, "What do you think about what I've done." He asks, "Who do you say that I am."

He doesn't ask "who do your friends think? . . . Who do your parent think? . . . Who do your peers think?" He poses instead a starkly personal query, "Who do you think I am?" . . .

The crowds today say all kinds of things about who Jesus is or was. Many people know very little about him and his name crosses their lips merely as a swear word. Some know a little about him – things they have gleaned from the remaining trappings of institutional Christianity in modern culture – a nativity scene on the courthouse lawn, a few lines from a hymn. Some of them can even tell you that Easter is that day when Jesus, after he he had been executed by the Romans, was placed in a rock tomb, and on the third day he rise from the dead and leaves the tomb--- and if he sees his shadow we're going to have 6 more weeks of winter.

Our culture doesn't like discussing Jesus, unless, of course, it is to attack their latest public witness of his modern disciples' faith. They certainly wouldn't claim to know Jesus – much less have a relationship with him. And so Jesus turns from the views of the crowd, and asks his disciples, in the plural: "But what about you? Who do you say I am?"

Jesus makes it personal. I hear what the crowds are saying. But what about you?

You know what your husband is saying. You know what your parents believe. You see people around you at church with faith and, they say, a relationship with Jesus.

But what about you? What is your response to Jesus? There are no second - hand, second - generation Christians. There are no grandchildren of God. It is personal. It is between you and God. You cannot live off someone else's faith or someone else's experience. You can't float along in some vague meandering sense of God in the river of religion.

What about you? Who do you say that Jesus is?

You can almost sense Jesus' piercing eyes as he looks these disciples in the eyes and fixes them with his gaze. You can have a head knowledge of what the crowds believe. You can study religion and faith. But the day comes when you are faced with a decision as to how it affects you and what your personal response will be.

And that decision – and it is a decision – has eternal consequences, if Jesus is who he says he is,

and the consequences of knowing him or not knowing him or what Jesus says they are. Peter, ever the spokesman, responds on behalf of the disciples: "The Christ of God."

Peter had seen enough, heard enough, experienced enough, to make this huge statement: "You are the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One of God that we have been waiting for."

This profession of Christ is what we are all invited to do.

It doesn't matter what the crowds say. Crowds are so often wrong. I confess: "You are the Christ of God".

The people are longing for, waiting for, a Messiah who will save them from Communists, fascists, or even that other political party. Jesus explains to his disciples something that they do not yet fully understand: He has come to suffer, and be rejected, to be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

All of this will be revealed in good time. Slowly Jesus is revealing himself. His true nature. His true intent. Slowly it is becoming clearer to his followers who he really is. But they do not yet grasp what is in it for the Christian. What is the payoff for rejecting what the world offers?

It is like this with us! We don't fully grasp who Jesus is or what he has done. We are still learning more about Jesus – we don't yet have the full picture. And we don't understand any reasonable motivation for such counter-intuitive choices.

Here it is--- the payoff is not money, nor power, nor influence. To the contrary, we will be inviting the surrender of possessions and place, while inviting persecution, and scorn from people we used to think were our friends. cache of Christianity is Christ.

The Fort Knox of faith is Christ. Fellowship with him. Walking with him. Pondering him. Exploring him. The heart-stopping realization that in him you are part of something ancient, endless, unstoppable, and unfathomable. And that the King of the Universe thinks you're worth his death on Roman timber. Christ is the reward of Christianity. Why else would Paul make him his supreme desire? "I want to know Christ" (Phil. 3:10 NCV).

Do you desire the same? You will be amazed. More importantly, you will be changed because as we follow, as we watch him, as we behold him, we become like him. As Paul writes: "We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18).

I experienced this principle firsthand when an opera singer visited a church I attended as a student in Austin. I had no way of knowing that he was a professional baritone and sang in opera houses all over the country. I didn't know he had spent most of a lifetime training his voice. You couldn't have known by his corduroy coat and loafers. There was nothing about his appearance that would raise so much as an eyebrow, but his voice certainly did. In the moment before we sang, all I knew was that he sat in the pew behind me.

But when we stopped to sing and I opened my mouth, he also opened his, and a sound as rich and mellifluous as Devonshire cream poured out of him. I suppose he tried to contain himself, but how can a tuba hide in a room of piccolos?

For a moment I was startled. But within a verse, I was inspired.

Emboldened by his volume, I lifted mine. Did I sing better? Not even I could hear me. My squeaks were lost in his talent. But did I try harder? No doubt. His power brought out the best in me.

Could your world use a little music? If so, invite heaven's baritone to cut loose. He may look as common as the guy next door, but just wait till you see what he can do. Who knows? A few songs with him might change' the way you sing... and live....

Forever.

THE PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Would you pray with me...

O God, we thank you for your love, a love seen in your Son who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow his commands. Help us to die to self to come to life for you; to empty ourselves so that you

might fill us with your Spirit and your power. Remind us Lord of the thousands of people in the world this year who will give up their freedom, their opportunities, indeed their very lives for your sake and for the sake of the gospel and grant us the zeal and the faith that they show. May our weakness be filled with your strength as a testimony to your power. May the virtue you give us bring praise to your name. Take our thoughts and our feelings - and remake them so that they are like your Son's - and fill us with your wisdom so that we may be able to know and approve of your good and perfect will.

Father, help us to offer all of ourselves to you. Make us willing to take our place among your people - to care for them and to love them. May we be salt and light for them as Christ has always been for us. All of this we pray in the name of 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, "Lift High the Cross", #371 in our *Hymnals*.

*HYMN OF DEDICATION

"Lift High the Cross"

The Hymnal #371

*THE BENEDICTION

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

"He Is Lord!"

He is Lord! He is Lord! He is risen from the dead and He is Lord!
Ev'ry knee shall bow, ev'ry tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

*POSTLUDE

Dr. Elizabeth Davis