

Trinitarian Congregational Church
TAKE OUT
September 6, 2020

Announcements

Prelude It is Well with My Soul
[Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aeexEgZ-KSM>]

Call to Worship

Praise God who offers us a place of peace and rest.
Come, dwell in the presence of God our Creator.
Praise God who meets us in Jesus Christ, revealing his grace and truth.
Come, seek to learn God's ways in this hour.
Praise God who invites us to reaffirm our life's purpose.
Come, open yourselves to the movement of the Spirit.

Gathering Prayer

One: We gather before you, Faithful One, with deep gratitude and joy. You are the God who fills us with life and meets us with goodness.
All: We dare to come to you, claiming ourselves as your people, but hesitant to open ourselves to you.
One: You are the Gracious One, you are the God who is ready to receive us with love and make yourself known.
All: We dare to come to you, knowing all too well that we are the ones who have turned from your ways.
One: You are the Merciful One, you are the God who seeks our lost souls.
All: We dare to come to you, recognizing we are the ones who resist your call.
One: You are the Patient One, you are the God who challenges our foolishness and offers us true life.
All: We dare to come to you, O God, hoping for salvation, and longing for strength; answer us with your grace and power. Amen.

Assurance

People of God, hear God's word of promise to us.

The Lord, is good and forgiving, full of compassion toward everyone who calls out to him.
The Lord hears our prayers and listens when we ask for mercy. Psalm 86:5,6

My friends, in Jesus Christ our sins are forgiven and our lives are made new. Praise be to God.

Scriptures

Psalm 105

- ¹ O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.
- ² Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wonderful works.
- ³ Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.
- ⁴ Seek the LORD and his strength;
seek his presence continually.
- ⁵ Remember the wonderful works he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he has uttered,
- ⁶ O offspring of his servant Abraham,
children of Jacob, his chosen ones.
- ^{45c} Praise the Lord!

Matthew 16:21-28

²¹ 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. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.” ²³ 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.”

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ 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? 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. ²⁸ 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

I Dare You Matthew 16:21-18

It starts at an early age. I dare you. ‘I dare you to jump off this step’. ‘I dare you to swim the length of the pool’. ‘I dare you to climb to the top of this tree’. As we get older the dares get more serious. ‘I dare you to do shooters.’ ‘I dare you to take a drag.’ ‘I dare you to a road race.’ We may think we adults are more mature, that we outgrow making dares, but that’s not so. We just get more subtle about it. “You mean you never did that? Oh, we’re going to fix that!” “Well, gee, if I can do it, so can you.” “I bet you 20 dollars you can’t...” See what I mean.

Even our faith is filled with dares. Today we hear Jesus’ dare to us. After Peter’s daring proclamation “you are the Christ” Jesus sets out to show them just how daring that call will be. The work of the Messiah means bringing in the Kingdom of God. It will mean healing the sick,

feeding the hungry and welcoming the outcast. But it will also mean confronting sin, and challenging arrogance, and opposing worldly powers. To be the Messiah is a daring thing - and it means being crucified.

Peter is shocked by Jesus' view "Jesus, how dare you! God won't let that happen. It can't happen. It will never happen." And Jesus' reacts to him with equal vigor "No Peter, how dare you!" Peter had caught the fact of the Christ, but did not yet grasp the reality of Christ. He was not in synch with God, because he was working from the world's perspective. The world says to us "win - be the victor, not the victim." The world says "claim the right - be justified, not condemned." The world says "You are great - be exalted, not humiliated". But as is so often true, God's thoughts are not our thoughts, and God's ways are not our ways. We don't see death as victory, and we don't see execution as triumph. Yet Christ died on a Cross, and was raised in the glory of God.

Jesus dares Peter to open his eyes, to take another look, and see life from a different perspective, from God's perspective. And then he does something more, much more. He dares Peter, (and He dares us) to live out that perspective, to embrace God's will. Jesus says this to his disciples, not to the world in general, but to every one of his followers, "If anyone would come after me, let them deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me." Jesus is not asking us simply to sign on to his program, or learn to be a good person, and not even to enjoy his presence in prayer and worship. Rather, if we are to be his true followers, Jesus says we have to go all the way. "Take up your cross and follow me". It is the ultimate dare.

Of course, just like Peter, even when we are willing, we don't really understand what that means. Simply put, taking up your cross is not giving up sweets for lent. Taking up your cross is not putting up with your obnoxious neighbors, or your in-laws. Taking up your cross is not quietly suffering through illness or living paycheck to paycheck. Taking up your cross is not even doing your best to keep this church going. Taking up your cross is literally dying for God's sake and dying for God's will. As Dietrich Bonhoffer said "The cross is laid on every Christian... as we embark upon discipleship we surrender ourselves to Christ ... we give over our lives to death... (Because) When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die... we do not want to die, and therefore Jesus Christ and His call are necessarily our death and our life."

It is not an easy thing to follow that call, to be followers of Christ who will go anywhere, do anything, for the sake of Christ - no matter what. But to be his disciple, to come after Christ, is to live as Jesus lived, to do God's will with every fiber of your being, to labor for the sake of the world and it's redemption.

So what does that look like? Sometimes taking up your cross really is martyrdom; like Dietrich Bonhoffer, a pastor and prophet who was executed by the Nazis, or Jan Huss, an early reformer who was burned at the stake, or Jim Elliot, a missionary who was speared to death by the tribesmen he was trying to reach. Sometimes taking up your cross is giving yourself in a life-time of service, sometimes in the worst of conditions; like Mother Theresa helping the poorest of the poor in India, or Albert Schweitzer serving in the remotest jungles of Africa, or Father Damien caring for the lepers of Hawaii. And sometimes, sometimes taking up your cross is being a pastor or a member of a church, through all its ups and downs, always striving to be

faithful in doing God's work here and now. It is to sing "take my life" – and to mean it literally. And if we do mean it, God will indeed use us. God will lead us where He needs us most, where the world needs us most, and we can best use our gifts.

You are an amazing church, because you are earnestly seeking to hear Christ's call to follow him, and you have asked me to help you through your discernment, and more importantly into your obedience. You know Christ's call is more than 'church as usual'; you know that following Christ today means a new direction, to new ways of being the people of God, and a new vision and mission to serve Christ in the world. And perhaps there is ahead of us a scary, wondrous road that leads us to a cross. But I promise you if you 'take up your cross' it will lead us to a resurrection, and to the glory of God.

Today, Jesus is speaking to his disciples, to you and to me. He is turning to each one of us and saying "Follow me. I dare you." Do you dare?

Amen

Musical Reflection

The Summons

[Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GiXnbOORTAU>]

Joys and Concerns

As you meet with God in prayer, please lift up the joys and concerns shared through the Trumpet Blast. God is eager to be your help and strength, to listen to you and meet your needs. Prayer is a gift we can always use.

Prayers of the People

O God, with gratitude in our hearts we come before you today. We thank you for Jesus who so willingly and faithfully followed your will, giving himself for our salvation. And we thank you also for your Spirit who challenges us to give our lives in kind, becoming true disciples and servants of Christ. And so we come to you now seeking your will and devoting ourselves to your holy purposes.

As so we pray for your church and for this congregation. May the truth and power of the cross be our hope and strength and may it be the heart of our service and witness so that all people may know the true life you offer.

We pray for all who are tasked with leading your world. May they hear your call to humble service, giving their all for the welfare of others. May they be guided to establish true justice and peace for all peoples. And may your people labor to bring your kingdom life to all.

We pray for all who seek your help today. May the lost know your guidance, the weary know your strength and the forlorn know your hope. Grant also your healing to the ill, your comfort to the sorrowful, and your aid to the needy. We especially lift up..... and all those concerns

that are on our hearts. May we, who have known your grace, share your abundant care with all our neighbors, near and far.

We praise you and thank you, wondrous God, for all your kindness to us, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray... [sins]

The Lord's Prayer

Communion

If anyone is not able to be present for communion and would like to receive home communion, please contact Rev. Rosemary at 413-285-5703

Invitation

We gather now in the name of Jesus, our Savior and Lord. We recall how Jesus made himself known to his friends in the breaking of the bread, and how their hearts were set ablaze as they talked and communed with him.

May our hearts rejoice and our tongues be filled with praise as we come to meet him here.

This table is open to everyone who wishes to know the presence of Christ and to share in the community of God's people.

Great Thanksgiving (Let us join together in prayer).

Holy God, for creating the world and breathing into us the breath of life,
we offer you our thanks and praise.

For redeeming us through Jesus Christ, forgiving our sins through his cross,
and offering us eternal life in his resurrection,
we offer you our thanks and praise.

For transforming us by your Holy Spirit who lives within us, as close as breath itself,
and guides us in your holy way,
we offer you our thanks and praise.

Merciful God, by your Word and Spirit, bless these gifts and your people,
**may we receive Christ's life in bread and cup
and may we become his life in the world. Amen.**

Consecration and Service

Prayer of Gratitude

We thank you God that at this table you have renewed our faith, strengthened our hope and rekindled our love. Through the power of the living Christ, at work with in us, may we now share your gift of life with all we meet. Amen.

***Common Commission**

Let us go forth into the world in peace, being of good courage, holding fast to that which is good, rendering to no one evil for evil, strengthening the faint-hearted, supporting the weak, helping the afflicted, honoring all persons, loving and serving the Lord, and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Benediction

Go now into the world

And may God equip you with every good thing you need to do his will;
may he produce in you that which is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ,
to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. Heb 13:21

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

Postlude Fantasy on Holy Manna

[Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjXBqmuXgTY>]