

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost  
August 16, 2020  
Living Faith Lutheran Church, Sechelt, BC

*As the practice has been for the past few months, online worshippers are invited to prepare bread and wine beforehand, ready to be consecrated and shared at the appropriate time. Those preferring to participate in holy communion along with the livestreaming of the liturgy may do so by clicking on the link to our parish website where the service will be posted for viewing at 9.15 a.m. today (August 16) or anytime in the days thereafter. That link is: [livingfaithlutheran.weebly.com/worship](http://livingfaithlutheran.weebly.com/worship)*

Preservice Music

**GATHERING**

Gathering Song #518 "We Eat the Bread of Teaching"

*Refrain: We eat the bread of teaching, drink wine of wisdom,  
are given here a taste of the kingdom.  
Together joined, the greatest and the least,  
we all are one at Wisdom's holy feast.*

1. Wisdom calls throughout the city, knows our hunger, and in pity gives her loving invitation to the banquet of salvation. *Refrain.*
2. Simple ones whose hearts are yearning, come and gain from Wisdom's learning; bread and wine she is preparing, know her loving in the sharing. *Refrain.*
3. Enter with delight and singing, for her richness now is bringing us this joyous celebration; eat and drink in jubilation. *Refrain.*

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit be with us all and be with us always. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

God of all peoples, your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

**WORD**

First Reading Genesis 45:1-15 *Today's lesson from the Hebrew Scriptures follows the semincontinuous readings from Genesis, telling the ancient stories of God's people on their journey to and their presence in the land promised to Abraham and Sarah and their descendants. The reason for Israel's subsequent move to Egypt is at the heart of today's reading.*

*I am also including last week's lesson as background for today's lesson. I won't be reading last week's text but do encourage everyone to look at it for themselves to provide context and setting.*

*<sup>1</sup>Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. <sup>2</sup>This is the story of the family of Jacob.*

*Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. <sup>3</sup>Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. <sup>4</sup>But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.*

*<sup>12</sup>Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. <sup>13</sup>And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." He answered, "Here I am." <sup>14</sup>So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock; and bring word back to me." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron.*

*He came to Shechem, <sup>15</sup>and a man found him wandering in the fields; the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" <sup>16</sup>"I am seeking my brothers," he said; "tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock." <sup>17</sup>The man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. <sup>18</sup>They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. <sup>19</sup>They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. <sup>20</sup>Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams." <sup>21</sup>But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." <sup>22</sup>Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him" — that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father. <sup>23</sup>So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the long robe with sleeves that he wore; <sup>24</sup>and they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.*

*<sup>25</sup>Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. <sup>26</sup>Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? <sup>27</sup>Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers agreed. <sup>28</sup>When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.*

In Genesis, chapters 38-44, the experiences of Joseph's life in Egypt are told including his eventual elevation to a trusted position close to Pharaoh. And it was as Pharaoh's representative that Joseph meets up once again with his brothers who do not recognize him. This second "meeting of the brothers" is the focus of today's lesson.

*<sup>1</sup>Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Send everyone away from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. <sup>2</sup>And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. <sup>3</sup>Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.*

*<sup>4</sup>Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. <sup>5</sup>And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. <sup>6</sup>For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. <sup>7</sup>God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.*

<sup>8</sup>So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup>Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. <sup>10</sup>You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. <sup>11</sup>I will provide for you there — since there are five more years of famine to come — so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.' <sup>12</sup>And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. <sup>13</sup>You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt, and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here." <sup>14</sup>Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. <sup>15</sup>And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

*Word of God. Word of Life. Thanks be to God*

**Second Reading**      **Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32**      *This continues our journey through the most significant of St. Paul's writings, his letter to the Christians in Rome, in which he lays out the most essential teachings of the faith given to him by the Holy Spirit and passed on to us for our instruction and growth, especially concerning the fundamental roles of God's grace and our response of faith (or trust) in and to that grace.*

<sup>1</sup>I ask, then, has God rejected God's own people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup>God has not rejected the people whom God foreknew. Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? <sup>29</sup>for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. <sup>30</sup>Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, <sup>31</sup>so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. <sup>32</sup>For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that God may be merciful to all.

*Word of God. Word of Life. Thanks be to God.*

**Lesson Hymn #790**    "Day by Day

1. Day by day, your mercies, Lord, attend me, bringing comfort to my anxious soul.  
Day by day, the blessings, Lord, you sent me, draw me nearer to my heavenly goal.  
Love divine, beyond all mortal measure, brings to naught the burdens of my quest;  
Savior, lead me to the home I treasure, where at last I'll find eternal rest.
2. Day by day, I know you will provide me strength to serve and wisdom to obey;  
I will seek your loving will to guide me o'er the paths I struggle day to day.  
I will fear no evil of the morrow, I will trust in your enduring grace.  
Savior, help me bear life's pain and sorrow till in glory I behold your face.
3. Oh, what joy to know that you are near me when my burdens grow too great to bear;  
oh, what joy to know that you will hear me when I come, Lord, to you in prayer.  
Day by day, no matter what betide me, you will hold me ever in your hand.  
Savior, with your presence here to guide me, I will reach at least the promised land.

*In keeping with this year's focus on Matthew, we explore the understanding of Jesus as Teacher, Healer and the "New Israel" whose life, ministry, passion, death and resurrection not only fulfill the ancient prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures about the Messiah (Promised or Anointed One) but expand and extend the understanding of him as Saviour and Redeemer who, by his actions, brings into being the reign of God which Matthew calls the "Kingdom of Heaven"*

<sup>10</sup>Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand: <sup>11</sup>it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles." <sup>12</sup>Then the disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" <sup>13</sup>He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. <sup>14</sup>Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit." <sup>15</sup>But Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us." <sup>16</sup>Then he said, "Are you also still without understanding? <sup>17</sup>Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? <sup>18</sup>But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. <sup>19</sup>For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. <sup>20</sup>These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile."

<sup>21</sup>Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>22</sup>Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." <sup>23</sup>But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." <sup>24</sup>He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." <sup>25</sup>But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." <sup>26</sup>He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." <sup>27</sup>She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." <sup>28</sup>Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

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

Sermon

Pentecost 11a, August 16, 2020

Matthew 15:21-28

LFLC

Along with a lot, maybe even most other preachers,  
 I used to believe and teach that, in this story,  
     Jesus was testing this woman in order to find out  
         how committed she was to her course of action,  
             how genuine her cry for help was  
                 and how strong her faith would be.

I no longer believe or subscribe to that interpretation  
 because I have come to a new realization about Jesus,  
 and it is this: I don't think Jesus would play mind games  
     with someone so desperate for help  
         simply in order to make or to prove a point.

On the other hand, if this wasn't a test of her faith,  
then Jesus sounds hard-nosed, uncaring and almost cruel  
in his dealings with this woman—  
and that makes me very uncomfortable  
about what I'm going to say in this morning's sermon.

Because, to be honest, that cold-hearted callousness  
that we see from Jesus in this story is what often results  
when people are fanatically committed to certain principles—  
whether theological or political or philosophical—  
and are therefore convinced that what they believe is absolutely right  
and that no deviation or change is possible.

And that is especially true when people of faith—like Jesus or us—  
are absolutely certain that they . . .that we . . .know  
what God's will is for each and every situation.

Now that conviction might be a result of our belief  
that God has said certain things or acted in certain ways in the past  
and therefore any notion of changing a particular direction or teaching  
or understanding or behaviour is impossible. . .  
because that would mean that the former directions or teachings  
or earlier understandings or behaviours were wrong or mistaken. . .

and that can't be because God never makes mistakes  
and God's will and mind never change.

And yet here we have a story in which Jesus changes:  
Changes his attitudes and beliefs  
which ultimately result in a change in his behaviour.

After all, when we describe Jesus as being fully human,  
that implies, as Tom DeLay puts it,  
that Jesus began his life as an embryo;  
that died at the age of 30 something;  
and that lots of things happened in-between.

By virtue of his being flesh and blood, born of Mary,  
he moved from one place to another;  
learned to speak a language; took his first steps,  
developed as a human being, and, as he grew up,  
he, like all other human beings, changed his mind.

In the same way, I think Jesus was very much a product  
of his religious upbringing and training--

which means that he did what he did and said what he said  
in the early stages of this story because he was convinced that,  
in accordance with what he had been taught,  
that he was acting and speaking the way God wanted him to act and speak.

However, by the end of this encounter with the Canaanite woman,  
he came to recognize that he was wrong, or at least misguided in his certainty  
that the laws and rules God had given at an earlier time  
to deal with a particular situation were and are to be accepted  
as God's final word for all times and all situations.

And I'll come back to that idea in a couple of minutes  
but only after looking at what happens in this story a bit more closely—  
a story that begins, as the Rev. Hubert Beck puts it,  
with Jesus' silence. . . a terrible, dreadful, outrageous silence.

"But he did not answer her a word." "He did not answer her a word".

That has to be one of the most difficult and devastating lines in the Bible.  
I mean, it's not that he didn't answer her because didn't hear her. . .  
because he did. . . and couldn't NOT hear her.  
The woman was pleading, crying,  
urgently and loudly begging, even shouting:  
"O Lord, Son of David, my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon."

Tell me, who wouldn't be moved by the tears and words of this woman  
who was asking nothing for herself,  
but asking only for an act of divine mercy?

And yet, although the anguish and pain and distress in her voice  
must have touched even the hardest of hearts in the crowd,  
Jesus completely ignores her. As Matthew, the writer, puts it:  
". . . he did not answer her a word!"

Can this be the Jesus whom we know and trust and pray to?  
Can this be the Jesus we call gracious and merciful?  
Can this be the Jesus who was known throughout the land  
for his deeds of compassion and kindness?  
Yes, it is he. It is none other than Jesus, "the Son of David," who is silent.

And yet as bad as the silence is, it gets worse  
because when the silence is finally broken, it is done in a chilling and callous manner. \  
"He answered [his disciples],  
'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'"

Notice, he doesn't even address the woman directly,  
but instead, speaks to his disciples, essentially saying  
"I didn't come into the world for people like that."  
As hard as his silence must have been for her,  
his merciless comment must have seemed even more dreadful.

And yet she would not and did not give up even though  
it would have seemed so easy and so reasonable to say to herself,  
"Well, I tried. You can't blame me for trying."  
But I guess there is no hope here. I will go back to where I came from."  
Indeed, isn't that what you and I would have said in all likelihood?

Not her, though. She doesn't back down a bit. . .and, in fact,  
she now gets even pushier and confronts him directly,  
fighting her way through the wall of the disciples  
acting like his bodyguards to kneels down in front of him  
in the position of a supplicant, a beggar.  
"Lord, help me" she cries with the voice  
of the most helpless of all the helpless. "Lord, help me!"

Now, it is true that she is a Gentile. And that's bad.  
Moreover, she is a woman, and that is worse.  
Women in those days were to practice "physical distancing"—  
that is, to stay two arms' lengths—6' away--from any man.

And to aggravate an already bad situation,  
she puts her worst foot forward by admitting publicly  
that she has a daughter who is in bondage to a demon  
and is therefore even more helpless than her mother.

Honestly, there is nothing but helplessness here. Pure helplessness.

And surely, in the face of such profound need,  
we would expect Jesus' appalling resistance to break down.  
Surely to a woman who is asking nothing for herself—  
not fame or fortune, not even a place in the kingdom—  
to a woman who is only asking for mercy,  
surely he cannot. . .could not. . .and will not. . .deny her that.  
But he does.

And when he finally speaks directly to her, his words are terrible to hear:  
"It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."  
". . .to the dogs." He calls her a "dog"—  
and not the kind of dog we think of. . .  
a beloved pet who is doted on. . .but a worthless and unwanted pest.

What descriptions today might be similar to such a derogatory term?

How about any of those disparaging terms we use. . .

or used to use. . .to describe Black people or Chinese people  
or Indigenous people or gay people or people from Pakistan or India?

We all know those slurs all too well, so substitute any one of them  
or others we have heard. . .and you get the drift of how heartless  
his response was to her tears and her pleading: "You dog!"

Now, no doubt she had heard that description used before

since it was the typical First century Jewish slur against a Canaanite—

a reminder of God's command given centuries before

when the Chosen People arrived in the Promised Land

after their 40 years in the wilderness—God's order. . .

God's command to wipe the Canaanites off the face of the earth.

Some had obviously survived though, and she was a descendant

of those accursed people; and apparently Jesus knew his history,

accepted those Biblical references and interpretations as correct,

and therefore believed that God wanted the Jews

to have nothing at all to do with such idolators and outcasts,

even one now kneeling at his feet.

I mean, God had spoken and that's that!

What more needs to be said? Well, evidently there is more. . .

and she says it because, as Peter Hawkins puts it:

“A kneeling woman doesn't have far to fall.”

In response to this insult, she refuses to slink off into the crowd

and take her place in the streets where she belongs with the other dogs. . .

but not this woman who uses every one of the wits God gave her:

"I would gladly be a dog" she says, "if you, Jesus,  
would do what dog owners do—and let some of the crumbs  
fall from the master's table for the dogs to lick up.

It would be enough for me just to have some crumbs.

Nothing more. Just. . .some. . .crumbs."

No doubt shaking his head in amazement at her stubborn refusal to give up—

and maybe even shaken to the core of his religious faith at the realization

that this non-Jewish woman knew more about God's will

than he, a good Jewish male, did—

shaking his head in astonishment by this flash of insight  
that he was wrong and she was right—Jesus finally speaks  
the word that she has been yearning and pleading for:



"O woman, great is your faith. Be it done for you as you desire."  
And her daughter is healed. **"O, woman, great is your faith."**

In the church and in sermons preached in churches,  
we talk a lot about faith, about trust,  
and almost always proclaim again and again  
that to trust means to keep on praying  
and holding on even in the face of what seems like  
terrible distress or paralyzing fear or certain disaster.

But in highlighting the need for and virtue of firm and unyielding trust  
in Jesus' promise of his presence and his help,  
preachers, including me, may have left the impression  
that trust is passive, that faith is a kind of sitting-on-one's-hands  
waiting for Jesus to save us, rescue us, deliver us and help us.

But this story reminds us that faith is not necessarily  
or always quietly submissive but that sometimes  
faith is actively assertive, aggressive, even argumentative—  
and that taking issue with God. . .or, at least,  
with our understanding or interpretation of God--

that such a struggle is a good thing because it is  
in debate and discussion and disagreement  
that God's mind and ours are clarified. . .and sometimes changed.

And that brings us to the point in this sermon  
where we are to ask "What does this mean?"—  
that is, what does this story have to do with us?

So, "Takeaway #1": From this story we learn that the biggest threat  
to trust or faith is not doubt but certainty. . .  
because if we are absolutely certain that we know  
what God wants of us or wants to happen in every situation,  
then there is no reason or need for faith or forgiveness:

And not just for the faith needed to take the risk of growing  
by reflecting on and challenging our present beliefs. . .  
but also for the forgiveness needed when what we did or do in response  
to a particular circumstance turns out to be thoughtless or harmful or mistaken.

Therefore, was Jesus right or wrong in what he finally did for the woman?  
You see, he had every right—socially, politically, theologically—  
to reject this woman and have nothing to do with her.  
So was he right or wrong in what he finally did?

Like us, Jesus had to figure out, on the fly, what God wanted or expected of him:  
Should he obey God's commands in Scripture  
prohibiting contact with Gentiles in general. . .  
public contact with women in particular. . .  
and any contact at all with Canaanites specifically?

Or should he choose to violate those laws  
and replace condemnation with compassion  
and respond to her cries with mercy instead of judgement?

And frankly, if Jesus wasn't completely sure  
of what God wanted him to do in this particular situation,  
then it's for sure that we can't be sure either.

So, perhaps it is only right to think. . .and then to do as St. Paul wrote:  
"Sin boldly, so that grace may abound more boldly still."  
In other words, do what we think is right. . .is best. . .  
and then trust the forgiveness and love of God  
in the event that what we finally decide to do  
turns out to be neither what is right nor the best.

The #2 Takeaway: In his experience with this woman,  
Jesus came to realize something extraordinary, even revolutionary—  
namely, that the traditional interpretation of the word of God  
regarding Gentiles and women was wrong at worst or outdated at best.

In other words, trying to express or "enflesh" the love of God  
in different times and places and needs  
requires different attitudes and actions.

This woman changed Jesus' way of believing and behaving  
by teaching him, through her words and deeds,  
as Barbara Brown Taylor puts it, that "God is in the business  
of rubbing out the lines we have drawn around ourselves to keep others away;  
and that God is calling us into a new country, a limitless kingdom—  
which is, the reign and rule of divine acceptance."

After all, Taylor writes, "No matter how hard we try,  
"we cannot seem to get God to respect our boundaries."

And if Jesus finally learned. . .and changed. . .then surely we can too.  
And if Jesus' religious boundaries and limits got moved,  
then perhaps we ought not be surprised if and when  
God expands and stretches the size of our playing fields too.

So, if you are convinced that you pretty much know  
what God wants to happen in every situation. . .  
or if you are convinced that God's mind and will  
can never change no matter what the circumstances might be  
because God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow;

or if you are convinced that since we know  
what God has said or done in the past,  
and that those ancient words of God in the Bible  
are to take precedence over the living Word of God  
that is at work in our world today:

if you are pretty certain about that, then you are probably going to be happier  
listening to a different preacher in a different church  
proclaim a different message.

And I say that because I have come to trust that the real Word of God—  
which is the Word of Life, the Word made Flesh,  
the Word known as "Jesus the Christ"—

I have come to trust that this "Living Word of God"  
calls us to listen and learn, to grow and change  
through our new experiences and encounters in life--  
just as Jesus listened and learned and grew and changed  
through his experience and encounter with this stubborn Canaanite woman.

Similarly, if you are more comfortable drawing little circles around yourself  
in order to keep certain people out . . .  
and to make sure that you are inside that circle--  
you should know that, for me and to me,  
as pastor and preacher of this community here in Davis Bay—

that I believe that God is using us to draw big circles  
that go around and include all those little circles;  
Indeed, we might even go so far as to say that God  
has used the cross of Christ as an old-time compass--  
making the cross the fixed and central point  
of a circle so large that no one is on the outside any longer.

And, oh yes, before I forget: In this assembling of sinner/saints,  
we are also content with the crumbs we receive at the table this morning--  
small bits of bread which are given to us in love  
by the Bread of Life, the Bread of the World,  
the Bread from Heaven, Bread for the Hungry  
and Bread for those on a journey.

And if it is true, as a late friend of mine often said—  
that sharing the good news is really nothing more  
than one beggar telling another beggar where to find food,  
then this is a place where beggars are fed,  
where faith is found and fashioned through debate and disagreement,  
and where lives and minds, beliefs and behaviours are changed,  
and where we are never left quite the same anymore.

Amen.           SDG

Hymn of the Day     #773   “Precious Lord, Take My Hand”

*This hymn was written by Thomas Dorsey after his young wife died in childbirth, and that newborn baby died shortly thereafter. It is both cry for help and a cry of hope.*

1. Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand, I am tired, I am weak, I am worn.  
Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light.  
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.
2. When my way grows drear, precious Lord, linger near, when my life is almost gone.  
Hear my cry, hear my call, hold my hand lest I fall.  
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.
3. When the darkness appears and the night draws near, and the day is almost gone,  
at the river I stand, guide my feet, hold my hand.  
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

#### Prayers of Intercession

Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world,  
and all who are in need.     *A brief silence.*

Our God and Lord, you gather the church to be part of your mission as ambassadors of Jesus  
Christ. As Jesus acknowledged the great faith of a woman from outside his people, help your  
church discover and find blessing in the faith of people we might reject.

Welcoming One, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You have blessed us with the bounty of the earth. Grant your grace to all your creatures, that the  
earth will flourish. Relieve waters choked by garbage, renew soils stripped of nutrients, and  
refresh the air all creatures need to live. Creative One, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You call the nations to be glad and sing for joy. Let your way be known among all the nations of  
the world, now divided by competing interests, contending alliances, profound inequities of  
wealth and privilege, and yet also united by enormous worry and fear of a universal threat.  
Bless and make your face shine upon all. Gracious One, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You show unexpected mercy, kindness, and generosity. We pray for those who do not have enough, for outcasts and cast-offs in our villages, cities, and town, and for all who need your healing presence (*especially those who are gravely ill or dying from the virus and those who are mourning their dead*). We also ask your comfort, strength, protection and care upon Gareth's immediate and extended family as they grieve their tragic and sudden loss. Finally, we bring before you those nearest our hearts whose names we speak now in silence or aloud. . .*(Pause)*. . . Hear their prayers along with ours. Compassionate One, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In you we live and move and have our being. Grant our communities of faith the grace to find our life refreshed in you. Accompany us in the rhythms of late summer especially during this strange and different time in the world and in our lives. Give us rest, renewal and hope, and strengthen us for taking on and following through whatever mission you set before us. Enlivening One, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your eternal promises are more than we could ever imagine. As you gather all the saints (*especially Rick, Dave, Maggie, Elizabeth and Gareth*), join us also with them on the great day of your salvation. Eternal One, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Healer, Friend, and Redeemer. **Amen.**

### Sharing of the Peace

May the peace of Christ be with us all here, now, everywhere and always.

*All at worship are invited to share by the peace by bowing to others as a sign of respect and affection or, if at home with family or close friends, to share a more intimate expression of peace through a hug or kiss*

### MEAL

*All may take part in the Thanksgiving and the Meal at home by following the printed order below or by participating in the livestreaming as the Presider leads the Thanksgiving. The bread and wine may be raised when they are blessed as a reminder of Christ's being "lifted up" on the cross as the offering of himself for us.*

### Offering Prayer

God of abundance, in this holy house and in holy houses across this community, this country and around the world, we who worship and thank you set before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we do what we can to care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Saviour, Rescuer and Deliverer. **Amen.**

God is with us. Therefore, let us celebrate and rejoice at the gifts of Christ's presence, love, strength and peace given to us in this foretaste of the feast to come.

Prayer of Thanksgiving *over the gifts of field and vine*

Holy God, our Bread from Heaven, our Table, and our Food,  
you created a world in which all might be satisfied by your abundance.  
You dined with Abraham and Sarah, promising them life,  
and fed your people Israel with manna from heaven.  
You sent your Son to eat with sinners  
and to become food for the world.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; (+)  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, (+) and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life given for us and his rising from the grave,  
we await his coming again to share with us the everlasting feast.

By your Spirit nurture and sustain us with this meal:  
strengthen us to serve all in hunger and want,  
and by this bread and cup make of us the body of your Son.

Through him all glory and honour is yours, gracious and steadfast One,  
with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. **Amen**

Let us pray together with all who have gathered in space and in time to say:

**Our Father/Mother in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**  
Fraction (*Breaking of the Bread*) and Invitation to the Table  
The gifts of God for the beloved children of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Come now and taste the goodness and kindness of God.

*This simple verse is to be repeated continually as the meal is shared.  
The words may be prayed along with the musical accompaniment until all have received*  
Hymn #528 "Come and Fill Our Hearts"

Come and fill our hearts with your peace. You alone, O Lord, are holy.  
Come and fill our hearts with your peace. Alleluia!

*Confitemini Domino, quoniam bonus./ Confitemini Domino. Alleluia!*

#### Sharing of the Meal

*In this blessed "one-ness" (or "com-union") with Christ and with all others everywhere in the world who are also one in Christ, our Saviour grants grace, forgiveness, new life and wholeness*

#### Prayer after communing

O God, our life, our strength, our food, we give you thanks for sustaining us with the living presence of your Son. By your Holy Spirit, enliven us to be and to share his body in the world, so that more and more we will give you praise and serve your earth and its many peoples, through Jesus Christ, our Rescuer, Healer and Friend. **Amen.**

#### Blessing/Benediction

May the One whose name is holy bless us and keep us.  
May the One whose face is wreathed in love shine on us with grace and mercy.  
May the One who watches over, cares for and protects us night and day  
look upon us with favour and ✝ give us peace. Amen.

#### Sending Song #534 "Savior, Again to Your Dear Name"

1. Savior, again to your dear name we raise  
with one accord our parting hymn of praise;  
once more we bless you ere our worship cease,  
then, lowly bending, wait your word of peace.
2. Grant us your peace upon our homeward way;  
with you began, with you shall end the day;  
guard all the lips from sin, the hearts from shame,  
that in our house have called upon your name.
3. Grant us your peace, Lord, through the coming night;  
for us transform its darkness into light.  
Keep us from harm and danger till the dawn;  
your evening presence promise to your own.
4. Grant us your peace through our earthly life,  
our balm in sorrow, and our stay in strife;  
then, when your voice shall bid our conflict cease,  
call us, O Lord, to your eternal peace.

Dismissal

Let us go in peace and gladly share  
what has been gladly given and gladly received.  
**May we do so now and always.**

Postlude