

A LITURGY OF HOPE
MARCH 22, 2020

Welcome & Greeting: Zephaniah 3:17

Good morning everyone...isn't this cool. If you are seeing and hearing me, then you are connected. I am sorry about the late meal last night with the link and liturgy...our hope is to send that out on Fridays.

This is a great time for us to remember that nowhere in the Bible will you find the church being referred to as a building. We say it all time, "We are going to church." When you look at Jesus' ministry and the establishment of the early church, it was never about a building. Jesus talks and teaches about a kingdom, not building. The Gospels are full of challenging and vivid parables, all about the Kingdom of God. That was at the center of Jesus' teaching - in fact, when he announces the kingdom of God at the beginning of his ministry, it is the beginning foundational aspect of understanding the gospel. You see... this kingdom He speaks about is not a where but a when. It is the state of the world when people acknowledge God; when God is honored and worshipped and respected—the Kingdom is present. The Kingdom is present today, so we worship the Lord.

You are the church - this (what we are doing now) is the church. What we DO find in scripture is the church being represented by a Body - made to work together, support each other, made to BE together. So whether it is in person in a church building, or electronically with a live stream time of worship...let's remember today...we ARE the church. As such, the Lord is with us.

Jesus says where two or three are gathered He is present. He does not distinguish where they should be meeting. This is Emmanuel "God with us." Jesus never promises that with size or organization that there would be more of His presence. He didn't leave building instructions or establish an organizational structure or provide liturgical templates. He said that his people and his presence were the only necessary ingredients. They would come together, and He would be with them...in a sanctuary, in your kitchen, bedroom, or family room, a bench at the park, at a coffee shop, even in a Zoom conference... He is present there. He said so.

Hear the words of the prophet Zephaniah as you prepare your heart for worship.

"The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing."

Call to Worship: Psalm 89:1-4

I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations. For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever; in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness." You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: 'I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.'" Praise the Lord!

Profession of Faith: The Apostle Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there 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 life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer of Invocation & The Lord's Prayer

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Old Testament Reading: Psalm 46 (read together)

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah Come, behold the works of the Lord, how he has brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. "Be still, and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Prayers of Intercession and Petition

New Testament Reading: Romans 12:1-12 (responsive)

Leader: I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

All: For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Leader: Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

All: Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.

Leader: Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

Prayer of Confession

Eternal God, you do not change. You have revealed yourself to us in your Word. You call us to worship you in spirit and in truth. But we confess that we often worship not your true self but who we wish you to be. We too often ask you to bless what we do rather than seeking to do what you bless. Forgive us when our worship shapes you into what we want instead of shaping us into what you want. Help us to meet you here, that we might bow before your unspeakable majesty and so live for you now and ever, in Christ.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon: Psalm 145:13-14

“The Lord is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works. The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down.”

Scripture Reading Philippians 2:12-15

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. 14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 15 that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world

Homily

Church Family Time

- hope to email liturgy & link on Friday
- some SS may begin meeting next via Zoom meetings
- Campus is closed through April 5 (reevaluate then); Connie & Lisa will be in the office; please do not come by, but call if you have a question or need assistance; likewise, if you are willing to provide assistance in any way.
- no decisions have been made yet in regards to any event after April 5 (including trips); we will communicate by email & facebook as decisions are made.

Closing Prayer

Benediction