
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – JULY 23RD

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

AS WE GATHER: Things are not how they were intended to be. We are not home yet. This sad state of affairs is the result of people who are not God playing God. Today we recognize that we are not God and that the true God is the Holy Trinity. In the Holy Trinity's good timing, the new heavens and the new earth will come. We will then be home. Until that day, we pray for the Holy Trinity to guide our coming and going.

RINGING OF THE BELL

After the ringing of the bell, we take a moment in silence to prepare our hearts for worship.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING BLESSING

P: In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

OPENING UP TO GOD AND ONE ANOTHER

P: Only God most high,

C: the earth is full of Your steadfast love, but we have turned away to the many passing loves that arrest our attention. Forgetting there is no god besides You, we often think we know what is best for ourselves and for others. But we don't. And so we groan in pain with the consequences of our sins. Hear our cry for Jesus' sake and have mercy on us.

SONG OF CONFESSION - "White as Snow"

White as snow, white as snow, though my sins were as scarlet

Lord I know, Lord I know, that I'm clean and forgiven.

Through the power of your blood, through the wonder of your love,

Through faith in you I know that I can be...white as snow.

(Repeat)

P: Beloved in Christ, God—the only God—hears your cry for mercy, blotting out your transgressions for His own sake and remembering your sins no more. Therefore, as a commissioned servant of Jesus and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

SONG OF PRAISE - “Glorify Thy Name”

TOSB 49

Father, we love Thee, we praise Thee, we adore Thee.

Glorify Thy name in all the earth.

Glorify Thy name, glorify Thy name.

Glorify Thy name in all the earth.

Jesus, we love Thee, we praise Thee, we adore Thee.

Glorify Thy name in all the earth,

Glorify Thy name, glorify Thy name.

Glorify Thy name in all the earth.

Spirit, we love Thee, we praise Thee, we adore Thee.

Glorify Thy name in all the earth,

Glorify Thy name, glorify Thy name.

Glorify Thy name in all the earth.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us Pray...O God, besides whom there is no other God, in this world Your people suffer great affliction having no enduring place in which to live. Grant that we who are not home yet with You in Your kingdom may endure with patience being sustained by Your Gracious Spirit, who intercedes for us. We pray these things through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns in communion and love with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Old Testament:

[Isaiah 44:6-8](#)

"Is there a God besides Me?"

*Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel
and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:*

*"I am the first and I am the last;
besides me there is no god.*

Who is like me? Let him proclaim it.

*Let him declare and set it before me,
since I appointed an ancient people.*

Let them declare what is to come, and what will happen.

Fear not, nor be afraid;

have I not told you from of old and declared it?

And you are my witnesses!

Is there a God besides me?

There is no Rock; I know not any."

The Spirit helps our weakness as we wait in hope with all creation.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

The parable of the weeds of the field

He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."'"

Matthew 13:36-43 English Standard Version (ESV)

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

SERMON HYMN - "I'm But a Stranger Here"

I'm but a stranger here, Heav'n is my home;
Earth is a desert drear, Heav'n is my home.
Danger and sorrow stand round me on ev'ry hand;
Heav'n is my fatherland, Heav'n is my home.

What though the tempest rage, Heav'n is my home;
Short is my pilgrimage, Heav'n is my home;
And time's wild wintry blast soon shall be over-past;
I shall reach home at last, Heav'n is my home.

Therefore I murmur not, Heav'n is my home;
What-e'er my earthly lot, Heav'n is my home;
And I shall surely stand there at my Lord's right hand;
Heav'n is my fatherland, Heav'n is my home.

SERMON

Deacon Larry Oliver

WE SHARE OUR FAITH

C: We believe in God, the Creator of all things, the source of all goodness and love.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, true God yet true man. He was crucified, died and was buried for our sin that we might be free and know the joy of life. He was raised on the third day and ascended to heaven, and will come again in power and glory to judge both the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the power of God at work inside of us.

We believe in the church of God, the people of faith throughout the world. We believe that our sin is forgiven and that we will live together with God for now and throughout eternity. Amen.

OFFERING

We offer our thanksgiving for what God has first given us—ourselves, our time, our possessions.

OFFERTORY

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

P: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. O God, You are merciful and gracious. The world and all it contains belongs to You, yet the sufferings of this present time remind Your people that we are not yet home. Help us to trust in Your mercy as we wait for You to fulfill all things. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: O God, You are merciful and gracious. You set up and depose rulers according to Your will. Grant us wise and just men and women in all positions of public trust in this and every land. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: O God, You are merciful and gracious. Together with Your whole creation people everywhere cry out in pain of body, mind, and spirit. Today we especially hold before You... along with all we name in our hearts (*moment of silence*). Sustain these and all who suffer afflictions, bringing them healing and wholeness in Your good time and ways. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: O God, Your infinite love restores to the right way those who err, seeks the scattered, and preserves those whom You have gathered. Pour out on You faithful people the grace of unity that, Your flock may be gathered to the true Shepherd of Your Church. Today we thank you for the unity and partnership we share with Immanuel Lutheran Church in Albany. Bless their gathering today that they may be strengthened to serve You in all faithfulness. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: O God, You are merciful and gracious. Each day we are reminded that we are not home yet. But according to Your promise, we are waiting for the new heavens and the new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Until that day, Lord, keep us from all evil, and keep our going out and our coming in from this time forth and forevermore. For all of these things and whatever else You know that we need, we ask through Your Son, Jesus, our Lord, who lives and reigns in communion and love with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

BENEDICTION

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

C: Amen.

***Great is the Lord, He is holy and just,
By His power we trust in His love.
Great is the Lord, He is faithful and true,
By His mercy He proves He is love.***

***Great is the Lord, and worthy of glory,
Great is the Lord, and worthy of praise.
Great is the Lord, now lift up your voice,***

***Now lift up your voice:
Great is the Lord! Great is the Lord!***

***Great is the Lord, He is holy and just,
By His power we trust in His love.
Great is the Lord, He is faithful and true,
By His mercy He proves He is love.***

Great are you Lord, and worthy of glory,

DISMISSAL

P: Go in Peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.