

TCC Takeout

An Order of Service for Worship at Home

God's Extravagant Welcome:

“No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, YOU are welcome here!”

August 9, 2020

Tenth Sunday After Pentecost



CALL TO WORSHIP (paraphrase of Psalm 105:1-5)

We give thanks to you, Lord.

We call on your name and make known your deeds among the people.

We sing praises to you.

We tell of your wonderful works.

Glory in your holy name, Lord.

Let the hearts of those who seek you rejoice!

We seek the Lord's strength and presence continually.

Remember the wonderful works the Lord has done! Allelujah!

Amen!

OPENING HYMN [Praise To The Lord, The Almighty](#)

1. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!

O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health and salvation!
Join the great throng,
Psaltery, organ and song,
Sounding in glad adoration!

2. Praise to the Lord! Over all things he gloriously reigneth.
Borne as on eagle wings, safely his Saints he sustaineth.
Hast thou not seen
How all thou needest hath been
Granted in what he ordaineth?

3. Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy way and defend thee.
Surely his goodness and mercy shall ever attend thee.
Ponder anew
What the Almighty can do,
Who with his love doth befriend thee.

4. Praise to the Lord! Oh, let all that is in me adore him!
All that hath breath, join with Abraham's seed to adore him!
Let the "amen"
Sum all our praises again,
Now as we worship before him.

GATHERING PRAYER

God of Presence,
as you walked upon the water to meet the disciples,
meet us in the midst of the storms in our lives.
God of Renewal,
as you lifted Peter from the water,
lift us from despair to hope,
from distraction to focus,
from death to life.
God of the Journey,
direct us in your way,
work out your purpose in and through our lives.
We pray in the name of Christ who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

GLORIA PATRI ([Audio Version](#))

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost
As it was in the beginning,
Is now and ever shall be,
World without end,
Amen, Amen.

READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE

Romans 10:5-15 ⁵Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that “the person who does these things will live by them.” ⁶But the righteousness that comes from faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷“or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸But what does it say? “The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. ¹¹The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.”

¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. ¹³For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” ¹⁴But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? ¹⁵And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

Matthew 14:22-33 ²²Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. ²⁵And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.” ²⁸Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” ²⁹He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” ³²When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

REFLECTION

Are you a boat person? Perhaps you, or your parents had a small boat you used for fishing? Or, maybe in the summertime you collected the grandkids and took them out on your boat to enjoy water activities like skiing or tubing? Or, maybe you have a happy

memory of going on a cruise with good friends and watching the sea as you relaxed on the deck?

Or, maybe you are not a boat person, at all! Maybe being on the water makes you nervous and you prefer dry ground! Or, maybe, like me, you have to cover yourself from head to toe when you are on a boat for fear of sunburn. Context matters, right?

We don't often think of the context of the Gospel of Matthew from which today's passage comes. By that I mean, we are not often cognizant of the first and second century worldviews when the New Testament scriptures came into being. Certainly, the immediate story about Jesus and his followers is important. And the reminder is for us to keep our eyes on Jesus always, unlike Peter whose gaze drifted away and panicked at the first sensation of sinking. But this story in the Gospel of Matthew was written for the early church community as they strove to live out the word of their resurrected Lord in a world that seemed hostile to them. It was written for the early believers who lived without the physical presence of Jesus. Essentially, they were a church floating in a sea of persecution anticipating upcoming storms of difficulty. Would they make it to the other side? They would have easily related to the fishermen disciples who had to contend with treacherous waters for their very livelihood and survival.

We have a context, too. In 2020, despite our advanced scientific knowledge and sophisticated understanding of the world, will we make it to the other side; the other side of this pandemic, the other side of cancer, the other side of racial injustice, the other side of social inequities.... Are our eyes fixed on Jesus, or are we panicking from fear?

"Matthew's first readers knew that the sea represented all that opposed God.... The sea [filled with pain and death] was the absence of God." ([Tenth Sunday After Pentecost, Year A -...](#)) In the 21st century, we do not necessarily think of the sea in this way. Yet, this is the context in which the account of Jesus walking on the water is told. Jesus calms the very sea, the very place it was thought God would not be. The power of the waters is subdued under Jesus' feet. Matthew's account in chapter 14 is surely encouragement to the early church that not only is God the God of dry land but also, the God of the dreaded sea. God is everywhere present, even where they had assumed God's absence; so, God is Lord of all. Context matters, because it puts into relief the purpose of this story. The Gospel of Matthew was written that others might believe. The words of Jesus' life recorded in Matthew were confessed in faith in hopes that others, too, might know this faith.

But, a question remains: did Jesus really want Peter to get out of the boat and walk across the water to him? When Jesus scolded Peter for having little faith, was Jesus saying Peter had little faith in his own ability to walk on water, or little faith in his ability to stay in the boat? Perhaps, Jesus was not really expecting Peter to get out of the boat. After all, in the Luke passage we looked at last week, Jesus affirms Peter's vocation as a fisherman. Jesus tells Peter to go out in the boat and let down his net into the waters. Jesus wants Peter to be in the boat! Jesus has sent Peter out onto the waters to do his

work. Jesus isn't asking Peter to do miraculous things, like walking on water; Jesus wants Peter to be faithful in what he has called him to do. But Peter needs reassurance, for the waters he has been sent to are a place where he has always assumed the Lord's absence. Jesus comes to him even there.

Do we not also have places in our lives where we fear God's absence, places of conflict or lack of trust or ugly greed and harm? Do we not also wish to jump ship and run to Jesus for safety? But God calls us to be witnesses of peace and justice in those "boats" there. Is Jesus reprimanding us for having little faith to stay in our boats? As Peter witnessed, God will walk to us even in such places.

Paul knew this. The Apostle Paul knew that there is nowhere we can go, whether by land or by sea, where we will be separated from the love of God, for God is Lord of all. And Paul was diligent in sharing these words; he traveled and preached and wrote to the early Christian communities that they might have God's word in their hearts, as well. In his letter to the Romans, Paul writes, "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart." Share these words of the Lord, Paul urges us, just as the writer of Matthew did and as Paul, himself, did. Share the words which are always near to you, because "if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved." Paul is encouraging us to be witnesses in our world of God's amazing love and presence, because the world needs this.

And certainly, there are so many ways to witness and confess that Jesus is Lord of our hearts. We do this with loving words and loving actions. TCC does this in so many ways; you pray for one another, you call each other, you share reassuring words, air conditioners and perennial flowers. You collect donations for community members and you strive to discern how you can be a church in a 21st century world with changing demographics and changing priorities. The word is near to you and you are confessing that Jesus is Lord of your hearts so that others might see how this love gives you life!

But you cannot do this if you abandon your metaphorical boat that has sent you out into the world. Jesus calls you and Jesus calls me to go out to the deep waters with great faith to confess the Word that is near to us, always.

Friends, indeed, the Word is near to us today, as it was to Paul, as it was to the writer of Matthew, as it is to those on dry land, as it is to those on the seas. The Word is ever around us and near us, always. When we know this in our hearts, we are put right with God; we are justified. But when we confess this in love to our neighbors, through our mouths, our hands, our feet, then, we are transformed.

Blessings to you, TCC, as you continue to go where Jesus sends you even if it is to places that seem far from church and God. Be faithful to the voyage knowing that Jesus walks alongside you on land and on water, and that the Word is ever near to you for you

to confess in all ways that you can. Surely it will be said of you, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Amen.

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION [We've Story To Tell To The Nations](#)

(Lyrics for your meditation as you listen to the music)

*We've a story to tell to the nations,
That shall turn their hearts to the right,
A story of truth and mercy,
A story of peace and light,
A story of peace and light.*

Refrain:

*For the darkness shall turn to dawning,
And the dawning to noonday bright;
And Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,
The kingdom of love and light.*

*We've a song to be sung to the nations,
That shall lift their hearts to the Lord,
A song that shall conquer evil
And shatter the spear and sword,
And shatter the spear and sword.*

*We've a message to give to the nations,
That the Lord who reigns up above
Has sent us His Son to save us
And show us that God is love,
And show us that God is love.*

*We've a Savior to show to the nations,
Who the path of sorrow has trod,
That all of the world's great peoples
Might come to the truth of God,
Might come to the truth of God.*

JOYS AND CONCERNS

As you take this moment to be in prayer, you may refer to the joys and concerns shared through the Trumpet Blast.

God hears all of our prayers, both those we give words to and say aloud, and those that remain silent in our hearts.

Prayer is always available to us.

PASTORAL PRAYER

God of the dry land and God of the sea, God of the sky and God of the earth, God of all that is visible and all that remains hidden, we come before you today with humility that you speak to each one of us. Thank you for this church community where we listen together to your word and where we hold each other in your love and your peace. God, be with us in this moment of prayer.

Loving God, we bring before you today our celebrations and our concerns. We bring to you our prayers shared out loud and all prayers kept silent in our hearts. Grant us the assurance that you hear all our prayers and that you are merciful and just in your response.

God, today we lift up our family members and our friends, both those who live near to us and those who live far away. Be with our loved ones even when we cannot be with them physically. And help us to know that, in your love, we are always connected.

God, today we lift up all those who are strangers to us, be they rich or be they poor, be they well or be they ill, be they joyful or be they sad. We pray for their health, safety, and satisfaction in life. We pray that there would be fewer and fewer that we would call strangers, because in you we want to live as one with all your children.

God, we also pray for those who are caring for others. Give them strength, perseverance and comfort.

And we pray for those in leadership positions that they might be wise and kind in their ways.

We also pray today for this planet that we call home. Help us to know how to care for the earth and then to delight in its beauty.

Finally, we pray for this Trinitarian Congregational Church and for the new pastor who will be starting her work this week. Bless her as she settles into this community and bless this church as they continue to faithfully witness to your truth in the world.

Today we pray all this with gratitude and sincerity, dear God, for today is the day that you have made and we will rejoice and be glad in it!

In Christ's name,

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us join together in the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us to say ~

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

PRAYER RESPONSE ([Audio version](#))

Hear Our Prayer, O God,
Hear our prayer, O God,
Incline Thine ear to us,
And Grant us your peace.

PASTORAL BENEDICTION

You have been raised with Christ.

Do the work of Christ in the world:

extend a hand to those in need,
speak up for those others would cast aside,
build bridges of reconciliation,
strengthen bonds of community,
and extend the invitation of life,
community and purpose to others knowing that
the God who created you,
the Christ who redeems you
and the Spirit who empowers you
will be with you this day and ever more.

Amen.

CHORAL POSTLUDE [Here I Am, Lord](#)

Go in peace to serve God and your neighbor in love.

*Liturgy adapted from ucc.org Worship Ways.