

AUGUSTANA

where Lutherans and Anglicans worship together

Pentecost 12 August 23, 2020

WOV Service of Word & Prayer

Welcome to worship.

As we begin our time of worship may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

GATHERING HYMN “Children of the Heavenly Father” ELW # 781

Children of the Heavenly Father
Safely in his bosom gather
Nestling bird nor star in heaven
Such a refuge e'er was given

God his own doth tend and nourish
In his holy courts they flourish
From all evil things he spares them
In his mighty arms he bears them

Neither life nor death shall ever
From the Lord his children sever
Unto them his grace he showeth
And their sorrows all he knoweth

CHILDREN'S TIME

- It's good to be told that we are doing things right ... Affirmation ...
- To receive a check mark or a thumbs up
- Sometimes we learn by being told we did things wrong, but really I'm sure we learn better when we're told, "good job you did it right."
- I could say that to today's worship assistant Ashley and to Deb our musician and the singers and to Greg and Bryan the tech people. I could give them a thumbs up or a check mark or a gold star for doing such a good job.
- In our Bible story today Peter gets the thumbs up ... a gold star.
- Jesus asks him who do you think I am? And Peter answers "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" and Jesus says, "A gold star for you Peter"

- Peter knew that who Jesus was and what Jesus did and taught was important. Peter's faith was built on that. That is also what our faith can depend on it ... be built on.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray: Living God, you accept our stumbling faith, our misplaced answers, our false horizons, and through them you build a way of peace. Empower and enable us to bind the wounds of the world and loose the bonds of oppression, so that all may confess the grace that is your work alone; through Jesus Christ, your anointed one. Amen.

SCRIPTURE SONG

Refrain: Salvation belongs to our God and to Christ the Lamb forever and ever.

Great and wonderful are your deeds, O God of the universe
 Just and true are your ways, O Ruler of all the nations.
 Who can fail to honor you, Lord, and sing the glory of your name? /refrain

For you alone are the Holy One.
 All nations will draw near and worship before you,
 For your just and holy works have been revealed. /refrain

SCRIPTURE READINGS

a reading from Exodus 1:15-20

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, 'When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live.' But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, 'Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?' The midwives said to Pharaoh, 'Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.' So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong.

Word of God, Word of life **thanks be to God**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Word of life, Jesus Christ, all glory to you!

Word of life Jesus Christ, all praise to you!

Our hearts burn within us while you open to us the Scriptures.

Word of life, Jesus Christ, all glory to you!

Word of life, Jesus Christ, all praise to you!

GOSPEL:

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew chapter 16:13-20 **Glory to you, O Lord**

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.' Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

The Gospel of our Lord, **Praise to you, O Christ**

MEDITATION

We have been following the family story - saga - of Abraham and Sarah and their offspring. Last week we left them in the care of their long lost brother Joseph. Safe in Egypt under the rule of a benevolent and appreciative Pharaoh. It seemed like a happy ending ... but today we hear that this is not so. The current Pharaoh is afraid of them - what might happen if the Hebrews turned against him?

This is the beginning of the story of Moses. Most of us have heard the story of the baby Moses in the basket many times over. But within the story about Moses there is another one about the two midwives Puah and Shiphrah and this story within a story is very special to me.

So Pharaoh, in fear, decided to disable the H through selective extermination: let the girl babies live, kill all the boy babies The midwives -- Shiphrah and Puah -- were given their instructions And they ignored them.....And that's how Moses came to live instead of dying at birth

Those midwives -- Shiphrah and Puah -- were dealt a pretty bad hand. They were told to do something that went against what they believed -- what they were trained to do. In their line of work life is precious. A new baby was to be welcomed not killed. But they had been commanded to kill certain babies. And the command came from no less than the pharaoh. They had a real dilemma to deal with. What was the right thing to do? Being clever and wise they found a way through .. a way to be disobedient and yet faithful.

I have a personal connection with this story. Many years ago when I was expecting a baby I went to the doctor for a routine visit. The doctor could not find the baby's heart beat. This was heart breaking especially since this pregnancy was following a very brief one. The doctor said, "It's all up to God." Which I thought was stupid: God wouldn't want my baby to die ... He was a fine doctor, but not so great a theologian.

I was sent to the hospital in the city to see “what was the best course of action to deal with a baby without a heartbeat.” It was very subdued as the ultrasound technician got me ready for my exam: she had the screen positioned so that I couldn’t see it and the sound was turned down. I guess this was to make the situation easier for me. After a few silent moments the technician spoke: “I’m not really allowed to tell you anything [only the doctor could tell you the result of the ultrasound], but if you look over here,” she said and then she moved the screen so I could see it and put the volume of the ultrasound up: I saw a baby swimming around and I heard the most wonderful sound in all the world - whoosh, whoosh – whoosh whoosh. She handed me a box of kleenex and said would I like my husband to come in – and this also was against the rules at that time. What a wonderful rule breaking woman.

She didn’t make our baby come back to life, but she did help make a difficult situation better ... her rule breaking was very caring. To me she belonged to the same school of thought as Shiphrah and Puah: breaking or bending the rules to bring new life to birth To give **life-giving care**. Because of the two midwives Moses lived to lead the Israelites out of Egypt

At this point you might think I am telling you to be disobedient ... I have heard that there are pastors who have told their church family that they don’t have to wear a mask, that it is OK to disregard the rules. LET ME BE CLEAR: wear a mask, keep all the rules that prevent the spread of covid 19: doing that is **life-giving care**.

The point I am trying to make is that it is hard to know what is the right thing to do. Every day I see people trying to make right decisions .. not always decisions as hard as the one facing Shiphrah and Puah ... but difficult nonetheless.

We are called to be midwives ... people who bring **life-giving care** ... doesn't matter what our gender is ... we are called to bring **life-giving care**. And like the midwives of long ago it is sometimes hard to make the decisions that provide **life-giving care**. When to follow the rules and when to be subversive? What is the foundation -- the rock -- on which we base those decisions?

Like Peter we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God. We are guided in making difficult decisions by Jesus' life and teaching. What did Jesus do? How did Jesus live? What did Jesus teach us? And in the difficult dilemmas that we face we ask ourselves "is this decision one that is life-giving?" I am not saying that it is always easy. There are no easy answers to many of the dilemmas that we face from day to day. But we do know that God has promised to walk with us as we face the questions that come up along the way.

Prayer: O God let each of us in our own way become midwives so that we may bring life-giving care to our world. Guide our decisions making ... show us when to follow the rules and when to be subversive. All so that your life-giving care may be shared.

This we ask in Jesus name. Amen.

SONG "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy" ELW # 588

There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in God's justice which is more than liberty.

There is no place where earth's sorrows are more felt than up in heav'n.
There is no place where earth's failings have such kindly judgement giv'n

There is welcome for the sinner, and a promised grace made good;
There is mercy with the Savior; there is healing in his blood.
There is grace enough for thousands of new worlds as great as this;
There is room for fresh creations in that upper home of bliss.

For the love of God is broader than the measures of our mind;
And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.
But we make this love too narrow by false limits of our own;
And we magnify its strictness with a zeal God will not own.

OUR RESPONSE TO THE WORD

- Prayer of Confession –God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, let us be reconciled to God and to one another. Gracious God, have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

GOD'S RESPONSE TO US

Hear then God's response: God who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace we have been saved. In the name of + Jesus Christ our sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in our hearts through faith. **AMEN.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us join hearts and voices together in prayer. Each short prayer will end with the words "Lord in your mercy" and you can make the prayer your own by responding "**hear our prayer.**"

Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Lord our rock, you are our foundation in Jesus Christ, your Son, whom we confess as the living God. During these strange times help us to continue to bear witness to Christ and care for our neighbour, both here at home and throughout the world. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for Bishops Michael Hawkins and Adam Halkett, the clergy and people of the Diocese of Saskatchewan and the dean, council, and congregations of the South West Area of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories. Grant them wisdom during challenging times. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You call forth praises from the far reaches of the universe to the smallest of creatures. Join our songs to theirs, that a spirit of praise and thanksgiving will arouse us to cherish this wondrous home you give us. Protect all who are involved in the harvest that all may be gathered in in safety. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Direct the leaders of countries, legislators and magistrates, mayors and councils, to walk in your way. Help leaders to make wise decisions so that all may receive the care and attention they need. Provide safety and care for all who are vulnerable especially refugees like the Iqbal and Alhamad/Wahid families. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Though we walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve us, deliver us, and fulfill your purpose for us. According to your steadfast love, grant healing and wholeness to those who are bereaved, in trouble or adversity, or sick and in need of care *especially*: Bruce, Gloria, Clayton, Logan, William, Marcus, Brodie, Karin, Anthony, Robert, Curtis, Linda, Marci, Gayle, Evelyn, Lisa, Danielle, Inger, Anne Jane, Deanna, Mary, Marlene, those who feel a sense of isolation during this pandemic and for all those we name aloud or in the silence of our hearts (*a pause to offer time to name others*)..... Hold them all in your care.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You call us to live in community. Help us to live and work and learn in safety. Be with teachers, professors, school administrators and students as they prepare for the school year. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You are the everlasting Rock from which we were hewn, and you restore your people to joy and gladness. In blessed memory and hope, we thank you for the lives of our beloved dead. Bring us with them to our heavenly home. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Pastor Marilyn: Knowing how God loves us as a Mother and Father we pray in the words Jesus taught us:

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come, your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

BLESSING

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor heights, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

God, the creator, + Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal life. AMEN.

SENDING SONG “Built on a Rock” # 652 (v. 1 & 3)

Built on a Rock, the church shall stand
 even when steeples are falling;
 Crumbled have spires in ev'ry land;
 bells still are chiming and calling,
 calling the young and old to rest,
 calling the souls of those distressed,
 longing for life everlasting.

Christ builds a house of living stones,
 We are his own habitation;
 He fills our hearts, his humble thrones,
 granting us life and salvation.
 Where two or three will seek his face,
 he in their midst will show his grace;
 Blessings upon them bestowing

DISMISSAL

You are the church. Christ is with you as you go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

+ + +

Zoom coffee time at 11:15 am Sunday August 16

To join Zoom Meeting

Click on this link:

Meeting ID:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84680174343?pwd=aTBrNW9kUjRHUDVCSVJkamNoZy9hQT09>

YOU CAN ALSO JOIN IN BY PHONE:

+1 587 328 1099 Canada
+1 647 374 4685 Canada
+1 647 558 0588 Canada
+1 778 907 2071 Canada
+1 204 272 7920 Canada
+1 438 809 7799 Canada

Built on a Rock - Words - ©1958 Augsburg Fortress Publishers;
Children of the Heavenly Father - Ernst W Olson, Words - ©1925, 1953 Augsburg Fortress Publishers
There's a Wideness in God's in God's Mercy public domain
Service of Word and Prayer; With One Voice, © 1995 Augsburg Fortress
Reprinted under ONE LICENSE #736256-A all rights reserved