

WORSHIP ON THE LORD'S DAY

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
JUNE 28, 2020



The LORD will provide.

LYONS-MUIR CHURCH
...transforming community

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ORDER OF WORSHIP

Call to Worship

Deuteronomy 6: 4-5

Hear, O Israel, The LORD our God,

The LORD is One.

We will love the LORD our God

with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might!

Let us pray:

O God our defender, storms rage about us and cause us to be afraid. Rescue your people from despair, deliver your sons and daughters from fear, and preserve us all from unbelief; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Opening Song

“No Matter What”

LMC Praise Band

A lot of us grew up believing
At any moment we could lose it all
And at the drop of a hat
God might turn His back and move on

A lot of us feel like we blew it
Thinking that we're just too far gone
But I want you to know
There's still a hope for you now

No matter what you've done
You can't erase His love
Nothing can change it
You're not separated
No matter what

There's never been a better time to get honest
There's never been a better time to get clean
So come as you are
Run to the cross and be free
Oh, be free

No matter what you've done
You can't erase His love
Nothing can change it
You're not separated
No matter where you run
He's always holding on
You're still a daughter, you're still a son
No matter what

I don't know what you've been taught
Don't know what you've been told
All I know is my God
Will never let go of you, no
And I don't know what you've seen
Don't know what you've been through
All I know is my God
Will never let go of you
He'll never let go!
He'll never, never, never let you go

[Chorus]

Songwriters: Ryan Stevenson, Bryan Fowler & Jonathan Smith

Greeting & Announcements

- **Adopt a highway:**
 - July 18-26. If you'd like to participate with one of our teams be in touch with Barb Davarn.
- **Worship and Devotion outside of Sunday morning:** We'll be mailing a devotional guide to each household this week, and after near the end of July we'll be launching online bible study and prayer groups.
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Children's Moment

Abraham Is Tested

Genesis 22: 1-14 (NRSV)

After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. 5 Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you." 6 Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. 7 Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.

9 When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill[a] his son. 11 But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 12 He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." 13 And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place "The Lord will provide";[b] as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

The Word of the LORD.
Thanks be to God.

Homily

“Out of One, Many”

We live in a country in which our greatest ideal is that when we are united, we stand. And the great motto of that ideal is the Latin phrase *E pluribus, Unum*: Out of many, One. In so many ways, despite our country's terrible the horrors of Slavery and the Civil War, this has proved true. The citizens of this great nation have been at their best when they stood together. And we have realized a greater potential than we could have imagined when we were united around the cause of freedom from tyranny, oppression, and generational poverty.

But as you will remember from the difficult intensity of last week's service, our country now struggles to find the spirit of that unity which the founding father's espoused as one of the grounding principles of the United States of America. I was on my way to pick up Elliott from child care the other day, and in the space of about 2 miles I saw two bumper-stickers that made our troubles so clear. The first said, “The Baby Needs Changing: Vote Blue.” And a couple blocks later, another car had one that said, “Are you an American, or a Democrat?”

E pluribus unum.... Out of many, one...

I think we've lost our way. Let us pray:

Dear heavenly Father, Spirit of Truth, Son of Righteousness,
save us from our generalizations;
give us eyes to see each other brothers, sisters, parents, and children
in everyone we meet.
Melt our hard hearts with the fire of your grace,
that we might be once more the vessels of your love,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

My first response to both those bumper-stickers was for the steam to come out of my ears. Then, for a moment, I gave up much hope of ever seeing the greatness of our democracy come to full flower, and then...stopped at a red light, the guy with the second bumper-sticker... the one that said, “Are you an American, or a Democrat...” caught my eye in his rear view mirror. He stared for a moment. I stared for a moment. Then the light changed and he turned right and I went on to pick up Elliott. But that moment was a moment I will remember for a long time, because as my pulse quickened and I got angry, God gave us a moment of silence at a red light. And the moment lasted just long enough for me to hear God calling me name, and for me to say, “Here I am.”

Here I am. Here I am....

And then all the despair and anger faded away. I pick up my boy and we went home.

When have you been angry this week?

Perhaps you were angry with me for preaching a sermon last week that got caught a maze of bad feelings... I know because some of you had the kindness and generosity to tell me so.

When have you been hopeless this week?

Perhaps you too saw something that made you wonder whether our country could ever be one.

But in your moments of anger, or despair, or emotional exhaustion... I wonder... Can you hear God calling your name?

I find it so amazing that every time Abraham hears someone calling his name he says, "Here I am." It happens three times in the passage we've read: once to the Lord, once to his son Isaac, and finally once more to the Lord. What would it take for us to have this kind of faith and generosity?

I think this is a really important question, because from this one man, Abraham, came many nations. His story is that from the faith of one person, God will bless all the families of the earth. Paul says that:

8 Hoping against hope, Abraham believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." 19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old [when Isaac was born]), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. 20 No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21 being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. 22 Therefore his faith "was reckoned to him as righteousness." 23 Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone, 24 but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Romans 4

Paul describes the faith of Abraham before Isaac is born, how much more then should we be amazed that Abraham trusted God, even to the point of losing what the text calls his son, his favored one, the one that he loves: Isaac. We need to know what this faith of Abraham is, because from that one total, uncompromising faith God would reconcile the whole world to himself. We need to know what this faith is, because healing the communities in which each of us lives isn't going to happen because the government gets it right. Rather, the transformation we seek will find its origin in the love and faithfulness of the people of God, who respond when their name is called - no matter what is at stake - "Here I am." will take place first in the individual human heart, and spread.

Out of many, one? Maybe someday. But so far we've not been smart enough to do that on our own.

But Out of One, Many? Yes... maybe today.... I believe that the complete faithfulness of one person to the Living God can change the lives of everyone around them. So when I see those bumperstickers again, I'm not going to pray, "Lord change that heart," but, "Lord, change mine."

I think we make too much of the faults of others before we have examine our own. As Jesus says, “take the log out of your own eye before you look to the speck in your neighbor’s” (Matt. 7:5). And I think if we would simply take Jesus at his word, we would find that log too big to move and realize that there is no possibility of overcoming our sin and longing and sadness until we lose ourselves in God... even to the point of letting go of the things we think we can’t live without. So here’s the generous mystery of the Good News dear friends: that when we give God the things we love most, God immediately gives them back so that we can put them to use in the love of others. We lay our great loves down at God’s feet, lest they become idols to us, and God immediately gives them back to us as the treasures and signs and sacraments of HIS grace. Indeed, “seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all the deep and holy desires of your heart will be given unto you” (Matt. 6:33).

The faith of Abraham, as Paul points out, finds its culmination in the person of Jesus Christ, who is both Priest and Sacrifice. Jesus is both Abraham and Isaac, and from his life, death, and resurrection, the New Creation is born: in the only begotten Child of the Creator all people have the opportunity to see and find their own true selves. Jesus reveals that even though all things pass away, “yet shall all manner of things be well.”¹

There’s so much noise these days, that it’s hard to hear the still, small voice that calls our name. So we have to pray our way into the Eternal Silence of Almighty God every day. And maybe, just maybe, if we keep the faith, we’ll get better at saying “Here I am, Lord.” And if we learn to say this in the imitation of Christ and all the saints, perhaps our lives will begin to transform our communities.

May it be so among us. Thanks be to God.
Amen.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Christ’s Invitation, Our Confession

All Standing.

Christ our Lord invites to his Table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin, and who seek to live in love and charity with others, as he has loved us. Therefore, let us make our fervent and humble confession before God and one another:

All begin in silent prayer.

Merciful God... we speak aloud the truth that we have sinned in our thoughts, words, and deeds by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry, and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us: that we may delight in your will and walk in your way, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

¹ Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, chapter 27. See also The Revelation of John 1:8.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**Praise God, from whom all life is born;
Praise God, who first pronounced the dawn;
Praise God, the Unbegotten One:
Creator, Spirit, and the Son!**

The Great Thanksgiving

May the everlasting peace of the LORD be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the LORD.

Let us give thanks to the LORD our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets. Therefore with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your Name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy LORD, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is he who comes in the Name of the LORD.

Hosanna in the highest!

Please be seated.

Holy are you, O God, and blessed is your Incarnate Word: Jesus, the Christ. Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captive and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people from their sins. Thus he revealed your reign of righteousness, bringing healing and peace to those who had no help:

he gave freedom and new life to those possessed by evil spirits;
 he raised Lazarus, the daughter of Jairus, and many others from the dead;
he cleansed those whose bodies had become lame and diseased;
 he gave sight to blind Bar-Timeus and many who could not see;
he looked upon the hungry and gave them something to eat;
 he called people out of darkness into the light of his grace;
he gave himself willingness to the agony of the Cross,
 that all people might come to know your saving love.

And through his Resurrection, most merciful Creator, you claim us all from Death and Nothingness, hiding the eternal life of the Creation in his and pouring out your Spirit upon all who love him: to be free from Sin and to proclaim his eternal life as a means of repentance and grace for all peoples.

Now in the strength of that New Covenant, being born of water and the Spirit, we call fully to mind the means which Christ gave to fulfill the great promise of his Ascension, to be with us always to the end of the age:

That on the night in which he was betrayed to his death,
 Jesus took bread,
 gave thanks to you,
 broke the bread,
 gave it to his disciples and said,
“Take, eat; this is my Body which is given for you.
 Do this in remembrance of me.”

And that, likewise, after the Supper was finished,
 Jesus took the Cup,
 gave thanks to you,
 gave it to his disciples, and said,
“Drink from this, all of you. This is the cup of the new covenant in my Blood poured out for you, and for any who will receive it, for the forgiveness of sins.
 Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Now therefore we beg you, O God, comfort and sustain us by this Heavenly Food:
 give light in our darkness,
 give peace in our stress and physical pain,
 give strength in our weakness;
 that we may praise you not only with our words, but in our lives,
 revealing to our neighbors a Living Faith:

Christ came to teach us how to love;
Christ died to redeem us from our sin;
Christ arose to claim us from death;

**Christ ascended to prepare a place for us;
Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead,
and make his home with us forever.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the Body and Blood of Christ, that we might be for the world the Body of Christ redeemed by his Blood. By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your Holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and forever. **Amen!**

By the gift and power of the Spirit, the bread that each of us holds is a sharing in the Body of Christ: Feed on his grace in your heart with thanksgiving.

All take the bread together, followed by silent meditation.

And by that same gift and power, the cup to which each of us clings is a sharing in the Blood of Christ: May he wash away all our sins and keep us unto everlasting life.

All take the cup together, followed by silent meditation.

From this Silence are begotten the prayers of the righteous:

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

We pray for our country and our leaders:

All join in silent prayer.

Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit... you have given to the peoples of this nation this good land as our heritage. May we prove ourselves mindful of your generosity and glad to do your will. Bless this land with honest industry, truthful education, and an honorable way of life. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance; and from every evil course of action. Make us who have come from many nations and cultures a united people. Defend our liberties and give those whom we have entrusted with authority the spirit of wisdom, that there may be justice and peace in our land. When times are prosperous, let our hearts be thankful; and in troubled times, do not let our trust in you fail. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

We pray for the faith to be obedient to God's call in our lives:

All join in silent prayer.

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Creator... you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, or be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the Holy Spirit can do more than we can ask or imagine. Amen.

We pray for our needs and the needs of others, naming those who have asked for prayer:

All are invited to lift the names of those in need.

The Prayer of St. John Chrysostom (c. 347 – 407)

Almighty God... you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common prayers to you, and you have promised, through your well-beloved Son, that when two or three are gathered together in your Name you will be in the midst of them; fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of your servants, as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. Amen.

Closing Song

“All the People Said Amen”

LMC Praise Band

You are not alone, if you are lonely
When you feeling frail, you're not the only
We are all the same, in need of mercy,
to be forgiven and be free
It's all you got to lean on
but thank God it's all you need

And all the people said Amen
And all the people said Amen
Give thanks to the Lord
for His love never ends
And all the people said Amen

If your rich or poor, well it don't matter
Weak or strong, we know love
is what we're after
We're all broken but we're all in this together
God knows we stumble and fall
And he so loved the world
he sent His Son to save us all

[Chorus]

Blessed are the poor in spirit
Who are torn apart
Blessed are the persecuted
and the pure in heart
Blessed are the people longing
for another start
For this is the Kingdom,
the Kingdom of God

[Chorus]

Songwriters: Matt Maher, Paul Moak & Trevor Morgan

Closing Prayer & Benediction

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the Cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the experience and joy of your grace; that God may be all in all. Amen.

May the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.