

Home Worship August 30th Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Announcements

Newsletters for September are sent. St. Mark's will be worshipping outdoors in the parking lot every Sunday in September at 9:00am.

Continue Food Pantry donations, Neighbors in Need and CROP walk donations

Thank you for your offerings also and to everyone who has continued to send offerings! Thank you for the food brought for the food pantry.

Children's Moment

So are you back to school? Some of you are having school at home and no matter where you are learning, there is a teacher right?

Teachers are wonderful! Teachers are gifts from God! Did you know Jesus was a teacher? Yes, he was called Rabbi which means teacher in the Hebrew language.

Jesus teaches us to follow him and listen to him so that we can learn how much God loves us.

Jesus also teaches us lessons about how we should be kind and generous and loving to other people. Teachers are very important so when you love your teachers, remember to love Jesus as your teacher too! Lets pray: Dear God, thank you for Jesus and thank you for teachers so that we can learn good ways to live with other people, animals and the earth. Amen.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting, whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation. Amen.

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Reconciling God, we confess that we do not trust your abundance, and we deny your presence in our lives. We place our hope in ourselves and rely on our own efforts. We fail to believe that you provide enough for all. We abuse your good creation for our own benefit. We fear difference and do not welcome others as you have welcomed us.

We sin in thought, word, and deed. By your grace, forgive us; through your love, renew us; and in your Spirit, lead us; so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.

Beloved of God, by the radical abundance of divine mercy we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus, through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.

Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope. For hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Prayer of the Day

O God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

First Reading: Jeremiah 15:15-21

Jeremiah's delight in the word of the LORD is contradicted by the heaviness of God's hand upon him and God's seeming unfaithfulness. God's tough love to Jeremiah says that if he repents, he will be allowed to continue in his strenuous ministry. Jeremiah is strengthened by the simple words, "I am with you."

¹⁵O LORD, you know; remember me and visit me, and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors. In your forbearance do not take me away; know that on your account I suffer insult.

¹⁶Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I am called by your name, O LORD, God of hosts.

¹⁷I did not sit in the company of merry-makers, nor did I rejoice; under the weight of your hand I sat alone, for you had filled me with indignation.

¹⁸Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed? Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail.

¹⁹Therefore thus says the LORD: If you turn back, I will take you back, and you shall stand before me. If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless, you shall serve as my mouth. It is they who will turn to you, not you who will turn to them.

²⁰And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you, for I am with you to save you and deliver you, says the LORD.

²¹I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked, and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

Psalm 26:1-8

¹Give judgment for me, O LORD, for I have lived with integrity; I have trusted in the LORD and have not faltered.

²**Test me, O LORD, and try me; examine my heart and my mind.**

³For your steadfast love is before my eyes; I have walked faithfully with you.

⁴**I have not sat with the worthless, nor do I consort with the deceitful.**

⁵I have hated the company of evildoers; I will not sit down with the wicked.

⁶**I will wash my hands in innocence, O LORD, that I may go in procession round your altar,**

⁷singing aloud a song of thanksgiving and recounting all your wonderful deeds.

⁸**LORD, I love the house in which you dwell and the place where your glory abides.**

Second Reading: Romans 12:9-21

Paul presents benchmarks for faithful relationships with Christians and non-Christians. Love is the unflagging standard of our behavior. When we encounter evil, we do not resort to its tactics but seek to overcome it with good. While Christians cannot control the actions and attitudes of others, we seek to live at peace with all people.

⁹Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. ¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” ²⁰No, “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.” ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Gospel: Matthew 16:21-28

After Peter confesses that Jesus is “the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (16:16), Jesus reveals the ultimate purpose of his ministry. These words prove hard to accept, even for a disciple whom Jesus has called a “rock.”

²¹From that time on, [after Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah,] 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. ²²And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.” ²³But 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.”

²⁴Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For 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?

²⁷“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. ²⁸Truly 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

How disappointing it must have been for Jesus to see Peter whom he calls his “rock,” the one he had promised the keys of the kingdom, suddenly turn into an obstacle, a stumbling block in his path to the cross. Have you ever given your trust to someone and you were let down? We all have and so we can know some of Jesus’ anger and frustration. We are tempted to stop trusting others at all. In these times of political rhetoric, inequality for so many, the corona virus and wild conspiracy theories, the easy road would be to withdraw and loose all trust completely.

Jesus did not withdraw from his disappointment in Peter. Instead, Jesus challenges all the disciples: if you want to follow me, follow in my steps. Earlier in this passage, Jesus asked: “*Who do you say that I am?*” Peter proclaimed that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of the living God. Peter got it right. But a few sentences later, Peter gets it wrong. So wrong that Jesus’ responds with: “*Get behind me, Satan!*” Peter is putting his own thoughts ahead of the ways of God which makes him an obstruction to Jesus’ mission. Jesus still does not cast Peter out, he reminds Peter of his proper place as a follower. Jesus continues on: “*If any want to be my followers let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me*”.

Since you are listening to this message, you must think of yourself as a follower of Jesus. Why? Why are you a follower of Jesus? Are you listening out of habit? Are you hoping to get something? Do you want to feel good, have hope, cope or are you listening so that you may be a follower? Today Jesus says pick up your cross, those things of grief, injustice, fear, anxiety and struggle and follow him to death. Why do we follow Jesus? In what ways do we follow Jesus? Many of us consider ourselves followers of Jesus in worship and prayer, being generous, forgiving others, doing mission work like quilting, the food pantry, the thrift store, musical offerings, church council, volunteering at church as ways to follow.

On Face book, we can follow or un-friend a person or posting. I admit that I no longer follow a lot of people of posts recently. We are... who we follow. I think following Jesus is the hardest thing that I have ever done. Jesus took up the cross protecting a woman from being stoned to death for the sin of adultery. Jesus took up the cross of economic justice when the tax collectors were threatening the poor and the widows for more money to line their own pockets.

Following Jesus? Following Jesus is so much more than worship and volunteering. Following Jesus also requires us to open our minds and hearts to the world that is hurting. Jesus took up the cross in protest for all of God’s people to live in peace and justice. Jesus is walking with protesters who need to be heard that they are hurting.

Peter was the first to follow Jesus. Peter promises to stick with Jesus no matter what happens, boasting that even the threat of death could never cause him to deny his Lord. He fails miserably in keeping both promises, staying far away when Jesus is arrested and denying him repeatedly while Jesus faces trial and torture. He is nowhere to be found at the crucifixion, while the power of government-sanctioned violence is inflicted upon the Messiah.

Jesus puts his life on the line ahead of all who follow him. That is why we follow Jesus. Because Jesus is always with us, and never leaves us even when like Peter, we should be left. We must not put our own thoughts ahead of the ways of God. So we pick up our cross, sometimes wondering why, and sometimes unwillingly, and we follow Jesus. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Caring for the church around the world, we pray — for a spirit of ecumenical cooperation, for the health of congregations during this difficult time, for our bishops, pastors, deacons, and lay leaders. Lord in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Seeing before us your good creation, we pray — for the repair of what we have harmed, for polar ice, for lands dealing with oppressive heat, for land ravaged by storms and fires especially in the gulf and in the west. Lord in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Facing so many international problems we pray —for the strengthening of democracies, for peaceful resolutions to conflicts, for the people of Belarus, Lebanon, and Yemen, for researchers seeking a vaccine, for racial justice within our nation, for our legislators to assist the lives of the poor, for an ethical election campaign. Lord in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Aware of all who are sick and suffering we pray —for those in need of healing: Karla Gipe and Brad Shippert. For those in care facilities: Sibyl, Barb, Lois, Tammy, Trudy, Jessica, Hazel, Jeanne and Linda. We pray for those in military service: Logan , JJ, Kevin Jr., Bryan, Dustin, Brad and Travis) Lord in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Gathered into one by the power of the Holy Spirit we pray as Jesus taught

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.

Blessing

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love. **Amen.**

Dismissal

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