

WORSHIP August 23, 2020

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

<https://youtu.be/BtkDIRp0cuU>

(To read the service continue on from here)

GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

CALL TO WORSHIP

*We see Jesus as the Messiah;
God's response to a broken world.
We see Jesus as our Lord and leader;
God's gift to a people in need.
We see Jesus as servant to the world;
God calls us to serve in the example of Jesus.*

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
Help us to hear the words of Jesus today.
Come Holy Spirit! Come!*

SCRIPTURE READINGS

1st Reading – Romans 12: 1-8

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

2nd Reading – Psalm 138

*I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing your praise;
I bow down towards your holy temple
and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness;
for you have exalted your name and your word
above everything.
On the day I called, you answered me,
you increased my strength of soul.*

*All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord,
for they have heard the words of your mouth.
They shall sing of the ways of the Lord,
for great is the glory of the Lord.
For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly;
but the haughty he perceives from far away.*

*Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies;
you stretch out your hand,
and your right hand delivers me.
The Lord will fulfil his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever.
Do not forsake the work of your hands.*

Gospel reading – Matthew 16: 13-20

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.' Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

SERMON - Pastor Carl Mangold

Rock of Love

Paul's prose in this chapter 12 of his letter to the Romans is so beautiful, it's almost like poetry. He urges them to not be conformed to the world of decadent Rome but to be renewed and present their bodies as a living sacrifice. From there he goes on to encourage them not to think more highly of themselves as a narcissist does. That they should have a sober judgment of themselves, to me also implies that they and we are not to think of ourselves as less than we are. There is to be no lording it over of others within the faith community wherein everyone has a gift to share for the benefit of the entire community.

Peter in the Gospels has his ups and his downs when it comes to having a sober judgment of himself and of Jesus. Today he confesses that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. We know that there are other times like a few weeks ago when he almost drowned trying to walk on water like Jesus. Today Jesus tells Simon son of Jonah that he is Peter, which in Greek is *petros* meaning "rock". So, Peter is peter as Rock is rock. For our Roman Catholic sisters and brothers this text is essential over time for the establishment of the Holy See and the papacy eventually at the Vatican and St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. We Protestants have tended to downplay the papacy and rather to interpret this passage as the rock equals faith that Jesus is The Messiah.

In the summer of 1992, I enrolled in a three-week theological institute to be held in Rome at the Waldensian Seminary. The Waldensians are Protestants who existed three centuries before the reformation of Luther. Their nearest theological entity in America would be the Presbyterians.

I arrived in Rome after a long flight and a thirty-minute layover in Paris to catch a second plane to Rome. When I arrived, my suitcase did not. In my best tourist Italian, I filed a claim and gave them the address where my bag could be sent when it arrived. I was confident it was in Paris where it did not make the transfer. My guides were outside waiting to escort me to the seminary. They told me it was a major Italian holiday and most things were closed. When I got to my room, I cleaned up but could not close my eyes for a brief nap.

So, I decided to go explore. Within a few minutes I was in St. Peter's Square and then inside the Basilica where I stood in awe before Michaelangelo's Pieta of Mary and her dead son draped across her lap. After a while I noticed that there seemed to be a mass taking place, and it was being conducted by the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II. As he led a procession of priests in my direction, he took them below Bernini's High Altar, which seemed to me as strange. As they reappeared there was something different about their robes or stoles. I happen to glance up at a statue in a niche with an ermine royal robe draped around it. I then knew that the pope had taken these priests to the bones of St. Peter and the statue in the niche was St. Paul. And so, I solved the mystery: the Italian holiday was the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. Rightly understood, the pope is the servant of the servants of Our Lord as were both Peter and Paul.

Jesus gives the power of the keys to Peter-the-Rock. The power of keys is not custodian work. It is the power to forgive or not, to loose or to bind. To forgive is an act of love that Jesus the Lord of Love then bestows upon Peter, and by extension to all clergy and through our baptisms to all Christians.

Years ago, I discovered the story and teaching of a Japanese Christian: Toyohiko Kagawa, 1888-1960, who was an illegitimate son of a wealthy Buddhist man. Kagawa was taken in by American missionaries who I think were Presbyterians. They educated him, they housed and fed him. When Kagawa discovered the love of Jesus for him and became a Christian disciple, he immediately went into the slums of the city and preached on the street corners saying, "God is love. God is love." He lived there with the poor and gave away his clothes. He dedicated his life to the poor, to woman's suffrage, to peaceful foreign policy, and to unions fighting for decent pay and working conditions because **God is love!** And love leads to the rock of forgiveness, even Jesus Christ Our Lord.

Several decades ago, a movie line became famous: love means never having to say you're sorry. Popular theology but off key here. Love for self and others is to say "I forgive you." When we forgive ourselves, we free or loose ourselves from the burdens of guilt and a lesser opinion of ourselves. When we forgive others, we refuse to hold them in lesser opinion or to lord it over them. In so doing we also free ourselves from hostile grudges that will harm us like a cancer that eats away at our souls.

The Rock of Love is Forgiveness.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in God, giver of life and creator of all. In the vastness of the universe, we are humbled at God's magnificence. In the mysteries of the atom, we are awestruck at God's complexity. Even still we believe God knows us by name.

We believe in Jesus whom God anointed to be a pure expression of divine will. In his life and ministry, we learn that divine will is the way of compassion and mercy. In his death and resurrection, we become the renewed life God desires for the world.

We believe in God's ever-present spirit. God's spirit is a Holy Spirit inspiring us to believe and have faith. God's spirit is a Holy Spirit calling us to lives of action and service. God's spirit is the presence of Jesus among us to be the People of God in the world. AMEN

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God, you are our creator and guide ... fill us with a boldness of faith to be committed servants working at bringing your Kingdom into our lives and the world. We pray always that your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us wisdom, humility, integrity, and compassion to be the People of God in a world yearning for the peace and healing that only you can give. In your grace and love Lord ... hear our prayer.

God, you are our creator and guide ... we pray all in need around the world. For peace among nations and races, Lord hear our prayer. For food, shelter, and basic provision to those struggling to live every day, Lord hear our prayer. For leaders of nations, communities, and churches to lead well and in keeping with your will and desire for the world, Lord hear our prayer. For peacemakers, those generous with their resources and blessings, and for those of a compassionate serving heart ... give them your peace and resolve. In your grace and love Lord ... hear our prayer.

God, you are our creator and guide ... 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, you are our creator and guide ... 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
with your ears pitched
to the sound of God's voice calling your name.
Go into your week
with your eyes peeled
for the face of Jesus in unexpected places.
Go into your week
with your soul poised
to receive the Spirit of God,
the Spirit of Peace.*

DISMISSAL

*Go in Peace ... Jesus' presence is constant and trustworthy
Thanks be to God.*