

Announcements

-Worship in July: we will offer two opportunities for in-person worship in July, on July 12 & 26. These will be outdoor services, with social distancing & other precautions for safety. Full details are in the July Newsletter.

-Five years ago on July 5, I was installed as your pastor. This isn't exactly what I thought five years would look like. (I imagined a big cake to share, for one thing.) Although we currently worship and connect at a distance, I know that we remain united by the Holy Spirit. I am grateful to all of you for being such a gracious and faithful congregation, calling me straight out of seminary and trusting me to be your pastor. When I think of worship, VBS, conversations over cookies and coffee, Bible studies, funerals, movie nights, committee meetings, hospital visits, baptisms, service projects, youth trips, and so much more, I am overwhelmed by the ministry we have done together these five years. I look forward to continuing to follow Jesus with you through what comes next. Thanks.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Gracious God,

have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ,

your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

This Is the Spirit's Entry Now



- 1 This is the Spir - it's en - try now: the wa - ter and the word,
- 2 This mir - a - cle of life re - born comes from the Lord of breath;
- 3 Let wa - ter be the sa - cred sign that we must die each day
- 4 Re - new - ing Spir - it, hear our praise for your bap - tis - mal pow'r



the cross of Je - sus on your brow, the seal both felt and heard.
the sin - less one from life was torn; our life comes through his death.
to rise a - gain by his de - sign as fol - l'wers of his way.
that wash - es us through all our days. Come, cleanse a - gain this hour.

Text: Thomas E. Herbranson, b. 1933

Music: LAND OF REST, North American traditional

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GREETING

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

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God, you send your followers into the wilderness to find those who are lost. Give us boldness like Philip to reach out to those we meet along the way, and let us welcome them unconditionally to the forgiveness of sins found in baptism's grace-filled waters.

Amen.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose
2 Sing . . with all the peo - ple of God, and



blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.
join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion:



Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and strength, and
Bless - ing and hon - or, glo - ry and might be to



hon - or and bless - ing and glo - ry are his.
God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Refrain



3 For the Lamb who was slain has be -



gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

Refrain

WORD

5Vtg' . &*!' - ' .
 K Y' bck 'i a d' U\YUX' h' c' W' UdhYfg' h' c' h' Y' g' h' c' f' m' c' Z' D' \]' d' U' b' X' h' Y' 9' h']' c' d']' U' b' ' Y' i' b' i' W' ' ' K' \ U' h' ' k' Y' g']' d' d' Y' X' . ' h' Y' Z']' f' g' h' 7' \ f']' g' h']' U' b' ' a' U' f' l' m' f' z' ' G' H' Y' d' \ Y' b' z' ' k' U' g' _]' ' Y' X' z' ' U' b' X' ' d' Y' f' g' Y' W' / h']' c' b' ' U' [U']' b' g' h' ' h' Y' ' V' Y']' Y' j' Y' f' g' ' V' Y' [U' b' ' ' h' Y' ' W' i' f' W' ' k' U' g' ' g' W' h' Y' f' Y' X' ' c' i' h' ' c' Z' > Y' f' i' g' U' Y' a' ' h' c' ' h' Y' ' h' c' k' b' g' ' U' b' X' ' V' z' i' b' l' f' n' g']' X' Y' ' c' Z' = g' f' U' Y' ' ' = f' c' b']' W' ' n' z' ' h']' g' ' d' Y' f' g' Y' W' / h']' c' b' ' ' Y' X' ' h' c' ' [f' Y' U' h' Y' f' ' Y' j' U' b' [Y']' g' a' ' U' g' ' h' Y' ' X']' g' d' Y' f' g' Y' X' ' V' Y']' Y' j' Y' f' g' ' g' d' f' Y' U' X' ' h' Y' ' b' Y' k' g' ' U' V' c' i' h' > Y' g' i' g' ' k' \ Y' f' Y' j' Y' f' ' h' Y' m' i' k' Y' b' h' ' ' ' .

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
 and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
 so he does not open his mouth.

In his humiliation justice was denied him.
 Who can describe his generation?
 For his life is taken away from the earth."

The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

SERMON

"What is to prevent me from being baptized?" asked the Ethiopian eunuch, who in Christian tradition is named Simeon Bachos. Simeon Bachos is a person for whom there is a great deal preventing inclusion in the community. A eunuch, Simeon Bachos was seen as neither truly male nor female. An Ethiopian, Simeon Bachos was not only of a different ethnic background from the believers but also a leader of a nation outside of the Roman Empire. There was no one like him in the church. Was it okay to extend baptism to him? they might have wondered. Philip doesn't let any of that stop him. In a surprise pool of water, miraculously provided by God in the desert, Simeon Bachos is baptized, and the family of God gets a little bigger. Actually, it gets a lot bigger: Ethiopian Christians to this day point to Simeon

Bachos as the first person to share the good news about Jesus Christ in Ethiopia. Today, there are more Lutherans in Ethiopia than any other country in the world except Germany.

One wilderness journey had a huge impact. One conversation made a difference for millions of people. Because Simeon Bachos was taught and baptized by Philip, the good news about Jesus Christ spread to a whole new continent, breaking out of the Roman Empire.

The times we're living in, full of change, fear, and disruption, have often been compared to a wilderness. It's not always clear where we're headed or when we'll get there. But... what if we didn't focus so much on that destination? Philip wasn't even planning to be on that road, and he never got to go where the road was headed! While he was in the wilderness, though, he did what he could to spread the Good News.

Could we do that, too? We don't know when it will be safe to "go back to normal" or if a "new normal" is waiting. Right now, on the road we didn't pick, with a destination we don't know, we could be more like Philip. We could pay attention to see if there are others on the road who need to hear about Jesus, who maybe were left out by others. We could look for unnecessary barriers that keep people from being part of God's church. We could keep an eye out for those miraculous gifts from God, like springs of water in the desert, giving us what we need to keep on going.

Above all, in whatever wilderness we face, we should remember that God's water flowed for us, too, marking us as forgiven and loved. Remember your baptism in the desert places of your life, trusting that God will satisfy your thirst. Remember, on every road you travel, that you belong to Jesus Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Baptized and Set Free



1 We are peo - ple cre - at - ed, cho - sen by God.
 2 We are fed and we're nour - ished, filled and re - freshed.
 3 We are nour - ished by wa - ter, all liv - ing things,
 4 Now with praise and thanks - giv - ing, we join the song.



Then we're washed, ev - er gent - ly, in mer - cy and love.
 Then our hun - ger re - turns and a - gain we are blessed.
 and by life that the Spir - it a - bun - dant - ly brings.
 All are wel - come! We gath - er to sing loud and strong.



Sin has pow - er no more. Je - sus o - pened the door
 For what - ev - er the need, God is great - er in - deed:
 As we jour - ney toward home, may your pres - ence be known:
 Not en-slaved, but set free! From now on, all will be



to a foun-tain bring-ing heal-ing, and whole-ness and more.
 end-less o - cean, al-ways deep - er than all of our need.
 pre - cious riv - er, ev - er - flow - ing, now car - ry us home.
 one in Je - sus, one in wa - ter, bap - tized and set free!

Text: Cathy Skogen-Soldner, b. 1956
 Music: BAPTIZED AND SET FREE, Cathy Skogen-Soldner
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PRAYERS

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of God's creation.

We pray for the church. Sustain us as we share your word. Embrace us as we struggle to find our common ground. Lift up leaders with powerful and prophetic voices. Free us from stagnant faith. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for the well-being of creation. Protect the air, water, and land from abuse and pollution. Free us from apathy in our care of creation and direct us toward sustainable living. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for the nations, especially the United States, celebrating its nationhood. Guide leaders in developing just policies and guide people through difficult conversations. Free us from self-interest that sacrifices the general welfare. Lead us to expansive love for our neighbor. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for all in need. For all who are tired, feeling despair, sick, or oppressed, especially those we name aloud or in our hearts. For all who have been treated like they didn't belong. Give your consolation and free us from all that keeps us bound. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for this congregation. Bless congregational leaders. Energize children's ministry volunteers, church administrators, and those who maintain our building. Shine in this place that we might notice the ways your love transforms our lives. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give thanks for those who have died in faith. Welcome them into your eternal rest and comfort us in our grief until we are joined with them in new life. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us join together in the prayer 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.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

5ZHYf'k cfg\]d'hcXUnz'g\ UfY' h' Y' dYUW' Vmi[YH]b[]b' hci W' k]h' gca YcbY'nci '_bck '\ Ug'VYYb' Yl dYf]YbV]b['U'k U_ 'h fci [\ 'h' Y'k]XYfbYgg''F Ya]bX'h Ya 'h Uh'nci 'WfY''

OFFERING

; cX'\ Ug[]j Yb'hc' YUW' cZi g' ci f'gY'j Ygž'ci f'h]a Yž'UbX'ci f'dcggYgg]cbg''; cX'[]j Yg'h' Y' k Ufa h' cZgi a a Yf'gi bž'h' Y' Vta Zcfh'cZU'd\cbY' W' Zca 'U'cj YX'cbYž'h' Y' fYUggi fUbW'cZ dfUmYf''K \Uh'; cX'\ Ug[]j Yb'hc' i gž'; cX'Yl dYVtg' i g'hc' g\ UfY''=Znci 'UfY']b' U'dcg]h]cb'hc' a U_Y' U'Vtbf]Vi h]cb'hc' gi ddcfh'ci f'Vtbf[fY[Uh]cb]g'a]b]ghfñ'nci 'Wb'a U] 'nci f'WYV'hc' h' Y' Wi fW' h' Y' a U]]g'VY]b['WYV'YX'fY[i 'Uf'm' h' Ub_ 'nci 'Zf'nci f'gi ddcfh'

OFFERING PRAYER

Merciful God, our ordinary gifts seem small, but you make of them an abundance, just as you do with our lives. Let all that we offer be in service to you to the glory of the risen Christ. **Amen.**

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace. **Amen.**

