



Southeast Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Solidarity Worship Service

Sunday, August 9, 2020

Greetings From Bishop Don Kreiss

Prelude: Keep Your Eyes on the Prize, Hold On
(Soloist is Harold Jackson, member at King of Kings, Ann Arbor)

Call to Worship: (The Rev. Matthew Bode)

Greetings, Saints in Christ, as we gather in solidarity within the Southeast MI Synod of the ELCA. We gather with this word called, “solidarity.” When you hear this word in the service, it means that we as a synod stand together with a particular purpose. In the midst of this COVID-19 crisis, everyone has been affected, whether by sickness, fear and anxiety, or shutdowns of business, schools and even our own households. However, we also recognize that some of our people, and the people of our region, have been disproportionately affected. Specifically, the cities of Detroit and Flint, and the Black communities in and around them, have had higher rates of hospitalization and death. While returning to any of our church buildings for Sunday worship is a risk, it is especially risky for those communities. Therefore, we are actively encouraging all congregations to wait to return to their buildings until all of our congregations can return to their respective home buildings.

We believe this disparity is happening because of a term called, “systemic racism.” The term reminds us that racial bias combined with institutional power means that white people will have natural advantage in our society, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)

will not. Another way of putting it, being white is seen as being “normal,” and most things we build, including church, focus first on the needs of white people. Being a BIPOC means having a disadvantage in access to the most important political, educational and economic entities in our world. It is why poverty rates, educational opportunities, employment, and other measurements of society statistically show massive white advantage. We are all part of this system. We did not choose it, but we are responsible for helping to change it.

As church, as followers of Jesus Christ, we know this is a problem, and a sin. The life of Jesus, even his death, were defined by the interrupting of bias and systems that harmed some to the benefit of others. By standing with BIPOC during this pandemic, we believe we are standing with Jesus. May God continue to guide us in justice during these incredible times.

Opening Litany: (The Rev. Sara Freudenburg)

Recognizing that we have been created and redeemed by a loving God, and that we live within a broken world scarred by systems built to separate us, let us prepare our hearts for confession.

Silence for reflection.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God,
whose steadfast love is everlasting,
who created the world and all that is in it,
who blessed that creation and called it very good,
whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation. **Amen.**

Poetry: “Knees on Our Necks” (Lona Barton)

By Amaya Burke, Grade 11

“I CAN’T BREATHE”

“I CANT BREATHE”

HIS KNEES ON HIS NECK

WE ALL WATCH AS HIS LIFE SLIPS AWAY FROM HIM

8 MINS OF HORROR

ANOTHER LIFE TO MOURN

OFFICERS FIRED

OKAY BUT THAT’S NOT ENOUGH FOR US

STILL NO CHARGES

THEY’RE PROTECTING THESE MURDERERS

WE'RE TIRED OF THE SAME RESULTS

WE'RE TIRED OF HAVING TO BEG FOR OUR LIVES

I AM TIRED OF SEEING MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS DIE

THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO PROTECT AND SERVE

BUT ALL THEY DO IS KILL

"WELL DON'T RESIST"

"JUST STAY CALM"

"JUST COMPLY"

NO MATTER WHAT WE DO

WE'RE A TARGET

OUR SKIN WILL STILL BE SEEN AS A THREAT

THEIR KNEES WILL STILL BE ON OUR NECKS

MY PEOPLE ARE TIRED AND NUMB

"RIOTING WON'T HELP ANYWAY"

"LOOTING WON'T BRING HIM BACK"

THEY DON'T NOT UNDERSTAND THAT OUR NUMBNESS HAS TURNED INTO RAGE

OUR RAGE KEEPS US GOING

OUR RAGE IS NOW OUR STRENGTH

OUR RAGE SET A CITY ON FIRE

AND TOGETHER WE'LL WATCH IT BURN

WE'LL HAVE OUR KNEES ON THEIR NECKS

LIKE MLK SAID

RIOTS ARE THE VOICES OF THE UNHEARD

Confession: (The Rev. Sara Freudenburg)

Pastor Sara: If we say we do not see the beautiful diversity of creation You, O Lord, have made; If we say we make no distinctions between people who look or act differently from us; If we say we do not participate in a system that is racist; If we say we have no sin, We deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we look honestly at ourselves and the world around us, confessing our complicity in a system that gives some people privilege while denying the promise of abundant life to others, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Most merciful God,

**We confess that we are captive to the systemic sin of racism
And cannot free ourselves.**

**We have sinned against you and against our neighbors
every time we have neglected to call out racist policies or actions
every time we have refused to call your creation good
every time we have decided one of your beloved children is disposable.**

We humbly ask for your forgiveness, for the things we have done and the things we have left undone,

Knowing that although you love us anyway, we are called to work with you to uphold and uplift the beloved community; knowing that even when we have the best of intentions, we will still fall short.

We humbly ask for your strength in these days, knowing that when we persist, when we show up, the arc of history bends ever more closely toward justice, and your kingdom draws ever nearer.

Cleanse our hearts of any thoughts that this isn't our fight.

Awaken our understanding that even if systemic racism is not our fault, it is our vocation as Christ-followers to dismantle it.

Inspire us to rejoice in the beauty of every person you have created.

Instill us with the conviction that every face we see bears Your image.

Fill with your love, renew our spirits, and sustain our hope.

Amen.

Pastor Freudenburg:

Beloved of God,
by the radical abundance of divine mercy
we have peace with God through Christ Jesus,
through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.

Our sins are forgiven.
Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,
let us lay aside the sin that clings to us so closely,
and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.
Let us live now in hope.
For hope does not disappoint,
because God's love has been poured into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Song of Praise: "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus," (David Billy, Genesis, Detroit)

Opening Prayer/Prayer of the Day: (The Rev. Marie Duquette)

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God our sure defender,
storms rage around and within us and we are afraid of what is,
uncertain about what will be,
and unable to catch our breath.
Rescue us from despair, Good Lord.
Guide us through the tumult and
breathe in and through our weary lungs.
Equip us to stand together as your beloved community,
bonded by grace
and united in faith.
This we pray in the name of the one who loves us into freedom,
and frees us into loving,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

**Children's message: The Rooster Who Would Not Be Quiet! by Carmen Agra Deedy
Illustrations by Eugene Yelchin (The Rev. Marie Duquette)**

First Lesson: 1 Kings 19:9-18

At that place he 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?" ¹⁰He 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." ¹¹He 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; ¹²and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. ¹³When 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?" ¹⁴He 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.”¹⁵ 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.”¹⁶ 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.¹⁷ Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill.¹⁸ 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.”

Reflection: (The Rev. Michael Johnson)

Song: "The Storm Is Passing Over" (Love Rising, Detroit)

Second Lesson: Romans 10:5-15

⁵Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that “the person who does these things will live by them.”⁶ 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)⁷ “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).⁸ 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);⁹ 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.¹⁰ For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved.¹¹ The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.”

¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him.¹³ For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”¹⁴ 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?¹⁵ 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!”

Reflection: (The Rev. Matthew Bode)

Reading: (Darrell Dennis II)

“Indeed our survival and liberation depend upon our recognition of the truth when it is spoken and lived by the people. If we cannot recognize the truth, then it cannot liberate us from untruth. To know the truth is to appropriate it, for it is not mainly reflection and theory. Truth is divine action entering our lives and creating the human action of liberation.”

— James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed*

“The Christian community, therefore, is that community that freely becomes oppressed, because they know that Jesus himself has defined humanity's liberation in the context of what

happens to the little ones. Christians join the cause of the oppressed in the fight for justice not because of some philosophical principle of "the Good" or because of a religious feeling of sympathy for people in prison. Sympathy does not change the structures of injustice. The authentic identity of Christians with the poor is found in the claim which the Jesus-encounter lays upon their own life-style, a claim that connects the word "Christian" with the liberation of the poor. Christians fight not for humanity in general but for themselves and out of their love for concrete human beings."

— James H. Cone, God of the Oppressed

Gospel: Matthew 14:22-33

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. ²⁵And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." ²⁸Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³²When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Reflection: (The Rev. Elizabeth Friedman)

Song: "Use Me," (Gracious Saviour Lutheran, Detroit)

If you can use anything Lord, You can use me
If You can use anything Lord, You can use me
Take my hands Lord and my feet
Touch my heart Lord, speak through me
If You can use anything Lord, You can use me

I remember a story in the Bible days
You took a man called Moses with a rod in his hand
You told Moses, "Take the rod in your hand
Stretch it forth and walk on dry land"
If You can use anything Lord, You can use me
If you can use anything Lord, You can use me
If You can use anything Lord, You can use me
Take my hands Lord and my feet
Touch my heart Lord, speak through me

If You can use anything Lord, You can use me
I remember a story, I remember it well
He took a shepherd boy, David, with a sling in his hand
He took the rock with the sling in his hand
Flung the rock and the giant fell dead
If You can use anything, You can use me
Take my hands and my feet
Touch my heart, speak through me
Refrain

John Lewis' Final Message, Portions: (Demetrius Dennis)

Prayers of the People (Robin McCants & Vicar Jeffrey Ogonowski, Live)

Vicar Jeff: Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Robin: O God, for your whole church throughout the world.
Give courage in the midst of storms,
so that we see and hear Jesus calling: "Take heart, it is I: do not be afraid."
May we follow Christ wherever the path leads.

Lord, in your mercy, we cry out,

Jeff: Receive this, our prayer.

Robin: O Lord, you created us as equal.
Yet we have valued others unfairly.
You formed us in your holy image.
Yet we have failed to recognize the dignity
and sacredness of your image in every person.

Lord, in your mercy, we cry out,

Jeff: Receive this, our prayer.

Jeff: Healer of injustice, the callousness of scars
block our sensitivity to the anguish that others experience.
Help us listen to those to whom injustice has been done
may we hear your cry in theirs,
may we feel your pain in theirs.

Lord, in your mercy, we cry out,

Robin: Receive this, our prayer.

Robin: Source of goodness, as new, tender skin emerges beneath old scars,
create in us a new humanity through the brokenness of our experiences.
Open our eyes to discover good.

Open our hearts to desire freedom for all.

Strengthen our wills to empower the oppressed.

Lord, in your mercy, we cry out,

Jeff: Receive this, our prayer.

Jeff: Holy Word, your prophets warn us of the Day of the Lord
And your wisdom reminds us of the justice we all deserve.
May we celebrate justice that rolls down like waters,
And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.
A stream that leads us where we had not intended to go.

Lord, in your mercy, we cry out,
Robin: Receive this, our prayer.

We give you thanks, O God, for the saints of the whole church
from all times and places,
and for the saints in our lives and in our community
whom you have gathered to yourself (*especially those who have died from COVID-19;...*).

Lord, in your mercy, we cry out,
Jeff: Receive this, our prayer.

Jeff: In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love,
we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Lord's Prayer: (Vicar Jeff)

Together: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Synod Choir Closing Hymn: "We've Come This Far By Faith"

Franciscan Benediction: (Bishop Don Kreiss)

May God bless us with *discomfort* at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that we may live deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that we may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless us with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, hunger, and war, so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in this world, so that we can do what others claim cannot be done, to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.