

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

August 23, 2020



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

85 East Brandt Boulevard

Landisville, PA 17538

*United in Christ,
we are called to love and serve.*

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CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Gracious God, we acknowledge that though we come from you, we have not always followed the guidance you have given us through Jesus Christ. We certainly have *not* reached the goal of perfection that lies ahead of us. Though there is more to know about you than we can ever learn, we are often distracted from our search for truth. Even though we have known Jesus to be the way, we have been diverted by less strenuous climbs. Even though there are many awesome things in our world, we have not seen beyond them to revere you. Be patient with us for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Silence for brief reflection.

Friends, hear the Good News! God's true love endures forever. The Lord will accomplish his purposes for and through us. Believe the Good News! In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Amen.

HYMN

Seek Ye First

BB 92

Seek ye first the kingdom of God
And His righteousness,
And all these things
Shall be added unto you.
Alleluia, alleluia.

Man shall not live by bread alone
But by every word
That proceeds from the mouth of God.
Alleluia, alleluia.



Ask and it shall be given unto you;
Seek and you shall find.
Knock and the door shall be
Opened unto you.
Alleluia, alleluia.

THE GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Son of the Living Lord, you have entrusted the keys of the kingdom not merely to Peter but to all who confess your name, for your promises are as wide as the heavens. Prevent us from closing what you want open and opening what you want closed, according to your wisdom and unfailing love. Though Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

† THE WORD †

FIRST READING

Isaiah 51:1-6

A reading from Isaiah.

Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the LORD. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many. For the LORD will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.

Listen to me, my people, and give heed to me, my nation; for a teaching will go out from me, and my justice for a light to the peoples. I will bring near my deliverance swiftly, my salvation has gone out and my arms will rule the peoples; the coastlands wait for me, and for my arm they hope. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and those who live on it will die like gnats; but my salvation will be forever, and my deliverance will never be ended.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

Romans 12:1-8

A reading from Romans.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, 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 renewing of your minds, so that 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 yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 16:13-20

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 16^h chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

*Grace and peace to you from God our Father
and our Lord, Jesus Christ.*

Amen.

Let me ask you: Are you a Christian? That may seem like an inappropriate question to ask those of you who are virtually watching Zion's worship service. But the truth is, not everyone who "attends" Christian in-church or virtual services is a Christian. People "come" to church for a variety of reasons: to worship God and to be renewed for the week ahead; because they're facing a difficult decision and are hoping for some insights; because it's the thing to do; it's a way to make friends and business contacts; it's a way to keep a spouse happy; or because they want their children to learn Christian values. And if you're a young person, maybe you "come" because your parents make you. There's a good chance we all have mixed motives for being part of a church and that's fine. Whatever your reason, I pray the Holy Spirit will touch your heart.

But my initial question still stands: Are you a Christian? That's a very personal question that no one else can answer for you, but maybe some questions will help you answer that question. For example: Do you pray daily? Do you live by the Golden Rule? Do you try to keep the Ten Commandments? Do you attend worship every week? Do you tithe? Do you serve on a committee or sing in the choir? Do you do volunteer work for the church and in the community? Do you treat others kindly?

If you said, "Yes," to most of those questions, there's a good chance you're a Christian, but not necessarily. You see, being a good person who serves others doesn't make you a Christian. Whether or not you're a Christian depends upon how you answer the question, "Who is Jesus Christ to you?" ... because how we answer it affects not only our present life – how we spend our time and money, and how we respond to others – but also how we view ourselves and our future life.

Jesus' peers said things like this: "Never has anyone spoken like he does!" and "He taught them as having authority, and not as their scribes," and "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." Yet many in Jesus' day who saw what he did and heard what he said, didn't believe him to be more than a man. Oh, there were those who thought he was John the Baptist or one of the old prophets who had returned to life like Elijah or Jeremiah. But the people weren't really sure who Jesus was. They just knew he was different ... that he was great man.

And you know, there's just as much confusion today as there was in Jesus' day. Some say he was a good man, a remarkable healer, a charismatic leader, a real teacher, a martyr, a model, and a friend. And he *is* all those things, but he must be much more. And I say that because other great men aren't remembered so long or have inspired so much art and music and literature ... and LIFE.

Nowadays it seems that people join a church more by location or by their friends or family than by their beliefs. For example, I have a friend that so far has been a UCC, a Lutheran, a Latter Day Saint, and now a Mormon! In fact, it's not so unusual for a person to church hop and not really know what his or her church body believes. An article in *Metro Lutheran* says that most Christians are confused about being saved. According to this article, the Mormons believe salvation is directly tied to a believer's good works in this life. Roman Catholics believe that God's grace and human behavior are both important for salvation, while Lutherans and all Protestant Christians teach that salvation is a pure gift from God, and that human behavior and good works can't assure salvation. Martin Luther's understanding, based directly on scripture, is that salvation is a free gift from God, and not dependent upon works. Yet a survey of 6,242 adults showed that between fifty and sixty percent of Presbyterians, Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Methodists believe that a good person *can* earn his or her way to heaven.

Within the Christian Church there are people with many different beliefs, but whether they are Christian depends on upon how they answer Jesus' question: "Who do you say that I am?" And the answer to that question is more important than your theology, how you worship, and how you live your life.

Today's Gospel story is a turning point in the ministry of Jesus. It marks the beginning of the church when Peter answers Jesus' question by saying: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Peter got it right. It was the answer Jesus wanted to hear. God had given Peter that understanding, and Jesus said, "Flesh and blood hasn't revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven."

Peter's confession was an inspired declaration, and it was on his confession that Jesus said he would build his church. And it's this confession that ties all Christian churches together. It's the center of our faith. This confession is the bottom line, the ultimate answer. Nothing else matters because it's a declaration that Jesus Christ is the Savior and the Lord and Master of life. It's a confession that gives meaning to life ... that inspires good works, personal commitment, loyalty, and compassion.

When we say the Apostles' Creed, we confess: "I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord." But how do we make that confession more than a rote reciting of words? How do we help people come to the understanding that Jesus is more than just a great man? How do we help people come to the place where they confess that Jesus is the Messiah, the one who saves and calls us to a new way of life?

The core issue today is how to make disciples of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. And we do that best by telling our own stories ... why we're a Christian, and not a Buddhist or some other religion. But how many of us can tell someone why we're really a Christian, and how many of us have actually done it?

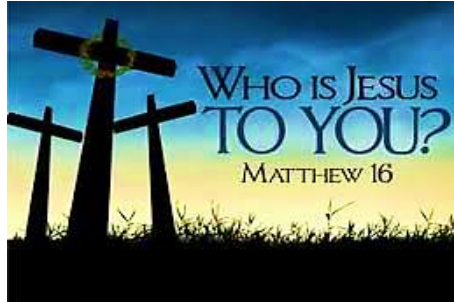
Faith development may be compared to the growth of a plant. The seed is planted in the ground and then sprouts. We become aware of the new life when a blade appears above the ground. And then with water and sunlight it grows, a bud appears, and then a beautiful flower. Or if it doesn't get enough sun and water, it will shrivel up and die. This is the story of faith.

And that seed is planted when we're baptized and receive our identity as a child of God. The blade of faith shoots forth as a person is nurtured in the Word of God by hearing the Bible stories, singing the songs of Jesus' love, and experiencing God's love through a teacher, a pastor, or other adult. The church of Jesus Christ is a place where we're accepted and loved, where broken lives and hearts are mended, and where there's forgiveness. And it's here where faith is caught ... not taught. It's a gift.

And the best way to nurture this gift of faith is by our own lives and by our own witness to those around us. Our works don't save us, but they can show that we are Christians trying to live our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Maybe you've heard the story of how Helen Keller came to learn about Jesus Christ. Helen's teacher, Ann Sullivan, invited the noted preacher, Phillips Brooks, to talk to Helen. With Ann interpreting, the minister shared the gospel story. When Brooks finished, Helen Keller was beaming with pleasure. Through her teacher, Helen told the preacher that she had always known about God, but until now she didn't have a name for God.

So, we're back to that original question: Are you a Christian? The answer lies in what you believe. Do you believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? If so, there's a good chance your life will show it, and you can boldly proclaim, "Yes, I am a Christian." 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 into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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 THE FAITHFUL

Lord Jesus, transform us by your love, so we may know and do your will, that we may live and work to your praise and glory, and that we may, with confidence and without hesitation say, "You are my Lord and Savior."

Help us to be your disciples. Teach us how to be good Christians ... loving you and others as you have so openly loved us.

We give you thanks, Lord Jesus, for the gift of faith you gave us when we were baptized. Help us remember that it's not what we do but what you have done for us that's so important. Help us to be confident in our understanding of Peter's brilliant confession ... a confession that inspires good works, personal commitment, loyalty, and compassion.

We pray for all people, recognizing that no two people are alike. Help us all show who we are by our actions ... trying always to live as your disciples, not as individuals trying to earn our way into heaven but by accepting your gift of eternal life.

We pray for all who continue to put their lives on the line to help those affected by COVID-19 ... health care workers, ambulance attendants, scientists, and social workers. We also pray for retail workers, postal workers, sanitation workers, and those working directly with the public. Protect them and give them strength to advocate for themselves and those in need.

We also pray for those who are anxious, concerned about the future, those in fear of the unknown, the lonely, the depressed, the betrayed, and those on Zion's Prayer List. Console all in need with the knowledge that you are their ever-present Lord.

Give comfort to all who mourn, especially the family and friends of Lloyd Jury, the brother of Floyd Jury. Give joy to all who are filled with sorrow. We especially give thanks for all who have followed your call and who now rest from their earthly labors.

And now, Lord God, accept these prayers we offer to you in the name of Jesus Christ, the one who came for all humanity and taught us to pray together saying ...

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 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.

† A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING †

Dearest God, thank you for your amazing power and work in our lives; thank you for your goodness and for your blessings. Thank you that you are able to bring hope even through the toughest of times, strengthening us to do what you desire us to do. Thank you for your great love and care. Thank you for your mercy and grace. Thank you that you are always with us and will never leave us. Thank you for your incredible sacrifice so that we might have freedom and life. Forgive us for when we don't thank you enough, for who you are, for all you do, and for all you have given us. Help us to set our eyes and our hearts on you in new and refreshing ways. Renew our spirits, and fill us with your peace and joy.

Our love for you is great even when we fail to show it, for the truth is we need you, this day and every day. Praise and thanks to you for you alone are most worthy! In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

† **THE SENDING** †

HYMN

Take My Life That I May Be

BB 121

(Refrain)

Take my life, that I may be
Consecrated, Lord, to thee;
Take my moments and my days;
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

(Verse 1)

Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of thy love;
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for thee.

(Go to Refrain)

(Verse 2)

Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect and use
Ev'ry pow'r as thou shall choose.

(Go Refrain)

BLESSING

May the love of the Father, the tenderness of the Son, and the presence of the Spirit, gladden your heart and bring peace to your soul, this day and all days. Amen.

DISMISSAL

United in Christ, you are called to love and serve. Now go and do it!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RE-OPENING FOR WORSHIP

As of now, we will be resuming in-person worship on Sunday, September 13. Services will be held at 8:30 and 11:00. If necessary, a third service will be added on Saturdays at 3:00. Since only 25 people will be allowed in the church for each service, members must call Parish Administrator, Anne Rankin, to reserve seating at a service (717-945-4585). Seating has been established based on social gathering rules which require people to maintain 6 feet apart and to wear masks. The service will be a simple service with no singing, but will include communion with individually pre-prepared communion kits. If you need more details about worship or how Zion's re-opening will happen, please email adminzelc@comcast.net.

PARISH FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

The Parish Fellowship Team and Council are working together to come up with some events to bring the congregation together. Stay tuned for more information!

WIRED WORD SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

The Wired Word class has continued to meet online throughout the months they could not meet in person because of the pandemic. The link to the class is emailed out each week (usually on Thursday or Friday). Everyone is invited to join the class; if you have questions or need help signing on to Zoom, please contact Joel Janisewski (717-945-9035 or j.janisewski@gmail.com).

PRAYER LIST UPDATE

If there are updates to the prayer list – anyone who should be either added or removed – please email the church office at adminzelc@comcast.net. We always want to be sure the list is current and accurate.

MINISTRY TEAM LEADERS

It is that time of year again to plan to review the current year's budget and to plan for 2021. Please submit your proposed budgets for 2021 to John Hay by Fri., Sept. 11. If you have questions, please contact John (717-742-8831) or jakket0349@comcast.net)

CROP WALK 2020

Although it will be happening in a different way than it has in the past, the Crop Walk is still on for this fall! Mark your calendar on Sunday, October 18th to participate in this event to help stop hunger. More information will be coming from the Social Outreach Team about how the Walk will take place this year. Donations collected will support Church World Service and the Lancaster Food Hub.

FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

The Food Pantry always appreciates the support of Zion and the community. Throughout the summer, they have received a variety of donations from many different groups and organizations in the area, including the food drive sponsored by the Wired Word class. If you would like to donate now, the Pantry is requesting the following items:

Spaghetti Sauce

Spaghetti

1 or 2 pound bags or boxes of rice

Canned kidney beans

Cereal

Canned fruit

Canned soup

Canned vegetables

PRAYER LIST

FOR HEALING

Rick Long

Marvin Ruch

Adele King

Kate Donnan

Barbara Williams

Dave Wise

Kevin Reinhart

Joe Adams

Judie Ingersoll

Lucy Davis

Bill Grove

Kay Crawford

Holly Hoover

Betty Stoner

Don Heartter

Janet & Harry Musselman

Bob Steinmetz (Brother of Diane Gerlach)

Homer Dietz (Brother-in-law of Harry Musselman)

Ron Sahd (Friend of Dave Wise)

Loma Slike (Mother of Sue Wise)

Mike LaFatta (Son-in-law of Bill & Julia Grove)

FOR COMFORT, PEACE, STRENGTH, & SAFETY

For the family and friends grieving the death of Lloyd Jury, twin brother of Floyd Jury.
For Marie, Joe, Matt, & Michael Adams as they grieve the death of Marie's father, Jack Small.

For the family and friends grieving the death of Fred Hamor.

Richard and Marilyn Heim

Arlene Miller

Deb McCartney

Marlin Zimmerman

Charlotte & George Potts

Bette Geibel

Jennifer Thompson

Ted Symonds & Family

Residents and Staff of the Phoenixville Care & Rehabilitation Center

Arlene Wise (Sister-in-law of Dave Wise)

Vaun Hile (Father of Lynda Sherwood)

Jennifer Kready (Daughter of Dave & Donna Dumeyer)

FOR PROTECTION FOR MILITARY & FIRST RESPONDERS

Christopher Wright

Chris Andrew

Thom Whitesel

Ryan Stitzel

Doug Kautter

Justin Gorklaski

Corey Landis (Nephew of Jesse & Pat Landis)

David Adams (Son-in-law of John & Kathleen Hay, and husband of Liz)

FOR CELEBRATION

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

23rd – Kara Barr

24th – Noah Hindes, Kyle Ramer

25th – Maria Hetrick, Keller Moore

27th – John Kearon, Kim Paternoster

29th – Todd Benedict, Jason Myers

Our Ministry Leaders

Ministers

Interim Pastor

Dir. of Music & Worship Arts

Dir. of Children, Youth, & Family Ministry

Parish Administrator

Worship Technology Assistant

Ministry Assistant

Council President

Members of the Congregation

Pastor Barbara Caruana

James C. Alfieri

Jeff Engroff

Anne Rankin

David Albin

Diane Gerlach

Adele King



Sextons

Brian Bourassa (AM)

Tom Miller (PM)

Church Office Phone:

717-898-2911

Parish Administrator's Phone:

717-945-4585

Emergency Phone (Pastor):

717-471-3232

Pastor's Email:

pastorcaruana@comcast.net

Music Director Email:

zionlandisvillemusic@gmail.com

CYFM Email:

jeffengroff@comcast.net

Office Email:

adminzelc@comcast.net

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www.zionhempfield.net

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