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Worship
May 30, 2021

GATHERING

PRELUDE
GREETING & ANNOUNCEMENTS
PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Call to Worship

Pastor: Come, People of God, and let us worship Jesus the Christ.

Reader: Let us worship the eternal God, the Source of love and life, who created us. Let us worship Jesus the Christ, the risen one who lives among us. Let us worship the Spirit, the Holy Fire, who renews us. Let us worship the one true God who is to be praised in all times and places.

Opening Hymn – “Holy, Holy, Holy”

Greeting

P The peace of the Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P May the risen Christ fill us with life, light, and hope.

*C Thanks be to God. The Spirit teaches us, inspires us, and give us the voice of the Gospel.
Amen.*

Hymn of Praise – “Lift Up Your Hearts”

THE WORD

First Reading

Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said:

**‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory.’**

The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: ‘Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!’

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: ‘Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.’ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I; send me!’

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Second Reading

Psalm 29

A Psalm of David.

**Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.**

**Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name;
worship the LORD in holy splendour.**

**The voice of the LORD is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the LORD, over mighty waters.**

**The voice of the LORD is powerful;
the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.**

**The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;
the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.
He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Sirion like a young wild ox.**

**The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire.
The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**

**The voice of the LORD causes the oaks to whirl,
and strips the forest bare;
and in his temple all say, 'Glory!'**

**The LORD sits enthroned over the flood;
the LORD sits enthroned as king for ever.
May the LORD give strength to his people!
May the LORD bless his people with peace!**

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Psalm Response – “The Lord Will Bless His People With Peace”

Gospel Reading

John 3:1-17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Trinity Sunday (Memorial Day), May 30, 2021. "The Forgotten."

Trinity Sunday always holds more than a little challenge for me. Preaching on a doctrine of the Church that is one of the major cornerstones of our faith, is always difficult, for the Trinity is perhaps the greatest mysteries of Christianity and coming as it does on this Memorial Day weekend, well trying to find something that speaks of both Trinity Sunday and Memorial Day is a challenge, but I believe that we need to honor both after this past year that we have endured.

I feel a need this day for us to remember those who have given so much over the 2 ½ centuries of this nation—more than 1,225,000 have died in our wars over the years—and that is probably a low figure—and in this past year we have lost an additional 602,000 in our country to Covid 19—I believe we should not forget them—the soldiers, sailors, air personnel, and now those who gave so much over these past 15 months, so here goes:

This day is never an easy one for those of us who served in combat units be it World War II, Korea, Viet Nam, the Gulf Wars, and the War on Terror. It is not easy for us for we remember those who did not come home—we remember their names—where they were from—and yes often times what church they belonged too. We remember the words we wrote home to the families who needed to hear that we honored their loved one while they were alive and honored them by remembering them as we wrote about their quirks, their laugh, their faith, their courage and how much they spoke of the families that they had left behind. Families that now will always have an empty place at the table. And now there will be more families with empty spaces at the table as we remember those who have been lost in these past months from Covid.

In times of war, prayers are more often than not on the lips of those going into battle, as prayers have been on the lips of countless families in these past months. And we do remember them; those we have known; those we have lost; so how is he going to weave the Trinity into this sermon?

I believe that this following story tells of how God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work together in times of crisis to remind us that God is God and those who listen to His voice are often called to serve and to sacrifice for the sake of others.

The following is a story that comes to us from World War II. It is the story of the 4 chaplains on the transport ship the Dorchester. The four chaplains were Pastor George Fox (Methodist), Pastor Clark Poling (Dutch Reformed), Rabbi Alexander Goode (Jewish), and Father John Washington (Catholic). They had been in chaplains' school together after Pearl Harbor. During their training the four had become close friends and as luck would have it, they were assigned together to the same battalion and were soon on their way to Greenland on a transport ship named the Dorchester. They shipped out on January 23, 1943. At this time Nazi submarines were sinking over 100 ships a month in the North Atlantic. January in the North Atlantic is not fun, and the Dorchester was sailing into the teeth of Torpedo Junction.

The young troops were terribly seasick on the rough seas of the North Atlantic. As they were only 190 miles from Greenland, the Dorchester was torpedoed. Chaos reigned. Cries, screams, darkness, overwhelmed the young troops—but then in the midst of all the screams and cries for help—above all of it came the strong, calm voices of the four chaplains directing the survivors to the lifeboat deck. With may officers dead, these four men gave the troops a chance in the night, in the roaring seas. As the ship sank, they made sure the men had their life vests, and when the life vests lockers were empty, knowing that they wouldn't probably survive, they gave their life vests to four young men, ensuring that those four would survive. The survivors of the Dorchester told this story as they watched the ship sink: "We could see the chaplains against the rail and we could hear the Jewish chaplain saying this prayer: '*Shma Yisroel Adonai Elohenu Adonai, echod.* We think it was from the prayer of the dying. The other three were saying the Lord's Prayer as they went down. You know sir, they saved a bunch of us.'

At the Navy Yard in Philadelphia there is a chapel named in honor of the Four Chaplains. These words are at the entrance to the chapel: In only 27 minutes after the first torpedo struck, the last trace of the Dorchester disappeared beneath the cold Atlantic waters, taking with it, 646 men, including the Four Chaplains of different faiths who found strength in their diversity by focusing on their love for God and the humanity they all shared."

Their love for God—so often God shows us through the actions of people of faith that even in the deepest darkness; in the times of greatest crisis, God does not abandon us. And in these times; in our time; there have been doctors, nurses, EMTs, and so many others that risked their lives for their patients—and so many others that gave their all for those whom they were called to serve—indeed on this day we need to remember the strength of our faith—and that is what this day is about. Amen.

Hymn of the Day – “Come, Thou Almighty King”

Affirmation of Faith

We believe that God has established the Church, and will preserve and protect it, and will provide us with a foretaste of our greatest hope.

We believe that Jesus Christ is the head of the church and died and rose again in His resurrection, to give eternal life through our baptism into Christ.

We believe that the Holy Spirit breathed fire and life into the Church at Pentecost and still provides power for its preservation and ministry.

We believe the Church is the community of disciples, using their gifts freely and wisely for the common good of the body and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ until He comes again.

Amen.

Prayers of the People

P. As we are rooted in Christ and sustained by the Spirit, we offer our prayers for the Church, the World, and all of Creation.

(A Brief Silence)

P. In these days of conflict and lack of trust among peoples, we pray for the people of Israel and Gaza, that their leaders will find peace and hope, so that their people may live without fear once more. Indeed, Lord, we pray for all peoples who are enduring conflict that soon peace will come. Hear us O God.

C. Your mercy is great.

P. Lord on this Memorial Day, we remember those who have given their lives so that we may have the freedoms that we so enjoy this day: our freedom to worship as we see fit; our freedom to disagree with civility; to vote for whom we choose; and we pray that someday all peoples will be to enjoy the freedom of speech, of worship, freedom from want; and freedom from fear. Hear us O God.

C. Your mercy is great.

P. Lord, you draw near to these who cry out for help. Enable us to be your hands that feed the hungry; to those who are in darkness and are looking for hope; let us be your arms to those who are mourning the death of loved ones; let us be your comfort to those who are ill of body mind or spirit, and enable us to bring your light and your hope who are searching for light and hope in their lives. Be especially with those for whom we pray on our prayer list, and those for whom we pray in this moment of silence.....Hear us O God.

C. Your mercy is great.

P. On this day Lord, we would pray for all those who serve our town and cities to keep us safe, and pray for their safety this day. We pray for those who serve us in far off places, that they will be able to return to their loved ones soon.

C. Your mercy is great.

P. Lord we here at Bethany would ask that your Spirit guide the search for a new pastor for your people here. Bless our Call Committee with the spirit of discernment as they examine those who believe that God is calling to a new congregation in Scottsdale, AZ Hear us O God.

P. We lift these and all of our prayers to you, O God, confident in the promise of your saving love, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Offering

Offertory

Prayer of Blessing

P Let us pray:

C. Gracious God, we give our best, lest in gaining the world we lose life itself. As a covenant people, we seek to witness to your will and way. Help us to know more clearly what you would have us do with the gifts entrusted to our care. Direct us according to your will O God. Amen.

MEAL

A Brief Confession

P. Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance, let us confess our sins and hear again, Christ's words of forgiveness.

A brief silence

C. Too often Lord, we question your ways when they differ from the ways of the world in which we live. We turn instead to our own understanding rather than trusting in You. We take offense at your teachings and your ways. Turn us again Lord, to you. Where else can we turn? Enable us Lord to help to hear your words for us and to enable us to be light and life for our world. Lord we confess that we have not always lived up to the covenant that you have made with us, and we ask for your forgiveness. Amen.

P. Beloved People of God, through Jesus the bread of life, the light of the World, you are forgiven all of your sins, and you are loved into the life with Christ.

All: Amen.

C.

P. The love of Christ has gathered us as one, to remember Christ, the Son of God, who loved his own until the end.

C. In His great, unselfish love, the Lord who calmed the storms and turned water into wine, stooped to a servant's duty and washed his disciples' feet.

P. When we are gathered here, let us be drawn together by His passion. Let no love be less than His.

C. Let us follow Christ's example and serve one another as He first served us. For by this, the world will know that we are Christ's followers, if we love one another.

P. On the night He was betrayed....

Communion Dialogue

P The Lord is risen!

C We have seen the Lord!

P Lift up your hearts, people of God.

C We lift them to the Risen Christ.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C We offer our thanks and praise to the One who gives us new life.

P On the night he was betrayed ...

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.**

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 - "A Place at Your Table"

Communion Blessing

P. Let us pray:

C. Jesus, Bread of Life, we have received from your table more than we could ever ask. As you have nourished us in this meal, now strengthen us to love the world with your own life. In your name we pray. Amen.

SENDING

Benediction

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

Closing Hymn - "Holy God We Praise Thy Name"

Dismissal

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

Response: Thanks be to God.