

August 30, 2020
Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

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GREETING & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP (Based on Psalm 105)

Pastor: Give thanks for all the wonderful works of God.
Congregation: Praise the Lord!
 Pastor: Sing a new song of praise to the God of all peoples.
Congregation: Praise the Lord!
 Pastor: Proclaim God's name to all the world.
Congregation: Praise the Lord!
 Pastor: Let our hearts rejoice, for the Lord is God!
Congregation: Praise the Lord!

OPENING PRAYER

All: Surprising, Still-Speaking God, you have an uncomfortable habit of showing up where we least expect you: in a burning bush, in the face of an enemy, in a livestock feed trough, on a rough wooden cross. Turn our lives upside down with your radical love. Help us to fully embrace your surprises, even as we revel in the joy of being fully embraced by your all-encompassing grace and mercy. We pray in the name of your most amazing surprise of all: your Son, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

HYMN

Holy Ground (Sing through 3 times)

We are stand - ing on ho - ly ground,
 and I know that there are an - gels all a -
 round; let us praise
 Je - sus now; we are
 stand - ing in his pres - ence on ho - ly ground.

OLD TESTAMENT READING*Holy Ground***Exodus 3:1-15**

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. ³ So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”

⁴ When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.”

⁵ “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” ⁶ Then he said, “I am the God of your father,^[a] the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ The LORD said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. ⁸ So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ⁹ And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. ¹⁰ So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”

¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

¹² And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you^[b] will worship God on this mountain.”

¹³ Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”

¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.^[c] This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD,^[d] the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’”

“This is my name forever,
the name you shall call me
from generation to generation.

EPISTLE READING*Hold Fast to What is Good***Romans 12:9-21**

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary:

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
 if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
 In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”
²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

GOSPEL READING*Take Up Your Cross***Matthew 16:21-28**

¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

²⁸ “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

SPECIAL MUSIC*Be a Light***Faye Schaeffer, Guitar & Rachel Wertz, Solo**

(Thomas Rhett, featuring: Chris Tomlin, Reba McEntire, Keith Urban, Hillary Scott)

In a time full of war, be peace.
 In a time full of doubt, just believe.
 Yeah, there ain’t that much difference between you and me.
 In a time full of war, be peace.

In a world full of hate, be a light.
 When you do somebody wrong, make it right.
 Don’t hide in the dark, you were born to shine.
 In a world full of hate, be a light.
 La-la-la, la, la

In a place that needs change, make a difference.
 In a time full of noise, just listen.
 Cause life is but a breeze, better live it.
 In a place that needs a change, make a difference.

In a world full of hate, be a light.
 When you do somebody wrong, make it right.
 Oh, don’t hide in the dark, you were born to shine.
 In a world full of hate, be a light.

La-la-la, la, la, la, la
 La-la-la, la, la, la, la
 La-la-la, la, la, la, la
 La-la-la, la, la, la, la

In a race you can't win, slow it down.
 Yeah, you only get one go around.
 Cause the finish line is six feet in the ground.
 In a race you can't win, just slow it down.

In a world full of hate, be a light (oh-oh)
 When you do somebody wrong, make it right (make it right).
 Oh don't hide in the dark, you were born to shine.
 In a world full of hate, be a light.

Yeah, it's hard to live in color -
 When you just see black and white.
 In a world full of hate, be a light.

SERMON

Rev. Laura C. Bair

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Pastor: Holy Lord, we have come from many different experiences and circumstances but with the same hopes of encountering you this morning and to hear again, your promises. Enter our hearts this day as we share our joys and concerns in prayer and in the actions and service that follows. We lift before you the situations and people who are in need of your healing mercies and your peace. Help us also, to be those who would bring peace to them. We sit in a moment of prayer to lift our concerns to you, using only the first names of those for whom we pray... [The congregation shares their concerns and needs with the Lord, aloud or silently in prayer] Lord, in your mercy...

Congregation: **receive our prayers of need.**

Pastor: As our lives have encountered difficulties and concerns, so, too, are we blessed with great joys. And so, we celebrate these moments of happiness and wonder before you, O Lord - giving voice to our joys and celebrations aloud or in silent prayer, again using only first names [The congregation offers prayers as they feel called, aloud or silently in prayer] Lord, in your love...

Congregation: **hear our prayers of praise.**

All: *Lord, bless all those whom we have named before you in our hearts and with our voices. Touch each life with blessing, peace, and mercy. Give us strength and empower us for the ministries to which you call us, for it is in your name that we pray. Amen.*

OFFERING INVITATION

Liturgist: We are standing on holy ground! Like Moses, we wonder sometimes why God would choose to work through us. Yet, God is doing exactly that – inviting us to participate in bringing about God's will on earth, even as it is in heaven. Let us “take off our shoes and bow before the Lord”, offering our very lives, along with our tithes and offerings, and dedicating them using the Offertory Prayer as printed in our bulletins.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

All: *Still-Speaking God, we stand in barefooted wonder, amazed at your graciousness. You feed us, loves us, and call us still. We respond with deep gratitude and in faith - accepting the cross of compassion and sacrifice for the sake of others. We do this boldly because you promise to be with us always in Christ Jesus, who taught us to pray, saying: 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

HYMN

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

Bulletin, Page 5

Unison

1. I have de - cid - ed to fol - low Je - sus, I have de -
 2. The world be - hind me, the cross be - fore me, the world be -
 3. Though none go with me, I still will fol - low, though none go
 4. Will you de - cide now to fol - low Je - sus? Will you de -

cid - ed to fol - low Je - sus, I have de - cid - ed to fol - low
 hind me, the cross be - fore me, the world be - hind me, the cross be -
 with me, I still will fol - low, though none go with me, I still will
 cide now to fol - low Je - sus? Will you de - cide now to fol - low

Je - sus— no turn - ing back, no turn - ing back.
 fore me— no turn - ing back, no turn - ing back.
 fol - low— no turn - ing back, no turn - ing back.
 Je - sus?— No turn - ing back, no turn - ing back.

BENEDICTION

Pastor:

God promised to be with Moses, and we are here to witness to the fulfillment of that promise. From generation to generation, the God of Israel is also the God of all who hear God call and then, follows! The God of the burning bush is waiting even now to encounter you, call you, challenge you, and transform you.

All: We go forth surprised by the love of God; inspired by the compassion of Jesus; sustained by the Holy Spirit. Amen.