

**TENTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST**

A Service of the Word

August 9, 2020



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

85 East Brandt Boulevard

Landisville, PA 17538

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

**TENTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST**
Service of the Word
August 9, 2020

**GIVE GOD
YOUR FEARS**

P: Pastor A: Assisting Minister C: Congregation & Pastor

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Eternal Father, Strong to Save

Setting by J. Carter

† **THE GATHERING** †

*The Holy Spirit gathers us in unity on the first day of the week,
the day of Christ's resurrection.*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: God, you call us to step out in faith, to place our lives in your hands, and to wholeheartedly commit to following you without fear. We confess that we find this difficult to do. It's not always easy to follow where you lead—to turn away from our own personal wants and desires, to let go of our safety nets and trust that you will provide for us in all things. Forgive us when we doubt you, God. Increase our faith. Open our eyes to see past our own interests and concerns to your broader vision for us and for our world. Amen.

Silence for brief reflection.

P: Friends in Christ: Our God of graciousness and abounding love calls each of us to step out in faith without fear. As you follow his call, believe in the Good news! In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Amen.

Refrain

Listen,
listen, God is calling,
through the Word inviting,
offering forgiveness,
comfort and joy.

Listen,
listen, God is calling,
through the Word inviting,
offering forgiveness,
comfort and joy.

(Verse 1)

Jesus gave his mandate:
share the good news
that he came to save us
and set us free. *Refrain*

(Verse 2)

Let none be forgotten
throughout the world.
In the triune name of God
go and baptize. *Refrain*

(Verse 3)

Help us to be faithful,
standing steadfast,
walking in your precepts,
led by your Word. *Refrain*

THE GREETING

P: 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

P: Gracious God, we gather once again to offer you praise and thanksgiving for your unfailing love and faithfulness, shown most clearly through your Son, Jesus

Christ. Grant us grace to worship you in spirit and in truth. Through the power of your Holy Spirit, open our eyes to recognize you here among us. Give us courage to step out in faith to meet you and confidence to follow where you lead. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

† **THE WORD** †

God speaks to us in Scriptures read and preached.

FIRST READING

1 Kings 19:9-18

A: A reading from 1 Kings.

At that place [Elijah] came to a cave and spent the night there.

Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’ He answered, ‘I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.’

He said, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.’ Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Then there came a voice to him that said, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’ He answered, ‘I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.’

Then the LORD said to him, ‘Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall

kill. Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.’

A: The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

Romans 10:5-15

A: A reading from Romans.

Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that ‘the person who does these things will live by them.’ But the righteousness that comes from faith says, ‘Do not say in your heart, “Who will ascend into heaven?”’ (that is, to bring Christ down) ‘or “Who will descend into the abyss?”’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, ‘No one who believes in him will be put to shame.’ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’

A: The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 14:22-33

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 14th chapter.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were

terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'

Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

P: The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Pastor Barbara Caruana

P:

*In the name of Christ.
Amen.*

Over the years, I've come to the belief that procrastination and fear are connected. I've also come to believe a lot of fear is hidden within procrastination. It may look something like this: "I don't really want to confront 'you know who', so I'll put it off. If I don't talk to the person about the issue, maybe the problem will just sort of disappear." So, we put things off until later ... maybe.

Procrastination and fear grip everybody to some degree. One author wrote, "All of us are born with this set of instinctive fears: the fear of falling; the fear of the dark; and the fear of the words: Some Assembly Required."

Whether you want to admit it or not, we're all afraid of something ... of failure, loss, rejection, a pending medical diagnosis, or the lack of money, and the list goes on. But do you know that the #1 fear of most people is the fear of public speaking, and the #2 fear is what people will say about us?

So, bottom line is, we all have fears. And you know what? God's not surprised by our fears. Think about it. The #1 instruction from God to all humanity is, "Do not be afraid." In fact, you'll find that instruction 366 times in the Bible ... one for every day of the year + leap year! God wants us to get the message. God doesn't want us to live in fear. In fact, in the first chapter of Joshua, God specifically says, "I command you to be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

It's easy for us to read or hear "Do not be afraid or discouraged", but it's tough to live out those words. So that's what I want to talk about today: the fears that keep us from living life to its fullest ... the fears that keep us from being fully alive ... the fears that keep us from being the person God created us to be ... because if we don't deal with some of these fears, what happens? They turn into phobias. My interest today is in help us grow spiritually through, and because of, our fears. But ... how do we do that? How can we grow closer to God because of our fears?

First, we must *admit our fears*. That's an extremely basic step, but it's tough. Our natural response if asked if we're afraid of something is to say, "I'm not afraid! He or she may be, but I'm not!" Truthfully, though, that's usually a lie. But when we do admit our fear, that's when things begin to happen. When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, they were terrified, and said, "It's a ghost!" And what did they do? They cried out in fear.

So, let me ask, what are you afraid of? What are the fears that are holding you back from living life the way God intended? What are the fears that keep you from being fully alive? What are your fears about what God might be doing in your life and the life of the church? Are you afraid of getting involved ... afraid of telling others about your relationship with God? Maybe you're afraid that people may find out about who you really are!

So, first things first. To grow through your fears, you must begin by admitting your fears. Then you need to *take risks*. And just like admitting you're afraid isn't natural, risk taking isn't natural either. Most of us didn't have moms who sent us off to school each day saying, "Have a risky day! I want you to embrace danger today. Oh, and by the way, when you cross the street just look one way." NO! What did they say? "Be careful! It's a dangerous world out there." But taking risks, like Peter did when he responded to Jesus' call to walk on water, led to intimacy with Jesus. Of course, with Peter it wasn't just any old risk. It was Jesus calling. If you do something risky just to be risky that's called dumb! But if you do something that feels risky to you and you know that God is part of it, that's called faith.

A lot of times we look at people who do take risks and think they're courageous. I wish I could stand here and say I'm a risk taker. But I can't. I don't naturally take risks. Oh, I do take them, but ... like most ... I prefer to play it safe. And even though I think people who display courage possess a great character quality, I

recognize courage isn't the absence of fear. Courage is doing the right thing even when you're afraid. It's rejecting comfort and doing the very thing you fear. And the problem gets worse with lack of action because lack of action adds fuel to the fear.

So, what's the risk you need to take? Admit it and then invite God to be part of it. Say, "God, I have a fear of the unknown." Then take the risk ... in other words, get out of the boat!!! People often say Peter was a failure because when he got out of the boat, he had his eyes on Jesus and when he took his eyes off him, fear entered, and he sank. But I'm thinking Peter wasn't a failure. Peter was the success. What about the guys that never got out of the boat? In my mind they were the failures. At least Peter got out of the boat. At least he took the risk.

All this sounds right to me, but I do have to say something that might sound surprising. Even after you've admitted your fears and taken risks, the reality is that the fear is going to return. It did with Peter, and you can count on it too.

So, what do you do if you fail and you're trying to spiritually grow through your fear? You *embrace the presence of God*. That's what you do. And the good news of the gospel is evident ... when you sink, God doesn't. Jesus proves that when he immediately stretched out his hand to Peter. Did you hear that word immediately? When you're sinking, Jesus is instantly there ... ready to embrace you and to be embraced.

As I think about my own fears, I realize that one of them is the fear of rejection. It's very real. That's hard for me to admit, but it's true. I've got fears just like all of you do. What I've found is when I focus on my fear, I find I lose sight of the presence of God. I find I have a tough time seeing God.

Peter had a tough time, too. But whether it was dark or foggy out there on the water doesn't really matter. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."

Maybe in today's world, in the midst of all the fears about COVID-19, the economy, the upcoming presidential election, protests, health care, personal finances, terrorist attacks ... you name it ... it's tough to see God, so I want you to hear God's promises. God promises "I will never leave you." God promise, "There's nothing that you and I can't do together. When you're able to get your arms around those promises ... those truths ... your life will radically change. Fears *will*

diminish and your faith *will* increase ... and then you can *give praise to God!* That's what the disciples in the boat did, and that's what we can do when we focus on God.

Within every great fear is a great opportunity for God to do something in your life and to enhance your faith. Keeping that in mind, I want to leave you with this challenge: Give God your fears! Allow God to work in your life! Allow God to help you grow through your fears!

And then say, "Thanks be to God. Amen."



MUSICAL INTERLUDE

You Raise Me Up
Lisa Nelson, piano

B. Graham/R. Lovland

APOSTLES' CREED

P: We now proclaim our faith with the words of the Apostles' Creed

C: **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

A: Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, you know we have our comfort zones, those places where we retreat when the storms of life kick into motion.

We enjoy excitement when it's temporary and we're able to maintain control. However, when excitement escalates into real trouble, we lose control and we become afraid.

Peter and the disciples were seasoned fishermen, so it must have been quite a storm to cause them fear. They thought they were doomed. But as the storm raged, Jesus went to them.

When storms rage around us and ministry appears to be impossible, come to us, Jesus. Give us the encouragement we need. Motivate us to act upon the hope you have given us and increase our faith.

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for the opportunities to experience fears and grow closer to you by taking risks and by embracing our fears and praising you.

We give you thanks for reaching out to us during frightening times and for your incredible promises: the promise that you will never leave us and that there's nothing we can't do when we do it with you.

We give you thanks for those who are givers and receivers through church ministries such as the Hempfield Food Pantry. May the givers and receivers be mindful that when the will of God is being lived out, God is among them.

Bless our country with peace, hope, and a cooperative spirit. Teach us to serve the neglected, the disoriented, the aged, and the lonely. By the Spirit be close to those on Zion's Prayers List who are sick and in need of comfort as they look to you for healing and help. Show your mercy to the dying whose hope is in the Risen Christ.

And now, Heavenly Father, 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** †
A prayer of thanks to God by his faithful people.

P: Heavenly Father, thank you for the blessings you have provided throughout our lives. You have provided us with more than we could ever have imagined. You have surrounded us with people who always look out for us. You have given us families and friends who bless us with kind words and actions and lift us up in ways that keep our eyes focused on you and make our spirits soar.

We also thank you for keeping us safe. You protect us from those things that seem to haunt others. You help us make better choices and provide us with advisors to help us with life's difficult decisions. You speak to us in so many ways, so we always know you are present.

And finally, Heavenly Father, we are extremely thankful for all your blessings in our lives. We pray that you remind us of just how blessed we are and that you never allow us to forget to show our gratitude in prayer and returned acts of kindness.

We thank you Heavenly Father, in the name of your precious son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



† THE SENDING †

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

HYMN

My Life Flows on in Endless Song

ELW 763

(Verse 1)

My life flows on in endless song;
above earth's lamentation,
I catch the sweet, though far-off hymn
that hails a new creation.

Refrain

No storm can shake my inmost calm
while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,
how can I keep from singing?

(Verse 2)

Through all the tumult and the strife,
I hear that music ringing.
It finds an echo in my soul.
How can I keep from singing? *Refrain*

(Verse 3)

What though my joys and comforts die?
The Lord my Savior liveth.
What though the darkness gather round?
Songs in the night he giveth. *Refrain*

(Verse 4)

The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
a fountain ever springing!
All things are mine since I am his!
How can I keep from singing? *Refrain*

BLESSING

P: God calls us to step out in faith, to follow where he leads even if what he calls us to do seems impossible. So, let us live our lives with courage, trusting in God's presence and power, and eager to do God's will.

And may the blessing of God ... Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be among you and within you wherever you find yourselves this week. Amen.

DISMISSAL

P: United in Christ, remember to go forth to love and serve.

POSTLUDE

What Wondrous Love Is This

C. Callahan

PRAYER LIST

FOR HEALING

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)
Wilson Pipkin (Father of Wilson Pipkin)
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 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 Gorlaski

Corey Landis (Nephew of Jesse & Pat Landis)

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



*Never Underestimate
the Power of Prayer!*