

Faith Lutheran Church
Sunday, January 17, 2021
Second Sunday after Epiphany



Welcome

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
whose voice is upon the waters,
whose mercy is poured out upon all people,
whose goodness cascades over all creation.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the abundant grace of God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Most Holy God,

you search us and know us.

You are acquainted with all our ways.

**We confess that our hearts are burdened by sin—
our own sins and the broken systems that bind us.**

**We turn inward, failing to follow
your outward way of love.**

We distrust those who are not like us.

**We exploit the earth and its resources
and fail to consider generations to come.**

**Forgive us, gracious God,
for all we have done and left undone.**

**Even before the words are on our tongues,
you know them;**

receive them in your divine mercy.

Amen.

How vast is God's grace!

Through the power and promise of ☩ Christ Jesus,
our sins are washed away

and we are claimed as God's own beloved.

Indeed, we are forgiven.

In the wake of God's forgiveness,

we are called to be the beloved community
living out Christ's justice

and the Spirit's reconciling peace. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn: ELW #677

“This Little Light of Mine”

Opening Prayer

Please join me in the Prayer of the Day:

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, most merciful redeemer, for the countless blessings and benefits you give. May we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day praising you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Readings and Psalm

- 1 Samuel 3:1-10 *The calling of Samuel*
- Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 *You have searched me out and known me. (Ps. 139:1)*
- 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 *Glorify God in your body*

The Holy Gospel according to John 1:43-51

In John's gospel, Jesus' ministry begins with the call of disciples, who then bring others to Jesus. Philip's friend Nathanael moves from skepticism to faith when he accepts the invitation to "Come and see."

⁴³The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." ⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." ⁴⁶Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." ⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" ⁴⁸Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." ⁴⁹Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" ⁵⁰Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." ⁵¹And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon

Grace, Mercy, and Peace from God our father and our Lord and savior Jesus Christ!

You might have heard about this story, it's a very common story, about a boy who desperately wanted to meet Christ. He was praying hard. One day, the Lord told him to walk up the mountain carrying his cross. He took his cross and began his journey. After some time, he began to feel the heaviness of the cross. He cut off a small portion of it and continued to walk. Soon, he felt the heaviness of the cross again. So, he cut out another portion off and continued his journey. This happened a few more times till he finally reached the mountain top. There, he found Jesus standing at the peak of another neighboring mountain. Jesus told him, "my son, now lay down your cross and walk on it over to me." But as he laid down the cross, he found that it was too short to bridge the two mountains. The gap was exactly the same length as the cross before he started cutting it down. He realized that if he had managed to bear the cross without cutting it down, he would have been able to reach Jesus.

In today's Gospel text Jesus asked Philip to follow him. What does it mean to be a follower of Christ? Many times in my previous sermons, I spoke about how much God loves us, and, how God never judges us, despite the failures in our lives. While preparing the sermon for today, I read and re-read the text. One thing that struck me was what it meant to Phillip, to follow Jesus? And what it means for us, to follow Jesus?

In the text, we see that Jesus found Philip and asked him to follow Him. Philip did not find Jesus...rather it is important to notice that "Jesus found Philip." God continually seeks us out, from the beginning of time. We read in Genesis 3, about Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit. After eating the fruit, they hid from God. But God came looking for them, seeking them and helping them with the situation. So we notice throughout the bible that God always takes the initiative to seek out His children. And God has done this from the beginning of creation.

It is important to know that God chose us from the beginning, not that we chose God. In the same manner Jesus finds Philip and commands him to follow Him. For me, following Jesus means trusting in God's abundant love and mercy. And watching our good deeds towards one another. Loving our neighbor as ourselves, means connecting with each other at the time of need.

The real beauty of this text is that God did not care how great Philip was. Jesus simply called Philip to follow him, and this is the message that applies to us today. God does not care whether we have big titles, or whether we are popular or well known in the society. God simply calls us and we need to trust in His love. We need to take up the cross and follow him.

I believe our God, the everlasting, is in every moment and everything. Nothing exists without God in this world. Today's Gospel text has a powerful message for us to respond to God's call on our lives. You might ask, "How can we respond to God's call on our lives?" I will say, we can respond and follow Jesus by simply responding to human needs in the community, and in the world. We are called to perpetually seek bold, innovative ways to challenge systems of violence, racism, oppression, and corruption, and to spread a message of love to those who need it most.

Today, we are in the middle of civil unrest, pandemic and racial hatred that divides our nation.

I strongly believe, and will always believe, that the world needs more voices speaking for non-violence, and more of those who are not afraid to boldly proclaim that all are loved, saved and equal through God's grace.

We all are aware of the present situation in our nation. There are riots, civil unrest, violence, and white supremacy has flooded our society. Many of you who are watching us online have been speaking, writing, acting powerfully to speak against the violence, injustice, truth, and White supremacy. Such ugly behaviors hurt many of us, we feel threatened, vulnerable, and isolated. And I know that my calling from God to ministry is to share the love of God and to support people or the community who are affected by these acts of oppression and violence.

As we read in our Gospel text today, Jesus calls us to follow him, and to follow Jesus, is to love our neighbor as ourselves, to speak the truth, and to stand against injustice. I learned during my internship that we cannot have true love as God intended, or true community, without fearless truth. A truth that calls white supremacy sin, and a truth that demands we dismantle systems of oppression, even if we might benefit from them. We must stand for a truth that demands we think beyond ourselves, beyond our generation, and into the future. A truth that screams out, that what we bind or loose on earth will be bound and loosed in heaven. As Jesus proclaims, what we do to the least of these, we do to Him.

And I believe we all feel that same call which Philip felt in the gospel text today. The call to help one another, to heal, to bring hope and justice whenever and wherever we can. The call to act, and to speak the truth for your neighbor. If a member of our community sins against their neighbor, our neighbor, we can and should confront them. As one body in Christ, we should and must respond to injustice with greater witness.

So Today, I feel called to proclaim that we are children of God and God loves us. Even though we may not agree on everything, even though we may never fully diffuse the flames that burn in the hearts of the most vulnerable, the oppressed, and the marginalized. We must still always remember that we are children of God made in His own image and equal in His sight.

At this crucial time in American history, all we know is that if we proclaim the truth of the love of Jesus Christ, our love will be louder and stronger than the forces of evil. And we know that although we may be experiencing hate, fear, and intolerance, we know that equally strong is our ability to show compassion, courage, and an unending commitment to equity, and justice for all.

We also heard in our Gospel reading that Nathanael believed what Philip said and he went to see Jesus for himself. We notice that Nathaniel didn't remain under the fig tree. After hearing Philip talk about Jesus, Nathaniel got up and went to meet Jesus.

God can see in and through us, where ever we are. We can't hide from Him. Jesus sees us right through, whatever our situation. God is always with us to bring peace, forgiveness and His comfort.

This Jesus that called Phillip is the same God who calls us to Himself today. Are you ready to Follow Jesus? God is calling you to show love for your neighbor. Are you ready?

Amen.

Hymn of the Day: ELW #574

"Here I Am, Lord"

Peace

The peace of the lord be with you always
and also with you. Amen.

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

A brief silence.

For the body of Christ gathered throughout the world and for all servants of the gospel, that following Jesus, the church lives out its calling every day, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For the whole church of Christ, especially the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and all congregations, our national Bishop, Elizabeth, our synodical Bishop Katherine, and our pastor Rita. let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For the well-being of creation, for plants and animals, and for all that God has marvelously made, that we serve as wise stewards of Earth, our home, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For police officers and firefighters, for attorneys and paralegals, for peacekeepers and military personnel, and for the leaders of governments, that they provide protection to all people, especially the most vulnerable, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For our Nation in our transition phase, especially for outgoing president Trump and incoming president-elect Biden, Let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For those lacking food or shelter, for those who are sick or grieving, and for those who are imprisoned or homebound. We pray especially for Beverly Tankersly, Pastor Matthew Lamb, Connie Mattson, Lori Strickland, Eric Marken, Eva Mohr, Al Picotte, Bill Duff, Bill Vaneffen, Sandra Kaye, Lois Stoppel, Teri DePlonty, and the family and friends of Adam Sanderson, Corri Darou, Dan Doran, and Tom Krause. For whom and what else do we pray silently or out loud? (Pause...), please God, console all who suffer, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For our neighborhood, for visitors joining us for the first time or returning, and for those absent from our assembly, that all who seek to know God are nourished by word and sacrament, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

In thanksgiving for the saints who have gone before us especially Antony and Pachomius, renewers of the church, that their lives give us a vision of the gospel in action, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior.

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. We are grateful for the community's continued generous support especially during these trying times.

Offertory Prayer (please join in prayer)

O God, receive these gifts as you receive us: like parents receive their children, with arms open wide. Nourish us anew in your tender care, and empower us in faithful service to tend to others with this same love, through Jesus Christ, our saving grace. 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**

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.
Amen.

Dismissal

Go in Peace, Live in faith, Share God's love.
Thanks be to God.

Sending Hymn: ELW # 303

"Brightest and Best of the Stars"

Sources:

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VIRTUAL AFTER SERVICE COFFEE HOUR

Join us on Jan 17, 2020 at 11:30 AM for a
Virtual Coffee Hour on Zoom, following Sunday's service.

1. Go to www.zoom.us
2. Along the top towards the right corner, click on **"Join A Meeting"**

Enter the following information when asked for it...

Meeting ID: **897 9656 1726**

Passcode: **885647**

If not using a computer or smartphone, you can join by simply calling in and following the prompts.

Phone number: **1(301)715-8592**

(enter this information when asked)

Meeting ID: **89796561726#**

Participant ID: **0#**

Passcode: **885647#**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

❖ **Pastor Rita is available for any pastoral needs by phone, email, and Zoom!** ❖

If you would like to speak with Pastor Rita, please call or email her at.

(312) 478-6212 or critawilliam@gmail.com

From there if you'd like to set up a Zoom meeting, just ask!

❖ **In-person Worship Services at Faith are suspended through January 31st.** ❖

The situation will be assessed again on January 26th, and we will notify you if the suspension of in-person service is lifted or if it is extended.

Faith's Annual Meeting will be held February 14, 2021. There are 3 seats to be filled on the council this year. If you are interested please get your information in to the office or to a Council Member. We also need 2 delegates to represent us for the Synod Assembly. More information will be available shortly.

❖ **ANNUAL REPORT TIME!**

If you are responsible for a committee which is included in the Annual Report, please get a report in to the office as soon as possible when 2020 ends. **The deadline is January 31st.** Reports can be emailed to faithlc1966@att.net with the subject "Annual Report". If you have any questions, please contact Sean in the office (906) 632-7246

Watch Faith's Worship Service Live on Sundays on our Facebook page! - You can catch our Service at 10:20am every Sunday at www.facebook.com/FaithLC1966 . You can also find us online by searching for **FaithLC1966** in any browser. If you have any questions or comments, please call the church office at (906) 632-7246.