WORSHIP PLAN FOR SUNDAY JULY 26, 2020, PENTECOST 8

WELCOME

PRAYER OF THE DAY
Let us pray.
Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

GATHERING SONG   God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens

1 God, who stretched the spangled heavens
   infinite in time and place,
   flung the suns in burning radiance
   through the silent fields of space:
   we, your children in your likeness,
   share inventive pow’rs with you;
   great Creator, still creating,
   show us what we yet may do.

2 We have ventured worlds undreamed of
   since the childhood of our race;
   known the ecstasy of winging
   through untraveled realms of space;
   probed the secrets of the atom,
   yielding unimagined pow’r,
   facing us with life’s destruction
   or our most triumphant hour.

3 As each far horizon beckons,
   may it challenge us anew:
   children of creative purpose,
   serving others, hon’ring you.
   May our dreams prove rich with promise;
   each endeavor well begun;
   great Creator, give us guidance
   till our goals and yours are one.

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Music: HOLY MANNA, W. Walker, Southern Harmony, 1835
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CONFESSION
In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and one another.

Most merciful God, we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: Romans 8: 26-39
A reading from Romans.
26 The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. 27 And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.
28 We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.
31 What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?
32 He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? 33 Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.
35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”
37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.
GOSPEL: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52
The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.
31 [Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; 32 it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”
33 He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”
34 “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.
35 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; 36 on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.
37 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; 38 when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. 39 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous 40 and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
41 “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” 42 And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

The gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

MESSAGE

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

From our many locations, yet held in one body by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need, responding to each petition with words from Psalm 119, Be gracious to us.

For the church, O God of mercy, we pray. Open your word to Christians around the world. Reveal yourself to us in ways both traditional and surprising, in places old and new. Bless our bishops, pastors, deacons, and other church leaders, as they face their challenging tasks. Turn to us, O God: be gracious to us.

For education and nurture in the church, O God of wisdom, we pray. Give us the will to seek your wisdom. Guide the many churches in their uses of technology and show us during this time ways to study your word. As this week we commemorate J. S. Bach and other musicians, accompany all church musicians as they seek to help the church offer its praise. Turn to us, O God: be gracious to us.
For the earth, O creative God, we pray. Give to plants and animals the water and
land they require. Form us into grateful and healing caretakers of your earth. Bless
the efforts of scientists and researchers, especially those seeking a vaccine. Lead
all people to honor the scientific discoveries that you grant to humankind.
Turn to us, O God: be gracious to us.

For the nations, O God of justice, we pray. Direct leaders of nations to build trust
with each other and to resist the ways of violence. Stifle the lust for conquest.
Bring peace to the Middle East. Visit the people of Hong Kong. Form our
government leaders to speak with honesty, to strive for justice, and to work to
alleviate the nation’s needs. Turn to us, O God: be gracious to us.

For all in need, O God of compassion, we pray. Heal the sick. Feed the hungry.
House the refugee. Comfort the countless thousands who are dealing with the
coronavirus. Accompany those living with anxiety and despair. Form us to be your
arms of mercy. Turn to us, O God: be gracious to us.

For the youth, O God of grace, we pray. Give to the youth of afflicted nations an
inspiring dream of what their future might be. Give them patience to await a time
of safety. Direct all schools from daycare through graduate school to find an
acceptable way forward. Turn to us, O God: be gracious to us.

You, O God, are our pearl beyond price. You are the tree giving us eternal refuge.
Hear now, we pray, the petitions of our hearts.
Turn to us, O God: be gracious to us.

In gratitude for the lives of our beloved dead, we pray that nothing, neither death
nor life, will separate us from your love. At the end, gather us with all your saints
in light everlasting. Turn to us, O God: be gracious to us.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in
your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Let us pray. O Word of God incarnate, O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging, O Light in our dark sky,
We praise you for the radiance that from the hallowed page,
A Lantern to our footsteps, shines on from age to age. Amen. (ELW #514, stanza 1)
LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, which 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.

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever. Amen.

SENDING SONG        Sent Forth by God's Blessing

1 Sent forth by God's blessing,
our true faith confessing,
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.
The supper is ended.
Oh, now be extended
the fruits of this service in all who believe.
The seed of Christ's teaching,
receptive souls reaching,
shall blossom in action for God and for all.
Your grace shall incite us,
your love shall unite us
to work for your kingdom and answer your call.

2 With praise and thanksgiving
to God ever-living,
the tasks of our ev'ryday life we will face--
our faith ever sharing,
in love ever caring,
embracing God's children, the whole human race.
With your feast you feed us,
with your light now lead us;
unite us as one in this life that we share.
Then may all the living
with praise and thanksgiving
give honor to Christ and his name that we bear.

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DISMISSAL
Go in peace. Christ is with you. Thanks be to God.

Previously Posted on July 21, 2020 by ELCA Worship
Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw

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