



St. Andrew's United Church of Christ

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SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

June 14, 2020

10:00 A.M.



Dear Friends in Christ,

These continue to be difficult days. Many plans have been shelved. Brutal events that have erupted in these last weeks continue to fuel a sense of helplessness in face of the virus and the endemic of racism in our country. And yet, week after week, we continue to worship the Triune God, trusting in his redeeming presence and that God is working out his purposes in this chaos.

Beginning this Saturday, June 13th, the Sanctuary will be open for Prayer from 1:00-3:00 pm. Please feel free to come and find a quiet place to pray. The Sanctuary will continue to be open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 1:00-3:00 pm. As a reminder, **you must wear a mask and practice social distancing.**

The Consistory will next meet this Monday, June 15th, and once again we will discuss the Re-Opening Process. There is a short CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY in the announcement section of today's bulletin. Consistory is interested in your response and would appreciate a prompt response, please be heard! Email Cindy at cadams@standrewsdexter@gmail.com or call 734.426.8610. We would LOVE YOUR RESPONSE before Monday's Consistory Meeting.

Peace and Prayers

In Christ,

Pastor Bigelow

Silent Prayer for the Beginning of Worship — Gracious and Eternal God, in whom we know the Maker of all things seen and unseen, the Savior of all both near and far, by your Spirit enable us to worship you today in spirit and truth. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP THE TRIUNE GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

May our lives profess and proclaim that “our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.” (Psalm 124:8)

Amen!

God’s love is steadfast and sure.

It is as constant as the rising sun.

It fills the world with warmth and light.

It endures forever.

Let us, therefore, worship the triune God, with thanksgiving and joy.

Who surrounds us and all creation in love.

SALUTATION

To those who are called, who are beloved in God the Father and kept safe for Jesus Christ: May grace, peace and love be yours in abundance. (Jude 1-2)

Amen!

GATHERING HYMN [*Morning Has Broken*](#)

(This hymn is offered today with permission by Ella Koran, granddaughter of Andy and Mary Ann Koran, who is a music student at Eastman School of Music. Ella offered this to her home congregation in Rochester, NY.)

OPENING PRAYER

Creator God, you call us to live life believing in your wisdom and mercy, and in your joy and love. We gather to praise and thank you for all these and all your gifts. You bless us with your constant presence in the Holy Spirit, and sustain us at all times and in all circumstances by your power. Strengthen us now to remain steadfast in faith, hope and love. We pray this in the precious name of Jesus, our Savior, Amen.

WE ARE RENEWED BY THE SPIRIT

CALL TO CONFESSION

In spite of God's love for us and gift of love to us, we often act in destructive and hateful ways. We close our hearts to God and disobey God's law. Let us then, confess our sin. Let us pray.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, we humbly confess our sin and seek your grace as we pray. We have not loved you with a pure heart; nor have we loved our neighbor as ourselves. We have not done justice, loved kindness or walked humbly with you, our God. In your loving kindness, have mercy upon us and cleanse us from our sin.

(silent reflection)

Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us. Do not take your Holy Spirit from us. Restore us to the joy of your salvation and sustain us with your Spirit. We pray this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND FORGIVENESS

This is the message we have heard from God and proclaim to you that God is light and in God there is no darkness at all. 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 – The Beatitudes

Please read Matthew 5:1-12

WE HEAR AND LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Old Testament—Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19

New Testament — Romans 5:1-8

SERMON – *Hope That Doesn't Disappoint* (found on pages XXX)

HYMN OF RESPONSE [*Sometimes a Light Surprises*](#)

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.

WE GO FORTH TO REVEAL JESUS CHRIST IN THE WORLD

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

We continue to live in an unsettled world filled with unrest and lament the loss of life, employment and routine in the world. We pray for those who are hungry and wait for food in the long lines at food pantries. Open our hearts and hands of hospitality.

We lament the unrest among us for the broken race relations, where exploitation brings weariness and drudgery; bring your rest and strengthen our commitment to justice.

We lament the violence and brutality that breeds fear and death, bring your peace and reconciling acts.

In this time of social distancing, where people are lonely and lost, bring your peace and loving arms of embrace.

Lift up our hearts this day, that we may hold firm to faith, daring to go beyond where we have been and to venture forth in your name and listening for your true Voice in every person and place.

This we pray, in hope as Jesus 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 [Lord, Dismiss Us with Thy Blessing](#)

BENEDICTION

Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous and be strong. Let all that you do be done in love and may the peace of Christ be with you now and forever. Amen!

SERMON – *Hope That Doesn't Disappoint*

SCRIPTURE

Old Testament—Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19

New Testament — Romans 5:1-8

Does it seem to you that a seismic earthquake is taking place under our feet with a “10” on the Richter scale? The ground under our feet is shaking and shifting so much that much of what we thought we knew, seems to be collapsing around us.

There is a breakdown of institutional norms and safeguards; there is a climate of chaos with more and more natural disasters; there is unrest in the streets; militarized law enforcement; record breaking unemployment; a sky rocketing national debt; and a growing pandemic virus. All providing ample evidence that danger lurks all around. Let’s face it, our world is a scary place! People are not paranoid! The crisis of mental health is not only the result of an imbalanced brain chemistry, we are responding to real events that are taking place in the world.

Now this situation is not entirely new. Life in the ancient Near East was always precarious. While the Psalms were being written, the average life expectancy was around 25 years, if people were lucky enough to live past 10 years of age. Childbirth was a source of infant and maternal mortality. Political instability, war, pillaging, disease and malnutrition, were all common and unpredictable and were constant threats to human life. At any moment, one’s life could be turned upside-down or lost. And yet in the midst of all this instability and uncertainty, the psalmist Paul, voiced an unwavering trust in God’s presence and help. They have hope in the face of terror. Listen again to Paul in our text for today:

“And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit and has been given to us.” (Romans 5:3-5)

Hope is an important ingredient in our lives. It allows us to plod along day after day, to get out of bed and put one foot in front of the other and to face the harsh realities of the day. When hope is gone, the streams of life dry up and one runs on empty. As long as there is hope, there is life. We all have many “hopes.” We hope for good health; we hope that our families will be safe; we hope that we won’t out-live our money in retirement; we hope for a Covid-19 vaccine; and you can continue because the list goes on. These are all reasonable hopes, but a question to be asked is: are these hopes ours or God’s? Our hopes might not work out and when that happens, when our hopes are crushed, it is easy to become bitter and resentful. Perhaps our

hopes are misplaced hopes? Have you ever thought about what God hopes for your life and for the world. Paul redirects our hopes to God, to God who pours his life into us by the Holy Spirit, a love that goes all the way for us. “But God proves his love for us, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

(Romans 5:8)

Hang on to this HOPE! And while it is difficult to see God’s love and work in all of this, we continue to hope that indeed God is working and as disciples of Jesus Christ, we continue living in that hope. The Holy Spirit is at work in us, connecting us with God’s action in the world, even though it is difficult to see. The Spirit has been poured out, means that we can continue to grow in the life of discipleship and that includes holding on to a God who has not abandoned us, and who will not disappoint us.

Remember again the text: “And not only that, we boast in our sufferings...”

A contemporary writer, Madeline L’ Engle, says that “Experience is painfully teaching me that what seems a No to a man from a man’s point of view, is often the essential prelude to a far greater YES.”

There is hope for the hopeless! HOPE affirms that God is at work in our lives and in this dark and broken world, reconciling us to himself; so that it will be on earth as it is in heaven. That a hope to be trusted, a hope that doesn’t disappoint.

PRAYER

God, where we find ourselves hopeless, discouraged and despairing today, breathe in us the breath of hope, so that we can find streams in this desert, have faith for the future, and the power for present living.

In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.