

7th Sunday of Easter

May 24th, 2020

10:00 a.m.

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

*Those who are able are encouraged to stand.

WELCOME

**Announcement about Laments and Prayer Requests
Request to contribute to online services through video**

A MOMENT FOR HOUSEHOLD WORSHIP The Cupp Family

CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 68:1-10, 28-35 32-35 ?

1 Let God rise up, let his enemies be scattered; let those who hate him flee before him.

2 As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melts before the fire, let the wicked perish before God.

3 But let the righteous be joyful; let them exult before God; let them be jubilant with joy.

4 Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds[a]— his name is the Lord— be exultant before him.

5 Father of orphans and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.

6 God gives the desolate a home to live in; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious live in a parched land.

7 O God, when you went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness,

8 The earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain at the presence of God, the God of Sinai, at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

9 Rain in abundance, O God, you showered abroad; you restored your heritage when it languished;

10 your flock found a dwelling in it; in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy.

32 Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth; sing praises to the Lord,

33 O rider in the heavens, the ancient heavens; listen, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice.

34 Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel; and whose power is in the skies.

35 Awesome is God in his [j] sanctuary, the God of Israel; he gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God!

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, you are Holy, and everything that surrounds you is Holy. You call for us, your children, to be Holy also. Lord, we need courage to be Holy when the world around us is full of sin. We need strength to be Holy when the people around us don't care. We need persistence Lord to be your chosen kingdom of Holy people, a kingdom of priests and a model for all the nations of the world.

Grant us the strength, the courage and the persistence Lord to be the people that are Your own possession. The light and salt to all the world.

HYMN #610 "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing"

CALL TO CONFESSION:

Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit. So let us come near to God and make the Lord God our refuge and redeemer.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

Creator of all, you promise to care for us fully, and invite us to cast all our cares upon you. Yet we continue to worry, betraying our lack of faith in your good and sure promises.

Forgive our lack of faith which we demonstrate by refusing to relinquish our anxieties. By your mighty Spirit, help us to trust in the power of your holy name, into which Jesus entrusted himself fully, both in life and in death.

LAMENT

You are invited to express in a journal or a piece of paper grief and frustration at the brokenness of the world. These could be personal, national, or global and do not have to be situations in which our community is directly culpable or blameworthy. We think especially of those suffering from COVID 19 and isolation; for the victims of violence; for those suffering from abuse, and for those at risk financially due to economic restrictions...

(A time for silent and personal prayer...)

**Lord have mercy.
Christ have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**

DECLARATION OF PARDON:—Romans 5:1-2, NRSV

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Moses told us in Deuteronomy Chapter 8, Your Son Jesus, our saviour reminds us in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 4 that **MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD."** You give us your word, your plan for our redemption. Lord, we long to hang on every word that proceeds from you. Feed us Your Word, oh Lord that we may be nourished by You.

Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Deuteronomy 7:6-9

⁶For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His [k]own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the [l]earth.

⁷ "The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸ but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of [m]slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. ⁹ Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps [n]His covenant and [o]His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;" NASB

SPECIAL MUSIC

‘Clarinet Solo’

Cheryl Kopplin

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Romans 8:1-11

“ ¹Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you[a] free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh,[b] God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering.[c] And so he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

5 Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. **6** The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. **7** The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. **8** Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

9 You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. **10** But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life[d] because of righteousness. **11** And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of[e] his Spirit who lives in you." NIV

SERMON

The Spirit of Holiness

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

HYMN #463

"How Firm a Foundation"

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH From the Heidelberg Catechism

Q 62. Why can't our good works be our righteousness before God, or at least a part of our righteousness?

A. Because the righteousness which can pass God's judgment must be entirely perfect and must in every way measure up to the divine law. But even our best works in this life are imperfect and stained with sin.

Q 63. How can our good works be said to merit nothing when God promises to reward them in this life and the next?

A. This reward is not earned; it is a gift of grace.

Q 64. But doesn't this teaching make people indifferent and wicked?

A. No. It is impossible for those grafted into Christ through true faith not to produce fruits of gratitude.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Holy God of Heaven, Triune Creator of all things seen and unseen, you make us and unmake us as you will, without advice or consent from us. Your ways and your plans are far above anything that we can comprehend.

You are Holy, set apart, special and magnificent; we are very ordinary. Our basic needs and desires have been shared with the rest of humanity for millenia. There is nothing new under the sun; everyday the sun rises and we go about our day, many tasks fulfilled and some left undone.

Surely the virus crisis has brought the ordinariness of our lives to the forefront. Without a way to make real plans for the future we are faced with the present moment and challenged to make the best of each day. Time seems to slow down because we know very little for sure.

The virus crisis has even made our death and dying much too ordinary. We struggle to mourn and grieve, without familiar funeral services and gatherings of family and friends. Without a way to mark the significance of the end of our lives it seems like a loved ones passing is just like any other ordinary day. We do not know how to grieve.

We communicate through glass windows, six feet apart. We wear masks and have long conversations over the phone or computer. The isolation, the restriction, the fear have all become ordinary for us in such a way that we struggle to be honest with others about how we are doing because there are only so many tears and so many ways to describe the desert of loneliness that our hearts are traveling through.

We have tried to deny the reality of the pandemic and the economic and social repercussions. We have all railed in anger at the decision of our leaders, at politics and nations, even at you God. We have bargained for our liberty, for our health, and for our sanity, until we slip into depression.

Teach us to accept this chaos for what it is: outside our control and influence.

Teach us to accept who we are: ordinary people with the same needs, desires and hopes as our ordinary neighbors.

Teach us to accept who you are, the Almighty Sovereign, Extraordinary God. Who is working in and through this crisis to proclaim your Gospel of Love and draw the whole world to you.

Teach us also to recognize your Extraordinary presence and work in the boring ordinary hours that make up these days of motionless anxiety.

Teach us to pray in gratitude for those who serve in spite of risks. Like Medical workers, first responders, Teachers and care providers.

Teach us to pray in hope for those encased in isolation.

We especially pray for:

Teach us to pray fervently, in these so ordinary times, for your extraordinary work in the world.

Teach us to pray your Son taught his disciples to prayer, saying...

LORD'S PRAYER

DOXOLOGY

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD

HYMN #35 "Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty"

OFFERING

Let's close our worship by giving our gifts to the Lord!

As a kingdom of priests and a light to all the nations of the world we strive to do all that we can to help our fellow humans, and to bring Your word to the places in the world that don't have Your Word available to give them hope and life.. We strive to bring Your Word to people in our neighborhood who do not realize the vitality of your message and the wholeness that comes from knowing You.

Each of us has an opportunity to be a part, large or small in this great mission, to love God and love our neighbor. Your generous gifts provide the means for us to achieve this.

Please remember FFPC in your giving. You can give online, through your own bank or through our website (www.ffpc.org). You can also mail any gifts, pledges or donations to the Church Office, 503 South Leroy, Fenton, Michigan 48430.

Please continue to participate in the St Jude's food drives that help truly needy neighbors right here in our own community, where need is not always out in the open for us to see, yet is there.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Lord, bless the members of this congregation and the members of Your body worldwide. Bless the gifts that we receive and grant us the discernment and wisdom to use them in the ways that You would have us do. Amen

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Live worthy of the Gospel that has been given to you.
May the Holy Spirit keep you firmly in household of grace.
May Jesus grant you joy in service.
May the God of all things grant you rest in all things.
May the Peace of Christ be with you.

AND ALSO WITH YOU!