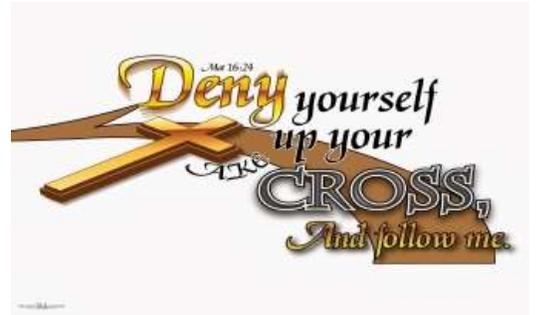


Faith Lutheran Church

Sunday, August 30, 2020
13th Sunday after Pentecost



Call to Worship

We gather together in the name of the Father, and of the Son+, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

We come to worship this morning from different places.

We come to worship this morning for different reasons.

We experience the presence of the Spirit in different ways.

We hear Jesus' words with different ears.

“Deny yourselves.”

“Take up your cross.”

“Follow me.”

O God, do not be far from us.

O God, we thank You for drawing near to us in this place, in our lives.

Amen.

Call to Confession

Heavenly Father, we call upon you in Jesus' name. We come with empty hands. Open our bodies, minds and spirits to Your word and Your will, confessing our sins.

Prayer of Confession *(please join in confessing our sins)*

We have not been able to love our enemies. As a rule, we have never even seen them. We have avoided them. When we saw them, we felt only fear and anger, not love. So, we come to You, not as the children of Your love, but as the enemy of our enemies, beseeching You for ourselves and all the others. Bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you. Forgive us for what we have failed to do for our enemies.

Declaration of Forgiveness

Gracious Father, You lead us out of the constriction of fear and out of the prison of hate, into the wide space of freedom. Let us see Your sun, which rises upon the evil and the good, and rejoice in its warmth, together with our enemies. In the name of Jesus+, your sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God

Opening Prayer

Please join me in prayer:

O God, we thank You for Your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world.

Humble us by His example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow Your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Readings and Psalm

- **Jeremiah 15:15-21** *God fortifies the prophet against opposition*
- **Psalm 26:1-8** *Your love is before my eyes; I have walked faithfully with You.*
- **Romans 12:9-21** *Live in harmony*

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew 16:21-28

After Peter confesses that Jesus is “the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (16:16), Jesus reveals the ultimate purpose of His ministry. These words prove hard to accept, even for a disciple whom Jesus has called a “rock.”

²¹From that time on, [after Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah,] Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²²And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to You.” ²³But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

²⁴Then Jesus told His disciples, “If any want to become My followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me. ²⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for My sake will find it. ²⁶For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

²⁷“For the Son of Man is to come with His angels in the glory of His Father, and then He will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

If money were no issue, and you could do anything in your life that you wanted to, what would it be? What would you choose to do?

In late 2007, a movie entitled “Bucket List” was released on the big screen starring Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman. These two terminally ill men met while they were in the hospital sharing the same room. They formed a sort of friendship and decided that having only a few months to live, they would write down all the things they wanted to do before they *kicked the bucket*. One of the men was a millionaire so, with money being no object, they headed out on their adventures together. They went sky diving, rode motorcycles on the Great Wall of China, did a lot of worldly traveling and enjoyed extravagant, fine dining. They not only got to experience things that they may have only dreamed of, but they found out a lot about themselves during this time.

Do you have a bucket list? Do you have a list that contains all the things you’d like to do before you die? Have you made a list of your dreams and desires, visions, and experiences you want to explore – before you walk on?

There may not be too many of us in the same financial position as the two guys in the movie “Bucket List”. We may not be millionaires or have a rich uncle we can turn to on a whim. I would venture to say that most of us aren’t living lifestyles where money is no obstacle. So maybe our bucket list wouldn’t include some of the extravagant adventures Jack’s and Morgan’s characters chose.

What are some things that would be on your bucket list? Travel? To where? My preference would be Alaska. I’ve always wanted to visit there. I have no interest in going someplace where it’s extremely hot. But I’d like to go to Alaska. That would be on my bucket list – if I had one.

Bucket lists for some may be going someplace exotic or trying something new. It may be purchasing a big-ticket item one has always dreamed of owning. Bucket lists can be as *expensive and expansive* as your dreams – and your budget. If your list included watching the northern lights dance across the sky, you could fulfill this wish rather inexpensively up here; yet the cost would be a bit more if you wanted to view them from, say, Alaska!

Doug and I have talked about traveling, getting a small trailer, and doing some camping around the country. The problem for me is that I’m not the camping type. I’ve camped before. It was an experience. That’s not to say it was a good experience. It *was* an experience. But then we look around us, living here in God’s country in the beautiful Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and wonder why we would want to travel anywhere else!

Jesus had a bucket list. Things He wanted to do. Things His Father sent Him to do. I doubt that He called it a bucket list and it wouldn’t have included things like going camping or taking a cruise or going on a trip to Alaska. Jesus’ bucket list had more of a purpose.

In Luke 4:43, we hear Jesus say, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, *because that is why I was sent.*”

In Mark 1:38, we hear another purpose of Jesus: “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. *That is why I have come.*”

And in John 3:17 and Luke 19:10, we hear yet another of Jesus’ purposes: “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, *but to save the world through Him.*”

Our gospel reading for today from Matthew 16, says that Jesus, “began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.” This was the first time Jesus told His disciples what would happen to Him.

Peter rebuked Jesus saying, No, Lord, we won’t let this happen to You! Jesus responded saying “Get behind me, Satan!” This must happen to me to fulfill God’s will.

“If any want to become My followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for My sake will find it.”

To become one of my followers, Jesus is saying that they must be prepared to face hatred, persecution, suffering, and death. They must deny themselves of all earthly pleasures and treasures that compete with following Christ. They must remove all hope and expectations of an *earthly kingdom* for that is not what awaits them as one of His followers. Jesus promises them a *heavenly kingdom*. Jesus promises them *eternal life* with Him.

This is what was on Jesus' bucket list. This is what Jesus was committed to do. To serve, to take away the sins of the world, to do the will of the Father, to testify to the truth, to proclaim freedom for all believers, to give life – eternal life with Him. These were what was on Jesus' bucket list.

Maybe I should start a bucket list. Oh, there are some things I can think of to include. Maybe take the focus away from all the earthly pleasures and treasures and add some spiritual things. Study my Bible more. Pray more. Help the poor, the sick, the widow, the orphan, the immigrant, those who are persecuted. Demonstrate the love of Jesus in my words and my actions.

How about you? Do you want to make some changes to your bucket list? It's the best time to do it! Thanks be to God! **Amen.**

Blessing

And now, may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. (*Philippians 4:7*)

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.*

God of faithfulness, You bid Your people to follow Jesus. Set the mind of Your church on divine things. Grant us trust in You, that we lose our lives for the sake of Christ and thereby discover joy in life through Him.

God of wonder, the earth is Yours and all that is in it. Heal Your creation and give us eyes to see the world as You do. As the seasons change, pattern the rhythm of our lives in harmony with all creation.

God of all nations, You call us to live peaceably with all. Give us ears to hear one another, even those we name as enemies. Fill all leaders with mercy and understanding, that they advocate and genuinely care for those who are poor and most vulnerable in their communities.

God of salvation, You promise to deliver us. Give those who suffer a strong sense of Your presence and love. Accompany those who are uncertain, raise the spirits of those who are despairing, and heal the sick, especially those we name in our hearts, our minds, and with our voices at this time... (please name your prayer concerns).

God of community, You call us to rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, and persevere in prayer. Make our congregation a workshop of Your love. When we quarrel, bring reconciliation. Help us overcome evil with good.

God of all grace, You give us everlasting life. In love we recall Your holy ones who now live in Your undying light. In our remembering, give us a foretaste of the feast to come.

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from Your love, we offer these prayers to You; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Our Lord's Prayer

I invite you to join in praying the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us...

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

Offering

It is generally at this time during the service that worshipers are invited to share their gifts for the Mission and Ministry of the church. Whether you choose to pause at this time or make your contribution following this service, we encourage you to continue your support of the ministry.

Offertory Prayer *(please join in prayer)*

We thank You, God, for coming to us as a neighbor, a stranger, an immigrant, binding our wounds and carrying us to safety, so that we might love You with all our heart, soul, and mind, and welcome the stranger, loving our neighbor as ourselves. Receive these gifts we lay before You in love. Amen

Benediction

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look upon you with favor and grant you peace; in the name of God the Father, God the Son+, and God the Spirit that makes us one. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you!

Thanks be to God!

Sources:

www.presbyterianmission.org

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