

First Sunday after Pentecost/The Holy Trinity

June 7, 2020

Cross of Glory Lutheran Church
Brooklyn Center, MN

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 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.**

WORSHIP SONG

This I Believe (The Creed)

Worship Team

Our Father everlasting	I believe in God our Father	I believe in You
The all creating One	I believe in Christ the Son	I believe You rose again
God Almighty	I believe in the Holy Spirit	I believe that Jesus Christ is Lord
Through Your Holy Spirit	Our God is three in One	
Conceiving Christ the Son	I believe in the resurrection	
Jesus our Savior	That we will rise again	
	For I believe in the Name of Jesus	

Our judge and our defender	I believe in life eternal	
Suffered and crucified	I believe in the virgin birth	
Forgiveness is in You	I believe in the saints' communion	
Descended into darkness	And in Your holy Church	
You rose in glorious life	I believe in the resurrection	
Forever seated high	When Jesus comes again	
	For I believe in the Name of Jesus	

WORSHIP SONG

How Great is Our God

Worship Team

The splendor of the King	How great is our God	And age to age He stands
Clothed in majesty	Sing with me	And time is in His hands
Let all the earth rejoice	How great is our God	Beginning and the End
All the earth rejoice	And all will see how great	Beginning and the End
He wraps Himself in light	How great is our God	The Godhead three in one
And darkness tries to hide		Father Spirit Son
And trembles at His voice		The Lion and the Lamb
And trembles at His voice		The Lion and the Lamb

Name above all names, Worthy of all praise
My heart will sing, How great is our God

PRAYER OF THE DAY The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray . . . **Almighty Creator and ever-living God: we worship your glory, eternal Three-in-One, and we praise your power, majestic One-in-Three. Keep us steadfast in this faith, defend us in all adversity, and bring us at last into your presence, where you live in endless joy and love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

PSALM 8

¹O LORD our Lord,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!—

²**you whose glory is chanted above the heavens out of the mouths of infants and children;**

you have set up a fortress against your enemies, to silence the foe and avenger.

³When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,

⁴**what are mere mortals that you should be mindful of them,
human beings that you should care for them?**

⁵Yet you have made them little less than divine;
with glory and honor you crown them.

⁶**You have made them rule over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet:**

⁷all flocks and cattle,
even the wild beasts of the field,

⁸**the birds of the air, the fish of the sea,
and whatever passes along the paths of the sea.**

⁹O LORD our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

NEW TESTAMENT READING: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Paul writes: ¹¹Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹²Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

¹³The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: Matthew 28:16-20

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁶Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

"GOD, WHERE CAN YOU USE ME?"

Dear Friends in Christ, God's grace and peace be with you. Amen.

Early one morning, for no earthly reason, journalist Sara Miles, raised an atheist, wandered into a church in San Francisco. Out of curiosity she went forward when invited to share in Holy

Communion. Against her better judgment she took the bread and the wine and found herself transformed. She was filled with the body of Christ!

Sara got involved in the congregation's work. Before long, she turned the bread she ate at communion into tons of groceries, piled on the church's altar to be given away. Within a few years, she, and the people she served had started nearly a dozen food pantries in the poorest parts of their city. In her book, Take This Bread, Miles claims that Jesus invites us to "jump right in" to ministry - following him in doing the work he is doing, even before we have a clue as to what it might mean.

And so, once she was fed with the living body of Christ, she believed that Jesus lived in her and started acting like it. She started feeding the hungry, started forgiving those she found most irritating, started including those who were hardest to accept, started caring for others and advocating for justice. Her friends started to say that she was crazy - a "Jesus freak." She started living more as Jesus lived and doing things that Jesus told her to do, and discovered that she was part of something that could change the world.

It might be time for us to follow Jesus, too.

The last days have shown us the harsh side of our society once again in vivid colors. With the grievous and senseless death of George Floyd on May 25, our nation is now along with the coronavirus dealing with another crisis - a crisis deeply rooted in years of oppression, racism, hatred, and bigotry. We are a broken and hurting people.

Many of us stay on the sidelines, not knowing how to help, what to say, or where to stand. We pray for God to guide us, to heal the divisions in our nation, to bring us peace, but then we may stand back and hope we can recuse ourselves from the rest of the discussion.

But what if God calls us to get involved? "**Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,**" Jesus' says to us in today's gospel, "**baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.**"

We know these words of Jesus as the Great Commission. In Matthew's gospel these are Jesus last words. His last words are not "It is finished" or "I must go," or "I wish I had turned more water into wine." No, his last words are "Go." "Go and live the Good News." Living the Good News is what being a disciple is all about. Being God's people today and being church today means living God's mission where we are.

"Go" says Jesus, because you can't keep this Good News to yourself. If you do, it won't be Good News anymore. Go, because we live in a world that desperately needs the oxygen of God's grace and love. Go, because this isn't just about you, only about you, only for you. Go, and live the Good News in your home, community and world today and in so doing, draw others into the family of God through our willingness to go and be a witness to God's love by the way we live our lives. Martin Luther once said, "God doesn't need your good works, but your neighbor does!" Jesus taught justice and our neighbor needs justice. Our neighbor needs acceptance. Our neighbor needs inclusion and equal rights.

Maybe our world needs more people like Sara Miles. She dared to believe that Jesus lives in her and she started acting like it. Her friends called her crazy. Maybe what our world need is more "crazy" Christians. Remember that when Jesus' family heard what he was doing and saying, they thought he was crazy and went to get him under control. (Mark 3:21). They felt they had good reason to be concerned because Jesus had been teaching things like: "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, pray for those who spitefully use you." And in a powerful sermon Jesus even said, "Blessed are the merciful, the compassionate, blessed are those who hunger and thirst that God's righteous justice might prevail, blessed are those who work for peace, blessed are you when you are persecuted just for trying to love and do what is good." Jesus was crazy! He even prayed while folk were killing him, "Father forgive them." Now that is crazy!

When Jesus calls us today to go make disciples, is he perhaps calling us to go and be as crazy as he was. Crazy enough to forgive like Jesus. Crazy enough to love like Jesus. Crazy enough to call for justice like Jesus did. Crazy enough to give and to share like Jesus. Crazy enough, like Jesus, to dare to change the world for God and for good.

Lately, the book I've been reading is called Holy Women, Holy Men. The book chronicles the lives of people, who though they were very human and at times messed up like the rest of us, these

people marched to the beat of a different drummer and in their lifetimes, they made a difference for God's world.

Once such example in the book is that of a woman by the name of Harriet Beecher Stowe. She was born in 1811 and she is best known for a fictional work entitled, Uncle Tom's Cabin. In this fiction, she told the truth. She told the story of how chattel slavery afflicted a family, afflicted real people. She told the truth of the brutality, the injustice, the inhumanity of chattel slavery. Her book did what YouTube videos of injustices and brutalities do today. It went 19th century viral. It rallied people against the injustice of racism.

The influence of Harriet Beecher Stowe's book was so powerful that Abraham Lincoln is reputed to have said upon meeting her, "So this is the little lady who started this great war!" A woman of her era was supposed to write "nice" stories, not stories that would disturb the conscience of a nation. She was supposed to marry well, raise well-bred children, participate in a few charitable activities and be fondly remembered by all who knew her. That was the "nice" life she was supposed to have. But she had been raised in a family that believed that following Jesus means changing the world from the nightmare it often is, into the dream that God intends. Sometimes that means marching to the beat of a different drummer. Sometimes that means caring when it is tempting to care less, or standing up when others shut up. Sometimes it means being different- even being crazy for God!

It seems to me that Jesus is sending us out into the world to be "crazy." Crazy enough to believe that God is real, that Jesus lives and the Spirit is moving in our midst. Crazy enough to follow the radical way of the gospel. Crazy enough to believe that the love of God is greater than all the powers of hate, evil and death. Crazy enough to believe as Dr. Martin Luther King often said, "That though the moral arc of the universe is long...it bends toward justice."

My friend, we need some crazy Christians today because sane, sanitized Christianity is killing us - it is not working anymore! Jesus today is calling us to go and be crazy enough to believe that children do not have to go to bed hungry, that the world doesn't have to be the way it often seems to be, that there is a way to lay down our swords and shields - down by the river side -, that as the slaves used to sing, "*There's plenty good rooms in my Father's kingdom.*" Why? Because my friend, every human being, EVERY HUMAN BEING has been created in the image of God and we are ALL equally children of God and meant to be treated as such.

Jesus calls us today to "Go." Go and live the Good News. But notice the very last words of our Gospel. Jesus promises, "And remember, I am with you always to the end of the age." Yes, Jesus calls us to "Go" but we never go alone! We go with Jesus and we also go together with each other. We must go together! All of us. Clergy and laity... young and older.... those who pine for days gone by and those who are thirsty for new water. We GO, but we must, we absolutely must, GO together.

I would invite you this week to reflect on a question. I've made the question our sermon title for today! It is really a simple prayer. I invite you to say: **God, where can you use me?** I invite you to pray this about your life. **God, where can you use me?** I also invite you to pray this about this congregation. **God, where can you use Cross of Glory Lutheran Church?**

This is what we long for. We long for a world that more and more reflects the compassion and mercy of God. We long for God's future, which is that gift of hope and grace and renewal in whatever surprising form it takes - for us, our congregation and for the world. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY

#705

God of Grace and God of Glory

1 God of grace and God of glory,
on your people pour your pow'r;
crown your ancient church's story;
bring its bud to glorious flow'r.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

2 Lo! the hosts of evil round us
scorn the Christ, assail his ways!
From the fears that long have bound us
free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the living of these days,
for the living of these days,

3 Cure your children's warring madness;
bend our pride to your control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.

4 Save us from weak resignation
to the evils we deplore;
let the gift of your salvation
be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
serving you whom we adore,
serving you whom we adore.

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 RESPONSE #814

Take, Oh, Take Me As I Am

Sung Twice

Take, oh, take me as I am;
summon out what I shall be;
set your seal upon my heart
and live in me.

OFFERING PRAYER

God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. Water and word, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Nourish us through these gifts, that we might proclaim your steadfast love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. Amen.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE

Rejoicing in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we pray for the witness of the church, the wholeness of creation and all who are in need.

O God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in whose name we are baptized and into whose fellowship we have been received, we cling in faith to you, the only God. Through your efforts, blessed Trinity, we have been created, redeemed, and sanctified. Grant us the grace to continue in this faith, until we join the hosts of heaven that cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy," before your throne. Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Compassionate God, enfold and comfort all who grieve the murder of George Floyd. Tenderly care for those who have been traumatized once again by this death. Spread your protection over all who tirelessly give themselves to provide care and comfort. Uncover the sin of white supremacy that has plagued our nation, state, and individual lives. Move us all to repentance, to radical change - joining hands with all to rebuild our communities in the way of justice. Hover over us, inspire us with vision to imagine a new way of being community; and a new resolve to work toward that vision. (written by Bishop Ann) Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

God of grace and mercy, be present with us as we face an unknown future and as we walk paths untrodden. In the uncertain world where we find ourselves, help us to know and be assured that you are sovereign, that you are all-knowing, all-powerful, and ever present. We know you are a

good God who holds us in our anxiety and distress. Calm our hearts and minds and give us hope in you, our only certain hope. Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Merciful God, be with all the members of Cross of Glory Lutheran Church. Where there is sickness, loneliness, hurt or loss, be our strength, comfort, and healer. Be especially with Pastor Ali as she prepares on July 1 to join the congregation in mission and ministry for you. Guide and bless all in this time of transition and new beginning. Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We entrust all our prayers to you, gracious God. Receive them by the power of the Holy Spirit and the love of Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER Our Father, who art in heaven . . .

BENEDICTION

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 #856 How Great Thou Art verses 1, 2 and 4

1 O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed;

Refrain

Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
how great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
how great thou art! How great thou art!

2 When through the woods and forest glades I wander,
I hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze; ***Refrain***

4 When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,
and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration
and there proclaim, "My God, how great thou art!" ***Refrain***

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY has resumed on-line by means of Zoom communication.

Please join us for the Tuesday Bible Study. Each week will reflect on the readings for the upcoming Sunday. If you would like to be a part of this gathering, all you have to do is to send Pastor Lee your email address. (Pastor's email is: 19ldh53@gmail.com) You will be sent an invitation to the meeting. Just click on the link in the email a few minutes before 9:30 a.m. on Tuesdays.