

Sunday Morning Worship

Sunday, July 4, 2021

10:30am

***Bold text** indicates where the congregation joins in unison.*

** indicates where the congregation may stand as they are able.*

Welcome and Announcements

***Call to Worship** (responsive)

Who will save us from the ways of death?

Jesus Christ our Lord; thanks be to God!

God's grace is sufficient for us;

In Christ, the weak are made strong.

Weeping may linger for the night,

But joy comes with the morning.

***Opening Prayer** (unison)

God of the covenant, in our baptism you called us to proclaim the coming of your kingdom. Give us courage like you gave the apostles, that we may faithfully witness to your love and peace in every circumstance of life, in the name of Jesus Christ our redeemer, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

***Hymn #461**

God Is Here!

Invitation to Confession

Threats to life pierce us and cause us to doubt God's love. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Let us confess our sins and receive new life.

Prayer of Confession (unison)

Holy Three, Holy One, triune God, we confess that we do not believe that you have overcome sin and death. We are more in touch with the pangs of our weakness than we are with the power of your love. In fear, we worship idols; in despair, we collapse in hopelessness; in rage, we seek to dominate others. O God of David, forgive us. O Son of David, have mercy on us. O Spirit of the Living God, grant us peace. Send us out with the good news: nothing can withstand the victory of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Hear and believe this good news: Jesus, the Christ, son of Mary, Son of the Most High God, was broken and poured out for our salvation. In Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

***Gloria Patri**

#579

***Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen. Amen.***

***Sharing the Peace of Christ**

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another. The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Exchange words of peace and reconciliation with one another.

Prayer of Illumination (unison)

Savior God, you gave Zion as stronghold for David. By the power of the Holy Spirit, speak to us through Jesus Christ, your living Word, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Ezra 9:1-10:4

After these things had been done, the officials approached me and said, "The people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their abominations, from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and for their sons. Thus the holy seed has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands, and in this faithlessness the officials and leaders have led the way." When I heard this, I tore my garment and my mantle, and pulled hair from my head and beard, and sat appalled. Then all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the faithlessness of the returned exiles, gathered around me while I sat appalled until the evening sacrifice.

At the evening sacrifice I got up from my fasting, with my garments and my mantle torn, and fell on my knees, spread out my hands to the Lord my God, and said, "O my God, I am too ashamed and embarrassed to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens. From the days of our ancestors to this day we have been deep in guilt, and for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been handed over to the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, as is now the case. But now for a brief moment favor has been shown by the Lord our God, who has left us a remnant, and given us a stake in his holy place, in order that he may brighten our eyes and grant us a little sustenance in our slavery. For we are slaves; yet our God has not forsaken us in our slavery, but has extended to us his steadfast love before the kings of Persia, to give us new life to set up the house of our God, to repair its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judea and Jerusalem.

"And now, our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken your commandments, which you commanded by your servants the prophets, saying, 'The land that you are entering to possess is a land unclean with the pollutions of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations. They have filled it from end to

end with their uncleanness. Therefore do not give your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons, and never seek their peace or prosperity, so that you may be strong and eat the good of the land and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever.’ After all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, seeing that you, our God, have punished us less than our iniquities deserved and have given us such a remnant as this, shall we break your commandments again and intermarry with the peoples who practice these abominations? Would you not be angry with us until you destroy us without remnant or survivor? O Lord, God of Israel, you are just, but we have escaped as a remnant, as is now the case. Here we are before you in our guilt, though no one can face you because of this.”

While Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a very great assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him out of Israel; the people also wept bitterly. Shecaniah son of Jehiel, of the descendants of Elam, addressed Ezra, saying, “We have broken faith with our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land, but even now there is hope for Israel in spite of this. So now let us make a covenant with our God to send away all these wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. Take action, for it is your duty, and we are with you; be strong, and do it.”

Sermon

*“A Love That Doesn’t Fail”
Final in a series, “Reclaim: Ezra”*

Pastor Christina

***Hymn #376**

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Morning Offering

***Doxology**

#592

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

***Prayer of Dedication (unison)**

God of grace, it is our delight and our devotion to give these gifts to you. All we are and all we have are yours alone. Accept this joyful offering as a token of our abiding love: use it to bring peace, justice and comfort to all the world, Amen.

Invitation to the Table

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is truly right and our greatest joy ...
... in the holy church, now and forever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

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 glory forever. Amen.

Breaking the Bread and Sharing the Cup

Prayer After Communion (unison)

Living Christ, as you open the scriptures to us you make yourself known in the breaking of the bread. Let us now go forth from this place, fed at your table and filled by the Spirit, to walk with you all the days of our lives, and to proclaim the glory of your resurrection to all the world. Amen.

***Hymn #564**

O Beautiful for Spacious Skies

***Benediction and Sending**



Prayers for at Home This Week

Morning Household Prayer

Loving God, as this day opens into new and untold possibility, purge me of my compulsive need to carry useless baggage – physically, mentally, or emotionally. Teach me to walk simply with you as I trust in your abundant provision. Amen.

Evening Household Prayer

Lord, as I come to the close of this day, I thank you for the gift of attentiveness and for every moment that the eye of my heart was fixed on you. When I failed, you were with me, and when I wavered, you were there, for there is no place that you are not. And so I rest in peace this night, for your grace is more than sufficient for me. Amen.