

**12<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**  
**August 23, 2020**  
**Cross of Glory Lutheran Church**  
**Brooklyn Center, MN**

**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME**

**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.

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 been given 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.**

**WORSHIP SONG**

**For Everyone Born**

For everyone born, a place at the table,  
for everyone born, clean water and bread,  
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,  
for everyone born, a star overhead.

**Chorus**

And God will delight when we welcome all to the table,  
with joy, compassion and peace:  
Yes, God will delight when we welcome all to the table,  
with justice and joy!

For everyone born, a place at the table,  
to live without fear, and simply to be,  
to work, to speak out, to witness, and worship,  
for everyone born, the gift to be free. *Chorus*

**Worship Team**

For young and for old, a place at the table,  
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,  
the hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,  
for young and for old, the gift to belong. *Chorus*

**GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

## SONG OF PRAISE

Our Father everlasting  
The all creating One  
God Almighty  
Through Your Holy Spirit  
Conceiving Christ the Son  
Jesus our Savior

Our judge and our defender  
Suffered and crucified  
Forgiveness is in You  
Descended into darkness  
You rose in glorious life  
Forever seated high

I believe in You  
I believe You rose again  
I believe that Jesus Christ is Lord

## This I Believe

I believe in God our Father  
I believe in Christ the Son  
I believe in the Holy Spirit  
Our God is three in One  
I believe in the resurrection  
That we will rise again  
For I believe in the Name of Jesus

I believe in life eternal  
I believe in the virgin birth  
I believe in the saints' communion  
And in Your holy Church  
I believe in the resurrection  
When Jesus comes again  
For I believe in the Name of Jesus

## Worship Team

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**    The Lord be with you.    **And also with you.**

*Let us pray . . .* **Incarnate God, though we are many members, you make us one in the body of Christ. Empower us to share our unique gifts, that we might strengthen and nourish the body to which we all belong; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## READING: Romans 12:1-8

<sup>1</sup>I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

<sup>3</sup>For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. <sup>4</sup>For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, <sup>5</sup>so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. <sup>6</sup>We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; <sup>7</sup>ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; <sup>8</sup>the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## SPECIAL MUSIC

**Keith Williams**

## GOSPEL: Matthew 16:13-20

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew.    **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>13</sup>Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" <sup>14</sup>And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup>He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup>Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup>And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup>I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven,

and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”<sup>20</sup> Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON** **Pastor Ali Tranvik**

In today’s text from Romans, we find a familiar metaphor. Paul refers to us, the community of Christ, as a body: “We, who are many, are one body in Christ” (12:5). This is a well-known metaphor in the church. We refer to it in prayers, we sing about it in songs. Especially in the midst of the physical distance brought on by this horrible pandemic, this metaphor feels particularly meaningful.

But it’s important to name from the outset that this metaphor can be a complicated one for many of us given all of the complicated relationships we have with our bodies, all of the suffering that inevitably comes with living in a human body. We may think our bodies are not young enough, not thin enough, not strong enough, not attractive enough, not [fill-in-the-blank] enough. Our bodies may not look the way we want them to, or work the way we wished they would. And there’s a multi-billion-dollar industry that tells us that we can “fix” our broken bodies if only we’d buy a certain product; that we can actually avoid any physical evidence of our own mortality through the right combination of exercise regimens and skin care products. But the reality is that no matter how much we buy or how hard we try to defy them, our bodies still ache and break, and sag and get sick, and disappoint us and decay and die.

And yet, embodiment is at the core of our faith. For God so loved the world that God became a human body. One Lutheran pastor reflects on the incarnation: “It’s so crazy that God would not spare God’s self the indignity of something like hiccups. Or having a pancreas” (Bolz-Weber). That God—the King of Kings and Lord of Lords—had a body that sweat and slept and wept and hiccupped. We may want a “spirituality” of pure transcendence that rises above our broken physical reality, but in Jesus we see that a physical life *is* a spiritual life (Bolz-Weber), that bodies matter.

So, the Bible tells us that the body of Christ that was born and died and rose again is at the core of our Christian faith, but it also says that *we are that body*. “We, who are many, are one body in Christ” (12:5). What does that mean?

Let’s break it down. First Paul says, “we are many” (many “members,” which can also be translated as “parts” or “limbs”), each with specific functions, particular gifts. Gifts, Paul says, in prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, generosity, leadership, compassion (12:6-7).

I’ve already seen these gifts (and many others!) in you. Some people share their musical gifts in worship. Others mow the church’s lawn. So many of you give money, others count it. Some tend to the community garden and invite neighbors to help themselves to what grows. Others have shown up to community organizing events with our Wildfire partners, and been involved with local justice work like fighting against predatory lending. Some of you are potters and poets who share your gifts of art. Others of you share your gifts as doctors or nurses or pharmacists who provide medical care to low-income or LGBTQ or immigrant neighbors. Some of you lead on council and committees and use your gifts of speaking. Others of you bless the body with your gifts of listening. Some of you are teachers who have the extremely demanding task of trying to teach on a computer screen. Others of you are parents who have the extremely demanding task of making sure your kids stay put in front of the computer screen. One of you organizes a prayer

chain and so many others of you share the gift of prayer. What beautiful gifts each of you shares for the sake of the larger body of Christ.

And what a gift it is that all of us have *different* gifts. *Unique* gifts. If all of us mowed the lawn, for example, Cross of Glory would have, well, very short grass—but we'd also be short on lots of other needs! If all of us counted money but none of us gave it, there would be nothing to count. If the world was comprised of only teachers, only doctors, only poets, only pastors (God forbid)...if the body only had people who prayed but never acted, or people who acted but never prayed, if the body only had people who spoke but never listened or listened but never spoke out, the body would die. The “health and wellness” of the body depends on our differences, on the unique gifts of its many members.

So we are many members, but Paul also says we are “one body.” And listen to the way he describes this oneness: “We are members *one of another*,” which can also be translated as “we belong to one another” (12:5). Which is to say, while we are many members, we are not *independent* members of the body. Quite the opposite: we are ***inter dependent*** members of the body. We necessarily *depend on* one another.

Because the body is such a familiar metaphor to us, I think it's easy to forget how radical, how counter-cultural, how *at odds* this is with essentially everything our world tells us. Dependence isn't really something that our world tells us we should strive for, is it? Dependence is often seen as deficiency, as weakness. Dependence isn't a quality we would list on a resume, or share with someone on a date. The world tells us in order to be happy and healthy and whole, we must be independent. That we should be self-reliant, self-sufficient, sovereign, “masters of our own fate, captains of our own souls” (Churchill). Our job is to take care of ourselves and “our own.” We can't depend on others too much (we might burden them), nor can we afford to be depended upon too much (we might be taken advantage of). Independence is the ideal. Indeed, American independence is often defined as such. Our country, our culture, our world tells us that to be free is to be uninhibited, uninterrupted, unburdened as we pursue our own plan of life as we see fit.

But “do not be conformed to this world,” writes Paul in today's passage (12:2). You are “members one of another.” You belong to each other. You are *interdependent*.

This may sound nice in theory, but let's be honest: this is absurd. On the ground, this is utterly and completely impossible. How can I belong to someone else? And how can they belong to me? I can't actually depend on other people. And clearly, I can't let them depend on me. I've already got enough on my plate. I can hardly keep my own head above water here just trying to take care of myself and my family. Sorry new-pastor-who-has-only-been-here-six-weeks, but this whole interdependence thing is a nice idea, but it is *just not possible*.

A few years ago, Isak and I spent a summer on the U.S.-Mexico border, something I mentioned in a sermon a couple weeks ago. We lived and worked at a hospitality house for migrants, deportees, and refugees as part of my seminary training. Part of my job was to lead Evening Prayer on Wednesday nights. One week, a few dozen of us were gathered in the small sanctuary of the shelter and I was leading the group through various prayer practices. For one of them, we wrote prayer requests on small pieces of paper that we then laid at the foot of a wooden cross in the middle of the room. Once all the prayers were at the cross, we took someone else's prayer card, committing to carrying it with us throughout the upcoming week.

But this particular Wednesday, after Evening Prayer had ended and everyone else had left the sanctuary, I noticed one man lingering. Luis, we'll call him, approached me with another blank prayer card in hand. It didn't surprise me he needed an extra prayer, I remember thinking. Luis had recently been deported after living in the U.S. for decades, suddenly forced to leave his

home, his job, and his family. I remember quickly prepping myself as he walked over to me in the empty sanctuary, preparing to offer an additional prayer for this neighbor clearly in need. This would be good practice for me as a pastor-to-be, I thought to myself. But instead, Luis told me he wanted to make sure someone was praying for *me*. He handed me the blank card and asked me to write down my name and the names of my loved ones. Touched by his offer, I wrote down the names and went to hand him the card—but he didn't take it from me. Instead, he pointed to the cross, gesturing for me to put my prayer at the foot of the cross, just as everyone else had done moments before. So I laid it on the cross, Luis picked it up, nodded, and walked out of the sanctuary.

What struck me most about this encounter was not Luis' offer to pray for me (as moving as that was), but it was what he did first. By insisting that I put my prayer at the cross before giving it to him, Luis understood something I did not (and frankly still don't), Jesus makes the impossible *possible*. Luis understood that it is only by depending on Jesus that that we can do what would be impossible to do on our own: to depend on others, and to be depended on by others.

Just as the finger depends on the hand or the foot on the leg, we depend on each other. I on Luis, and Luis on you, and you on me, and us on the students at Progeny Academy, and the workers at the Brookdale Walmart, and the Brooklyn Center mayor, and the pregnant teenager at the bus stop, and the bankers at Wells Fargo, and Hmong family who lives across the street. We are dependent on them, and they on us.

This interdependence is not easy. It's burdensome. It's uncomfortable. It's costly. By opening ourselves up to depend on others and to be depended upon, we will be exposed to greater suffering. But paradoxically, by opening ourselves up to depend on others and to be depended upon, so too will we be exposed to a much greater joy. We will experience a greater *independence* in our *interdependence* (Luther), a greater strength in our vulnerability, greater happiness, and health, and wholeness than any one of us members could ever "achieve" on our own.

In these lonely days when it's easy to feel disconnected and disjointed from the rest of the body of Christ, take comfort and courage in this Good News today: you are dependent. This may not be the good news that we wanted to hear today. And it's certainly not the news that our world would call "good." But, my friends, this is the unwelcome, uncomfortable, counter-cultural, and *Good News* we need. Because it is in depending on others and being dependence that we encounter the love of a God on whom we can always depend, a God in whom all things are possible. Amen!

#### Sources:

- Luke Powery, "Holy Bodies," Sermon at Duke University Chapel, August 24, 2014.
- Luther, Martin. "The Freedom of a Christian" (1520), *The Luther Study Edition*, trans. Mark Tranvik, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 31-96.
- Nadia Bolz-Weber, "Home within Flesh," *The Work of the People*.
- Willimon, William H. *Incarnation: The Surprising Overlap of Heaven and Earth* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013).

**HYMN OF THE DAY #576 We Are All One in Mission**

- 1** We all are one in mission;  
we all are one in call,  
our varied gifts united  
by Christ, the Lord of all.  
A single great commission  
compels us from above  
to plan and work together  
that all may know Christ's love.
- 2** We all are called for service,  
to witness in God's name.  
Our ministries are diff'rent;  
our purpose is the same:  
to touch the lives of others  
with God's surprising grace,  
so ev'ry folk and nation  
may feel God's warm embrace.
- 3** Now let us be united,  
and let our song be heard.  
Now let us be a vessel  
for God's redeeming Word.  
We all are one in mission;  
we all are one in call,  
our varied gifts united  
by Christ, the Lord of all.

**CONFESSION OF FAITH Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**OFFERTORY**

*We give thanks for the many kinds of gifts God has first given us, and for many kinds of gifts that the people of God steward for the work of the church. If you are able to give a financial gift, you are encouraged to do so by mailing it to the church office (5929 Brooklyn Blvd, Brooklyn Center, MN 55429). Thank you for your continued generosity!*

**OFFERTORY RESPONSE #496 One Bread, One Body**

**Refrain**

One bread, one body, one Lord of all;  
one cup of blessing which we bless,  
and we, though many throughout the earth,  
we are one body in this one Lord.

- 1** Gentile or Jew, servant or free,  
woman or man, no more. **Refrain**
- 2** Many the gifts, many the works,  
one in the Lord of all. **Refrain**
- 3** Grain for the fields, scattered and grown,  
gathered to one for all. **Refrain**

## OFFERING PRAYER

**God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. Help us to joyfully share the gifts you have first given us with all the members of your body; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord; Amen.**

## PRAYERS of the PEOPLE

Incarnate God, you came to us in the form of a human body, affirming the belovedness of our bodies.

We pray for bodies that have been abused, ignored, and degraded, and we ask for forgiveness for the ways we are complicit in systems that perpetuate violence against bodies, especially those that are black and brown. Help us not to be conformed to the ways of the world that work to separate us from one another, but to be transformed by our interdependence. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we give you thanks for the unique gifts of each member. For the gifts of teachers and parents, doctors and nurses, scientists and researchers, politicians and policy-makers, prophets and poets and artists. Bless the rich variety of gifts you have given all of us--those we recognize and those we fail to see and celebrate--and equip us to find creative ways to use these gifts to care for our neighbors in need. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Creator God, we rejoice in the work of your hands. We give thanks for the vineyards and fields, the soil and the sea that burst with life and helps to sustain ours. Forgive us when we use creation as a means for profit and exploitation and guide us that we might be good and grateful stewards, caring for the gift of this earth. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Healing God, gently tend to those for whom this season is especially difficult: for those whose bodies ache, those whose hearts are lonely, those whose spirits are weary, and those whose minds are plagued with worry. We pray especially for Karen Earnest, Bev Hoium, Gil Hartlage, Lee Howe, Georgie Proctor, Terry Stejskal, Nancy Hengel, for Caroline and Rick, family of Dan and Julie Aulwes, and for Jeffrey, son of Harriet Halvorsen. Surround them with your loving embrace and grant them your healing. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all the prayers we've named aloud, and for all those that remain in the silence of our hearts, embolden us to trust in you, that we too might proclaim that "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." **Amen.**

**LORD'S PRAYER** *Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us always to pray. . .*

**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.**

## **SENDING FORTH SONG            There Are Many Ways of Sharing**

There are many ways of sharing, but God's Spirit gives each one.  
There are many ways of caring; it's one Lord whose work is done.  
God whose gifts are overflowing, may we hear you when you call;  
Keep us serving, keep us growing, for the ministry of all.

We've been baptized in the waters, we've been given work to do.  
When you call your sons and daughters, you give gifts for serving you.  
God we join in celebration of the talents you impart.  
Bless our manifold vocations; give us all a loving heart.

All are blest by gifts you give us, all connected in one flesh,  
All of us the various members, in one body we're enmeshed.  
Give us faith to serve our neighbor, give us joy to share your Word.  
Give us bold and faithful visions as we serve your church and world.

## **DISMISSAL**

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

## **Community Announcements**

- Grab a cup of coffee and join us on Sunday after Zoom worship for Virtual Coffee Hour, a brief time of small group fellowship immediately following the service. This is a great way to connect with one another during this time apart!
- Join us for Bible Study on Tuesday mornings at 9:30 am on Zoom. Call in using the same Zoom information that we use for worship on Sunday mornings.
- You're invited to meet our neighbors at CAPI (the immigration and refugees services organization located across the street from the church) for "Fresh Food Fridays," a produce distribution that takes place on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month from 1-2:30 pm. For more information or to sign up to help with distribution, reach out to Pastor Ali.
- In his book *Living the Sabbath*, theologian Norman Wirzba explores the biblical teachings of Sabbath. As we collectively wrestle with life during the COVID-19 pandemic, you are invited to take part in a Zoom conversation about how Sabbath can deepen our relationships with God and our neighbors. This free, public event will take place on Wed 8/26 at 6:30 pm. To register, visit [www.loveyourplace.org/registration-page](http://www.loveyourplace.org/registration-page).
- Please contact Pastor Ali Tranvik to share any announcements or pastoral concerns and needs. You can reach her by email ([atranvik@crossofglory.us](mailto:atranvik@crossofglory.us)) or by phone (763-533-8602).