

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
June 28, 2020



Meditation

Martin Luther, 16th century

"Where there are no good works, there is no faith. If works and love do not blossom forth, it is not genuine faith, the gospel has not gained a foothold, and Christ is not yet rightly known.

THE CALL

Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18

I will sing of your steadfast love, O God, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. I declare that your steadfast love is established for ever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to my servant David: 'I will establish your descendants forever, and build your throne for all generations.'" Happy are the people who know the festal shout, who walk, O God, in the light of your countenance; they exult in your name all day long, and extol your righteousness. For you are the glory of their strength; by your favor our horn is exalted. For our shield belongs to God our ruler to the Holy One of Israel.

Prelude

Sandy Wentzloff

Welcome and News of the Church

- ❖ Marian Pfarr Swenson has had two special people in the news lately. Granddaughter, Katie, has been recognized on Channel12 for raising funds for food and water and other supplies for the National Guard in Minneapolis during the early protest marches. Katie is the daughter of Marian's son, Brian. Daughter, Jodi, along with Allison Boisvert have published a new book "The Urgency of Awareness."
- ❖ In order to be more in touch with our people during this pandemic, the Church has purchased 5 DVD players to take to local people who do not have internet resources to watch the worship service. These will be brought to you each week with a new DVD of the service so that you can view it whenever you would like. It is a small self-contained unit with no internet required. **If you would like this service please call the Church at 507-237-2595 and let us know if you are interested.**
- ❖ **Next week, July 5, is Communion Sunday. The service of Communion will be included in the regular printed and video service. As usual, Communion cups and wafers can be picked up at the church on Wednesday between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. In addition, Pastor Dennis will be at the north door of the church on Sunday, July 5th between 9:30 and 10:00 a.m. for anyone who would like to drive by for Communion and a blessing.**

Gathering Hymn

"Sweet, Sweet Spirit"

NCH #293

There's a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place, and I know that it's the Spirit of the Lord
there are sweet expressions on each face, and I know they feel the presence of the Lord.

Refrain: *Sweet Holy Spirit, sweet heavenly Dove, Stay right here with us, filling us with your love; And for these blessings we lift our hearts in praise.*

Without a doubt we'll know that we have been revived when we shall leave this place.

There are blessings you cannot receive, Till you know that Spirit's fullness and believe;
You're the one to profit when you say, "I am going to stay with Jesus all the way." **Refrain**

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: God calls into our midst those who are beloved in all their diversity:

People: We welcome them.

Leader: God calls into our midst all those who are vulnerable, in need of teaching, healing, shelter.

People: We welcome them

Leader: God calls into our midst all those with a word of challenge
That proclaims God's kin-dom for all

People: We welcome them.

Leader: Let us worship God, who calls us to be "prophets of welcome:"

People: Alleluia!

INVOCATION

Holy One, who calls us into community, and invites us to welcome your prophets and messengers, let us experience your welcome to us gathered in various places but joined in this moment. Show us that we are beloved and honored in your presence and in this community. Show us how to put our resources at the service of all, help us know that the cup of water given in your name nourishes the one who gives and the one who receives. Satisfy our thirst to know your presence here and now.

Prayer of Confession

Leader: God of all, you call us into obedience to the ways of life and holiness, to honor your image in all whom we meet. When we ration your welcome to a very few:

People: Lord have mercy.

Leader: God of abundance, you call us to stop clinging to things, to trust in your goodness to provide all we need. When we grasp and hoard and do not share,

People: Christ have mercy.

Leader: God of hope, you call us to imagine a future "kin-dom" where all find a place at the table, a safe and joyful welcome to neighbors, children, creation.

When we stop short of your vision of your world of mercy and justice for all,

People: Lord have mercy.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Holy One, who is still speaking through our words, help us to hear your assurance in the peace we share together. You will always welcome us by name and forgive.
Amen.

Gloria

Glory be to Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Eternal life, Amen. Amen.

Scripture

Genesis 22:1-14 • Matthew 10:40-42

Sermon

"Courage to Follow"

Pastor Dennis

Our Gospel lesson today from Matthew starts off with the word "welcome". Thus the usual sermon topic from this text is one of welcoming hospitality. Welcoming, Jesus says, in the name of the one who sent me, a prophet, a righteous person, a disciple. Welcome and receive the reward of welcoming. This is a very important and appropriate message.

Today I would like to talk about the urging of being called to go out in God's name to do the work of the Gospel. To have and to share the gift of hospitality is a calling. God calls us to recognize and use the gifts that we have, in order to enhance the realm of God.

A variety of gifts listed in our scripture allows for a great number of harvesters to go out with differing gifts to bless the people of God. A couple of weeks ago we read of Jesus telling the disciples that the harvest was great and harvesters were few in number. Thus, God's disciples are called to go out.

I remember as a child growing up in the church, learning of God's unconditional love for all people, me being one of them. It was an important message for me. I clung to it even though the environment in which I lived and the sexual orientation with which I was created did not foster a feeling of belonging. The church in its message of love put conditions on it that told me I was a sinner and unacceptable. But I knew God loved me.

As I grew and began to recognize a call to serve God through the church, I recognized the ministry to which I was called. It was a ministry of acceptance, a ministry of welcoming for all God's people. I wanted to let people know that no matter who they were they are beloved children of God. Every one of them!

And even though one could see this as a call to welcoming, I saw it as a call. Acceptance was the message of that call.

For me a "call" is a direct sending, given by God, to go and be an agent for God. An agent who represents God. One who is responsible to God. One who has been given a great command to make a difference in the world, one beloved child of God at a time.

As individuals are called to be agents of God, so is the church! This makes sense since the church is people who come together in community and faith. I believe that God calls each of us to be a part of a community. We are called to bring our individual gifts to help fulfill the call of the church to go, be an agent of the living, loving God of grace.

Many times, we believe we have a God-given gift for the people of God. We believe that others should recognize our gift and come to us for the blessings that the gift can bestow. We believe that if we advertise, the people come. The church often has this same approach. "If you build it they will come" may work for a baseball field in the middle of Iowa, but it is fortunately not the way the church is to act on its call.

For so many years we have operated from this frame of mind. We build our building, we put out our sign, we put up banners and lights that show the location of the building and we wait. While we wait for those who need God to find the church, we talk of the blessings of God for us to bring us comfort in our own lives. That may have worked in the 1950s when people sought a church to which they could belong as an active part of the community.

It no longer works. We must claim once again the scriptural call to go out. Go out into the field and serve the people of God in ways that they may know that they are beloved children of a loving God. That in their confusion, pain, hurt, lack of direction and purpose, they are not alone. The love of God is present with them to guide, heal, transform their lives. The people of God surround them to remind them of the blessings of a loving God who sees us all the same. This is not a call for evangelism in its traditional form. The importance is not to bring in church members. It is to be the agents of God in the world to bring the world into a life in the spirit—life as God calls us to live in relationship with one another.

The key though, is getting the message out to the people.

The world is changing. There is a growing spirit of change throughout the world. It is a call for a radical change in the way we the people of God have been living in relation to one another. It is not unlike the call to Noah to build the ark. The people of God were not living in right relationship to one another and God wanted to bring about a drastic change and thus, the flood. Today we are not seeing a flood of water but a flood of people marching to get our attention that there is a better way. A flood of people spreading around the world to change the way we think, the way we work, the way we live in all areas of life. We see this call to change provocatively being expressed through the protest marches in the name of George Floyd, for racial equality. But there is a bigger name calling us to this change. The name is God.

God calls us to let people know that no matter who they were they are beloved children of God. Every one of them! And as people of God, all are created equal. No one above or below another. Not one with the right of privilege that the other does not have. This is the call to justice for all.

God calls us to go out. Not to set up shop and hope people will come in. To go into the fields of injustice, fear, anger, frustration, that have been planted for generations. Generations of people who believe that one child of God is more beloved and greater than another.

Let us consider for a moment. What is the mission of the people of God called church? As the church, what is our role in this world wide call for change? Are we going to be a place where we gather to find solace and grace for our own lives? If so, what are we called to do and who are we called to be after we find that solace and grace?

Martin Luther King Jr. once said that the church was called to be the headlights for society—leading the way to the light of God. But that too often the church was the tail lights. In being tail lights we are safely following the change, not being the change. We are lighting the way to where we have been, not shining God's light as a beacon of hope in the midst of the beloved people of God. Not leading but safely following.

I believe in a called ministry of welcoming to all God's children, by going out to let them know they are beloved children of God. Each and every one. And thus equal in every way to each sister and brother. But the end is not in the welcome. It is knowing what welcoming calls us to do. I believe it is to follow the Gospel. It is hard work. Threatening work. Dangerous work. We are tempted to stay safe in our buildings. But the Gospel calls us to do the hard work of "being the church."

We are called to

- Protect the environment
- Care for the poor
- Forgive
- Reject racism
- Fight for the powerless
- Share earthly and spiritual resources
- Embrace diversity
- Love God
- Enjoy this life as just life for all.



People of God, you are called by God to go out into the fields to welcome everyone just the way they are. Live out your call.
Go and Serve the Lord. AMEN.

HYMN

"I, THE LORD OF SEA AND SKY"

WOV #752

1. I, the Lord of sea and sky
I have heard my people cry
All who dwell in dark and sin
My hand will save
I, who made the stars of night
I will make their darkness bright
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?
- Chorus:** Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night
I will go, Lord, if you lead me
I will hold your people in my heart.*
2. I, the Lord of snow and rain
I have borne my people's pain
3. I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
Till their hearts be satisfied,
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send? **Chorus**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Leader: Show me the suffering of the most miserable so I will know my people's plight. Lord in your mercy

Response: Hear our prayer

Leader: Free me to pray for others for you are present in every person. Lord in your mercy

Response: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Help us take responsibility for our own lives so that we can be free at last. Lord in your mercy...

Response: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Grant us courage to serve others for in service there is true life. Lord in your mercy...

Response: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Give us honesty and patience so that we can work with other workers. Lord in your mercy...

Response: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Bring forth song and celebration so that the spirit will be alive among us. Lord in your mercy...

Response: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Let the spirit flourish and grow so that we will never tire of the struggle. Lord in your mercy...

Response: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Let us remember those who have died for justice for they have given us life. Lord in your mercy...

Response: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Help us love even those who hate us, so that we can change the world. Lord in your mercy...

Response: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Loving God make us one, all people, all around the world, as we pray together,

Response: 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Three-Fold Amen

Amen. Amen. A-A-A-A-men.

Offering Invitation

We know the reward of God's welcome.

The Holy Spirit has blown through us so that we sing of God's steadfast love continually. Now, gathered here as prophets of welcome, we respond to what God has done. We give our gifts of tithes and offerings in the certain hope that God's welcome will continue in the ministry we offer.

Prayer of Dedication

Welcoming One, bless these gifts with your Spirit.

Transform these gifts into the balm that your world needs.

In these gifts, may we welcome in a new world of love. Amen.

Sending Hymn

"God Be with Your"

NCH #81

God be with you till we meet again; By good counsel guide, uphold you, with a shepherd's care enfold you: God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again. Wings of shelter safely hide you, daily manna still provide you: God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again. When life's perils thick confound you, Put unfailing arms around you: God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again. Keep love's banner floating o'er you, Smite death's threatening wave before you: God be with you till we meet again.

Benediction

Quench our thirst for love, satisfy our need to be known, assure us that we are indeed Prophets of welcome. Let us go to proclaim this peace in God's name.

Postlude

Sandy Wentzloff



Students attending post-secondary education are encouraged to apply for a Mission Board Scholarship.

Applications are available on the table by the north entry door and can be given to any Mission Board Member, mailed in or turned into the secretary's office by July 15th.

Remember in Prayer: Sandy Pomplun's father, Henry Albers, in hospice, Bill Cowell, Eunice Gasow, and Aggie Schue. We pray for others who have been ill or are home bound and those at Oak Terrace and Golden Hearts. We pray for health and healing for all people everywhere. We pray with anticipation for the day we can all gather again with our church family. Pray for the ministries of our church. Pray for those serving in the military and for our local and national leaders during these trying times.

If you have a prayer request or would like to receive a call from Pastor Dennis call his office at 237-2595 (leave a private voice mail) or his cell 763-258-3371.

Giving our Gifts to God:

Tithes and Offerings can be sent to Gaylord United Church of Christ P.O. Box 385 Gaylord, MN 55334 or dropped by the church office on Wednesday between 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Pastor Dennis is usually in the office each Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. He can be reached at the office, 237-2595 (private voice mail) or his cell: 763-258-3371.

E-mail: dmckee545@gmail.com

Website at listen2god.org

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- ❖ You can view the Service online by Friday or Saturday each week. Click on the link to view Service at: <https://listen2god.org/weekly-message/>
 - ❖ Weekly devotional available each Tuesday at: www.listen2God.org/worship/devotionals
 - ❖ UCC Church Directories are available for pickup inside the north door each Wednesday.
 - ❖ Our From the Heart Offering for June is for Strengthen the Church. Envelopes are available by the north door.

