

Sunday, November 5th, 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. After a short prayer by the preacher with the choir, the liturgist will enter and take his/her seat followed by the Pastor who will step into the pulpit, welcome everyone, and make announcements. Afterwards, the preacher will take a seat.)

PRELUDE "For All the Saints" - Charles Callahan **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 Isaiah 55 and printed in our bulletins?”

CALL TO WORSHIP (adapted from Isaiah 55)

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near;

Let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts;

Let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them and abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth,

So shall my word not return to me empty, and accomplish that for which I sent it.

For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace;

The mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song;

Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;

Instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;

It shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Let us worship God beginning with prayer....

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Let us pray... Almighty and everlasting God, from you comes the water that wells up to eternal life. Bless now the words of my lips and the meditations of our hearts. As we come before you this day help us to let go of all our fears and our worries and to take upon ourselves the mind that you want us to have. Grant that our prayer may rise to you even as Christ comes down into our hearts. Breathe your Spirit into us and grant that we may hear and in hearing follow and praise your name both now and forevermore. Amen.

Would all of you who are able please stand with me and join in singing our opening hymn, “O Day of Radiant Gladness”, number 470 in our Hymnal.

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

***HYMN OF PRAISE** “O Day of Radiant Gladness” **The Hymnal #470**

After the hymn, the preacher will step into the lectern 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, He who is faithful and just will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In penitence and faith, let us confess our sins before God and one another, praying together the prayer of confession as it’s printed in our bulletin and pausing at its conclusion for a moment of silent prayer. Let us pray...

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION** (In Unison)

Loving God, how quick we are to blame you when our lives fail to follow the carefully planned route that we have charted for ourselves. We fail to take into account that, sometimes, detours are a part of your plan to help us arrive where we will be truly satisfied and filled our greatest joy. We confess that

when we are forced to travel a path we have not chosen, we doubt your promises and question your love for us. Remind us that just as you led Israel out of bondage, Ruth into a new family, and Naomi into security and peace, so you will provide a way for us to reach your anointed kingdom come. Forgive our complaints and our hesitancy to heed your gracious call. Help us to commit ourselves fully to your way. 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. God proves his love for us in that, while we still were sinners, Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him.... 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 the Father through the grace of his Son, let us be reconciled to one another and share the peace of Christ. 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

(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.*

What is a saint? What do they look like? What do they do?

When you look out at all these adults, do any of them look like saints? Do they always act like saints?

Then why do we call them saints? Because God does.

Why does God do that? Because he sees them as they will be, not as they are. He is turning them into saints.

Show them childhood pictures of Donald Trump and Barak Obama. Who are these people? What do we call them? ... **Mr. President...** they look different, come from different places, do different things.... But guess what-- we call the both Mr. President.

And we call you a saint... Not because you act like it, but because one day, just as these two children grew up to be Mr. President... you will grow up to be saints. St. Grayson, St. Leighton, St. Tenley.... St. Christian... etc.

Would you pray with me?....

After a prayer the children return to their parents, and the preacher will step into the pulpit and say...

Several members of this congregation have moved from the church militant into the church triumphant this year. Let us remember each of them and when the video concludes, let us give God thanks for their lives and for the lessons and gifts they imparted to each of us.

After the video, the preacher will return to the pulpit and say...

A THANKSGIVING FOR THE SAINTS

A Video & Prayer

Let us pray... Lord of all worlds, we lift up our humble thanks to You for all your saints, who lived a life of faith. Those known to the world.... those known only to Your Church.... and those known only to us.... We give you thanks that they have finished their race and at last entered into the promised rest which

belongs to all who love you. We are glad that having lived among us seeing and understanding only in part your plan for your creatures and kingdom, now they see clearly and know fully, even as they have been fully known. Give us grace to follow them, as they followed in the footsteps of Your Holy Son. Encourage our wavering hearts by their example, and help us to see in them the pledges of Your might by which the weak are made strong. Keep alive in us the memory of our loved ones, whom You have called out of this world, and make that recollection powerful enough to subdue every unworthy thought and wish. Grant that every remembrance that turns our hearts to those unseen may lead us closer to You, until we also come to our eternal home which You yourself have prepared for us, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

After the prayer, the liturgist will step to the pulpit and say,

THE INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

God has given us all that is good and right and true. What a joy to return these gifts to the service of Christ in the life of this community and far beyond our own reach. 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

"Behold a Host" - Dale Wood

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... You have blessed us beyond all our imagining, O God, so when situations stress us and circumstances test us, keep us from complaining or putting you to the test. May our acceptance of your gifts and our willingness to share them with others display our ready trust in your care for all of us. Follow these gifts with your blessing and multiply them to your glory, in Christ's name. 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 & 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

"In this Moment of Remembrance" - Dale Wood

The Choir

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

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our first lesson this morning is taken from the eighth Chapter of Romans, beginning at the twenty-sixth verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page #983 in your pew bibles.

Listen once more for the word of God...

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he

also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

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

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

Our sermon text today is taken from the book of Ruth, the 4th Chapter, beginning at the thirteenth verse. If you would like to read along, you can find it on page 233 of your pew bibles. Listen once more for the Word of God:

“So Bo'az took Ruth and she became his wife; and he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son.

Then the women said to Na'omi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without next of kin; and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him."

Then Na'omi took the child & laid him in her bosom, & became his nurse.

And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Na'omi."

They named him Obed; he was the father of Jesse, the father of David."

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

THE SERMON

“Dealing with Detours”

Two figures crested the horizon of the Judean desert. One, an old widow. The other, a young one. Wrinkles creviced the face of the first. Their too thin faces are powdered only with the dust from the road. They walk so close together that an onlooker might have mistaken the two women for one.

Ten years prior, life was good. Naomi had a prosperous farmer husband and two strong sons. They had land, money in the bank, and crops in the field. But then locusts and drought produced repeated total crop failures, and their carefully planned journey through life was forced to take a detour, followed by the loss of everything they owned. Elimalech mortgaged his land heavily to make a new start in a new place. So desperate were they that they headed for enemy territory, the land of Moab.

And for a while fate seemed to smile upon them. There they found fertile soil to farm and good wives for each of their two sons. But then Elimalech dropped dead in the field one day, and her sons died of the small pox or whatever pandemic came through town that winter.

Without the protection of a man in the house, there could be no income. Worse yet, the three women alone were soft targets for whatever trouble walked through their gate. So Naomi resolved to return home to Bethlehem. The law there offered some Naomi some protection. Blood relatives were obligated to watch out for her. And by the grace of God, one of her daughters-in-law, Ruth, determined to go with her.

The pair could hardly have appeared more pitiful as they entered the village. No money. No possessions. No children to raise or farm to cultivate. In the twelfth century Be a woman's security was found in her husband, and her future was secured by her sons. These two widows had neither. They'd be lucky to find a bed at the local homeless shelter.

Their hope was the size of a splinter. This is life as war zone. Drought, doubt, debt, and disease. Does grace happen here? Even to sick moms, unemployed dads, and penniless widows from Moab? If you're wondering, listen close, because Ruth's story was written for you.

Ruth went to a nearby field to scavenge enough grain for bread. The field is owned by Boaz-- a square jawed hunk of a man with wavy hair, biceps that bulge, pecs that pop, teeth that sparkle, and pock-ets that jingle.

And then he saw Ruth. She wasn't the first immigrant to forage grain from his fields. But her glance caught his for a moment, and a moment was all it took. Eyes the shape of almonds and hair the color of ebony.

As fast as the flick of his donkey's tail, Boaz learned her name and her story. He invited her for

supper, and told the overseer to send her home happy. In a word, he gave her grace. At least that is the word Ruth chose: "Oh sir, such grace, such kindness-- I don't deserve it. You've touched my heart, treated me like one of your own. And I don't even belong here!"

Ruth left with thirty pounds of grain and a smile she couldn't wipe off her face. Naomi heard the story and recognized, first the name, then the opportunity. "Boaz ... Boaz.... Why! He's Rahab's boy! And how shall I put this delicately?... His mama was the housemother to a whole sorority of fallen angels in old Jericho. If anybody in this tribe knows what it means to be an outsider, Boaz does. He knows what life is like for a woman forced to make her way through this world along a tough and rocky detour. Ruth, he's one of our cousins!"

Naomi's head began to spin with possibilities. This being harvest season, Boaz would be spending the night on the threshing floor to protect the crop from intruders. Naomi told Ruth, "Clean yourself up. Put on your little black dress. Wipe a little pomegranate juice on your lips, and a little charcoal on your eyelids. Then go down to the threshing floor, and when he lies down, go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do" Wink. Wink.

Pardon me while I wipe the steam off my glasses. How did this midnight seduction get into the Bible? What was Naomi thinking?

She was thinking it was time for Ruth to get on with her life. It was time to get off the detour and back on the road to joy.

Ruth was still grieving the death of her husband. When Naomi told her to "put on your best clothes," she used a phrase that describes the clothing worn after a time of mourning.' As long as Ruth was dressed in black, Boaz, respectable man that he was, would keep his distance. New clothing signaled Ruth's reentrance into society.

Naomi was also thinking about the law of the kinsman redeemer. If a man died without children, his property was transferred not to his wife but to his nearest male relative who was to provide for the widow. This law kept the property in the family, gave the widow protection, and, in some cases, a husband.

So as soon the threshing floor was quiet, by the light of the still-popping fire, Ruth made her move. She crept between the lumps of sleeping men in the direction of Boaz. Upon reaching him, she "uncovered his feet and lay down. This gesture was roughly equivalent to the giving of an engagement ring. "I am your servant Ruth," she said. 'Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer'".

Audacious move. Boaz was under no obligation to marry her.

He was a relative, not a brother. Besides, she was a foreigner. He was a prominent landowner. She was a destitute alien. He was a local power broker. She, unknown. He, well known.

Yet with the first light of the morning, Boaz kicked into action. He redeemed her father in law's land, and took her straight to Rabbi Moishe's Synagogue of Wedded Bliss and tied a knot tighter than a Scotsman's wallet.

By now you've noticed that Ruth's story is ours. We, too, are poor--spiritually, for sure; monetarily, perhaps. We wear robes of mourning for what might have been. She buried her husband; we've buried our dreams, desires, even our ideals and morality. Like Ruth and Naomi, we're out of options. But our Boaz has taken note of us. Just as the landowner approached Ruth, Christ came to us "while we were yet sinners". He made the first move.

"Will you cover us?" we asked him, and Grace smiled.

Not just mercy, mind you, but grace. Grace goes beyond mercy.

Mercy gave Ruth some food. Grace gave her a husband and a home.

Mercy gave the prodigal son a second chance. Grace threw him a party.

Mercy prompted the Samaritan to bandage the wounds of the victim. Grace prompted him to leave his credit card as payment for the victim's care.

Mercy forgave the thief on the cross. Grace escorted him into paradise.

Mercy pardons us. Grace woos and weds us.

Ruth's story is a picture of how grace happens in hard times. Jesus is your kinsman-redeemer.

He spotted you in the wheat field, hobbled by hurt.

And he has resolved to romance your heart. Through sunsets. Through his doting kindness. Sweet somethings whispered in your ear from Scripture.

Marginalized and discarded? Taken the wrong road? Done things that you're not proud of?

Grace is God walking into your world with a sparkle in his eye and an offer that's hard to resist.

He looks at us crying over the mistakes we've made and the mess we live in as a result and says smilingly, "Sit still for a bit. I can do wonders with this mess of yours."

Believe this promise. Trust it. Cling like a barnacle to it.

Imitate Ruth-- get off of the detour and get busy. Leave your version of Moab and head to the threshing floor. This is no time for inactivity or despair. Off with the mourning clothes. Take some chances; take the initiative. You never know what might happen. You might have a part in bringing Christ to the world. Ruth did.

Last glance had Boaz, Ruth, and Naomi posing for a family photo with their brand-new baby boy. Boaz wanted to name him Bo Jr., but Ruth preferred Obed, so Obed it was.

Obed went on to raise a son named Jesse, who fathered David, the second-most-famous king to be born in Bethlehem. You know the most famous king-Jesus. Now you know him as even more: your kinsman-redeemer.

Ruth's troubled life helped give birth to grace. Yours can do the same!

THE PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Would you pray with me...

Jesus Christ, our savior, our way, truth, and life, love us enough not to leave us be. Tell us the truth about ourselves, even when it hurts. Lord, do not be too gentle on us. Care for us enough to show us where we are wrong. Keep working with us, even when we so often fail to work with you.

Where we have taken a detour from the route you had planned for us, come after us, shake us up, but turn us around, and deliver us from the bumps and confusion of walking apart from you. Assist us in learning what things are good and what things bad, what things wise and what things foolish; and grant us then the wisdom not to sell eternity for time, nor to barter the priceless for trash.

Teach us to praise you in truth, as you are, and not as we would make you. Before we tell you what's on our minds, help us humbly to listen to what is on yours. Before we tell you what we want you to give us, move us to be obedient to what you want us to give you.

We pray that we may have the courage of the faith we profess, the bravery to bet our lives that you are truly God our Father, and the discipline to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Christ.

Send your Holy Spirit upon us, we pray, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be to us the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Grant that, being joined together in him, we may attain to the unity of the faith and grow up in all things into 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

God knows that we are sinners. Jesus came not to redeem the righteous, but to save sinners. 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.

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 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. 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

Loving God, we thank you that you have fed us in this holy meal, united us with Christ, and given us a foretaste of the life to come as part of your eternal kingdom. So strengthen us in your service that our daily living and love for one another may show our thanks, and that we may become saints in fact and not just in name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let all of us who are able stand & join in one voice to sing our closing hymn, "Here Is Bread, Here is Wine", hymn #2266 in our *Sing the Faith* hymnal supplement. Remember we will sing Verses 1, 2, Refrain, Verse 3, Refrain just like the choir did.

*HYMN OF DEDICATION "Here Is Bread, Here is Wine" *Sing the Faith #2266*
THE BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face to shine upon you and give you His peace-- in your coming in and your going out; in your lying down and in your rising up; in your labor and in your leisure; in your laughter and in your tears; until you come to stand before Jesus in that day in which there is no sunset & no dawning. Amen.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE "Go, My Children, Fed & 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