



**At Home Worship  
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church  
Sundays in August 2020**

*This month we return to the Revised Common Lectionary and journey through Matthew 14-16. These are familiar stories about Jesus' teaching, miracles, and identity as the Son of God. I hope that God will open up these stories anew for you as you read them each week. This month, I have included a brief reflection on each of the texts.*

*Before starting each service, you will need to get your bible. If you are worshipping with another person/people, take turns being the leader. All read the bold together. If you are worshipping alone, read all parts out loud. Or better still, call a friend or family member and invite them to worship with you. If you would like to share an offering with the church, the information on how to do so is below.*

*In Christ,  
Pastor Colleen Montgomery  
Holy Trinity, Wytheville*

*Any offering you wish to share during our time of physical distance can be shared by mail to our congregation or by using our congregation's option for online giving. See that information below:*

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church**

*Mail offering to: Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 405 W Main Street, Wytheville, VA 24382*

*Online giving option: <http://www.holytrinitywytheville.org/>*

*Link at the bottom of the page*

## August Worship 2020

*Take three centering breaths as you prepare your heart, mind, and body for worship.*

### **Confession and Forgiveness**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
whose steadfast love is everlasting,  
whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation.

**Amen.**

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Reconciling God,

**we confess that we do not trust your abundance,  
and we deny your presence in our lives.**

**We place our hope in ourselves  
and rely on our own efforts.**

**We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.**

**We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.**

**We fear difference and do not welcome others  
as you have welcomed us.**

**We sin in thought, word, and deed.**

**By your grace, forgive us;**

**through your love, renew us;**

**and in your Spirit, lead us;**

**so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.**

Beloved of God,

by the radical abundance of divine mercy

we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus,

through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.

Our sins are forgiven.

Let us live now in hope.

For hope does not disappoint,

because God's love has been poured into our hearts

through the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**August 2, 2020** - 9th Sunday after Pentecost

**Prayer of the Day**

Glorious God, your generosity waters the world with goodness, and you cover creation with abundance. Awaken in us a hunger for the food that satisfies both body and spirit, and with this food fill all the starving world; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**Isaiah 55:1-5** *Eat and drink that which truly satisfies*

**Psalms 145:8-9, 14-21**

**Romans 9:1-5** *The glory of God's people Israel*



**Gospel Acclamation**

*Alleluia.* One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. *Alleluia.* (Matt. 4:4)

**Matthew 14:13-21** *Christ feeding five thousand*

Reflection from Pastor Colleen:

Each of the feeding miracles we read in the gospels are a little bit different. So while it may be tempting to skim over the passage and say to ourselves, “Jesus cares about hungry people and feeds them. We should feed hungry people too. Got it,” spending a few moments with the details of this particular feeding miracle is in order.

The detail that stands out to me this time is that Jesus isn’t the one who feeds the hungry crowd. It is the disciples. Take another look at v. 19. Jesus blesses the loaves and fish that the disciples bring to him and then the disciples distribute it amongst the people. Jesus and the disciples feed the crowd together. Both are necessary for this miracle. The disciples need Jesus, just as Jesus needs the disciples. Likewise, this means that we need Jesus, and Jesus needs us.

Along this line New Testament scholar O. Wesley Allen Jr. writes, “We must be careful not to flip this message over and say that the church is able to meet the needs of the masses.... Instead, as with the disciples in the story, we are not left to our own resources. Whatever we offer the world is more than we have to offer because God takes it and blesses it.” (Matthew 157)

We each have skills and gifts to share. While on their own, they may seem small or insignificant. However, through Jesus our skills and gifts are combined in the body of Christ and poured out abundantly for the sake of the world. Even in this time of physical separation, Jesus is multiplying and sharing our gifts (including YOURS) in our congregation, community, and world. Thanks be to God!



**August 9, 2020** -10th Sunday After Pentecost

**Prayer of the Day**

O God our defender, storms rage around and within us and cause us to be afraid. Rescue your people from despair, deliver your sons and daughters from fear, and preserve us in the faith of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**1 Kings 19:9-18** *The Lord speaks to Elijah on Mount Horeb*

**Psalms 85:8-13**

**Romans 10:5-15** *Hearing and confessing the word of faith*



**Gospel Acclamation**

*Alleluia.* I wait for you, O Lord; in your word is my hope. *Alleluia.* (Ps. 130:5)

**Matthew 14:22-33** *Jesus walking on the sea*

Reflection from Pastor Colleen:

The image of this story is one of my favorite stained glass windows at Holy Trinity. It's on the pulpit side of the sanctuary in the middle. Do you remember where Peter is in the image? Is he faithfully walking alongside Jesus on top of water? Nope! Peter is chest deep in the water, reaching out for Jesus' help.

There's probably lots to be said about why Peter didn't remain faithful. Jesus even asks Peter that when they get back into the boat. But right now, I'm not interested in those questions, criticisms, or critiques. What I want to focus on instead is Jesus' response to Peter while in the water. Because I don't know about you, but I have felt like I am in the water as of late.

In the moment of Peter's need, Jesus is there. In the moment of Peter's need, Jesus takes his hand and pulls him out. In the moment of Peter's need, Jesus doesn't question, criticize, or hesitate. In the moment of Peter's need, Jesus helps.

The same is true for us. When we call out to Jesus in the moments of our deepest needs, Jesus is there. Jesus takes our hand and is with us. Jesus grants us peace and hope for the moment ahead. There does come a time for reflection on our questions, our doubts, and our struggles. But when we need him the most, Jesus is there. In these difficult days, we can trust that Jesus is with us. We can trust that Jesus is leading us forward one small step at a time. Amen.

**August 16, 2020** - Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost

**Prayer of the Day**

God of all peoples, your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**Isaiah 56:1, 6-8** *A house of prayer for all peoples*

**Psalm 67**

**Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32** *God's mercy to all, Jew and Gentile*



**Gospel Acclamation**

*Alleluia.* Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom and cured every sickness among the people. *Alleluia.* (Matt. 4:23)

**Matthew 15: 21-28** *The healing of the Canaanite woman's daughter*

Reflection from Pastor Colleen:

The boldness of the Canaanite woman is striking. To Jesus then. To me today. Despite being an outsider, a foreigner, a Gentile, this woman is confident that God's promises are for her and her daughter just as they are for the children of Israel. And she tells Jesus as much. Jesus does as she asks and heals her daughter.

In his biblical commentaries, Martin Luther pairs this story with Jacob wrestling the angel in Genesis 32 (Luther's Works 6:139). In that encounter, Jacob demands a blessing from the heavenly creature that has met him on the riverside. Here the heavenly being wrestles with Jacob all night and eventually changes his name from Jacob to Israel. My seminary advisor, Dr. Nelson Rivera, writes on this comparison, "Moreover, faith is not passive but active and demanding. What faith demands is the promise of God, to be fulfilled in us here and now." (*Journal of Lutheran Ethics*, Jan. 1, 2018).

I know that we grow weary of the restrictions of the pandemic and we long for life to settle into a new sort of normal rhythm. We may grow weary of worshiping at home and be lackluster in our prayers and time with scripture. I understand and struggle with this as well. So may we be encouraged by the faith of the Canaanite woman and Jacob-Israel. May we be bold in our prayers and confident in God's promises to be with us, to love us, and to lead us forward towards abundant life. May we be active in our faith, wherever we are, making our needs known to God so that God might provide for us and use us to provide for others. Amen.

**August 23, 2020** - Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost

**Prayer of the Day**

O God, with all your faithful followers of every age, we praise you, the rock of our life. Be our strong foundation and form us into the body of your Son, that we may gladly minister to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**Isaiah 51:1-6** *The enduring foundation of God's salvation*

**Psalms 138**

**Romans 12:1-8** *One body in Christ, with gifts that differ*



**Gospel Acclamation** *Alleluia.* You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. *Alleluia.* (Matt. 16:16)

**Matthew 16:13-20** *The profession of Peter's faith*

Reflection from Pastor Colleen:

In today's reading, following Peter's accurate confession of Jesus as the Messiah and Son of the Living God, Jesus says "on this rock, I will build my church." So what is this rock? Is it Peter? I don't think so. While Peter is certainly an important person within the history of the church, I don't think that he is the rock of the church. Instead, the rock on which Jesus builds his church is the confession of Peter of Jesus' messiahship that is shown forth in Jesus' life and teaching.

The church is not built on Peter. The church is built on the love and mercy of Jesus. We live out Jesus' mission to bring hope to all the world. We are the church and we follow the lead of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The words of the hymn *Built on a Rock* by Nicolai F. S. Grundtvig, come to mind as I read this text. The second verse seems particularly applicable given our current situation.

Surely, in temples made with hands  
God the Most High is not dwelling—  
high in the heav'ns his temple stands,  
all earthly temples excelling.  
Yet he who dwells in heav'n above  
deigns to abide with us in love,  
making our bodies his temple.

Wherever we find ourselves, may our bodies be temples of God and serve God and neighbor in love. Amen.

## **August 30, 2020 - Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost**

Prayer of the Day

O God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**Jeremiah 15:15-21** *God fortifies the prophet against opposition*

**Psalms 26:1-8**

**Romans 12:9-21** *Live in harmony*



### **Gospel Acclamation**

*Alleluia.* May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our hearts, so that we may know the hope to which God has called us. *Alleluia. (Eph. 1:17, 18)*

**Matthew 16:21-28** *The passion prediction and rebuke to Peter*

Reflection from Pastor Colleen:

Last week, Peter understood Jesus so well. This week, his understanding is not so clear. In many ways, these two stories together parallel Peter's experience of walking on the water. He is able to step on the waves at first, and then he soon falls into the sea. Peter knows that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God, and then he doesn't want Jesus to have to die. We see Peter struggle in his faith and his discipleship. And to be honest, I often struggle in the same way.

Sometimes I have a clear understanding of Jesus and the way he is leading me in life. Other times, I want Jesus to act in the precise ways I desire. Most often, answering my prayers like a vending machine. The Lutheran Study Bible poses the following question about this text: In what ways are you tempted to make Jesus what you want him to be? I hope that you'll spend some time reflecting on that question throughout the coming week.

In this pandemic season, following Jesus looks very different than what it did a few months ago. We aren't able to worship in the same ways. We aren't able to serve in the same ways. However, we are still living out our faith every day. So I also hope that you'll spend some time reflecting on the ways you have been able to follow Jesus during this season. How have you prayed for the church and the world? How have you experienced scripture in new ways? What relationships have strengthened during this time? I hope you'll find that Jesus has been with you throughout this time and perhaps see a way that he is leading you forward. Amen.

## **APOSTLES CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

*We pray together, knowing that the Spirit knits our prayers together. You may complete each phrase with who or what you wish to pray for.*

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

For the church universal, its ministry, and the mission of the gospel....

For the well-being of creation...

For peace and justice in the world, the nations and those in authority, the community...

For the poor, oppressed, sick, bereaved, lonely, and those listed below....

For all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit, and especially those who suffer from COVID-19 and those listed below...

For our congregation, all members and friends of the congregation and their families...

*(Additional prayers may be added.)*

With thanksgiving for the faithful departed, especially those listed below....

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.**

**BLESSING**

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,  
nor things present, nor things to come,  
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,  
nor anything else in all creation,  
will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.  
God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ,  
and the Holy Spirit, the comforter,  
bless you and keep you in eternal love. **Amen.**

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

**Thanks be to God.**

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