

## WORSHIP August 30, 2020

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

[https://youtu.be/\\_CvnbFGwzEU](https://youtu.be/_CvnbFGwzEU)

(To read the service continue on from here)

### **GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP**

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

*Worship is a time to learn the ways of God.*

*As God's love is genuine, may our love toward one another be authentic.*

*Worship is a time to be caught up in the Spirit of God.*

*We call upon God to instill within us a spirit of generosity, hospitality, and hope.*

*Worship is a time to nurture peacefulness within and among ourselves.*

*We pray for a humbleness of heart and a willingness to forgive and receive forgiveness.*

*May this time of worship nurture us in the ways of God.*

### **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*

*Be filled with the spirit of God today.*

*We worship to open our hearts for God's blessing.*

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Reading – Romans 12: 9-21

*Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading – Psalm 26:1-8

*Vindicate me, O Lord,  
for I have walked in my integrity,  
and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering.*

*Prove me, O Lord, and try me;  
test my heart and mind.*

*For your steadfast love is before my eyes,  
and I walk in faithfulness to you.*

*I do not sit with the worthless,  
nor do I consort with hypocrites;  
I hate the company of evildoers,  
and will not sit with the wicked.*

*I wash my hands in innocence,  
and go around your altar, O Lord,  
singing aloud a song of thanksgiving,  
and telling all your wondrous deeds.*

*O Lord, I love the house in which you dwell,  
and the place where your glory abides.*

## Gospel reading – Matthew 16: 21-28

*From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'*

*Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?'*

*'For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'*

**SERMON** - Pastor Carl Mangold

### **In-Crisis Care**

I have always loved the study of history. In college I was a history major, studying American history and some world history and also religion in America history. I learned how to critically analyze historical documents and also more modern opinions about historical events. It was a significant step in my critical thinking development, a skill too frequently missing today, sorta like common sense is no longer so common. One important technique is the art of asking questions, which is also important for counselors like I was. When the Puritan preachers railed against adultery, the question is simply: "WHY?" If adultery was not present then there is no reason to preach against it.... But if it is present or even prevalent, then there is good reason to address the issue.

So, when I read Paul's message to the Romans, I began to wonder

- why he wants love to be genuine,
- why he tells them to never flag in their zeal,
- why he admonishes them not to be haughty,
- why he wants them to love each other,
- why he encourages them to bless those who persecute them,
- why he wants them to be constant in prayer,
- why he reminds them that vengeance belongs to God alone.

Is it because they are doing all of these correctly? Or is it because there seems to be some lack of doing these correctly? Hmmmmm. I don't know the answer to that but it does give one pause to wonder. When we turn to the Gospel today, we find Jesus for the first of at least three times predicting his forthcoming persecution, death and resurrection. Immediately Peter messes up by trying to rebuke Our Lord who responds that Satan should leave. In the parlance of my 1960s New Jersey idiom Jesus is saying to Peter: "Jump back, Jack!" Peter sinks in water and now he sinks in his vision of what the mission of Jesus is to be. We might just forgive him because this is all new to him. And maybe we need to also forgive ourselves because we do not want Jesus to suffer, nor ourselves to suffer, nor our loved ones to suffer... because we know where Jesus will go next: if we try to save our lives we will lose them and if we lose our lives for Our Lord's sake we will save our lives. This is an existential crisis that strikes to our core. It is a confusing conundrum, the horns of a dilemma that confronts us with an awesome choice. In short it is a crisis from which we'd like to slink away.

As you may know the Chinese language does consist of words as we know them but rather ideograms which are pictures of the words. When they learn of a new word or concept that is new to their language, they must find a way to combine at least two other ideogram pictures to illustrate and convey the new word or concept. They had no word/ideogram for crisis so they combined the ideogram for danger with the one for opportunity. Every crisis does indeed have both a danger but also an opportunity. Being at the juncture of one pastor's ministry here at Bethany ending while launching into an unknown future can be scary. Being in the middle of societal unrest and racial tensions in the midst of a pandemic can be frightening. But there also new opportunities involved in each of these dangers: new mission focus and renewed energy among congregational members; fully facing the inherent or systemic national racist inequities, especially in the criminal justice system might lead to a healthier society; moving through a pandemic may bring newness of life rather than a return to what we used to call "normal" but was instead a society of greed and false rugged individualism where care for the neighbor that Jesus wants was lacking.

We are not the first people nor the first Christians to face such crises. In the early summer of 1974, I was attending the Ohio Synod Assembly of the Lutheran Church in America. The featured speaker was to be Bishop Auala (pronounced ah-way-lah) from Namibia. Namibia was previously known as South West Africa and the League of Nations after WWI took this colony away from Germany and gave it to the United Kingdom, whose local African counterpart was South African which soon declared apartheid or radical racial segregation. Many black indigenous Namibians became Christians through the work of German Lutheran missionaries, and then through Anglican or Episcopalian missionaries as well. And so began the struggle for Namibian independence from the bigotry and apartheid of South Africa.

Bishop Auala came to the podium at the appointed time to address the gathered assembly and informed us that he could not present to us his prepared remarks because just two hours before he had learned of a horrific massacre of his people who had fled across the Namibian border to the next country seeking safety. His congregation, his wife, his children and many others had fled to seek safety but instead the South African Air Force had strafed the refugees several times killing many and wounding many more. At that time, he continued he had no idea who lived and who died. Then he quoted by memory the words of Paul from the fifth chapter of his letter to the Romans:

“We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us because God’s love has been poured into our hearts.”

These words and the words of Paul in our first lesson point to what we need to do in the midst of a crisis facing danger but hoping for resurrection opportunity:

- pray constantly,
- love one another genuinely,
- do not be haughty,
- bless those who persecute you,
- never flag in zeal,
- remember that vengeance belongs to God alone,
- Martin Luther recommended singing hymns in such times.

In short, self-care in a crisis and care for each other means we go high no matter how low anyone else does because Jesus The Messiah is The Lord of Love who forgives us so that we can and will forgive others. Hold on to The Rock, who pours God’s love into your hearts.

## **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

*We believe in God,  
Creator of the universe,  
Giver of every good gift,  
Author of life itself.*

*We believe in Jesus Christ,  
who reminded us of the coming of God’s kingdom,  
who commanded us to care for those in need,  
who taught us to store up treasures in heaven, not on earth,  
and who gave us the example of self-giving love.*

*We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
who inspires us to faithful stewardship of God’s gifts and  
that God has given us gifts to be shared freely and generously, in a spirit of love and joy.  
We believe that faithful stewardship is an act of worship,  
a means of praising God who has blessed us abundantly.  
We believe that God has great things in store for us,  
for it is in giving that we receive. AMEN*

*(Allen & Sara Ewing-Merrill, 2004)*

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

*Holy God, giver love and blessing ... bless our lives, lead us in your ways, gives us hearts for gratitude and service. Fill us with your grace, that what we desire is also what you desire. Grant us the understanding that our hearts' true desire is the love of you. May the love of Christ urge us on, may we walk by faith. In your grace and love Lord ... hear our prayer.*

*Holy God, giver love and blessing ... bless those who govern. Bless the leaders of nations, countries, towns, and cities. Bless all those who lead in all manner of ways – social, political, and religious. Fill the hearts of all with your wisdom. Guide us in the way of justice and integrity for all. Guide us to walk by faith. Holy God, tend to those who suffer in mind, body, and spirit. Tend to the tired, the dying, the poor and the hungry. Help us to follow the love of Christ, a love which urges us on to seek and serve Christ in others. In your grace and love Lord ... hear our prayer.*

*Holy God, giver love and blessing ... 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.*

*Holy God, giver love and blessing ... 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 82<sup>nd</sup> 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**

*People of God, look for Jesus!  
Seek him as a treasure in this great wide world.  
Seek him in the eyes of your loved ones and in the eyes of strangers.  
May your heart burn within you as the Lord draws close to you this week.*

## **DISMISSAL**

*Go in Peace ... to live and serve in the way of the cross  
Thanks be to God.*