

Worship in the Home: October 18, 2020

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Worship in the Home

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Lectionary 29

October 18, 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.

In today's first reading God uses the Gentile ruler Cyrus to accomplish divine purposes. When the Pharisees try to trap Jesus, he tells them to give the emperor what belongs to him and to God what belongs to God. To gather for worship reminds us that our ultimate allegiance is to God rather than to any earthly authority. Created in the image of God, we offer our entire selves in the service of God and for the sake of the world.

Find a peaceful place to pray, perhaps a table. You may wish to light a candle near where you pray. One person may lead in this acclamation and then pray the Prayer of the Day.

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

Amen.

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Sovereign God, raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 45:1-7

The prophet announces that Cyrus the Persian emperor is the one the LORD has anointed to end Israel's exile. The LORD makes this choice so that the whole world will recognize this LORD as the only God. Persia had a god of light and a god of darkness; the LORD claims sovereignty over both light and darkness.

¹Thus says the LORD to Cyrus, the Lord's anointed,
whose right hand I have grasped
to subdue nations before him
and strip rulers of their robes,
to open doors before Cyrus—
and the gates shall not be closed:

²I will go before you

and level the mountains,
I will break in pieces the doors of bronze
and cut through the bars of [iron](#),
³I will give you the treasures of darkness
and riches hidden in secret places,
so that you may know that it is I, the LORD,
the God of Israel, who call you by your name.
⁴For the sake of my servant Jacob,
and Israel my chosen,
I call you by your name,
I surname you, though you do not know me.
⁵I am the LORD, and there is no other;
besides me there is no god.
I arm you, though you do not know me,
⁶so that they may know, from the rising of the sun
and from the west, that there is no one besides me;
I am the Lord, and there is no other.
⁷I form light and create darkness,
I make weal and create woe;
I the LORD do all these things.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 96:1-9 [10-13]

¹Sing to the LORD ¹a new song;
sing to the LORD, ¹all the earth.
²Sing to the LORD, bless the name ¹of the LORD;
proclaim God's salvation from ¹day to day.
³Declare God's glory among the nations
and God's wonders among all peoples.
⁴For great is the LORD and greatly ¹to be praised,
more to be feared ¹than all gods.
⁵As for all the gods of the nations, they ¹are but idols;
but you, O LORD, have ¹made the heavens.
⁶Majesty and magnificence are ¹in your presence;
power and splendor are in your ¹sanctuary.
⁷Ascribe to the LORD, you families ¹of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD hon- ¹or and power.
⁸Ascribe to the LORD the honor due the ¹holy name;
bring offerings and enter the courts ¹of the LORD.
⁹Worship the LORD in the beau- ¹ty of holiness;
tremble before the LORD, ¹all the earth.
[¹⁰Tell it out among the nations: "The ¹LORD is king!
The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge the peoples with equity."
¹¹Let the heavens rejoice, and let the ¹earth be glad;
let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that ¹is therein.
¹²Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O LORD,
for you come to ¹judge the earth.
¹³You will judge the ¹world with righteousness
and the peoples ¹with your truth.]

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Most likely this letter is the first written by Paul. Paul gives pastoral encouragement and reassurances to new Christians living in an antagonistic environment. Their commitment of faith, love, and hope makes them a model for other new Christian communities.

²We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly ³remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that God has chosen you, ⁵because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, ⁷so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. ⁹For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for God's Son from heaven, whom God raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Matthew 22:15-22

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

After Jesus begins teaching in the temple, religious leaders try to trap him with questions. First they ask if God's people should pay taxes to an earthly tyrant like Caesar.

¹⁵The Pharisees went and plotted to entrap Jesus in what he said. ¹⁶So they sent their disciples to Jesus, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. ¹⁷Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?" ¹⁸But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" ²¹They answered, "The emperor's." Then Jesus said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." ²²When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

Having read these readings, think on this:

In this [account](#), found in all three synoptic Gospels, Jesus says we should pay our taxes. Only, for us, there is no Caesar. Our commitment is to functioning government, to government "by the people." When we are the government, we should gladly pay our taxes, but, even more, we should give what belongs to our shared government by voting. And we should endeavor to see that the taxes are spent justly, especially to aid the most vulnerable, like Cyrus letting the captive people go. That all is what Luther would call God's "left hand," in which God mysteriously governs the world through the powers that be. But what about God's "right hand?" Jesus Christ, the one who is being threatened with arrest and death in this story, is himself the very image of God. He is our head. His cross finally holds together and inscribes all things. Everything is God's, not only the government. By the power of the Spirit, Jesus gives life and salvation to us in his word and — when we can come to it — in his supper, so that, like Paul and the Thessalonians, we can in turn give thanks for, pray for, and give to the earth and our neighbor. That is giving to God what is God's.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "Lift Every Voice and Sing" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 841), "O God of Every Nation" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 713). Links to hymns in the public domain are provided below.

[Lift Every Voice and Sing](#)

Then pray these intercessions:

With confidence in God's grace and mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need, responding to each petition with the words "In mercy, receive our prayers."

A brief silence.

We pray for the church around the world: that church leaders be supported in their ministries, especially pastors (*names*); that national and local churches receive the necessary funding to accomplish their tasks; and that, hearing you call us by name, we join with all the baptized to give you praise, even in this time of great trouble.

A brief silence.

You are great, O God, our Redeemer:

in mercy, receive our prayers.

We pray for the earth, the lands, the waters, the animals: that what has been destroyed or harmed be renewed; that the wildness of both storms and viruses be tamed; and that all people become faithful stewards of your good creation.

A brief silence.

You are great, O God, our Creator:

in mercy, receive our prayers.

We pray for the nations of the world: that violence between and within nations cease; that ELCA World Hunger, the World Food Programme of the United Nations, and other relief agencies be enabled to feed those who face starvation; that elections in the world's democracies be conducted fairly; and that the people of our country shun acts of hostility and sedition.

A brief silence.

You are great, O God, our Sovereign:

in mercy, receive our prayers.

We pray for a right use of taxation: that laws concerning taxes reflect justice for all; that tax monies be directed to worthy uses; and that citizens honestly pay what is fairly charged, so that our nation may be maintained.

A brief silence.

You are great, O God, our Judge:

in mercy, receive our prayers.

On this day commemorating St. Luke, we pray for all ministries of healing: that hospitals and clinics receive adequate resources; that medical care be improved in neighborhoods of poverty, in prisons, and in refugee camps; that physicians and nurses be upheld; and that kindly hospice care be available to the dying.

A brief silence.

You are great, O God, our Healer:

in mercy, receive our prayers.

We pray for all in need: for all who suffer from the coronavirus; for all who are living with high anxiety; for those who are unemployed; for those evicted from their housing; for all who experience prejudice based on skin color, ethnicity, or economic status; for those we name here before you. . . .

A brief silence.

You are great, O God, our Comforter:

in mercy, receive our prayers.

We pray finally for ourselves: that you give us steadfastness in faith and love; and that you hear the petitions of our hearts.

A longer period of silence.

You are great, O God, our Friend:

in mercy, receive our prayers.

We praise you for the centuries of the faithful who have died in the faith, especially today for the evangelist Luke, and for those we remember in our hearts. . . . That at the end you will welcome us all into your presence, we pray.

A brief silence.

You are great, O God, our Hope:

in mercy, receive our prayers.

Hear us when we call upon you, O God, and enfold in your loving arms all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

If you have a hymnal, you might now sing or read; "God of Grace and God of Glory" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 705); "When Our Song Says Peace" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 709). [Links to hymns in the public domain are provided below.](#)

[God of Grace and God of Glory](#)

Then conclude with these prayers:

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Glory to you, O God, for your creative Word:

making and mending all things,

evoking the cosmic hymn of praise,

and singing a love-song for your beloved:

your vineyard, your flock, your people.

With all creation we sing, Glory! **Glory!**

Blessed are you for your liberating Word:

speaking through Moses and the prophets,

encountered in the Gospels,

and proclaimed in the assembly:

your freedom, forgiveness, and life for the world.

With the whole world we say, Blessing! **Blessing!**

Holy are you, O God, for your living Word:

among us wherever we gather,

welcoming everyone to your feast,

and, with grace and generosity,

bringing to earth the kingdom of heaven.

With saints and angels, we cry, Holy! **Holy!**

Clothe us in your loving Spirit,

flowing from the Crucified and Risen One,

and keep us awake to your presence

in the people and places you call us to serve.

Glory, praise, and blessing are yours, Holy God,

now and forever. **Amen.**

Offering

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

Offering Prayer

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. You have set before us these gifts of your good creation. Prepare us for your heavenly banquet, nourish us with this rich food and drink, and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world, through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

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

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.

Then speak the Blessing:

Mothering God,
Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life.
Amen.

Devotional Music Links: For your individual or group devotion, you may choose to listen to the following choral recordings made available through Augsburg Fortress: "[For the Sake of the World;](#)" "[I Will Lift Up My Eyes to the Hills;](#)" "[O God Beyond All Praising.](#)"

Luke, Evangelist, October 18

Identified as the author of both Luke and Acts, Luke was careful to place the events of Jesus' life in their social and religious contexts. His gospel gives us some of the most beloved parables, as well as the songs of Zechariah, Mary, the angels, and Simeon.

Readings for the Week:

Monday (Luke, Evangelist) Luke 1:1-4; 24:44-53. **Tuesday** Daniel 3:19-30. **Wednesday** Matthew 17:22-27. **Thursday** Psalm 1. **Friday** (commemoration of James of Jerusalem, martyr, died around 62) Titus 2:7-8, 11-15. **Saturday** John 5:39-47. **Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost** Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18, Psalm 1; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8; Matthew 22:34-46.

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

Due to copyright restrictions, we are only able to provide downloadable hymns that are in the public domain. Other suggestions provided above may be found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. To purchase a copy of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* for the home, visit the [Augsburg Fortress website](#) or call 1-800-328-4648.

Reflection text: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw

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Thank you to the ones who have helped present this service.

Thank you to those who clean the Church following worship.

Flu Shots will be given here at Grace on October 22, 9:00 – 11:00. They are requesting a sign-up sheet, just to enable us to spread time to enable to keep the 6' distance. Also asking for participants to wear mask.

Special Information Sessions to be held following worship today, October 25th and November 1st.

Annual Meeting will be held November 22nd following Worship.

Please keep in your prayers this week: Kevin Johnson, Barbara Metzger, Rob Johnson and Steve Lindberg (Streeter Family Friend's & Kin), Noah Klenken (Fred Fixsen's Nephew), Cal Curtis & Patty Thompson (Carole Holten's Son-in-Law & Sister), Bill Warner, David Warner, Emily (Ben & Casey's Daughter), Terry Newgard, Judy Wings, Steve Murdock.

Pastor's Mid-week Message – Oct. 14, 2020

"The church thrives under persecution.

In the middle of the 12th century, a Mongol warrior we know as Genghis Khan broke through the great wall of China, and moved through central Asia and across the mountains into Russia. He and his warriors literally crushed the Russian opposition by building a huge platform over their victims, and then holding a feast atop this platform. The victims were then crushed to death by the weight of the celebrants.

The Mongols despised other races, believing it was THEIR destiny to conquer the world. They lived for war. They could ride horseback for days at a time, drinking the blood from their horses' veins when they needed nourishment.

When they attacked Kiev in 1240, they aimed their catapults at the dome of the cathedral. They used battering rams to break down the walls of the city, and stormed and destroyed the churches where people had gathered for refuge. A traveler passing through in 1246 wrote that Kiev, which had been a great city with many churches and libraries, had only 200 houses left. He had seen only ruins, and a countryside littered with human skulls and bones.

That was not the end. Although 2/3 of the population had perished, and most of the survivors had fled into the forests --- despite all this --- the people of Kiev maintained their Christianity. The 2 centuries following this conflict became known as the Golden Age of Russian Spirituality, during which the teaching and spirit of the Orthodox Church came to stand for the Russian nation itself."

By Suzanne Massie, LAND OF THE FIREBIRD; NY: Simon & Schuster, 1980

P.S. What will they say about the teaching and spirit of the 21st century Christian Church in America, centuries from now? Will we have much of an impact on our nation itself??

Peace,

Pastor Bill Sass