



Sunday, August 30, 2020
13th Sunday after Pentecost
Service of the Word with
Communion

The prophet Jeremiah speaks of the incurable wound of his suffering yet finds in God's words the delight of his heart. When Peter doesn't grasp Jesus' words about suffering, Jesus tells the disciples they will find their lives in losing

them. Such sacrificial love is described by Paul when he urges us to associate with the lowly and not repay evil with evil. In worship we gather as a community that we might offer ourselves for the sake of our suffering world.

WELCOME! We are glad to have you join us in worship today. Here are a few notes to help you feel more at home participating in our worship.

Worshipping. Today's service is printed in this bulletin. Parts in bold indicate responses by everyone in which you are invited to participate.

Adjustments to our service. In order to comply with safety and social distancing guidelines, it will be mandatory that everyone have a face covering and everyone must be mindful of keeping their distance from others. Please refrain from mingling in confined spaces before and/or after service.

Other adjustments are:

- Congregational singing is discouraged. If you feel you must, please sing softly with your mask in place.
- The sign of the PEACE will be offered by a wave or bow while staying in place.
- The OFFERING PLATE will not be passed or brought forward. It will be in the back of the sanctuary instead.
- If this is a service of HOLY COMMUNION, communion elements will be available as you exit the sanctuary.
- At the conclusion of the service, everyone is asked to remain in their pew. Ushers will dismiss people by row to maintain safe spacing.
- The Sanctuary, Narthex and Broadway lobby are the only areas open. All other areas of St. Stephen's are closed.

Prayer Requests. Please call the office you'd like to place someone on our prayer list.

+ **GATHERING** +

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding deacon begins.

D Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

C Amen.

D God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

D Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

D Most merciful God,

C we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

D God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace we have been saved. In the name of Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven. May almighty God strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in our hearts through faith.

C Amen.

GATHERING SONG: *What Wondrous Love Is This* (ELW 666)

You are invited to listen.

*What wondrous love is this,
O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this
that caused the Lord of bliss
to bear the dreadful curse
for my soul, for my soul,
to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?*

GREETING

D The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **And also with you.**

CALL TO WORSHIP

D Praise be to God,

C **who rescues us from the power of darkness;
who redeems us, and sets us free!**

D Praise be to Jesus Christ, the first born of all creation,

C **through whom all things were made,
in heaven and on the earth.**

D Praise be to the Spirit of God,

C **whose presence sustains us,
and whose breath renews all creation.**

D Behold! I am making all things new!

C **Come, O God, and make your home among us.
Pour out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

D Let us pray. 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.

C **Amen.**

+ **WORD** +

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 15:15-21

Jeremiah's delight in the word of the LORD is contradicted by the heaviness of God's hand upon him and God's seeming unfaithfulness. God's tough love to Jeremiah says that if he repents, he will be allowed to continue in his strenuous ministry. Jeremiah is strengthened by the simple words, "I am with you."

A reading from Jeremiah.

¹⁵O LORD, you know;
remember me and visit me,
and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors.

In your forbearance do not take me away;
know that on your account I suffer insult.

¹⁶Your words were found, and I ate them,
and your words became to me a joy
and the delight of my heart;

for I am called by your name,
O LORD, God of hosts.

¹⁷I did not sit in the company of merrymakers,
nor did I rejoice;
under the weight of your hand I sat alone,
for you had filled me with indignation.

¹⁸Why is my pain unceasing,
my wound incurable,
refusing to be healed?

Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook,
like waters that fail.

¹⁹Therefore thus says the LORD:

If you turn back, I will take you back,
and you shall stand before me.

If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless,
you shall serve as my mouth.

It is they who will turn to you,
not you who will turn to them.

²⁰And I will make you to this people
a fortified wall of bronze;

they will fight against you,
but they shall not prevail over you,

for I am with you
to save you and deliver you,
says the LORD.

²¹I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked,
and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.
...The word of the Lord. **C Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING: Romans 12:9-21

Paul presents benchmarks for faithful relationships with Christians and non-Christians. Love is the unflagging standard of our behavior. When we encounter evil, we do not resort to its tactics but seek to overcome it with good. While Christians cannot control the actions and attitudes of others, we seek to live at peace with all people.

A reading from Romans.

⁹Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

...The word of the Lord. **C Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL: 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."

D The holy gospel according to Matthew.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

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. **C Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: *I Want Jesus to Walk with Me* (ELW 325)

All are invited to stand and listen as the Word of God is proclaimed in song.

*I want Jesus to walk with me;
I want Jesus to walk with me;
all along my pilgrim journey,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.*

APOSTLES' CREED

A With the whole Church, we confess our faith.

C **I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

**born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,**

**the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A 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.

A 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. Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

A 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. Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

A 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. Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

A 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. Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

A 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. Lord, in your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

A In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

PEACE

The presiding deacon and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.

D The peace of Christ be with you always.

C **And also with you.**

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace with a wave or bow while staying in place.

+ MEAL +

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

We give thanks together for God's gifts, celebrating Holy Communion with the bread and wine consecrated last night in worship at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rockville Centre, NY.

D Let us pray. Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,
who preached good news to the poor,
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

When the community gathered for Holy Communion last evening,
we remembered that in the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

We also remembered that, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.
unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

D Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

C 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 and ever. Amen.

+ SENDING +

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

D The God of steadfastness and encouragement
grant us to live in harmony with one another,
in accordance with Christ Jesus.

C Amen.

D May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing,
so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

D The God of all grace bless us now and forever.

C Amen.

SENDING SONG: *Lift High the Cross* (ELW 660)

Refrain

*Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
till all the world adore his sacred name.*

*Come, Christians, follow where our captain trod,
our king victorious, Christ, the Son of God. Refrain*

DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Lost and Found

In an age when self-actualization and “finding oneself” are high cultural values, it can be easy to see these tasks as a steady trajectory toward a fixed end, one that we can control.

Jesus says, on the other hand, that in order to find our life—our identity—we must seek to lose it. We are to identify with Jesus so completely that he becomes our identity. And here’s the ace-in-the-hole, the part that even our therapists and life coaches can accept: It’s not that we identify with Jesus in order to *forget* who we are—to forget the childhood that wasn’t perfect, the mistakes we made as teenagers, and the people we’ve hurt along the way. We identify with Jesus in order to *remember* who we are—children of God who are created by God.

So, what of Peter? He’s just been named the Rock and handed the keys to the kingdom. But he’s already trying so hard to protect this newfound identity that he forgets how he got it in the first place. It’s no wonder that when his hopes for the kingdom are threatened and Jesus talks about death, Peter is the one to say, “Hold up!” Jesus diagnoses Peter correctly—he is clinging to his new self-understanding as “right-hand man” more than God. It’s his protectiveness and rigidity that earn him the name Satan, not his zeal.

When Jesus says that we must lose our lives, he’s not offering a formula. Jesus is asking for a willingness to accept something different from what we’ve planned or expected, a willingness for Peter to relinquish his understanding of what it means to be the Rock. It’s only this willingness to follow a meandering path and to give up our control over the outcome that results in the found life we all look for.

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