

Augustana

Lent 5, 2021 – setting 8 ELW – March 21, 2021

Welcome to worship. ...

- where Lutherans and Anglicans worship together in treaty six territory and the homeland many people of the Metis Nation.
- You are welcome: as followers of Jesus the people of Augustana aim to share the unconditional love of God with people of all genders, orientations, abilities, ages, colours, cultures, ethnicities. This is a work in progress and you are welcome to join us on our way.

Thanks just like on a Sunday morning when we worship together there are many who make it possible for us to worship together. Look at the end of the video for all those names.

GREETING

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.

Response: and also with you

KYRIE

Kyrie eleison, on our world and on our way

Kyrie eleison, ev'ry day

CHILDREN'S TIME

- Families are complicated: eg. My Scottish family

- My grandmother was the eldest of 14 children (some siblings by birth and some by adoption) my father's cousins were closer to my age and then there is my uncle who lived and worked in Canada until he retired back to the Isle of Lewis who isn't really an uncle but a 1st cousin twice removed.. my family ... my people
- Families are complicated: blended families, half and step siblings, the people who are part of the family – not exactly sure how – but they are
- The family of God can seem kind of complicated too: the question of who belongs comes up from time to time ... who are God's family ... God's people
- God simplifies this question: my people hold my law in their hearts and I'll put it there.
- What is the law of the Lord: "Love God with all your heart and soul and mind and love your neighbor as yourself"

The glue that holds the people of God ...that is the family of God ... together is love: God's love for God's people ... and the love that God puts in our hearts

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Loving God, write your law on our hearts, so that we may be your people.

Amen.

READING: Jeremiah 31: 31-34 (NRSV)

³¹ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, ^[a] says the LORD. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

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

Please join in singing our Gospel Acclamation

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.

Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.

Save us as you promised we will trust your word.

Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord.

GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel according to St. John 12:20-33 Glory to you O Lord

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²² Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

²⁷ “Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹ The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰ Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people^[a] to myself.” ³³ He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

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

MEDITATION

The times they are a changin' ... spring has sprung (kind of). It may not feel exactly like Spring but after yesterday the days are longer than the nights. This is an expected change that returns every year. In our Gospel reading the times were also a changin' and it was a change that was much more dramatic and unexpected than any yearly changin'

The Bible story begins with Philip in a classic comedy situation: someone has crashed the party ... the Greeks have shown up That is, the non-Jewish people and we're not sure if they are welcome.

It reminds me of a scene from the movie, "My Big Fat Greek Wedding"

- Greek woman meets a non-Greek man falls in love – all without the knowledge of her very traditional, Greek family.

- They get engaged and along the way to the wedding a number of events throw the families together the groom's non-greek parents are hopelessly out of place. Their straight-laced politeness doesn't quite fit in with the lively and free-for-all Greek family ways.

+ + +

The Greeks that showed up to see Jesus were neither invited nor were they expected. Philip doesn't know what to do with them. He went to his fellow disciple Andrew, "I don't know what to do, do you know what to do?" "No, I don't know what to do, what do you think we should do?" And so they took the problem to Jesus, "What do we do with these people, these Greeks, these gentiles, outsiders?"

The times they were a changin' There was a sea-change in the air.

+ + +

We are not the same people we were a year ago

We have watched a pandemic spread to every corner of the world.

Seen and felt the dreadful effects of Isolation and loneliness

We are not the same people we were a year ago:

We have learned to wear masks and keep our distance ... no hugging, no handshakes

In the midst of the pandemic so many other ills of our times have been exposed and there is a call ... a demand that “the times must change”: Black lives matter Indigenous lives matter ... people have gathered up their courage to come forward to expose sexual harassment and workplace harassment ...

The pandemic has exposed how underlying poverty and prejudice increase the personal cost of living through a pandemic. The weak points in our society cry out for the times to be a changin’

Close to home, here in our own province: we have a pastor who preached hateful and hurtful words targeted at the LGBTQ community, but his words were hateful and hurtful for all of

us.... And, in response, many cry out “the times have got to be a changin’!”

We are not the same people we were a year ago

We are not the same church we were a year ago ...

We have learned how to worship on youtube and livestream and we have even learned how to zoom. We have learned how to support one another from a distance.

We have been forced to be a church without a building ... to be a church family with no home but ourselves.

The times they are a changin’ but NOW WHAT? I feel like Philip “I don’t know what to do Do you know what to do?”

So, like Philip and Andrew let’s take that question to Jesus.

Jesus answered the question with a story of a grain of wheat. In its ending is a new beginning. But new beginnings are fraught with anxiety. It’s hard to let go of the old. It’s confusing to let go of what is known and for Philip and Andrew as they looked at the inclusion of the Gentiles and heard Jesus’

word's that spoke of death it seemed that what they knew, what they were familiar with was about to change.

They were faced with the decision to move with the changing circumstances or be left behind. In a nutshell that is what Jesus means when he gives them the option to "Love their life and lose it or hate their life and keep it." "Cling to the life you have now and you will lose it Let it go and change with the times, deal with the new and live."

This new life is not exempt from suffering or death just as Jesus was not exempt from suffering and death.

We are not the same church we were a year ago ...

We will return to the church building, but we are not the same.

What we were a year ago is gone. . . we have buried it. We are still a church family with no home but ourselves. No home but ourselves: but the glue that holds that home ... that family ... together is God ...

"I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

I'm not exactly sure what we will be, but I do know that we are:
God's people ... God's family.

Prayer: O God, you have called your servants to ventures of
which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden,
through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good
courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is
leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our
Lord. AMEN.

HYMN "Seed that in earth is dying" # 330 ELW

Seed that in earth is dying grows into ears of grain.
Grapes that are crushed in the vessel turn into golden wine.
God through this mystery grant us faith in our deepest
darkness, life in our night and death

We were baptized in Jesus, into his death and grave, to
resurrection's promise praise and eternal life. Heaven's own
praises begin here where you yourself are near us, deep in our
night and death.

Seed that in earth is dying rises to bear much fruit. Christ, as we meet at your table, give us the bread of life. Lord, we do thank and adore you! Unceasing praise of the ages rises from night and death.

CONFESSION OF SIN AND ABSOLUTION

Blessed be the Trinity + one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion. Fountain of living water,

Pour out your mercy over us. Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free. Rebuild what we have ruined and mend what we have torn. Wash us in your cleansing flood. Make us alive in the Spirit to follow in the way of Jesus, as healers and restorers of the world you so love. Amen.

Beloved, God's word never fails. The promise rests on grace; by the saving love of Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God, your sins are + forgiven, and God remembers them no more. Journey in the way of Jesus. **AMEN.**

Sharing of the peace – *share the peace with those who with you now & with those you meet or talk to in the week to come.*

Prayers of Intercession

Let us join hearts and voices together in prayer. Each short prayer will end with the words “hear us, O God” and you can make the prayer your own by responding “**Your mercy is great**”. ... Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence

You wash us through and through and remember our sin no more. Make your church a community of forgiveness throughout the world. Give your people courage to forgive; through them show the world new possibilities. Bless ministries of repentance and reconciliation. Guide the ministry of the people and clergy of the diocese of Montreal and their Bishop Mary Irwin-Gibson and the people, rostered ministers, and staff of the Manitoba-Northwestern Ontario Synod and the Assistant to the Bishop Deacon Michelle Collins, and Bishop Jason Zinko. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

You fill the earth – from tiny grains of wheat to the mighty thunder – with your presence, and you call us to attend to your will for all creation. Grant weather that prepares the soil for seeds; protect all from violent storms, flooding, and wildfire. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

You promise to write your law on our hearts. Guide citizens throughout the world to shape communities that reflect your mercy, justice, and peace, and give them creativity to work for the welfare of all. Be with us as we meet for our zoom annual

meeting. Grant us patience, courage, and wisdom as we meet in a way that is new to us. Bless those who are offering their time and talent for leadership on church council.

Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

You sustain us with your bountiful Spirit. Restore the joy of all who need to know your presence: those who are lonely or feel unforgiveable, those who need healing of mind or body, those who are dying, and all who grieve. We pray especially for: Angie Remus and family as they mourn the death of Gordon and Lorene and family on the death of her brother-in-law ... and for Elsie, Audrey, Orville and Carol, Bruce, Marie, Gloria, Anna Marie, Marcus, Brodie, Karin, Anthony, Robert, Curtis, Linda, Marci, Gayle, Evelyn, Lisa, Danielle, Shelby, Alice, Deanna, Ron, Marlene, Mildred, Minnie, Louise and all those we name aloud or in the silence of our hearts*(a pause to offer time to name others)*.

Give them courage and peace in the face of illness and grief. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

Jesus calls us to follow him in life and death. Empower this congregation in discipleship. Equip children and teachers in Sunday School, confirmation, and learning ministries. Give us your truth and wisdom, and teach us to follow Jesus. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

You rule over the nations. Raise up advocates for peace and justice within and between nations. Grant safety to refugees

especially: the Iqbal and Alhamad/Wahid families. Give life where hope seems dead; call into existence new realities we cannot even imagine. Help us to dream of and work towards a time when all people are vaccinated. And instead of returning to the old “normal,” help us to work towards a new and just normal. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

Be with newly arrived seminary student Tewodros Gebrehiwot and his family: wife Kelem, daughter Iyesusawit and son Applos as they settle into life in Saskatoon. Give them patience as they go through their time of quarantine. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks that you have called Alexa Wallace to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Bless her as she is ordained to the Diaconate of the Anglican Church of Canada this evening. Give her courage, wisdom, and grace as she takes on this new role as a follower of Jesus. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

In the cross of Christ, your name is glorified. We praise you for those who have given us words to worship you. With all those who have died in Christ, bring us into life everlasting. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

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

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.

WALK FROM SYRIA UPDATE - **travelled so far** - 6,523.75 kms

Remaining - 3,256.25 kms

Different definitions of what a family is... resulted in family being separated

... families can be quite complex

ANNUAL MEETING this afternoon (that is if you are participating in this worship service the morning of March 21)

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

You are what God made you to be; created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbour. God bless you that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity. **AMEN**

Go in peace to love and service the Lord

THANKS BE TO GOD

Challenge before our church family of letting the old die and the new live on: The glue that holds the people of God ...that is the family of God ... together is love: God's love for God's people ... and the love that God puts in our hearts. Our choir anthem reminds us of this as it sends us off today.

SENDING SONG: CHOIR ANTHEM: Wondrous Love

THANKS

Worship Assistant: Larry Trenouth

Musicians: Mik Bickis, Deborah Buck, Augustana St. Timothy Choir

Technicians: Bryan Tastad & Greg Fowlie-Neufeld

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Intercessory prayers, blessing, dismissal, Confession and Forgiveness adapted from Sundays and Seasons 2021; © Augsburg Fortress