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Worship
February 21, 2021

(To watch the videotaped version of the worship service, click the link below)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqUQ1Jl7lqs>

GATHERING

PRELUDE – “To the Desert Follow Me”

Erin/Kristan

GREETING & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

OPENING HYMN – “Led by the Spirit”

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Come, people of God, and worship the Christ.

Reader: Once we were separated from him, aliens and strangers who did not belong, without hope and without God in the world.

Once we loved darkness rather than light. Once we could not sing the Lord’s song.

But now we are joined with Christ, brought near through his blood, for He is our peace.

Now we who lived in darkness have come into the light have been given a new song.

Let us come and worship the Living Light of Christ!

A BRIEF CONFESSION

Pastor: Let us confess our sins, trusting in the abundant grace of Christ.

(A moment of silence)

Congregation: You are acquainted with all our ways. We confess that our hearts are burdened by sin: our own sins and the broken systems that bind us.

We turn inward, failing to follow your outward way of love.

We distrust those who are not like us. We exploit the earth and its resources and fail to consider the generations to come.

Forgive us, gracious God, for all we have done and left undone.

Yet we are forgiven by our God through the Risen Christ, and we are called to be the beloved community living out Christ’s justice and the Spirit’s reconciling peace. Amen

GREETING

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Be filled with the spirit of God today.

C: We worship to open our hearts for God’s blessings.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading

Genesis 9: 8-17

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.' God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.' God said to Noah, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.'

Reader: Here what the spirit is saying to us.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Second Reading

Psalm 25

Of David.

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

O my God, in you I trust;

do not let me be put to shame;

do not let my enemies exult over me.

Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;

let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

Make me to know your ways, O LORD;

teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth, and teach me,

for you are the God of my salvation;

for you I wait all day long.

**Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.**

Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for your goodness' sake, O LORD!

Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.
All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

Reader: Here what the spirit is saying to us.

Response: Thanks be to God.

PSALM RESPONSE – “To You O Lord”

GOSPEL READING

Mark 1:9-15

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.’

Reader: Here what the spirit is saying to us.

Response: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY – “Gracious God”

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe that God is Spirit, and we worship Him and must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

We believe that God is Light, and that if we walk in the light, we then have fellowship not only with one another, but with our Lord as well.

We believe that God is Love, and that everyone who loves is born of God and know God.

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Resurrection and the Life and that whoever believes on Him, will abide forever.

(from the Book of Common Worship by Wilbur P Thirkield)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Pastor: As we are guided by the Spirit, let us offer our prayers for the church, for the nation, for all in need, and for our world.

(A brief silence)

Pastor: Gracious God, in this time of worry, fear, division, uncertainty, we pray that you will bring insight, compassion, understanding, and strength of character to our leaders of communities, churches, states, and nation that calm and direction will be restored to our people. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Congregation: Gracious God, we pray that we shall use wisely all the gifts of our world: the water that provides life to us all; the land that provides our food; for you call us to be good stewards of all that you have made, and we ask that you let it be so. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Pastor: Lord, we pray for the safety of all who protect us: police officers and firefighters, military personnel, peacekeepers, and for the leaders of governments. We pray that all act with justice and understanding to all whom they encounter. And Lord, we pray for the time when peace will come, and violence will be no more. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Congregation: We pray for our world, nation, and community in the midst of this Covid-19 pandemic. We know that health care workers are having to make difficult decisions of life and death. Give them wisdom in those decisions. Give strength that they may give care to those suffering with Covid and other diseases, and we ask that you would protect them from illness and despair. We also pray for all who are ill here at Bethany and we ask for hand of wholeness and healing; comfort and strength for all who are ill of body, mind, or spirit. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Pastor: Listen to each of us Lord, as we come to you in this moment of silent prayer.

It is into Your hands, great and compassionate God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

OFFERING

PRAYER OF BLESSING

God of all blessings, giver of all good gifts; day by day you shower us with what we need to live and prosper. With glad and generous hearts and in a response to thanksgiving, we return a portion of our wealth. May what we give be a symbol of our gratitude and a blessing of your love for those who may be helped through our offering. Amen.

MEAL

Communion Dialogue

P: For the spiritual hunger in our lives, Jesus said:

C: Eat this bread.

P: For the spiritual longing to have fellowship with God, Jesus said:

C: Drink this cup.

P: Jesus is the Bread of life, the risen Lord.

C: In him there is no hunger, in him there is no thirst.

P: On the night he was betrayed ...

Communion Invitation

P: Come to God's table; be fed and satisfied.

C: We come to feed our spirit and be in the presence of God.

Communion Music - "Into the Desert"

Erin/Kristan

Communion Blessing

P: Let us pray:

C: Radiant God, may your Word take flesh in us that we may be your holy people. May this meal empower us to better be your loving servants. AMEN.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ fill you with every good blessing. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN - "Beyond the Days"

DISMISSAL

Paster: Go in Peace...to live and serve in the way of the cross.

Response: Thanks be to God.