



## St. Andrew's United Church of Christ

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### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

June 21, 2020

10:00 A.M.



Dear Friends in Christ,

VERY GOOD NEWS...The Consistory met on Monday afternoon, June 15<sup>th</sup> and with guarded joy, is glad to announce that corporate worship in the sanctuary will resume on **Sunday, July 5<sup>th</sup>** at 10am. The word guarded is used because information seems to change daily. There will be more information in the July Chronicle which is scheduled to come out this week. Thank you to all of those who responded to the Congregational Survey. A majority of responses indicated a willingness to begin as soon as permitted, and/or to begin, but with some reservations.

The Sanctuary will continue to be OPEN for PRAYER and REFLECTION on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons from 1-3 pm. Occasionally, music will be offered during those times. Please feel free to come and leave as you please. It is requested that you wear a mask and practice social distancing when in the sanctuary.

Finally, today's scripture and sermon deal with family. As I was studying this passage and writing the sermon, I couldn't help but think of the sitcom, "All in the Family," with Archie Bunker, Edith, Mike (the Meathead) and Gloria. The show helped us deal with some very serious family issues with a good dose of humor.

On this Father's Day, we think of our fathers, grandfathers, great-grandfathers and the gift of family.

Happy Father's Day!

Once again, we thank you for your continued prayerful and financial support.

Peace and Prayers

In Christ,

Pastor Bigelow

**Silent Prayer for the Beginning of Worship** — Christ, in this hour of worship, lift us out of the routines of our daily lives and set us up on your mountain. Let our worship come from our hearts, that it may be genuine. Let our praises for you be real, that we may be alive with faith and joy. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

## **WE GATHER TO WORSHIP THE TRIUNE GOD**

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Come, let us bow down in worship,  
**let us kneel before the Lord our maker;**

for he is our God.

**We are the people of his pasture and the flock under his care.** (Psalm 95:1-2)

This is the day the Lord has made;

**let us rejoice and be glad in it.** (Psalm 118:24)

### **SALUTATION**

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, to set us free from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and father, to whom be the glory forever and ever.

**Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN [\*10,000 Reasons \(Bless the Lord O My Soul\)\*](#)

### **OPENING PRAYER**

God, our Rock, our refuge, our resting place, we come to you out of yet another week of scary and sad news; that leave us wondering what this world is coming to. We wonder what our place is in this world, how we fit and where we belong. We gather this morning to meet, know and encounter you to relocate you as the Center of our being. We come to you, O Unmovable Rock of our security. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

## **WE ARE RENEWED BY THE SPIRIT**

### **CALL TO CONFESSION**

God's Word assures us that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 5-7)

In humility and faith, let us confess our sins to God.

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Almighty God and loving Father, we thank you for placing us in covenant relationships, in homes and families and friendships. Forgive us for taking our vows and promises lightly, for the breakdown of life in our families, for hurting those we love and failing to teach and live by our values.

(silent reflection)

By the power of your Holy Spirit, teach us every day to love and serve, to cherish and protect those whom we love. In your name we pray.

### **WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND FORGIVENESS**

This is the message we have heard from God and proclaim it to you; that God is light and in God there is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light, as God is in the light; we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

(1 John 1:5-7)

Believe this Gospel and go forth and live in peace!

### **GOD'S DIRECTION FOR OUR LIVES**

He has told you, O Mortal, what is good and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

## **WE HEAR AND LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD**

### **SCRIPTURE LESSON**

Old Testament—Genesis 21:8-21

New Testament — Matthew 10:24-39

SERMON – *Trouble in the Family* (found on pages 6-7)

HYMN OF RESPONSE [\*The God of Abraham Praise\*](#)

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH – THE APOSTLES’ CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth;  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord;  
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead and buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day he rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father almighty,  
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

## **WE GO FORTH TO REVEAL JESUS CHRIST IN THE WORLD**

### PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

Gracious and loving God, we thank you on this day, when once again we think of our families and our fathers, grandfathers, great-grandfather and even great, great-grandfathers whom are among us. We thank you for their love, protection, work and care over the days and years. We thank you for the valuable gift of our families and we know how much work and responsibility a family can be.

Help us, Lord, to build trust in all our relationships, especially with those whom we have the closest bond. Help us to build open, honest and trusting channels of communication between us and our family members. Let us take time to listen carefully and choose our words wisely, to seek healing instead of anger and to express love and concern at all times.

Uphold families that find themselves in conflict where relationships become destructive where people are hurt and harmed, rather than cared for and nurtured. Walk with those who know the pain of divorce or abuse where the intimacies of homes have become instruments of evil. Bringing healing and hope, this we pray in Jesus' name who taught us to pray:

***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. Lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory forever. Amen.***

PARTING HYMN    [\*The Lord Bless You and Keep You\*](#)

BENEDICTION

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word, now and forever. (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17)

**Amen!**

## SERMON – *Trouble in the Family*

### SCRIPTURE

Old Testament—Genesis 21:8-21

New Testament — Matthew 10:24-39

Our scripture passages this morning deal with family. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is teaching about the demands of discipleship, including the ways which place disciples under great stress in their families; and in the Genesis account, we read of the trouble taking place in Abraham's family and a conflict between Sarah and Hagar.

Say what you will about the Bible, but let's at least say that it is very realistic and very true to life in the real world. In many places in the Book of Genesis (the word means beginning) the story line could very well be made into a mini TV series about a scandalous family living like one of those older Friday evening TV series, like Dallas, Knot's Landing or Falcon Crest.

Our Old Testament Lesson today is not about some ideal family, rather it is about how ordinary human family struggles are woven into the divine purposes for God's people. In our account today, the story of Abraham's family begins peacefully, but quickly moves toward tension and conflict. Abraham begins the action by throwing a great feast to celebrate the weaning of Isaac, the child of Sarah. During this celebration, in verse nine, Sarah glances at the half-brother child playing with her young son, Isaac. The half-brother is unnamed in the story at this point and identified only as "the son of Hagar, the Egyptian." According to Genesis 16, Hagar is Sarah's "slave girl" who, because of Sarah's infertility, is taken as Abraham's concubine and they have a child named Ishmael. This practice was normal for the time and culture.

This makes the tension between Sarah and Hagar understandable, doesn't it? It occurs to Sarah that the child of her slave woman is Abraham's first-born son; therefore, this boy stands to inherit everything, all the promised land of his father, so Sarah begins to pester Abraham about getting rid of the woman and her child. Though Abraham is reluctant to do such a thing, God tells Abraham that God will take care of Hagar and her son. Sarah gets her way; Abraham, in a touching scene, sends Hagar and Ishmael away out into the wilderness. Abraham gives them a full skin of water, but how long will that last? Not too long, because soon Hagar realizes that her child is going to die and that she will die shortly afterwards.

Just then an angel hears their cry and God promises not to let Hagar and her child die, but rather to preserve them and make a great nation of them. This ancient story of Abraham, Sarah and Hager has been seen by Islam as the origin of their faith. God fulfilled God's promise to Hagar and made a great nation out of her son, Ishmael, the people of Islam. God did that and those in

Islam will confess that they had to rely on God to preserve them because they understand that they can't do it themselves. That sounds a lot like we Christians often say about God.

As we read and try to understand tensions in the Middle East, it all goes back to this family story; which means that the tensions in Abraham's family got worse over the years, rather than better. It's been a bloody family squabble over inheritance, land, favoritism, sibling rivalry; about a family that is caught up in the everyday traffic of revenge and hate. Imagine if you are Father Abraham with the Jewish people, Christians and Muslims all claiming their origins with you and fighting over what you did and said about the inheritance? It's more than just bickering on steroids; imagine how tiring to a father that might be to listen to and watch that fighting going on for centuries! God promised to make a great family out of Abraham, but it wasn't and isn't easy.

This is a story of human tragedy that is redeemed by God! And that can be the story of our families. We use the word "dysfunction" to describe the conditions of family life where there is division, envy, squabbles with siblings, step-parents and children and all the rest. As a pastor, I can say that over the years I have spent a great deal of time listening to people who have been hurt badly by people in their own family. While we might be a long way from getting it together in our human families, or in the family that makes up Jews, Christians and Muslims; we can take heart! There is the good news that we don't have to get it all together, because behind the scenes, often unnoticed, there is a God, a God who is relentless in keeping God's promises. We use the word "providence" which means God works to care for us, to guide us and stand by us. While our stories may begin in "all too human places," there is the great possibility that they end in divine graciousness.

There is no ideal family, no perfect family, but there is your family and the good news on this Father's Day, that like Father Abraham's family, God isn't done with us yet, that behind the scenes, often unnoticed by us at the moment, God continues to work. By the grace of God, we get to be a work in progress.

Happy Fathers, Grandfathers, Great-Grandfathers and Great-Great Grandfathers' Day!

Amen and let us pray:

Lord, in your wisdom you have placed us in human families where most of us experience a taste of your love and receive protection and guidance while in our families. But not always, for some the family is a place of fear and violence, and place where great harm is done, sometimes in the name of love. While our families may sometimes fail us, you don't; we pray that you will continue your providential work among us. In Jesus' name, Amen.