

September 6, 2020¹
 Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

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GREETING & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER CALL TO WORSHIP

All: Gracious God, we come this day seeking courage and hope for the future. Our world is in such peril. Heal these wounds and quiet the words of war. Help us to be those who bring peace in our families and communities. Banish the darkness of doubt and fear; anoint us with your light and love that we may spread the good news of your mercy to everyone. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

HYMN

Abide with Me

In moderate time

1. A - bide with me: fast falls the e - ven - tide; The dark - ness
 2. Swift to its close ebbs out life's lit - tle day; Earth's joys grow
 3. I need Thy pres - ence ev - ery pass - ing hour; What but Thy
 4. I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless: Ills have no
 5. Hold Thou Thy cross be - fore my clos - ing eyes; Shine through the

deep - ens; Lord, with me a - bide: When oth - er help - ers
 dim, its glo - ries pass a - way; Change and de - cay in
 grace can foil the Tempt - er's power? Who like Thy - self my
 weight, and tears no bit - ter - ness. Where is death's sting? Where,
 gloom, and point me to the skies: Heaven's morn - ing breaks, and

fail, and com - forts flee, Help of the help - less, O a - bide with me.
 all a - round I see; O Thou who chang - est not, a - bide with me.
 guide and stay can be? Through cloud and sun - shine, O a - bide with me.
 grave, thy vic - to - ry? I tri - umph still, if Thou a - bide with me.
 earth's vain shadows flee: In life, in death, O Lord, a - bide with me. A - MEN.

¹ Townley, Nancy. "Worship Connection: September 6, 2020" Ministry Matters.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All: Forgiving and loving God, our hearts are filled today with pain and concern for the future of humankind. Words of anger assail our airways — we cannot escape from the threats being thrown about. In our fear, we cry “Where are you, O Lord?” We wander around in the darkness of the spirit, seeking light and hope. Forgive us when we forget that you are always with us, through times of peace and times of war. Heal our souls. Help us to reach out to others with the assurance of your love and presence, for we ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Pastor: God hears our prayers and our cries. God leads us out of the darkness of the past into the bright promise of today. We are called to stand strong and confident in God’s Love. Rejoice, dear friends, for that love which began before creation flows in and through you this day!

All: Amen!

OLD TESTAMENT READING - Exodus 12:1-14 (The Living Bible)

Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ²“From now on, this month will be the first and most important of the entire year. ³⁻⁴ Annually, on the tenth day of this month (announce this to all the people of Israel) each family shall get a lamb^[a] (or, if a family is small, let it share the lamb with another small family in the neighborhood; whether to share in this way depends on the size of the families). ⁵ This animal shall be a year-old male, either a sheep or a goat, without any defects.

⁶“On the evening of the fourteenth day of this month, all these lambs shall be killed, ⁷ and their blood shall be placed on the two side-frames of the door of every home and on the panel above the door. Use the blood of the lamb eaten in that home. ⁸ Everyone shall eat roast lamb that night, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ⁹ The meat must not be eaten raw or boiled, but roasted, including the head, legs, heart, and liver.^[b] ¹⁰ Don’t eat any of it the next day; if all is not eaten that night, burn what is left.

¹¹“Eat it with your traveling clothes on, prepared for a long journey, wearing your walking shoes and carrying your walking sticks in your hands; eat it hurriedly. This observance shall be called the Lord’s Passover. ¹² For I will pass through the land of Egypt tonight and kill all the oldest sons and firstborn male animals in all the land of Egypt and execute judgment upon all the gods of Egypt—for I am Jehovah. ¹³ The blood you have placed on the doorposts will be proof that you obey me, and when I see the blood I will pass over you and I will not destroy your firstborn children when I smite the land of Egypt.

¹⁴“You shall celebrate this event each year (this is a permanent law) to remind you of this fatal night.

GOSPEL READING - Matthew 18:15-20 (New Revised Standard Version)

¹⁵“If another member of the church^[a] sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶ But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

SERMON

Prepared for the Long Journey

Rev. Laura C. Bair

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Pastor: Lord of light, in the midst of darkness and fear, you call us to be a community of peace, love and hope. You remind us of the blessings we have and the opportunities to share those blessings with others. We praise and thank you for all these things and for your constant presence with us. Today, as a community seeking peace and healing, we offer the names of loved ones who are struggling with illness, with loss, with feelings of alienation and fear. We name, by first name only, our dear loved ones. By saying their name aloud, all who have gathered in worship, near and far, may enter the prayer for these people, seeking your healing and hope in their lives. Let us share our concerns within this worshipping community of faith. [Prayers of concern are offered here]. As we have lifted up our concerns, we also offer messages of love and rejoicing. Let us offer prayers of thanksgiving and joy in this community of faith. [Prayers of joy are offered here]. Lord, we thank you for your healing mercies and your sustaining love for us. We are confident in your abiding presence with us. Help us to be faithful to you in all times and in all places. Give us the grace to accept the forgiveness you have offered to each of us. For it is in Jesus' name that we offer this prayer.

All: *Amen.*

OFFERING INVITATION

Liturgist: Because God has blessed us abundantly, we are so grateful for this opportunity to offer back a portion of that blessing so others will know God's blessing too! Let us offer our very lives, along with our tithes and offerings, and dedicate them using the Offertory Prayer printed in our bulletins.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

All: *We dedicate to you, generous God, our lives. Receive these offerings as a sign of our gratitude and commitment. 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

Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer

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BENEDICTION

Pastor: Go into this world confident in Christ's love and God's eternal presence with you. Go to be a witness for good and a bearer of peace to all you meet. Go in peace!

All: *Amen.*

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Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer

Exod. 13:21; 16:4; 17:6; Ps. 105:39-44; Rev. 22:1-2

William Williams, 1745

St. 1, transl. Peter Williams, 1771; alt.

St. 2-3, transl. William Williams, 1772; alt.

1 Guide me, O my great Re - deem - er, pil - grim through this
 2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, where the heal - ing
 3 When I reach the Riv - er Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious

bar - ren land; I am weak, but you are might - y;
 wa - ters flow. Let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar
 fears sub - side. Death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion,

hold me with your power - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
 lead me all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - erer, strong de - liv - erer,
 land me safe on heav - en's side. Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es

feed me till I want no more, feed me till I want no more.
 ev - er be my strength and shield, ev - er be my strength and shield.
 I will ev - er sing to you, I will ev - er sing to you.