

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

June 21, 2020

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, FALLS CHURCH, VA

SERVICE OF WORD AND PRAYER



PRELUDE *From God Can Nothing Move Me* Setting: Jeffery Blersch

WELCOME

ENTRANCE HYMN #713 sts. 1-4, 7 *From God Can Nothing Move Me*

- 1 From God can nothing move me;  
He will not step aside  
But gently will reprove me  
And be my constant guide.  
He stretches out His hand  
In evening and in morning,  
My life with grace adorning  
Wherever I may stand.
- 2 When those whom I regarded  
As trustworthy and sure  
Have long from me departed,  
God's grace shall still endure.  
He rescues me from sin  
And breaks the chains that bind me.  
I leave death's fear behind me;  
His peace I have within.
- 3 The Lord my life arranges;  
Who can His work destroy?  
In His good time He changes  
All sorrow into joy.  
So let me then be still:  
My body, soul, and spirit  
His tender care inherit  
According to His will.
- 4 Each day at His good pleasure  
God's gracious will is done.  
He sent His greatest treasure  
In Jesus Christ, His Son.  
He ev'ry gift imparts.  
The bread of earth and heaven  
Are by His kindness given.  
Praise Him with thankful hearts!

△ 7 For thus the Father willed it,  
Who fashioned us from clay;  
And His own Son fulfilled it  
And brought eternal day.  
The Spirit now has come,  
To us true faith has given;  
He leads us home to heaven.  
O praise the Three in One!

*CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION*

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 aid of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that, attentive to your Word, we may confess our sins, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

*(Silence for reflection and self-examination)*

Gracious God,

**have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. Amen.

*KYRIE*

In peace let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

For the gift of divine peace and of pardon, with all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

For the holy Christian church, here and scattered throughout the world, and for the proclamation of the Gospel and the calling of all to faith, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort and defend us, gracious Lord.

**Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

*HYMN OF PRAISE*

**To you on high be glory and peace to all the earth;  
Goodwill from God in heaven proclaimed at Jesus' birth!  
We praise and bless You, Father; Your holy name, we sing –  
Our thanks for Your great glory, Lord God our heavenly King.**

To you, O sole begotten, the Father's Son, we pray;  
O Lamb of God, our Savior, You take our sins away.  
Have mercy on us, Jesus; receive our heartfelt cry,  
Where You in power are seated at God's right hand on high.

For You alone are holy; You only are the Lord.  
Forever and forever, be worshiped and adored;  
You with the Holy Spirit alone are Lord Most High,  
In God the Father's glory. "Amen!" our glad reply.

*THE PRAYER OF THE DAY*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray. O God,

**because Your abiding presence always goes with us, keep us aware of Your daily mercies that we may live secure and content in Your eternal love; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**



*FIRST LESSON*    Jeremiah 20:7–13

O LORD, you have deceived me,  
and I was deceived;  
you are stronger than I,  
and you have prevailed.  
I have become a laughingstock all the day;  
everyone mocks me.  
For whenever I speak, I cry out,  
I shout, "Violence and destruction!"  
For the word of the LORD has become for me  
a reproach and derision all day long.  
If I say, "I will not mention him,  
or speak any more in his name,"  
there is in my heart as it were a burning fire  
shut up in my bones,  
and I am weary with holding it in,  
and I cannot.  
For I hear many whispering.  
Terror is on every side!  
"Denounce him! Let us denounce him!"  
say all my close friends,  
watching for my fall.  
"Perhaps he will be deceived;  
then we can overcome him  
and take our revenge on him."  
But the LORD is with me as a dread warrior;

therefore my persecutors will stumble;  
they will not overcome me.  
They will be greatly shamed,  
for they will not succeed.  
Their eternal dishonor  
will never be forgotten.  
O LORD of hosts, who tests the righteous,  
who sees the heart and the mind,  
let me see your vengeance upon them,  
for to you have I committed my cause.  
Sing to the LORD;  
praise the LORD!  
For he has delivered the life of the needy  
from the hand of evildoers. (ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*PSALM 91:1-10*

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.  
I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust."

For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler  
and from the deadly pestilence.

He will cover you with his pinions,  
and under his wings you will find refuge;  
his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

You will not fear the terror of the night,  
nor the arrow that flies by day,  
nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,  
nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

A thousand may fall at your side,  
ten thousand at your right hand,  
but it will not come near you.

You will only look with your eyes  
and see the recompense of the wicked.

Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place—  
the Most High, who is my refuge—  
no evil shall be allowed to befall you,  
no plague come near your tent.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

*SECOND LESSON*    Romans 6:12-23

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*CHILDREN'S SERMON*

*ALLELUIA VERSE*

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

*GOSPEL*    Matthew 10:5a, 21-33

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them:

“Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.

“So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges me before

men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.” (ESV)

This is the Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to You, O Christ**

### *SERMON*

In the Biblical text between the ending of last Sunday’s Gospel and the beginning of today’s, Jesus assured His disciples that the Holy Spirit would give them the right words as they began their first missionary journey. I understand their uneasiness; I have often felt at a loss for the right words too. All of us have. We are great Monday morning quarterbacks, able to think of all sorts of good words, but after that moment has passed us by. Jesus assured them that God would provide the words, but they must go into the villages trusting God to go with them.

The OT Lesson sheds light on those who carry such God breathed words. Jeremiah had the difficult and hugely unpopular task of telling Israel, both people and king, that God was about to punish them for their sins. God’s instrument of punishment was to be their biggest enemy, Babylon. Imagine how much like treason that sounded in old Jerusalem. In fact, Pashhur, the High Priest, slapped Jeremiah across the face for daring to say that this was a word from God. He had Jeremiah put in stocks, holding him up for all Jerusalem to ridicule. This lesson shows what it was like for Jeremiah to have God place a **“thus says the Lord”** word on his lips. It was like having a burning coal in his mouth that insisted on being spoken. But it must have seemed to Jeremiah that such words only brought him ridicule and destruction.

As I pondered about how to reconcile these texts with our situation, I thought about the difference between saying what I think you or your neighbors want to hear and saying what God wants to be said. That’s the holy part of the preacher’s task. To discern a “Thus says the Lord” word for God’s people. Peter felt duty bound to preach at Pentecost, **“This Jesus, whom you crucified, God has raised to life!”** However bold Peter would become, he had not, before Pentecost, spoken boldly outside the Twelve. In fact Peter was the one who denied 3 times that he knew anything about Jesus. This change in Peter is testimony to Jesus’ promise of the Holy Spirit, and the clarity that the Spirit brings. If you set out to be a Jesus witness, especially in our secular world, worry less about finding the words, and more about keeping your eyes fixed on the One about Whom you testify. Words will come, but speaking the truth will only come if your eyes are fixed on Jesus. Your witness is about Him not about you.

Jesus had His own way of saying this: **“A disciple is not above the teacher, nor the slave above his master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher.....if they called the teacher a ‘prince of devils,’ how much worse will they call you.”** If as Jesus’ witness you set out to be liked and approved by your audience, you’ve chosen the wrong goal. We witness about our Master, because only He can give life to those who are lost.

We learned from St. Peter in the epistles read during Eastertide that there ought to be a gentleness in our witness. That does not mean that we water Jesus down; it means that we love the person to whom we witness, and keep on loving them as we testify, trusting the Spirit to supply the winsome words. There is a place for the kind of Apologetics that sets the record straight and forcefully confesses the truth of Jesus. That is particularly true when He is ridiculed or spoken of falsely. But when you are on a missionary journey to share the Savior with those who do not yet know His love, it is the warmth of His love and the gentleness of your manner that are the tools the Holy Spirit uses to win hearts.

I expect that none of us have ever been given a message from God to speak to our national leaders. And it is also probably true that most of us have never been sent on a missionary journey as were the Twelve. Our witness is mostly over the back fence to a neighbor, or across the cubicle wall to a colleague. As we learned during our Epiphany Bible classes, we are His witnesses where we are, to the people He puts in our path. In class we talked about building bridges to others, bridges that flow

naturally from our personality or our jobs or our community. We were taught to be gentle, not confrontive. We were taught to avoid making up a speech which we could repeat on demand – because that would be phony. We were invited to love the ones to whom we speak, to pray for them, and to trust God to lead us to the words. What I wish for all of you, especially those who have not participated in our witnessing class yet, is that you hear Jesus' command to you: **“You are my witnesses.”** We witness because we are the Body of Christ, lambs of His flock. And we witness with every word and deed we say and do. Jesus sends us to be good witnesses, winsome witnesses, and He promises to be with us and to bless every witnessing moment.

**You and I are** witnesses; unlike the prophets we have not been given commanded words or commanded audiences. Still Jesus sends us, as He sent the Twelve, to go to this place and that person, with His Gospel – which alone is the power of salvation. Think how passionately we can argue politics, testify to products we like, sing the praises of sports or music stars. Then notice how hard it is to speak about Jesus. We hesitate, get quiet, and are often silent. Becoming a good witness begins with trusting that Jesus meant you, when He said, **“You are my witnesses.”** It means claiming His gifts that make our witness like the saints of old. And in these later days, it also means believing that He is coming soon, and that the time for witness is short.

You are His witness. Pray for God's Spirit to fill you for all your witnessing moments; choose specific people you have reason to believe do not yet know Jesus, or love him. Specific and real people. Then pray for them. Fix your eyes on Jesus, claiming His blessing for this witnessing moment. And don't delay. Go. To that person. Because you really are His witness. You have the hope that is in You, from Jesus; go share it and Him.

*HYMN OF THE DAY #840 Christ High-Ascended Now in Glory Seated*

- 1 Christ high-ascended, now in glory seated,  
Throned and exalted, victory completed,  
Death's dread dominion finally defeated,  
We are His witnesses.**
- 2 Christ from the Father ev'ry pow'r possessing,  
Who on His chosen lifted hands in blessing,  
Sends forth His servants, still in faith confessing,  
We are His witnesses.**
- 3 Christ, who in dying won for us salvation,  
Lives now the firstborn of the new creation;  
To win disciples out of ev'ry nation,  
We are His witnesses.**
- 4 Christ in His splendor, all dominion gaining,  
Christ with His people evermore remaining,  
Christ to all ages gloriously reigning,  
We are His witnesses.**
- 5 As at His parting, joy shall banish grieving,  
Faith in His presence strengthen our believing;  
Filled with His Spirit, love and pow'r receiving,  
We are His witnesses.**

*APOSTLES' CREED*

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*OFFERING Christ High-Ascended Now in Glory Seated* Setting: Michael D. Costello

*PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH*

O merciful Father, hear Your people as they pray in the name of Jesus on behalf of all manner and conditions of people.

*Brief silence*

Faithful God, when we are fearful of our enemies and weary of the struggle, You are our shield and our strength. Grant to us the full measure of Your grace to sustain us in those times when others rise against us and help us to endure the trials and temptations of this mortal life. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Faithful God, with Your favor upon us, we pray You to help us in our fight against temptation and sin. Help us to live holy and righteous lives by the power of Your Spirit and keep us from surrendering ourselves to the slavery from which Christ has set us free. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Faithful God, with the witness of the saints before us and the courage of Your Holy Spirit within us, we pray You to help us maintain the faithful confession and to contend for the faith in our own age as did those who confessed Christ in days past. Give to your whole church, including our congregation and all those of the Augsburg Confession, unity of doctrine and harmony of life together under the cross of Christ. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Faithful God, we remember those who serve us in Jesus' name. Bless the leaders of our Synod and all pastors, teachers, and church workers, that they may be faithful in their calling and honor Christ with an obedient life. And raise up others who will follow in their steps to serve Your Kingdom in the years to come. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Faithful God, give grace to those being baptized, to the catechumens in their instruction, and to all the places where Your people gather to learn Your Word. Equip us to live out the promise of our baptismal life under Your grace and guide us to love our neighbors as You have loved us. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Faithful God, give healing and strength to the sick and all afflicted in body or mind, and grant to those who struggle the gift of peace of mind and heart. Hear us especially for those who have requested our prayers [*including \_\_\_\_\_*] and those whom we name in our hearts now. Restore our nation and the world in health and livelihood and preserve us from both pestilence and fear. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Faithful God, give courage to those near life's end and comfort those who mourn [*especially \_\_\_\_\_*]. As we recall the saints who trusted in You in life and who died in Christ, encourage us

by the witness of their faith, so that when Christ comes in His glory we too may be found faithful and delivered with them into the glory of Your eternal presence. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All these things, Father, and everything else for which we need, we pray You to grant us for the sake of our Savior Jesus Christ, who died and rose and lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

*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.**

*BENEDICTION*

The Lord bless us and keep us.  
The Lord make His face shine on us  
and be gracious to us.  
The Lord look upon us with favor and ✠ give us peace.

*SENDING HYMN #696 O God, My Faithful God*

- 1 O God, my faithful God,  
True fountain ever flowing,  
Without whom nothing is,  
All perfect gifts bestowing:  
Give me a healthy frame,  
And may I have within  
A conscience free from blame,  
A soul unstained by sin.**
  
- 2 Grant me the strength to do  
With ready heart and willing  
Whatever You command,  
My calling here fulfilling;  
That I do what I should  
While trusting You to bless  
The outcome for my good,  
For You must give success.**

- 3 **Keep me from saying words  
That later need recalling;  
Guard me lest idle speech  
May from my lips be falling;  
But when within my place  
I must and ought to speak,  
Then to my words give grace  
Lest I offend the weak.**
- 4 **Lord, let me win my foes  
With kindly words and actions,  
And let me find good friends  
For counsel and correction.  
Help me, as You have taught,  
To love both great and small  
And by Your Spirit's might  
To live in peace with all.**
- 5 **Let me depart this life  
Confiding in my Savior;  
By grace receive my soul  
That it may live forever;  
And let my body have  
A quiet resting place  
Within a Christian grave;  
And let it sleep in peace.**
- 6 **And on that final day  
When all the dead are waking,  
Stretch out Your mighty hand,  
My deathly slumber breaking.  
Then let me hear Your voice,  
Redeem this earthly frame,  
And bid me to rejoice  
With those who love Your name.**

*ANNOUNCEMENTS*

*DISMISSAL*

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

*POSTLUDE*    *O God, My Faithful God*    Setting: Carl F. Schalk

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