**pentecost 17- communion**

**zion, philipsburg, st. peter’s, linwood**

Welcome to worship on this 17th Sunday of Pentecost. Today we will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion. We will only be partaking of the bread. We will go over the instructions at the beginning of Communion.

We had a clergy cluster meeting this week and our Dean, Pastor Tanya Varner was talking to Synod about the protocols surrounding singing. Synod has advised that we are able to hum the hymns quietly. I know that it is not singing but it is a step forward.

Just a note that Zion’s council will meet on Tuesday evening at 7:00 at the church.

As we are back to in person worship we will be resuming my Sundays off on the 4th and 5th Sunday of the month. The worship committee will be providing the service next week.

Today we are recording the service on our trusty mp3 player. We have ran into a snag with our internet which will be discussed at the council meeting. Look for th eservice to be uploaded to the website later today.

**GATHERING**

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

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,

whose teaching is life,

whose presence is sure,

and whose love is endless. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sins to the one who welcomes us with an open heart.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God our comforter:

**like lost sheep, we have gone astray.**

**We gaze upon abundance and see scarcity.**

**We turn our faces away from injustice and oppression.**

**We exploit the earth with our apathy and greed.**

**Free us from our sin, gracious God.**

**Listen when we call out to you for help.**

**Lead us by your love to love our neighbors as ourselves.** **Amen.**

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

By the gift of grace in ☩ Christ Jesus, God makes you righteous.

Receive with glad hearts the forgiveness of all your sins. **Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG*Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing* (ELW 389)**

1 Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
The cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring.
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

2 Christ is alive! No longer bound
to distant years in Palestine,
but saving, healing, here and now,
and touching ev'ry place and time.

3 In ev'ry insult, rift, and war,
where color, scorn, or wealth divide,
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,
and lives, where even hope has died.

4 Women and men, in age and youth,
can feel the Spirit, hear the call,
and find the way, the life, the truth,
revealed in Jesus, freed for all.

5 Christ is alive, and comes to bring
good news to this and every age,
till earth and sky and ocean ring
with joy, with justice, love, and praise.

**GREETING (ELW p. 98)**

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 (ELW p. 102)**

Let us pray.

O God, our teacher and guide, you draw us to yourself and welcome us as beloved children. Help us to lay aside all envy and selfish ambition, that we may walk in your ways of wisdom and understanding as servants of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**WORD**

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

**FIRST READING: Jeremiah 11:18-20**

A reading from Jeremiah.

 18It was the Lord who made it known to me, and I knew; then you showed me their evil deeds. 19But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter.
 And I did not know it was against me that they devised schemes, saying,
 “Let us destroy the tree with its fruit, let us cut him off from the land of the living, so that his name will no longer be remembered!”
 20But you, O Lord of hosts, who judge righteously, who try the heart and the mind,
 let me see your retribution upon them, for to you I have committed my cause.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 54**

 1Save me, O God, by your name; in your might, defend my cause.
 2Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.
 3For strangers have risen up against me, and the ruthless have sought my life,
  those who have no regard for God.
 4Behold, God  is my helper; it is the Lord who sustains my life.
 5Render evil to those who spy on me; in your faithfulness, destroy them.
 6I will offer you a freewill sacrifice and praise your name, O Lord, for it is good.
 7For you have rescued me from every trouble, and my eye looks down on my enemies.

**SECOND READING: James 3:13--4:3, 7-8a**

A reading from James.

13Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. 14But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. 15Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. 16For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. 17But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. 18And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.4:
  1Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? 2You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. 3You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures. 7Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8aDraw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL: Mark 9:30-37**

The holy gospel according to Mark.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

30[Jesus and the disciples went on] and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it;31for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.” 32But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.
  33Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” 34But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. 35He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” 36Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, 37“Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON (ELW p. 103)**

 These conflicts and disputes among you…where do they come from? This was the question the author of James asked the early church in our New Testament reading today. You see, the members were not getting along, and the author was calling them on it. They were quarrelling amongst themselves, desiring what each other had. They were trying to keep up with the proverbial Jones of the times at the expense of loving God and loving one another.

 We hear the same storyline in our gospel reading this morning. The disciples were travelling with Jesus through Galilee on their way to Capernaum, and as they were walking, they were arguing amongst themselves about who was the greatest.

Throughout the gospel of Mark, we often hear about the mentality and confusion of the disciples concerning Jesus’ identity and their call as disciples in the world. I have mentioned it myself in many of my sermons, calling them confused or criticizing them for not getting it. C. Clifton Black in his Working Preacher Commentary for our gospel reading this week says it pretty bluntly….the disciples were “so dense that the light bent around them.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Those are pretty harsh words!!!

 We were discussing the disciple’s actions at Bible Study this week, (we meet on Tuesday mornings at 10:30 on Zoom with the folks from Trinity, New Hamburg, please chat with me if you would like the link, the more the merrier), and Pastor Tanya wondered if we haven’t been a little too hard on the disciples. She went to remind us that the disciples were hearing and learning from Jesus in real-time. They would not have had the advantage of hearing and reading about his works and radical love in written form as we have. Sure, they knew what their elders had passed on to them from the prophets in the aural tradition. They knew the Messiah was coming, for John the Baptist and many others proclaimed it. They became Jesus’ followers. They witnessed his miracles. They listened to his parables and his teachings. They heard Jesus tell them that he was the Son of Man, Peter, James, and John witnessed his transfiguration on the mountain, but still, they struggled with what Jesus was telling them.

  What is helpful to remember is that the disciples were human, and I wonder if they were not caught in the tension of faith and fear. They wanted to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, that he was the Son of God, but they did not understand what that meant. They were looking for the return of God, not understanding that Jesus was the continuation of God’s Word and work in the world. They were looking for power and privilege because they had seen what power was in the leadership of the Roman empire, and that it led to oppression and poverty for many of the Jewish people. To them, Jesus represented a kingly power of might that would overrule the powers of the Roman empire. Then wealth would be restored, and privilege and greatness would be prevalent in society at the expense of the Romans.

 Our passage today lives into our difficulty as human beings in comprehending just who God is and how God’s presence makes a difference in our lives through the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. That presence also calls us to serve and be in community with others, not to be in power over others.

 How often do we act like the disciples? We argue amongst ourselves proclaiming to be the greatest, believing we are right, proclaiming to have all the answers. Take a look at our world at the moment! I know I am not alone when I lament that it feels like we are living in a divided world. People are frustrated and angry for so many reasons. And I wonder if part of the issue is that it we are all fearful, but we are all fearing different things. I wonder if we are not caught in that same tension of faith and fear as the disciples were. Having faith is to trust in something that we cannot see that is greater than ourselves. It is being vulnerable. It is trusting that God is with us through the fear and the doubt, through the grief and sorrow, the anger and the discontent. And sometimes that is hard to do!

 God uses Jesus to show us what faith and trust are like in our passage today. We read that Jesus sat down and called the disciples to come to him. He explained that the first must be last of all and servant of all. He then placed a child in his lap and wrapped his arms around them. Children in antiquity held no status. They were possessions or nonpersons who were dependant on others until they reached the age where they could assist in family chores and duties.

 In simply holding a child in his arms, Jesus was calling the disciples to change their views and grow in faith. Jesus was calling them to understand that the power of Jesus' radical grace and acceptance was found in welcoming those who had little or no status, and in doing so, one was welcoming God into their midst. This was the true meaning of power and greatness. This was the true meaning of love, understanding that we all are beloved children of God, regardless of status, culture, sexual orientation, race. When we welcome our neighbour, we welcome God's presence among us.

 How different would our world look if we stopped with the words and actions that divide us? What if we stopped quarrelling about who is right and who is wrong? What would happen if we listened to one another without judgement or privilege? What if we genuinely were kind to one another? What would our world look like if we pursued greatness that benefited all of God’s beloved children, where all had a voice, where all were wrapped in the loving arms of Jesus like the child he held in his arms that day? I know that I am asking a lot of questions again!!

 So maybe we could let up on the disciples a little bit, understanding that they too were human just like us, trying to figure things out and trying to live into the faith and love of God. May we remember each day that we are all God’s beloved children, may that help us to come together instead of dividing us and pulling us apart.

**HYMN OF THE DAY*Children of the Heavenly Father:* (ELW 781)**

1 Children of the heav'nly Father
safely in his bosom gather;
nestling bird nor star in heaven
such a refuge e'er was given.

2 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.

3 Neither life nor death shall ever
from the Lord his children sever;
unto them his grace he showeth,
and their sorrows all he knoweth.

4 Though he giveth or he taketh,
God his children ne'er forsaketh;
his the loving purpose solely
to preserve them pure and holy.

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Made children and heirs of God’s promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need. *A brief silence.*

God of community, we pray for the church around the world. Unite us in our love for you. Help us overcome our divisions, that we are encouraged to work together for your sake. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of creation, we pray for this hurting earth. Awaken in us a new desire to care for this world and empower us to support agencies, organizations, and individual efforts to heal our environment. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of cooperation, we pray for nations of the world embroiled in conflict. Inspire leaders to listen to each other and work towards peaceful solutions to disagreements. Protect the vulnerable, especially children, who cannot find safety in their home or country. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of comfort, we pray for all who live with mental or physical illness. Help them find appropriate care. Bring healing and wholeness when the path forward seems bleak. We remember this morning Eddy, Elaine, Lynette, Barb, Sarah, Bonnie, Mary, Tilly, Robert, Helen, Katie, Rhonda, Nicole, Esther, Phyllis, Ian, the lives and memory of the thousands of buried children at residential school sites across Canada, and those we name either out loud in the silence of our hearts. (*Pause*) Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of compassion, we pray for the young people of this congregation. Renew in us your call to welcome the children in our midst. As they grow, strengthen their faith and our commitment to them. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of consolation, we give you thanks for our loved ones who have died and pray for all who grieve today. Shine your grace on all your saints. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**PEACE (ELW p. 106)**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**MEAL**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

**OFFERING PRAYER**

God of abundance,

you cause streams to break forth in the desert

and manna to rain from the heavens.

Accept the gifts you have first given us.

Unite them with the offering of our lives

to nourish the world you love so dearly;

through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

 **DIALOGUE (ELW p. 107)**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

 Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

 Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

**PREFACE (ELW p. 108)**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,

that we should at all times and in all places

give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,

through our Savior Jesus Christ;

who on this day overcame death and the grave,

and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,

with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 108)**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

**God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE (ELW p. 108)**

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,

who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,

who preached good news to the poor,

and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed,

our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;

broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,

and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,

we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,

and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,

the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;

to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,

be all honor and glory, now and forever. **Amen.**

**LORD’S PRAYER (ELW p. 112)**

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.**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

All who hunger and thirst, come. The table is ready.

**COMMUNION (ELW p. 112)**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (ELW p. 114)**

Let us pray.

Lord of life, in the gift of your body and blood you turn the crumbs of our faith into a feast of salvation. Send us forth into the world with shouts of joy, bearing witness to the abundance of your love in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**SENDING**

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

**BLESSING**

People of God, you are Christ’s body, bringing new life to a suffering world.

The holy Trinity, ☩ one God, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

**SENDING SONG*I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light* (ELW 815)**

1 I want to walk as a child of the light.
I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world.
The star of my life is Jesus.

Refrain
In him there is no darkness at all.
The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

2 I want to see the brightness of God.
I want to look at Jesus.
Clear Sun of righteousness, shine on my path,
and show me the way to the Father. Refrain

3 I'm looking for the coming of Christ.
I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race,
we shall know the joy of Jesus. Refrain

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. The living Word dwells in you.

**Thanks be to God.**

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1. C Clifton Black, Mark 9:30-37 Commentary in Working Preacher, accessed September 15, 2021, <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/ordinary-25-2/commentary-on-mark-930-37-7>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)