**PENTECOST 4- SUNDAY JUNE 20, 2021**

**ZION, PHILIPSBURG, ST. PETERS, LINWOOD**

Welcome to worship on this 4th Sunday of Pentecost, June 20, 2021.

What beautiful weather we have had this past week….warm days, drying breezes and cool nights which is great for sleeping. Humidity is returning, and summer begins today.

Happy Father’s Day to all the Fathers and Father figures. I hope you get to relax and enjoy your day. Today we will also commemorate National Indigenous Day which is tomorrow June 21. We give thanks to the Eastern Synod, the Anglican Church of Canada and the United Church of Canada for providing the resources I am using today.

Your church council met this week and a return to in person worship is on hold until the next meeting in August. Please speak to me or any council member if you have any concerns. Please join us for coffee hour today at 11:00. All are welcome.

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** - written by Sherri Wilker

We are walking hand in hand on this safe and bountiful land which is part of the Grand River watershed, traditional territory of the Anishinabewaki, Mississaugas, and Neutral peoples, fellow sojourners. We give thanks to the Creator for this great gift and recognize our responsibility as treaty people to care for the land and waters that nourish us and give us strength. We also acknowledge that it is our duty to do more to learn about the rich history of this land to better understand our roles as residents, neighbours, caretakers and sojourners.

**GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**GREETING**

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.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

O God of creation, eternal majesty, you preside over land and sea, sunshine and storm. By your strength pilot us, by your power preserve us, by your wisdom instruct us, and by your hand protect us, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG*When Peace like a River (It Is Well with My Soul)* (ELW 785)**

1 When peace like a river attendeth my way,  
when sorrows like sea billows roll,  
whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,  
it is well, it is well with my soul.  
  
Refrain  
It is well (it is well)  
with my soul, (with my soul,)  
it is well, it is well with my soul.  
  
2 Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
let this blest assurance control,  
that Christ has regarded my helpless estate,  
and has shed his own blood for my soul. Refrain  
  
3 He lives--oh, the bliss of this glorious thought;  
my sin, not in part, but the whole,  
is nailed to his cross and I bear it no more.  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul! Refrain  
  
4 Lord, hasten the day when our faith shall be sight,  
the clouds be rolled back as a scroll,  
the trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall descend;  
even so it is well with my soul. Refrain

**WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**FIRST READING: Job 38:1-11**

A reading from Job.

1The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind:  
 2“Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?  
 3Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me.  
4“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?  
  Tell me, if you have understanding.  
 5Who determined its measurements—surely you know!  
  Or who stretched the line upon it?  
 6On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone  
 7when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?  
8“Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb?—  
 9when I made the clouds its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band,  
 10and prescribed bounds for it, and set bars and doors,  
 11and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stopped’?”

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32**

1Give thanks to the Lord, for the Lord is good, for God’s mercy endures forever.  
 2Let the redeemed of the Lord proclaim  
  that God redeemed them from the hand of the foe,  
 3gathering them in from the lands;  
  from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.  
 23Some went down to the sea in ships, plying their trade | in deep waters.   
 24They beheld the works of the Lord, God’s wonderful works in the deep.  
 25Then God spoke, and a stormy wind arose, which tossed high the waves of the sea.  
 26They mounted up to the heavens and descended to the depths; their souls melted away in their peril.  
 27They staggered and reeled like drunkards, and all their skill was of  no avail.  
 28Then in their trouble they cried to the Lord, and you delivered them from their distress.  
 29You stilled the storm to a whisper and silenced the waves of the sea.   
 30Then were they glad when it grew calm, when you guided them to the harbor they desired.  
 31Let them give thanks to you, Lord, for your steadfast love  
  and your wonderful works for all people.  
 32Let them exalt you in the assembly of the people;  
  in the council of the elders, let them sing hallelujah!

**SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 6:1-13**

A reading from 2 Corinthians.

1As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 2For he says,“At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”  
See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! 3We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, 4but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; 6by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, 7truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; 9as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; 10as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.  
  11We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. 12There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. 13In return—I speak as to children—open wide your hearts also.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL: Mark 4:35-41**

The holy gospel according to Mark.

35When evening had come, [Jesus said to the disciples,] “Let us go across to the other side.” 36And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. 37A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. 38But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” 39He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. 40He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” 41And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON (ELW p. 217)**

As I was reading over the gospel this week, I was engrossed by the imagery the author shared, and so I ask you this morning to relax, close your eyes, and listen as I reread the gospel. Imagine that you are a disciple on the boat that day and reflect on what are you feeling and experiencing.

It has been a long day, you spent all of it with Jesus listening to his teachings and parables. Parables like the Sower and the seed, putting a lamp under a bushel basket and of course that tiny mustard seed have left you intrigued. You enjoy the stories; you know there is a message that Jesus wants you to understand but sometimes you feel confused. Just what is Jesus trying to say? What is he trying to teach? Who is this man?

The sun is just starting to set as you join the other disciples in the boat. Jesus has asked that we take him to the other shore on the Sea of Galilee. You are setting out into uncharted and perhaps even dangerous territory you are headed into the land of the Gentiles or Gerasenes. The Gentiles were considered outsiders who did not follow the word of God, and Jesus wanted to bring his radical truth and love to them. He wanted to extend his mission of grace and mercy to everyone including non-believers. You are feeling nervous but take comfort in knowing that there are other boats around you joining in on the journey.

As the boat is leaving the shore you notice dark clouds rolling in. The wind is picking up and there is thunder and lightning off in the distance. You have heard stories of how quickly storms appear in the Sea of Galilee, some of the disciples on board are experienced fishermen, but you are not. You look around to see where Jesus is, and he is already fast asleep at the back of the boat on some cushions. He seems content and is oblivious to the weather that is approaching. Who is this man?

Suddenly the wind picks up. The waves of the sea start to rise and begin crashing against the boat, making it hard to steer. Water is pouring into the boat. James and Andrew begin bailing out the water, but it seems to be coming in faster than it can be bucketed out. You begin to feel queasy and seasick from the motion of waves, others feel the same. Fear and panic are starting to set in. It does not help the situation when you hear the cries from other boats around you. You can hardly see them through the rain and the wind. You feel the boat sinking under the pressure of the waves and the heaviness of the water entering the boat. Thinking that the boat is about to sink you frantically cry out to Jesus, through the wind and the rain saying, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?

Jesus sleepily opens his eyes and looks around at the people on the boat. He then turns his gaze towards the water and says, Peace! Be still! Suddenly the wind and the waves stopped, and the sea was as still as glass. Everyone around you is incredulous, yourself included. And now a different kind of fear is growing inside of you…you are thankful that the storm has stopped of course, but how did it happen? How did Jesus calm the storm with his voice and words? What kind of power does this man Jesus have? Who is this man?

The tension of faith versus fear was alive and well in our gospel reading today. The disciples in our story and throughout the whole gospel of Mark have a challenging time understanding just who Jesus was. In all honesty, I am not sure they ever fully understand who the person of Jesus was. They say they get it; Peter says that he knows Jesus is the Messiah, but then he denies him, not once but three times. Peter and the disciples were perfectly imperfect.

Along with the tension of fear and faith, the reading also echoes that of the creation story when God brought forth order from the chaos. Water, when it is unbridled and uncontrolled is full of panic and death; it is chaotic. Water contained is thirst-quenching, freeing, and life-giving. In the waters of our baptism, we are given the promise of eternal life in Jesus Christ through his grace and mercy, but as we all know storms will still arise in our lives and our faith will be tested.

I ask you to reflect for a moment on the storms that have appeared in your life. How often are we like the disciples, crying out in fear and panic? How often do we cry out to God, saying “Hey God, where are you, I’m dying here?” How often do we question why bad things happen to good people? Why do our loved ones get sick and die? How often do accidents and tragedies happen? We get stuck in the fear that envelops us. We panic and think we are drowning in the same boat as the disciples. I include myself in this revelation as there have been times in my life where I have often gotten stuck in fear rather than in faith. And when we are stuck in fear we often become irrational and feel almost paralyzed. It becomes hard for us to think clearly; trust has been thrown out the window, or perhaps out of the proverbial boat. And when it is difficult for us to trust, it is difficult for us to have faith. There is that imperfect perfectness again.

I wish I had a perfect answer as to why bad things happen in our lives, but I do not. My only response that offers comfort and hope is that Jesus did not abandon the disciples in their time of need. Jesus stayed on the boat in their time of fear and panic. He invited the disciples to turn to the trust that God provides, a God who is more powerful than any storm on any sea. Jesus had a deep trust in God and that is why he was able to sleep soundly while the sea raged on around him. Yes, Jesus invited the disciples to that same deep trust, and we are also invited into that same trust. We are invited to not be afraid. We are invited to trust in the power and glory of God, knowing that God is with us always. The disciples were not alone in the boat, and neither are we alone in the struggles and storms of our lives.

The disciples in Mark often struggled to acknowledge and understand just who Jesus was. His words help us to understand his divinity, his power, and his unconditional love of humankind through the glory of God. The simple and powerful words Jesus used to calm the stormy seas that day were only one of the times that God used God’s word offering unconditional love and trust to all. In the chaos of creation, God spoke and there was light in the world. God spoke to the Israelites through Moses and led them to safety from slavery into the promised land. God spoke through the prophets offering peace and promise for the future. And yes, God spoke, and God’s word became flesh in the humanity of a tiny babe named Jesus whose grace and mercy would transform the world and call us into the action of unconditional love for others and an everlasting faith in God.

The disciples were challenged on the boat that day to trust in something they could not see, to trust in something more powerful than the raging wind and sea around them. We too are called to do the same, we are called to faith, we are called to trust, we are called to take the hand of God and let God lead us in the world, through the storms that challenge us and the peace and calm that comfort us. Let it be so. Amen

**HYMN OF THE DAY*Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me* (ELW 767)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWC8aXDq6WQ>

1 Lord, take my hand and lead me  
upon life's way;  
direct, protect, and feed me  
from day to day.  
Without your grace and favor  
I go astray;  
so take my hand, O Savior,  
and lead the way.  
2 Lord, when the tempest rages,  
I need not fear;  
for you, the Rock of Ages,  
are always near.  
Close by your side abiding,  
I fear no foe,  
for when your hand is guiding,  
in peace I go.  
3 Lord, when the shadows lengthen  
and night has come,  
I know that you will strengthen  
my steps toward home,  
then nothing can impede me,  
O blessed Friend!  
So, take my hand and lead me  
unto the end.

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Let us come before the triune God in prayer. *A brief silence.*

Holy God, you gather your people from east and west, north and south. We pray for the mission of the church throughout the world, that your steadfast love may be made known to all peoples. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You laid the foundations of the earth and the waters are the womb of creation. The morning stars sing your name and all creation shouts for joy. We pray for your blessed creation, that it may continue to flourish and magnify your glory. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

You keep watch over all nations. We pray for countries experiencing violence, hunger, and unrest. Guide worldwide and local community organizations in their efforts to establish safety and justice. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You are close to the brokenhearted and near to those in distress. We pray for those who are experiencing oppression. Liberate us from the systems and chains that bind us. Remove the barriers that separate us from one another. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

You teach us to love our neighbour, we thank you for Indigenous neighbours and friends this day. And yet we lament, too. We lament that historic and contemporary racism continues to mar our relations. We lament the church’s role as beneficiaries of an economic and governance system that privileges settler peoples at the expense of the First Peoples of this land. We lament apathy in the face of the need for change, change that recognizes the sovereignty of the First Peoples and recognizes at long last, in ways that make a difference, the sacredness of the land and the need for all of us to walk humbly upon it. We remember that each week more and more mass graves are found at residential school sites throughout Canada. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You give us eyes to see the witness of strength, caring, and love of Indigenous peoples, and for the struggle for what is just and right, open our hearts this day. Encourage us to listen more, speak less, participate in the movements for change that will bring us together in good and respectful ways. Encourage us to make friends, get to know someone’s story, and share our stories too, without fear, for in Christ we know we are all kin, relatives, with you and with each other and with all living and non-living things. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You hold in your loving arms those who struggle with illness and injury of the body, mind, and spirit. Be with all who grieve in sorrow and sadness. We especially remember Eddy, Elaine, Lynette, Barb, Sarah, Alea, Mary Ann, Bonnie, Mary, Tilly, Robert, Helen, Vivian, Katie, Esther, Rhonda, Deb, and those we name in the silence of our hearts. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You dwell with us in this faith community. We pray for our leaders and elders. Grant them knowledge, patience, and kindness, that through their leadership you may be exalted in this assembly. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your love endures in all situations. On this Father’s Day, we pray for those who are fathers or wish to be fathers, for those with broken or strained relationships, for those who are missing their fathers, and for fathers who have lost children. Bless and strengthen them. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your abiding grace. **Amen.**

**PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD (ELW p. 220)**

Let us pray.

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

**Amen.**

**LORD’S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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 trespasses,**

**as we forgive those**

**who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,**

**and the power, and the glory,**

**forever and ever. Amen.**

**SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**BLESSING**

Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Share the good news.

**Thanks be to God.**

**SENDING SONG*My Life Flows On in Endless Song* (ELW 763)**

1 My life flows on in endless song;  
above earth's lamentation,  
I catch the sweet, though far-off hymn  
that hails a new creation.  
  
Refrain  
No storm can shake my inmost calm  
while to that Rock I'm clinging.  
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,  
how can I keep from singing?  
  
2 Through all the tumult and the strife,  
I hear that music ringing.  
It finds an echo in my soul.  
How can I keep from singing? Refrain  
  
3 What though my joys and comforts die?  
The Lord my Savior liveth.  
What though the darkness gather round?  
Songs in the night he giveth. Refrain  
  
4 The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,  
a fountain ever springing!  
All things are mine since I am his!  
How can I keep from singing? Refrain

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