**Sunday, August 16th, 2020**

**Psalms 95:1-2**

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;

let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before him with thanksgiving

and extol him with music and song.

The Word of The Lord.          **Thanks be to God**

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When Lawrence of Arabia was in Paris with some of his Arab friends

after World War I, he took them to see the sights of the city.

His friends showed little interest in the Louvre, the Arch of Triumph, or Napoleon’s tomb.

The thing which really interested them was the faucets in their bathtubs.

They spent much time turning it on and off. This was amazing and wonderful.

All they had to do, was turn the handle, and they could get all the water they wanted.

When they were leaving Paris, Lawrence found them in the bathrooms with

wrenches, trying to get the faucets off so they could take them home with them.

Lawrence was shocked and demanded: "What are you doing?"

They replied: "You know how dry it is in Arabia. What we need are these faucets.

If we have them, we will have all the water we need."

Lawrence had to explain to them that the effectiveness of the faucets

depended on the water system to which they were attached.

By themselves the faucets were useless. It required a lot of explaining,

but finally, his Arab friends left the faucets in the bathtubs.

It is good for us to remember that without being connected to God,

we can accomplish so little.

When we worship Him, we are empowered by Him.

We are able to do much more than we could ever imagine.

We know what worship is.

Worship is gathering together in the sanctuary.

It is candles burning on the altar, and flowers adorning the altar.

Worship is music: the organ being played, and the choir singing, and hymns being sung.

Worship is Scripture being read, and prayers being said.

It is the Liturgy being recited and responses being sung.

Worship is the prayers being said, and blessings being spoken.

We thought we knew everything.

We knew how to worship.

Worship is gathering together, sitting in the pews, singing hymns, praying.

We knew what worship is.

Until we didn't.

Then we had to relearn everything about worship.

Worship matters because it matters to God.

True worship is God-centered worship.

It doesn’t begin with us.

Worship begins and ends with God.

God is worthy of all praise, from all people, for all time.

But who could have envisioned worship alone, at home,

connected by telephones with each other?

The singing is limited.

There are no hugs and shaking of hands.

We hear, but cannot see one another.

Who could have imagined this happening?

And yet, in some way, through our worship,

we discover we are connected to God, and with one another.

The word for such moments is reverence.

The place for such moments is the Sanctuary, wherever, and however,

that Sanctuary is.

Everything is difficult, confusing, and a bit scary now.

But in the midst of our daily storms, we can look up and set our sights on God.

We can be open and willing to carry out his will.

Wherever our Sanctuary is, and whatever it now looks like,

we can linger in the presence of God.

The more we focus up there, the more inspired we are down here.

As long as our eyes and hearts are focused on Him, the more love is in our hearts,

and the more we see what he wants us to do.

Then we can be alert to the things happening around God.

When we take our minds off ourselves, we discover is God with us.

We begin to see things from God's perspective.

There is no problem so big, God cannot solve it.

There is no mountain so tall, He cannot move it.

There is no storm so dark, God cannot calm it.

There is no sorrow so deep, God cannot soothe it.

It has been a long, strange, and difficult journey.

It often seems as if we are on a train, going through a long, dark winding tunnel.

But we cannot see any light at the end of the journey.

All we can do is trust God, and remember this dark journey will come to an end.

Worship is not simply which we do on Sunday mornings.

Worship is a lifelong, seven days a week,

process of placing ourselves in the presence of God.

Worship is living the teachings of Jesus in everything we do.

We are worshiping God by what we do all week long.

When we give food to the hungry – that is an act of worship.

When we share a few words of kindness and understanding

to someone who so desperately need it, that is an act of worship.

When we offer comfort and encouragement, that is an act of worship.

When we pack and give away backpacks, it is an act of worship.

Whatever we do to help others, is an act of worship.

As we reach out to others, we discover the importance and urgency

of helping our neighbors.

Our words and actions can make a great difference in someone's life.

When we first turn to God in worship, and listen to what he is urging us to do,

then we are able to respond to all the hurt, confusion, and lostness around us.

That is what worship really is.

It makes all the difference in our lives, and in the lives of everyone around us.

AMEN