

Worship in the Home: Sunday, July 19, 2020

Posted on July 14, 2020 by ELCA Worship



Worship in the Home

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost Lectionary 16 July 19, 2020

In this time of world-wide crisis, congregations throughout this church are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ. While you cannot be together in person, we can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer. We offer this brief resource as an aid for prayer in the home. As with our prayers in the gathered assembly for worship, you are encouraged to prepare or adapt them locally for your context.

It is an age-old question: why is there evil in the world? In the parable of the wheat and the weeds Jesus suggests that both grow together until the harvest. With Paul, we long for the day that all creation will be set free from bondage and suffering. Having both weeds and wheat within us, we humbly place our hope in the promises of God, and from the Lord's table we go forth to bear the fruit of justice and mercy.

The Prayer of the Day may be prayed.

Let us pray.

Faithful God, most merciful judge, you care for your children with firmness and compassion. By your Spirit nurture us who [live](#) in your kingdom, that we may be rooted in the way of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Then the readings for this Sunday may be read, as follows:

First Reading: Isaiah 44:6-8

There are no other gods besides God: the word of the LORD does not fail to come to pass. We can trust in God, through whom Israel—and we—are redeemed.

⁶Thus says the Lord, the Sovereign of Israel,

and Israel's Redeemer, the Lord of hosts:

I am the first and I am the last;

besides me there is no god.

⁷Who is like me? Let them proclaim it,

let them declare and set it forth before me.

Who has announced from of old the things to come?
Let them tell us what is yet to be.

⁸Do not fear, or be afraid;
have I not told you from of old and declared it?
You are my witnesses!
Is there besides me any other deity?
There is no other rock; I know not one.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 86:11-17

¹¹Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk^l in your truth;
give me an undivided heart to revere your name.

¹²I will thank you, O Lord my God, with^l all my heart,
and glorify your name for-^l evermore.

¹³For great is your^l love toward me;
you have delivered me from the^l pit of death.

¹⁴The arrogant rise up against me, O God, and a band of violent people^l seeks my
life;

they have not set you before their eyes.

¹⁵But you, O Lord, are gracious and full^l of compassion,
slow to anger, and full of kind-^lness and truth.

¹⁶Turn to me and have mercy on me;
give your strength to your servant, and save the child^l of your handmaid.

¹⁷Show me a sign of your favor, so that those who hate me may see it and be^l put
to shame;
because you, Lord, have [helped](#) me and comforted me.

Second Reading: Romans 8:12-25

For Paul, true spirituality means that we experience the reality of the Spirit, which enables us to pray as God's children, keeps us in solidarity with creation, and gives us unseen hope that God will liberate us and creation from bondage to death and decay.

¹²So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—¹³for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with Christ so that we may also be glorified with Christ.

¹⁸I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; ²³and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have

the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus tells a parable about the coexistence of good and evil in this world. God's judgment will remove all evildoers and causes of sin, but not until the end of human history.

²⁴Jesus put before the crowd another parable: "The dominion of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. ²⁶So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' ²⁸He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' ²⁹But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

³⁶Then Jesus left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." ³⁷Jesus answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son-of-Man; ³⁸the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of God's dominion; the weeds are the children of the evil one, ³⁹and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹The Son-of-Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his dominion all causes of sin and all evildoers, ⁴²and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the dominion of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!"

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

Having read these readings, think of this:

We certainly know groaning right now. Indeed, in this difficult time, the whole creation seems to be groaning. And, amid signs of awful division between people in our land, we are tempted to try to weed the field ourselves, to try tear out and eliminate whoever we think is a "weed." But the parable warns us that we would be torn apart ourselves; we all are both wheat and weed. Rather, as Isaiah says, only God is the judge, and we are to be witnesses to God's patience and mercy.

Furthermore, Paul invites us to hope. Our groaning prayer is the very Spirit of God in us, forming us to trust God as a dear father, bearing witness in us that because

of Christ we are children of God. We groan for the world together with Jesus in the garden and on the cross. Then, in his resurrection, Christ makes us to be pure wheat. In God's great harvest we can be made into bread for our neighbor.

If you have a hymnal (or using the graphic below), you might now sing or read "We Plow the Fields and Scatter" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 681).

[We Plow the Fields and Scatter \(WIR PFLÜGEN\)](#)
[Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast](#)

Confident of God's care for us in the midst of the world's sufferings, we join together in the power of the Spirit to pray for the church, the earth, the world, and all who are in need, responding to the words "Teach us your way" with the phrase "you are full of compassion."

A brief silence.

God of the church, we praise you for sowing the good seed of the gospel throughout the world, and we mourn that at this time many Christians cannot assemble to nurture one another for growth in the faith. Tend your people; support bishops, pastors, deacons, and lay leaders; give us strength through your word. Lead seminaries to plan appropriately for the fall semester.

A brief silence.

O God, teach us your way:

you are full of compassion.

God of the earth, we praise you for a wondrous creation, and we mourn that many lands and seas are groaning for rebirth. Nurture our green spaces and national parks; send rain where there is drought; protect endangered animals from poachers. Show us how to care for your earth and its creatures.

A brief silence.

O God, teach us your way:

you are full of compassion.

God of the nations, we praise you for the good that has been given us in this country, and we mourn that many people here are poor and dispossessed, that we have allowed racism to distort our society, that violence breaks out in our land. Lead us to form communities in which all people are equal and where disputes are settled without violence. Save us from preserving a past that has been harmful to many. Bring an end to warfare around the world, and mend the torn fabric of humankind with your truth and mercy.

A brief silence.

O God, teach us your way:

you are full of compassion.

God of humankind, we praise you for wherever health and happiness prevail, and we mourn that many people suffer. Each day thousands more contract the virus; renters are facing eviction; medical workers are exhausted; some of the sick have no access to [health care](#); countless people are broken by sorrows. Open our hearts to your children who suffer in any way, and show us how to serve them.

A brief silence.

O God, teach us your way:

you are full of compassion.

God of the seasons, we praise you for summertime, and we mourn that this year many hopes and expectations are denied. Give relief to those who suffer from the heat. Protect travelers from infection. Guard our children. Give rest to those with no vacation time, hope to those who are unemployed, and patience to all who must endure this difficult time.

A brief silence.

O God, teach us your way:

you are full of compassion.

God, you are Abba, our loving Father. You are our Sovereign of our lives, our Redeemer, the Rock on which we build. Hear us as we offer the petitions of our hearts.

A longer time of silence.

O God, teach us your way:

you are full of compassion.

God of eternity, we praise you for all who have died in the faith, especially this week the apostles Mary Magdalene and James. We mourn our own beloved dead. At the end, bring us all into the shining light of your presence.

A brief silence.

O God, teach us your way:

you are full of compassion.

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

Amen.

If you have a hymnal (or using the graphic below), you might now sing or read "Blessed Assurance" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 638).

[Blessed Assurance](#)

Then conclude with these prayers:

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

Amen.

Offering

Please remember to mail in your offerings so that Grace can continue to serve you.

Offering Prayer

God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is as firm as the Heavens. Water and word, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Nourish us through these gifts, that we might proclaim your steadfast love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. **Amen.**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Amen.

Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever.

Amen.

Due to copyright restrictions, we can only provide downloadable hymns that are in the public domain with this resource. To purchase a copy of ***Evangelical Lutheran Worship*** for the home, visit the [Augsburg Fortress website](#) or call 1-800-328-4648.

Devotional Music Links: For your individual or group devotion, you may choose to listen to the following choral recordings made available through Augsburg Fortress: ["I Sing the Love that Dreamed Creation;"](#) ["Sing Praise to God;"](#) ["Great is Thy Faithfulness."](#)

Readings for the Week:

Monday Psalm 75. **Tuesday** Galatians 4:21 — 5:1. **Wednesday** (Mary Magdalene, Apostle) John 20:1-2, 11-18. **Thursday** (commemoration of Birgitta of Sweden, renewer of the Church, died 1373) Psalm 119:129-136. **Friday** Acts 7:44-53. **Saturday** (James, Apostle) Mark 10:35-45. **Eighth Sunday after Pentecost 1** Kings 3:5-12; Psalm 119:26-39; Romans 8:26-39; Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52.

Daily Prayer Resources are available, including simple forms of Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer; Responsive Prayer; and prayers for mealtimes and other occasions.

Reflection material: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw
Portions from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and [sundaysandseasons.com](#), © 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress.

Readings from *Readings for the Assembly* © 1995, 1996, 1997 Augsburg Fortress. Citations from the Revised Common Lectionary © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts. Scripture quotations from NRSV Bible, Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, adapted and edited with permission by Gordon Lathrop and Gail Ramshaw.

Mid-week Sermon from Pastor Bill sass

Pastor's Message: July 14, 2020

There is a story about a young German boy who was slow in school. This bothered him greatly. He was also distressed by his appearance. That is not unusual. Most young people worry about such things. Sometimes an off-hand remark by another can be a crushing blow.

This particular young fellow had terribly unruly hair. One day, a peasant girl employed in his parents' home chided him about his hair. "Hair shows a person's character," she said sarcastically. "Yours is the

worst I've ever seen!" The young fellow was nearly devastated. One day, though, while visiting his grandmother, he saw a great artist's picture of the Apostle John. In the painting, John had unruly hair! The boy thought to himself, "He was a saint, yet he had unruly hair. I can't be all bad. Maybe God can use me too."

By the time that boy was thirty, he was a concert pianist, an eminent scholar, and a college president. Later he would leave it all behind to become the twentieth century's most famous missionary in French Equatorial Africa. His name – Albert Schweitzer.

Some of you can remember the misery of youth. Charles Blair in his book, *The Man Who Could Do No Wrong*, tells of his childhood in the depression. His family was poorer than most. Charles' daily task was to haul from the firehouse a pail of free government-issue milk for his family. He sensed the scorn of other boys, as he passed them on the street, as he carried his free milk – the symbol of poverty. Deep in his heart, he made a vow that one day he would escape his poverty, and his sense of worthlessness, and never carry a milk pail again.

He also tells of walking home one day after school with a girl for whom he had developed some very strong feelings. Suddenly, beside them sat another boy from their school on a shiny new bicycle. The boy on the shiny new bike offered the girl a ride home. Immediately, she hopped on the back fender and rode off, leaving Charles burning with humiliation. Within his heart, he made another vow. There would come a day when nobody could humiliate him like this again. HE would have the equivalent of the shiny new bicycle, and he would use his status to demand respect.

Charles Blair went on to become a successful pastor, father, and member of his community, but he never quite left behind that disappointed and humiliated little child of poverty he had once been. In his heart, that child was still there. For years, he strived to prove to the world that he was somebody – that he had escaped the poverty, the worthlessness, and humiliating powerlessness of his youth.

Many of us have a little child from our youth who follows us around, and says to us, "You have unruly hair, you're too fat, you're dumb, you're nobody, you'll never amount to anything." The misery of being human. The awful agony of rejection. Is there any hurt more devastating than that one?

Some of us find ourselves crippled for a lifetime by our inability to accept ourselves as we really are. We go to extremes to avoid having persons dislike us. Any small word of criticism is taken as a personal affront. We isolate, and insulate ourselves emotionally from others. We dare not let anyone penetrate the façade we have constructed. They might discover we are, in fact, human.

Do you get the picture? That is what life does to some of us. Even worse, that is what some of us do to ourselves. And we are miserable. Some of us are even self-destructive. Some of us are forever hindered from being what God created us to be. The misery of being human.

But listen, there is hope. It is contained in the words God spoke to Jeremiah when he first called him to be a prophet:

“Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations...”

One Biblical scholar described the world situation in 640 B.C. – the decline of Assyria, and the rise of the new military and political forces. Then he imagined that he was God looking over the troubled world.

“What can I do about all this? God asked. “I know, I’ll make Jeremiah.”

God says to Jeremiah, “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you...” What an awesome statement.

Awesome in its philosophical, theological, and even moral implications. But also awesome in its implications of our daily lives. Here the misery is transformed to majesty. “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you...”

AMEN!!