

WORSHIP August 9, 2020

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

<https://youtu.be/712uHdxQbm8>

(To read the service continue on from here)

GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

CALL TO WORSHIP

We come to worship the God of all Creation

Fill us, O God, with awe for you have wonderfully made us.

We come to worship to be inspired by the ministry of Jesus.

Teach us, O God, to learn from the one you sent to be our teacher and savior.

We come to worship to be filled with the Holy Spirit

Inspire us, O God, with your energy to be ambassadors of love and service.

A BRIEF CONFESSION

If we say we have no sin, if we believe we are not broken; we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

God of forgiveness, God of healing ... fill us with your truth, your grace.

We trust that your mercy is our forgiveness, your compassion our healing.

God of forgiveness, God of healing ... fill us with your truth, your grace.

We live in the power of a forgiving God.

We live in the presence of Jesus the Christ ... we are forgiven, thanks be to God. Amen.

GREETING

The Lord be with you

May this time of worship give praise to God

May this time of worship equip us for service in Jesus' name.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

1st Reading – 1 Kings 19:9-18

At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there.

Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.' He said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.' Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.'

Then the Lord said to him, 'Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.'

2nd Reading – Psalm 85:8-13

*Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.
Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.*

*Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
The Lord will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness will go before him,
and will make a path for his steps.*

Gospel reading – Mt 14: 22-33

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.' Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

SERMON - Pastor Carl Mangold

Vision to Mission

In our two lessons today, we find both Elijah (Eli-jah literally means “my God is Jahweh”) and Jesus on mountains. Elijah has recently killed the prophets of Baal and is now in hiding while he seeks God’s attention. He does not find God in the winds, earthquake and fire, but rather in a still small voice. In Matthew Jesus directs the disciples to get into a boat while he dismisses the crowd of 5,000 men plus women and children that they just fed. Then he goes up a mountain to be alone and pray. Both are alone in quarantine.

About thirty years ago I had the pleasure to spend several days over the period of a month with Albert Whitehat, an elder of the Ogalala Sioux tribe. He shared his tribal culture with us and two tribal rites of passage for young people.

Young boys and girls are given a birth name which is used while they are children. When they reach the age of young adults, they are given their new adult name. Similar to some Christian rites where we get a baptismal name and then a confirmation name. On that birthday the young person sits in front of their house and is greeted by tribal members. The birthday girl or boy distributes individually chosen gifts to each one who comes. Not like each of us getting similar candy canes in Sunday school at Christmas when we were children. Rather, each gift is specifically selected for the particular person. Gramma might receive a heavy wool blanket because she is cold during the winter. Someone else whose radio broke might receive a new radio. The child becoming an adult does not receive gifts, rather that new adult is distributing gifts so that s/he learns to take responsibility within the tribe for others.

The other ritual is a Vision Quest in which a young man takes some food and water into the wilderness, or on a mountain to achieve a vision of his role in life. He goes out like Elijah expecting some huge event like a strong wind or earthquake or fire or a bolt of lightning which does not come. Initially disappointed he begins to realize that this is an inner spiritual experience of finding his own voice and vision for his life. After Elijah receives the vision in a small voice, he follows God's mission to him to go out and anoint two kings and one prophet. After Jesus prays on the mountain, he walks across the water to join the disciples in the boat. When they see Jesus walking on water, they fear it is ghost. Peter calls out to Jesus to get an invitation to come to Jesus on the water...if you are really Jesus. Jesus calls him to come and Peter starts to walk on water toward Jesus, but perhaps his faith quivers so he begins to sink. Peter, looking up at Jesus, calls out to Jesus to be saved and Jesus saves him.

Vision and mission are always intimately connected. Sometimes the mission may precede the vision and sometimes it follows the mission, but they are always inter-connected.

In the early days of school desegregation in the deep south, a little African American girl named Ruby Bridges was to start attending an all-white elementary school. I think she might have been a second grader. Each day she walked through two rows of state troopers who were holding back a crowd of angry white people who were yelling threats and abusive slurs at her.

The school district officials had anticipated that this would happen so they had hired a therapist to help Ruby cope with this abuse. One morning her teacher watched as she walked through the crowd and saw her lips moving. Concerned by the possibility that Ruby might further incense the crowd if Ruby talked back to them, she informed the therapist so he could talk with her. When the therapist told Ruby that it would be unwise to talk back to the crowd she replied, "Oh, I wasn't talking to them. I was praying for them."

Our vision also leads us to mission action, just like Elijah, Jesus, Peter and Christians of all ages. Like Ruby we may feel like we are walking through a hostile crowd at times. Like Peter we may feel in over our heads sometimes. These are natural reactions to saying goodbye to a pastor without knowing where our congregation is going and how our mission may develop.

These are also natural feelings in times such as these when we might face a hostile response simply because we are wearing a mask.

In the midst of a viral pandemic without a pastor in residence one of our chief missions might be to just pray for our enemies or others. So, pray for those who wear a mask, who physically distance and quarantine. Then pray for those who don't. Pray for doctors, nurses, EMTs, medical science researchers, and paramedics. For school teachers, parents and children. For hospital and school custodians. And pray for a renewed society, not just a return to the previous "normal" because that normal needs renewal. And finally, pray for this congregation of Our Lord's disciples as we move into a new future during uncertain times.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in God the Creator,
by whom every person in heaven and earth is named.
We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.
We believe in one God:
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Amen

- *Creed of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of power and wisdom ... You are Creator of all. You give us life and blessing. By your word, all that is was brought forth. You call us to be faithful trusting in your providence over all of creation. By your power and wisdom give us faith that serves you and your purpose. By your power and wisdom give us courage to act upon the faith you give us. By your power and wisdom give us the humbleness of spirit and the gratitude of heart to worship you always in honesty and truth to be the People of God poised for service. In your grace and love Lord ... hear our prayer.

God of power and wisdom ... we pray for peace today. We pray for peace in our hearts. We pray for peace in our homes and communities. We pray for peace in our nation and in the world. Help each of us to do our part in being peacemakers in the circles of our own lives and we pray for those called to be peacemakers among nations and cultures. We pray for the hungry, for the homeless, for the refugee and immigrant. We pray that their longings for a place to call home, a place to be safe, and to place be fed is a journey in which we partner with them to be the love of God for healing and provision. In your grace and love Lord ... hear our prayer.

God of power and wisdom ... We pray for Bethany members on our prayer list. Give them the blessing of your presence amid their times of trial. We pray for our congregation in this time of suspended worship that we will still continue to be a committed community of faith seeking to be the light of Jesus in our community and world. In your grace and love Lord ... hear our prayer.

God of unfailing love ... We pray for our world in a time of pandemic and societal distress and change. Give our leaders wisdom, compassion, insight, and courage to lead in ways that serve all the people under their charge. We pray for doctors and nurses, EMT's, and all those on the frontline of healthcare amid this COVID-19 pandemic. Give them health, energy, compassion, and the strength to care for those struggling with illness and hospitalization. In your grace and love Lord ... hear our prayer.

Listen to each of us, Lord, as we come to you in a moment of silent prayer

Into your hands, great and compassionate God, we commend all for whom and about which we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

OFFERING

(Please mail your weekly offering to the church - 4300 N 82nd St. Scottsdale, AZ 85251)

PRAYER OF BLESSING

God of all blessing, 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 of 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

THE LORD'S PRAYER

You may say traditional Lord's Prayer or use the Aramaic translation printed below or you may say both in succession

*O Creator, the one who gave birth to the universe,
You are the sacred source of our being.*

*Focus Your ways, Your light, within us.
Make us useful for Your purposes here on earth so that
Your desire and our lives become one.*

Grant what we need each day in bread and insight.

*Loosen the cords of mistakes binding us,
as we release the strands we hold of other's guilt.*

*Do not let surface things delude us, snare us, and lead us away
from You and Your purpose.*

*But free us from what holds us back, give us power to
live as you intended and created us to live.*

*From You comes the all-working will, the lively strength to act,
the song that beautifies all and renews itself from age to age. AMEN*

BENEDICTION

*Go into your week
knowing you are
loved perfectly,
saved eternally,
and empowered
as a disciple of Jesus
to share God's love
with everyone you meet.*

DISMISSAL

*Go in peace and go in the power of God's Holy Spirit.
We go as ambassadors for Jesus. Thanks be to God.*