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**At Home Worship  
March 21, 2021**

**GATHERING**

**PRELUDE** – “The Cross of Jesus”

Erin/Kristan

**GREETING & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP**

**OPENING HYMN** – “Take Up Your Cross”

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

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

*Reader: Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.*

*Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered.*

*Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit, there is no deceit.*

*Let us come and worship the Christ who forgives sin.*

**A BRIEF CONFESSION**

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

**(A moment of silence)**

**Congregation: Holy God, we pray for your forgiveness of all of our sins: For our self-centered living, and our failure to walk with humility and compassion; for longing to have what is not ours; for the misuse of human relationships, and for our unwillingness to see the face of Christ in others. For our hurtful words that condemn, and divide us one from another. For our unwillingness to share the gifts that You have given us. For our idleness in witnessing to the Love and Grace of Jesus Christ in all that we do and say, Holy God, holy and mighty, have forgiveness for us in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.**

*Pastor: We are forgiven by our God through the Risen Christ, and He calls us to be the beloved community of Christ, living out His 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**

#### **Jeremiah 31:31-34**

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. 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, says the LORD. 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. 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.

*Reader: Here what the spirit is saying to us.*

**Response: Thanks be to God.**

### **Second Reading**

#### **Psalm 51**

To the leader. A Psalm of David, when the prophet Nathan came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.  
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.  
Against you, you alone, have I sinned,  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you are justified in your sentence  
and blameless when you pass judgement.  
Indeed, I was born guilty,  
a sinner when my mother conceived me.

You desire truth in the inward being;  
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.  
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.  
Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from your presence,  
and do not take your holy spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

*Reader: Here what the spirit is saying to us.*  
Response: Thanks be to God.

### **PSALM RESPONSE - "Create in Me"**

### **GOSPEL READING**

#### **John 12:20-33**

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 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. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.

'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. Father, glorify your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, 'An angel has spoken to him.' Jesus answered, 'This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.' He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

*Reader: Here what the spirit is saying to us.*  
Response: Thanks be to God.

## SERMON

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, March 21, 2021. "I Am Troubled."

**"My hour has come...My soul is troubled, and what shall I say?"** Being familiar with the Gospel of John, we know that Jesus is making a 180 turn here. Philip has brought the Greeks to come and see Jesus, and now Jesus says, "My hour has come." Prior to this lesson in Chapter 12, Jesus has been making it clear that His hour has NOT come. Be it at the wedding in Cana, the feeding of the 5,000, or in any one of three or four other places in John's Gospel. This change forces us to ask, what has changed?

**What has changed is now He is in Jerusalem; He has just raised Lazarus from the dead; and the powers of Judaism have decided that Jesus needs to die for the sake of the nation. Little wonder that Jesus's soul is troubled. My soul would also be troubled knowing that my death was coming soon. Not a death of old age; or of disease; but a death that supposedly was reserved for murderers and terrorists, certainly not one reserved for a religious teacher; certainly not for the Son of God. "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say?"**

**That innocent people are killed all the day long hasn't changed in 2,000 years. Children slaughter each other on the streets; people are shot for asking others to wear a mask in this time of pandemic; greed robs people of their savings and their retirement; and the pandemic still takes lives every day. Not only is Christ's soul troubled, but so are ours, wondering when all of this chaos will come to an end. We pray every day and once in a while, hope does shine on the horizon. Vaccines are here and people are getting them. There are upticks in employment. Perhaps we hope that we will see an end to this pandemic and the economic dislocation that has come with it.**

**But as a pastor, I must admit that there are times when the weariness of all that I have seen wears on my soul. I wonder, as I sure you do as well, if my feeble words make any impression on people at all. The stories of heartache and sorrow; of love that has turned to anger because one's expectations are not being met in a relationship; of lost faith, or of no faith because of truly horrible things that sometimes happen in life: the death of a love one way too early in this pandemic; of children who end up on the wrong side of the law and life; of jobs that have been lost in the economic downturns caused by the virus; of loved ones lost in the endless wars in Iraq or Afghanistan; parents and children and friends who are no longer speaking because of an argument that happened years ago, and yes, my soul is troubled, what have I to say?**

**This lesson this morning reminds that at times even Jesus found it difficult to grips with the pain and suffering around him, and now the coming pain suffering that He would soon endure on the Cross. Though John doesn't mention it here, it is clear that Jesus is in prayer—in conversation with the Father throughout this period that leads to the Cross. And that is where each of us needs to find our strength—our faith...in Scripture and in prayer as we approach Holy Week and Easter.**

**Note in our lesson, that the Pharisees said that the whole world was coming after Jesus. Perhaps it felt like that to the Pharisees, but to Jesus, it wasn't until the Greeks came with Philip and Andrew, did He acknowledge that His time was now come. And in this time, he would die, and like a grain of wheat, his death would enable him to bear much fruit, and from the Cross He would draw all people to Himself. The Greeks came to "see" Jesus, and in John's Gospel to "see" often means to 'believe' in Jesus, thus the Greeks and others, after hearing of Lazarus from the dead, they came to see in order to also believe in Jesus.**

**So, what now of ourselves? Do we come now to ‘see’ Jesus? Are we willing to die ourselves as Jesus calls us to so that we might have eternal life. Or would we rather let someone else do our dying for us? Are we willing to take up our cross and follow Jesus, or not? And what of suffering for our faith? Are we willing to suffer in Christ’s name, or are we willing to let someone else do the serving, do the suffering for the whole Body of Christ, and then complain that they didn’t do it our way?**

**And what then do we see when we look upon Christ on the Cross? Do we see the Christ who draws all people to himself? Do we see the one who tells us of God’s great love for us all, a love so great that he gave his only Son for us that we might have life in the midst of darkness and death? Indeed, it is through the cross that Jesus shows us a God who brings forth life out of death. Do we see in the Cross, God’s proclamation of life for us all? What do you See? Amen.**

**HYMN OF THE DAY – “Unless a Grain of Wheat” Erin, verses & Cong., refrain**

### **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

*Pastor: Let join in professing our faith:*

**Congregation: We believe in God the Creator of all, known to us through perfect love, and who called us forth as a people of faith.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ, the Word became flesh, crucified and resurrected, our Savior from sin, our peace, and Lord of the church.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, poured out on all believers, our source of inspiration and power.**

**We respond to Christ in faith as the church, the community sustained by the Spirit, called to proclaim and witness to the kingdom of God. Amen.**

**(Based on the “Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective: 1995)**

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

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

**(A brief silence)**

*Pastor: Lord, during this season of Lent, give us a new awareness of your presence throughout our journey to the Cross. Aid us as we struggle in these days of Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, and help us to see in the coming of the vaccines, hope that someday soon, that this time of heartache, sorrow and fear will end. Lord in your mercy,*

**(all) Hear our prayer.**

**Congregation: Holy God, Creator of all things, give us wisdom to use the gifts of your creation wisely. Enable us to grow the crops and animals so that the food that comes from You will feed all people, especially in these times, those who hunger because of lost employment, those who suffer hunger because of war and turmoil in their nations and all others in need. Lord in your mercy,**

**(all) Hear our prayer.**

*Pastor: Lord, we pray for those who lead the nations and factions of the world, that they would listen to your voice that speaks of justice and the rule of law for all people. We pray for the safety of all those who protect us on the streets of our cities, our firefighters, police officers, EMTs and others, that they would return home to their families safely this day. We pray also for our military personnel around the world who place themselves in harm's way each day, as well as our health care workers who must make difficult decisions of life and death each day. Lord in your mercy,*  
**(all) Hear our prayer.**

**Congregation: We give you thanks for the scientists and others who have worked on the vaccines that are now protecting so many of us, yet at the same time we pray for those who mourn the deaths of their loved ones. We ask you Lord, to surround them with your arms of comfort and compassion. We pray for those who are ill of body, mind, or spirit here at Bethany and all others who are in need of your hands of healing and wholeness. Lord in your mercy,**  
**(all) 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 – “Purify My Heart”**

**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 – “O Christ, Your Heart, Compassionate”**

### **DISMISSAL**

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

**Response: Thanks be to God.**

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

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/Uct8qX94ICK-omDHSc71en4w>