**Pentecost 21- October 17, 2021**

Zion Lutheran Church, Philipsburg

**ANNOUNCMENTS**

Welcometo worship on this 21st Sunday of Pentecost. Warm weather is still upon us, it felt more like May than October this week.

Please continue to keep Norma in your prayers, she is struggling with a number of health issues.

You have read in your bulletin that Zion requires 4 council members due to not having an Annual Meeting in 2021. Please prayerfully reflect on this need and how your skills, talent, and creativity can make a difference within our community. The time commitment is not large, we meet every 6 weeks and the meetings are 2 hours.

Also looking for lectors, again not a lot of time commitment, it is good to hear a variety of voices….male and female!

**GATHERING**

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

**GATHERING SONG*Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service* (ELW 712)**

1 Lord, whose love in humble service  
bore the weight of human need,  
who upon the cross, forsaken,  
worked your mercy's perfect deed:  
we, your servants, bring the worship  
not of voice alone, but heart;  
consecrating to your purpose  
ev'ry gift which you impart.  
  
2 Still your children wander homeless;  
still the hungry cry for bread;  
still the captives long for freedom;  
still in grief we mourn our dead.  
As you, Lord, in deep compassion  
healed the sick and freed the soul,  
by your Spirit send your power  
to our world to make it whole.  
  
3 As we worship, grant us vision,  
till your love's revealing light  
in its height and depth and greatness  
dawns upon our quickened sight,  
making known the needs and burdens  
your compassion bids us bear,  
stirring us to ardent service,  
your abundant life to share.  
  
4 Called by worship to your service,  
forth in your dear name we go,  
to the child, the youth, the aged,  
love in living deeds to show;  
hope and health, good will and comfort,  
counsel, aid and peace we give,  
that your servants, Lord, in freedom  
may your mercy know and live.

**GREETING (ELW p. 213)**

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. 215)**

Let us pray.

Sovereign God, you turn your greatness into goodness for all the peoples on earth. Shape us into willing servants of your kingdom, and make us desire always and only your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**WORD**

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

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 53:4-12**

A reading from Isaiah.

4Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases;  
 yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted.  
 5But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities;  
 upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.  
 6All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way,  
 and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.  
  
 7He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth;  
 like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 8By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people.  
 9They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich,  
 although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.  
  
 10Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain.  
 When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days, through him the will of the Lord shall prosper. 11Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.  
  The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. 12Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 91:9-16**

9Because you have made the Lord your refuge, and the Most High your habitation,  
 10no evil will befall you, nor shall affliction come near your dwelling.  
 11For God will give the angels charge over you, to guard you in | all your ways.  
 12Upon their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.   
 13You will tread upon the lion cub and viper; you will trample down the lion and the serpent.  
 14I will deliver those who cling to me; I will uphold them, because they know my name.  
 15They will call me, and I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble; I will rescue and honor them.  
 16With long life will I satisfy them, and show them my salvation.

**SECOND READING: Hebrews 5:1-10**

A reading from Hebrews.

1Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; 3and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. 4And one does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was.  
  5So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”; 6as he says also in another place, “You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.”  
  7In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; 9and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, 10having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL: Mark 10:35-45**

The holy gospel according to Mark.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

35James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” 36And he said to them, “What is it you want me to do for you?” 37And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” 38But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” 39They replied, “We are able.” Then Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; 40but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”  
  41When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. 42So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. 43But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, 44and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. 45For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON (ELW p. 217)**

Upon first reading our gospel today from the book of Mark, one might think that this is just another passage about the disciples’ continued confusion in understanding just who Jesus was and what was going to happen to him. They claimed to understand that Jesus was the Messiah. When Jesus asked Peter in Mark 8:29 who he was, Peter answered him precisely, saying that it was Jesus. James and John knew of the glory that Jesus would bring. But again, their understanding of glory and Jesus’ understanding of glory were on two totally different realms. At least that is how we have understood this passage throughout the years. But I wonder if the disciples were really that confused or if there was another emotion at play here.

We learn more about the emotion in the beginning of this passage which is not included in the lectionary for this 21st Sunday of Pentecost. It states, “ They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid.” Then Jesus told the disciples for the third time of his impending death and resurrection in vivid detail.

The author of Mark states that those who travelled with him were afraid. It does not say that they were confused. So, what fear would have been prevalent? Maybe the disciples were finally beginning to comprehend the brevity of what the journey to Jerusalem meant not only for Jesus but for them as well. Maybe asking Jesus the outlandish question of wanting to be at his left- and right-hand side was not about power and glory in the sense of earthly power, but in the sense of wanting to stay by his side because of their love for and trust in him. Maybe they were looking for some sort of security blanket, some sort of control in a time that seemed completely out of control for them.

Let’s put ourselves in the sandals of the disciples for a moment. They have been living under oppressive Roman rule surrounded by poverty. They left the security of their jobs to follow this man who claimed to be the Messiah. They have seen Jesus’ miracles and listened to his teachings. They have seen him challenge the Pharisee's orthodoxy. We have the advantage to read about it, to discern and reflect, and even preach about it. But the disciples were figuring all of this out in real-time, the change and transformation was happening in front of their eyes. Jesus continually asks if the disciples have any faith when they question and seem confused, but what we all seem to forget is that the disciples were human. They were perfectly imperfect folks trying to do the right thing. They were trying to live out faithful lives to the best of their ability. Just as all of us, they were growing in faith, which is sometimes uncomfortable and really hard.

Most all of you here today probably remember the glory days of the church, back when the pews were fuller, everyone came to church because it was the outing for the week. It was where your social circle was centred. The church had its place in the community and there was a sense of power and hierarchy. And while there was a deep sense of security in the church, it was also self-serving. We are all aware of the roles that power and corruption have played within the denominations of our Christian faith. For too long, some who held positions of power within the church used scripture to traumatize and condemn their members for their own gain instead of healing and transforming them as beloved children of God.

And this in part, is what has led to the downfall of the church. There is mistrust, there is doubt, there is frustration, and there is fear. Perhaps we are not so different from James and John as we would be led to believe.

Jesus asks James and John if they would drink the cup that Jesus drinks. They respond that they are able. In scripture, the cup is an image that portrays both joy and salvation and suffering and wrath. The joy of the cup is found in our beloved Psalm 23:5, "you anoint my head with oil and my cup overflows." An image of suffering is found in Psalm 11:6, "on the wicked, he will rain coals of fire and sulphur, a scorching wind will be the portion of their cup.” We also hear of the cup in Mark 14:36, where Jesus is in the garden of Gethsemane, praying and lamenting to God saying, “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.” Did the disciples truly understand what Jesus was asking of them? Do we?

Throughout the gospel of Mark, the disciples were called to understand who Jesus was as the Messiah. Jesus also impressed upon them the call to a life of servanthood. We read, "whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.” This is what we are called to do. This is who we are called to be. And the church is called to do the same. The church cannot fulfil its role in the kingdom of God through power, privilege, and prestige. The hierarchical roles do not help proclaim the kingdom of God among us.

I think the last 18 months have given us a clearer understanding of that call. We have had to live with uncertainty and a loss of control. When the doors of our building were locked, there was a need to reach out in different ways. We had to think outside the box in how one continued to do the work of the church. How do we reach and engage our members? How do we minister to the greater community?

And as a whole I think many found answers to those questions. But now that we are back to in-person worship, how do we continue that? Or do we go back to the old ways of being church because it is easier, because it is comfortable and safe, because it is what we know? Or do we gladly take the cup that Jesus drank from? Do we jump into the waters of our baptism? Do we let go of the fear and truly live into the kingdom of God, as servants of Jesus Christ?

In being called as servants, in being called to share the cup that Jesus drank, we are reminded of the love that God has for us through the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. With that love surrounding and sustaining us, we can trust in the promise of hope for the future because the fear and need for security that is carried in our hearts and minds are replaced with unconditional love for one another regardless of race, skin colour, sexuality, gender or even vax status. We can take up our crosses and live as faithful disciples of God, trusting that the presence of God is with us and that the love of God will sustain us.

The future of the church is up to us. Can we live into the faith and mission that God has given us through the power of the Holy Spirit? Can we let go of the church of the past and live into a new reality of serving and loving one another beyond the walls of our buildings? Can we forgo the fear and truly drink the cup that Jesus drinks knowing that life brings us both joy and suffering, both salvation and wrath? Let it be so. Amen

**HYMN OF THE DAY*The Church of Christ, in Every Age* (ELW 729)**

1 The church of Christ, in ev'ry age  
beset by change, but Spirit-led,  
must claim and test its heritage  
and keep on rising from the dead.  
  
2 Across the world, across the street,  
the victims of injustice cry  
for shelter and for bread to eat,  
and never live before they die.  
  
3 Then let the servant church arise,  
a caring church that longs to be  
a partner in Christ's sacrifice,  
and clothed in Christ's humanity.  
  
4 For he alone, whose blood was shed,  
can cure the fever in our blood,  
and teach us how to share our bread  
and feed the starving multitude.  
  
5 We have no mission but to serve  
in full obedience to our Lord;  
to care for all, without reserve,  
and spread his liberating word.

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Set free from sin and death and nourished by the word of truth, we join in prayer for all of God’s creation. *A brief silence.*

Holy One, for the gift of the church handed down through the ages and for all who carry on the servant ministry of Jesus, we praise you. Send your Holy Spirit upon all who are discerning calls to ministry in its many forms and equip them with your gifts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creating One, for the lush and abundant habitat you provide for all your creatures, we praise you. Provide healing for the earth so that waterfowl, reptiles, fish, and all living things flourish as you intend. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Suffering One, for all who work toward peace and who lead nations with a servant’s heart, we praise you. Bring justice for all who suffer violence, persecution, discrimination, hunger, poverty, and homelessness, and create places of refuge for all people. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Merciful One, for all who do the work of healing in mind, body, and spirit, we praise you. Surround and comfort all who struggle with depression, anxiety, cancer, diabetes, dementia, covid, or any other illness or injury. We remember today, Eddy, Elaine, Barb, Sarah, Bonnie, Tilly, Katie, Nicole, Esther, Phyllis, John and Ruth, Norma, the lives, and memory of the thousands of buried children at residential school sites across Canada, and those we name out loud or in the silence of our hearts (Pause). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Sustaining One, for all who volunteer for the vitality of this congregation, we praise you. Strengthen and encourage councillors, lectors, comforter knotters, counters, committee leaders, teachers, students, evangelists, singers, builders, nurturers, and all who serve with generous and open hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Risen One, we thank you for those who have shaped your church and shared your gospel. Through the witness of your saints, continue to inspire us with hope until we all are gathered at your eternal feast. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Confident that you hear us, O God, we boldly place our prayers into your hands; through Jesus Christ, our truth and life. **Amen.**

**PEACE (ELW p. 217)**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**OFFERING (ELW p. 217)**

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.**

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

Let us pray.

Holy God,

mighty Fortress, loving Redeemer, steadfast Comforter, as vegetation matures in forests and fields, your living Word undergirds all that lives.

We praise your eternal Word.

 In the words of the scriptures you offer us Christ: our refuge, our savior, our friend,

accompanying us throughout our years and renewing us in love.

We praise Jesus, your Word.

 We pray for power from your abiding Spirit. Strengthen us to stand firm in faith,

in devotion to your Word, and in service to others.

We pray for the Spirit of your Word.

 To you be honor and praise and glory, today and forever. **Amen.**

**LORD’S PRAYER (ELW p. 221)**

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**

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*Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song:* (ELW 808)**

1 Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey;  
I'll tell ev'rybody about you wherever I go:  
you alone are our life and our peace and our love.  
Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey.  
  
2 Lord Jesus, I'll praise you as long as I journey.  
May all of my joy be a faithful reflection of you.  
May the earth and the sea and the sky join my song.  
Lord Jesus, I'll praise you as long as I journey.  
  
3 As long as I live, Jesus, make me your servant,  
to carry your cross and to share all your burdens and tears.  
For you saved me by giving your body and blood.  
As long as I live, Jesus, make me your servant.  
  
4 I fear in the dark and the doubt of my journey;  
but courage will come with the sound of your steps by my side.  
And with all of the family you saved by your love,  
we'll sing to your dawn at the end of our journey.

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. The living Word dwells in you.

**Thanks be to God.**

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