

Sermon followed by Service

October 16, 2022

A Legacy of Presence

Imagine a robot approaching the forgotten backpack at the airport - “Whose is that backpack? What’s in it?” Imagine the drone flying into enemy territory. Imagine the unmanned underwater submersible down deep at the bottom of the ocean spying.

What do they all have in common? They can all be operated from a comfy couch or a comfy chair. People use them to do their dirty work, their dangerous work so they can keep their hands safe and clean. People use them to do the hard work so they can have it easy. We like that idea, don’t we? And not just with drones and robots. We text and email instead of talking; we talk on the phone instead of getting together face-to-face. And we tell ourselves how much easier it is. But is it better? That’s a struggle we have, isn’t it? All the more now with COVID-time. People work remotely in their slippers and jammies. And it’s not just work, people worship remotely too. When we started our online COVID services, I remember a picture from Ray, sitting in his comfy chair, slippers on, fake-fire burning, chrome-casting our worship service on the big TV. And it was good. Good with God’s Word, and, at that time, better than the alternative of not being able to get together for worship.

Do you picture God as a comfy-chair God? Sitting back, feet up, 3-d goggles on, running the control board? Do you picture God as a desk-bound, desk-jockey God? Reading reports, texting, emailing, but never face-to-face? Do you picture God as a cabin-by-the-lake God, a campfire God, a bleacher God, a God who’s on the run to find fun, a God who pops in now and then to “connect” if he doesn’t have

anything else going? Do you picture God staying home and alone because it's more comfortable and convenient?

That's not the Jesus we know, is it? When he saw the mess we made of ourselves, he could have steered clear; he could have stayed home; he could have gone somewhere else to do something else with someone else. He could have begged his Father to send the archangel Michael against Satan and left it at that. Or with his Father, he could have created and sent a robot with artificial intelligence to scope out the needy and do them good. When God saw the mess we made of things, when he saw how difficult we can be, when he saw how much work we would be, he could have settled into a comfy chair, changed the channel with his remote, and set his calendar so he would never have to interact us.

But that's not Jesus, is it? Instead of sitting back and putting his feet up, he left the comfort of heaven to join us here in this world. Instead of looking to avoid the mess and muss of us, he was born into this world - with all the mess and muss of being born as one of us. He didn't give himself a palace and castle to cocoon in; he made his home with his people. He didn't give himself a different set of rules to live by; he lived the life of his people. He didn't look to steer clear of the mess and the muss and the fuss of people, but he stepped into our lives and reached out to be part of our lives.

When he met people with messed-up lives, he didn't look around, bothered and embarrassed, to see who was watching; he didn't look around for a way out; he didn't look for a way or a reason to stay remote, he made time for them, sat down with them, connected with them. And those with leprosy ... When he saw those people with the sores of leprosy, he didn't throw sticks and stones to chase them away - that's what many people did - and he didn't just heal them

remotely, he reached out, he got close, he touched and he talked, and he healed. When he saw the 5000 and how hungry they were, he didn't just snap his fingers and work a remote miracle. No, Jesus brought his disciples in; he included them in doing with God and doing for others - hand to hand, face to face, heart to heart.

Jesus didn't steer clear of the mess and the muss and the fuss of dealing with people. He didn't settle to sit back and work and worship remote from heaven, but he was born into this world to be God-with-Us. We see Jesus as God-with-us and God-for-us in the way he patiently shared life with his disciples and his people - face-to-face and heart-to-heart. But we especially see Jesus as God-with-us and God-for-us at the cross. At the cross, he took our sin, yours and mine. The times we've been lazy and self-centered in our worship, the ways we've been more interested in convenience for self than commitment to God ... the times we couldn't be bothered by the mess and the muss and the fuss of getting together in Christ's church with Christ's people ... the times we thought ourselves better because we're here and they're not - Jesus took it all - our sin, our guilt, and God's judgment curse. At the cross, Jesus stepped up and stepped in for us to pay the price so God can call you forgiven; so he can see you right by him; so he can wrap you up with him into his life and love, today and forever.

That's the promise Jesus gives you in the Supper we call Holy Communion. Here you see - Jesus isn't content to relate to us remotely. Here we see - Jesus has something better for us than for us to relate to him remotely. Here, Jesus gives us himself, his body, his blood, his presence, his real presence. Here Jesus gives us himself; he puts himself out; he puts himself in here [our hands]; he puts himself in here [our hearts]. Here Jesus gives us his real presence so that you

can know, so that we can know we have Jesus with us and for us; we have God with us and God for us.

It's interesting, isn't it? The way Jesus gives us and promises us his presence is incredibly personal. One by one, we take and eat; one by one, we take and drink; one by one, Jesus gives us himself. At the same time, whenever the Bible talks about the Lord's Supper, this Holy Communion, what do we see? Jesus gathering his people together. That's one of the reasons we've gone back to our old way of communing together - so we can see and experience together - together. Not just that Jesus is with me, and I'm with Jesus; or Jesus is with my family, and my family is with Jesus; but Jesus is with us, and we're with Jesus.

Oh, there are times we settle and receive the Lord's Supper alone - when we're incapacitated and homebound, when we're enduring a health emergency, when we're engaged in a spiritual struggle and our soul cries out for the presence of the Lord. In the same way, there are times when we settle for online worship, remote worship, not as a convenient option - our love for God doesn't expect him to settle for quick and convenient, does it? - but there are times we settle for online and remote worship because it's better than the alternative. But we recognize that we are settling, and that Jesus wants more for us and better for us. When Jesus calls us into his presence, he's not just calling us in for a convenient one-on-one; he's calling us into his presence and into the presence of his people, his church.

Our Lord wants us to be in his presence. Think about that. He (the Lord God Almighty) wants you in his presence not just as a toy for him to play with or as a servant to boss around. He wants you in his presence as his family to love. He wants you in his presence so he

can share his presence, his life, his love with you. Not just one-on-one - he invites you into his presence so you can share his life and love with each other. Not just by remote control, but face-to-face and heart-to-heart - the same way Jesus wants to live life with you. Amen.

October 15 & 16, 2022

THE SERVICE

IN OUR WORLD TODAY... we see the hurt and harm that comes to people and society when people withdraw and cocoon into themselves and their own circles.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we see a Savior who - instead of withdrawing and cocooning - enters our world and shares with us his presence. Why? Not to meet some "need" he has, but to meet our needs for life the way it is supposed to be. As Jesus shares his presence with us, what does he call us to do? To be present with and present for each other!

OPENING HYMN

"God Is Here! As We Your People"

Hymn 858

God is here! As we your people meet to offer praise and prayer,
may we find in fuller measure what it is in Christ we share.
Here, as in the world around us, all our varied skills and arts
wait the coming of the Spirit into open minds and hearts.

Here are symbols to remind us of our lifelong need of grace.
Here are table, font, and pulpit; here the cross has central place.
Here, in honesty of preaching, here, in silence as in speech,
here, in newness and renewal, God the Spirit comes to each.

Here our children find a welcome in the Shepherd's flock and fold;
here, as bread and wine are taken, Christ sustains us as of old.
Here the servants of the Servant seek in worship to explore
what it means in daily living to believe and to adore.

Lord of all, of Church and kingdom, in an age of change and doubt,
keep us faithful to the gospel; help us work your purpose out.
Here, in this day's dedication, all we have to give, receive;
we who cannot live without you, we adore you! We believe!

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Lord God, heavenly Father, you see us and know us better than we know ourselves. You have seen how our disconnect from you, and our conflict with you, has led to a conflicted disconnect from ourselves and from others. Today, we thank you that you have not left us alone and on our own to be absorbed in self. We thank you for sending your Son and your Spirit into our world and into our hearts to connect us with you. We thank you that here and now you invite us and bring us together with you and with each other. Lord, forgive us for the times and ways we prefer and pursue a disconnect from you and your church for the sake of self.

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves
and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

LORD, HAVE MERCY

In peace let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.



A - men.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

Refrain

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace

to his peo - ple on earth.

Last time only

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. *Refrain*

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father; receive our prayer. *Refrain*

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen. Amen. *Refrain*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank you for the forgiveness you worked through your Son and now share by your Spirit. We thank you for gathering us together with you and your people. We thank you for your presence with us, and we ask that you bless us - and our presence - to be good for each other.

Amen.

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 31:31-34

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD,
“when I will make a new covenant
with the people of Israel
and with the people of Judah.

It will not be like the covenant
 I made with their ancestors
 when I took them by the hand
 to lead them out of Egypt,
 because they broke my covenant,
 though I was a husband to them,"
 declares the LORD.
 "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel
 after that time," declares the LORD.
 "I will put my law in their minds
 and write it on their hearts.
 I will be their God,
 and they will be my people.
 No longer will they teach their neighbor,
 or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,'
 because they will all know me,
 from the least of them to the greatest,"
 declares the LORD.
 "For I will forgive their wickedness
 and will remember their sins no more."

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM OF THE DAY
Refrain

Psalm 100A



En - ter his gates with thanks-giv - ing.

Tone



Shout for joy to the LORD, / all the earth.
Worship the LORD with / gladness;
come before him with / joyful songs.

Know that the / LORD is God.
It is he who made us, and / we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his / pasture. *Refrain*

Refrain



En - ter his gates with thanks-giv - ing.

Tone



Enter his gates with thanks- / giving
and his / courts with praise;
give thanks to him and / praise his name.

For the / LORD is good
and his love endures for- / ever;
his faithfulness continues through all gener- / ations.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy / Spirit,
as it was in the be- / ginning,
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain***

SECOND READING

Revelation 21:1-5

Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Matthew 18:20

Alleluia. "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." Alleluia.

GOSPEL

John 1:1-4, 10-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Matthew 26:26-28

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Matthew 28:16–20

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

HYMN OF THE DAY

"As Angels Joyed with One Accord"

Hymn 320

As angels joyed with one accord upon the advent of our Lord,
so let us gladly praise the name of him who from the Father came.

He came, not clothed in majesty nor pow'r that suits his deity.
In lowly state he walked till he in dying set us captives free.

This done, he soared to God's right hand,
yet orphaned not his chosen band,
for he, not bound in grace and pow'r, attends his own each day and hour.

In ev'ry age—let praise abound— he comes; we hear his voice resound.
His glorious gospel does not cease to bring us comfort, joy, and peace.

He comes in water to the child and cleanses it, from birth defiled.
This washing seals his pard'ning grace and shows the Father's kindly face.

He comes to us in bread and wine to give himself and gifts divine.
O praise him for this sacrament, redeeming love's great testament!

Lift up your heads! All grief and pain shall vanish when he comes again.
Where we shall see him face to face, there joy alone shall have a place.

SERMON

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Gracious God and Father, we praise you for the countless blessings, which we receive from your hand: the beauties of creation and the bounties of the earth, the joy of life and the pleasure of friendship, the good of work and the gift of rest, the privilege to share happiness and sorrow with one another.

Above all we praise and thank you for your saving Word and for your Son's body and blood, which you give us to eat and to drink in the sacrament. Through these means of grace, you send the Holy Spirit into our hearts and unite us to Jesus and to the whole Christian Church on earth.
Strengthen us through this heavenly food; increase our trust in Christ and our love for one another.

Great God and Lord, without your continuing help we easily waver in our faith, lose courage, and grow careless in our watchfulness. The times and days are perilous. Give us strength to face the evils of each day with fresh confidence. Open our lips to speak of your grace, and move us to use the gifts that you give us to share your Word of salvation with all people. Protect and prosper the family, the school, the government, and all good institutions that you have established for the benefit of society. Remember in mercy those who are sick and suffering, and bring your healing to troubled homes and lives.

Move us to pray for those in need and to help them with deeds of kindness.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

Hear us, Lord, as we bring to you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

Now, eternal God and Father, keep us in the saving faith and so enable us to overcome all things through our Lord Jesus Christ.

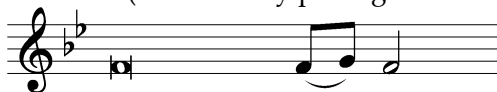
LORD'S PRAYER

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Individually packaged wafers are gluten-free.)



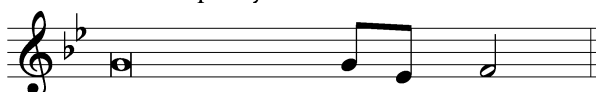
The Lord be with you.



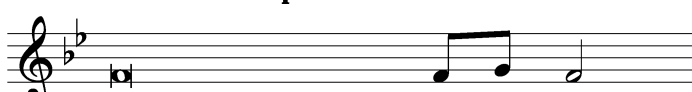
And al - so with you.



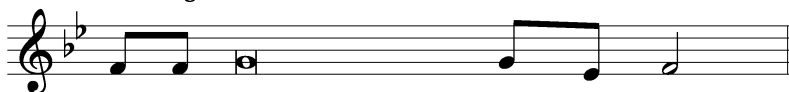
Lift up your hearts.



We lift them up to the Lord.



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who promised that wherever two or three come together in his name, there he is with them to shepherd his flock until he comes again in glory. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power, God of 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, hosanna in the highest!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my T body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my T blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

JESUS, LAMB OF GOD

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"Here, O My Lord, I See You Face to Face"

Hymn 660

Here, O my Lord, I see you face to face;
here would I touch and handle things unseen,
here grasp with firmer hand eternal grace,
and all my weariness upon you lean.

This is the hour of banquet and of song;
this is the heav'nly table spread anew.
Here let me feast and, feasting, still prolong
the brief bright hour of fellowship with you.

I have no help but yours nor do I need
another arm but yours to lean upon.
It is enough, O Lord, enough indeed;
my strength is in your might, your might alone.

Mine is the sin but yours the righteousness;
mine is the guilt but yours the cleansing blood.
Here is my robe, my refuge, and my peace:
your blood, your righteousness, O Lord, my God.

Too soon we rise; the vessels disappear;
the feast, though not the love, is past and gone.
The bread and wine remove, but you are here,
nearer than ever, still my shield and sun.

Feast after feast thus comes and passes by,
yet, passing, points to that glad feast above,
giving sweet foretaste of the festal joy,
the Lamb's great marriage feast of bliss and love.

CLOSING PRAYER

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet you
have given us in this Sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith,
nourished our hope, and strengthened our love.

By your Spirit, help us to live as your holy people until that day when you
will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who
lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

“Go, My Children, with My Blessing”
Hymn 930

Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you; you are my own.
In my love’s baptismal river I have made you mine forever.
Go, my children, with my blessing, you are my own.

Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.
Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.
Here you heard my dear Son’s story; here you touched him, saw his glory.
Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.

Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me;
grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.
Here my Spirit’s power filled you; here his tender comfort stilled you.
Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.

I the Lord will bless and keep you and give you peace;
I the Lord will smile upon you and give you peace;
I the Lord will be your Father, Savior, Comforter, and Brother.
Go, my children; I will keep you and give you peace.

OFFERING

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