



**Quest As A Spiritual Practice:
The Reflection
4th Sunday After Pentecost
July 3, 2022 + 9:00 a.m.**

Congregational responses are in BOLD.

All are welcome to receive Jesus' unconditional gift of God's grace through the sacrament of Holy Communion. Regardless of your church membership or affiliation, all are encouraged to participate in communion or to come forward for a blessing.

Children of all ages are encouraged to worship with the whole community in Christ. Children's worship bags are available in the back of the sanctuary.

Page numbers that are listed are found in the front of the cranberry-colored hymnal on the bottom of the page. Hymn numbers are listed in bold, large print on the top of the page.

If you would like home communion, hospital visit, or a conversation with the pastor, please contact the church office at 715.687.4110 or at office@zionstratford.org or Interim Pastor Andrea Fluegel at 715.391.9311 or pastor@zionstratford.org.

Ministers: All the People of God through the love of Jesus and the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit

Interim Pastor: Andrea Fluegel

Administrative Assistant: Kathy Busche

Organists: Judy Polege, Marge Redetzke, Ryan Huther

Custodians: Gerry Viegut

Missionaries: Steven & Bethany Friberg, Tanzania

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Scripture Focus: When we begin to broaden our experience of lands and peoples in our travel, or in our own towns and cities, we may move through a personal crisis if the plurality of religious thought and practice has not come into close view in our lives before. And yet, if we continue to reflect and open, what feels so different may not be as far from us as we first imagined. The light we seek and life-sustaining river that runs through the “Kin-dom” of God is full of common themes across religions: peaceful coexistence, food and shelter, love and compassion for those suffering and oppressed. How can deeper reflection about our own hesitation to connect to the wider human family free us to explore more possibilities for a better world?

PRELUDE

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS/CENTERING

We Gather in Grace

ENTERING THE JOURNEY

INVOCATION

Blessed be the holy Trinity, +one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN “Gather Us In” Hymn 532 vs. 1, 2, 4

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We come to the water again today. Today’s scripture comes from the Book of Revelation—a powerful vision of a new creation, where the divisions are wiped away and all beings are one. It says, “To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.”

Our baptism reminds us that we are already part of the spring of the water of life. And our thirst that comes from forgetting that source can be quenched even now. Let us pray:

Merciful God,

**we confess that we have not loved you with our whole hearts
and have not loved our neighbors as ourselves,
through what we have done and left undone.**

**Forgive us when we create boundaries of
“us” and “them”**

and assume scarcity where you offer abundance.

Guide us as we seek to turn around toward greater love.

Lead us to travel in your ways.

Amen.

Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and one another with a moment of silence for reflection and individual confession.

Know this:

There is a spring of life that flows throughout creation and is available to all—to us—when we need it most.

In the midst of our fear,

Jesus calls us to be a new creation.

He is our constant companion,

inviting us to reach out to one another,

traveling together toward the Kin-dom of Love.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Glory to God. Amen!

GREETING

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

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray:

Sojourning God, your Spirit exists everywhere, on every path, inviting us to move with curiosity and compassion toward each other. Decenter us even if we become uncomfortable. Show us how to be humble and willing to accept that all beings are sacred as created by you so that we will grow in peace, expand in love, and deepen in understanding. Nudge and guide us, we pray. Amen.

We Hear the Word of God**FIRST READING****Isaiah 65:17-25****SECOND READING****Revelation 21:22-26****GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** *“Alleluia”***Page 151****GOSPEL****Matthew****25:31-46**

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the twenty-fifth chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave

me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’³⁷

Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? 38 And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing?’³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’⁴⁰

And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.’⁴¹ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You who are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels,⁴² for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’

⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you?’⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

CHILDREN’S TIME OF UNPACKING

THE WORD *“Bless Now, O God, the Journey”* Hymn 326 vs. 1, 2

HYMN OF THE DAY *“Canticle of the Turning”* Hymn 723 vs. 1-3

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

United in Christ and guided by the Spirit, we pray for the church, the creation, and all in need.

Lord of the harvest, you send your church into the world to proclaim Christ’s new creation to all. Renew the church as it carries out your mission of peace and healing. We pray for missionaries and aid workers who accompany your people. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You guard the nations; let no leaders exalt themselves, but lift up the most vulnerable and work for the good of all. Send your Spirit to eradicate classism and inequity, violence and war, poverty and hunger. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You desire abundant life for all. As we celebrate Independence Day, instill in us gratitude, generosity, and persistence in working toward freedom for all people. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We pray that you will bless all our military men and women as they are away from their families at this time, fighting for our freedom. We know that you are the Almighty One and you will watch over them and protect them and let them know that we love them and pray for their safe return home to their families. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Mothering God, you care for all people in need. Nourish those who are hungry. Restore employment to those who have lost work. Heal those who are sick, and comfort all who are dying or grieving. We pray for all the people, places and circumstances that we now name aloud or silently in our hearts.... God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, giver of all good gifts: Look on your Church with grace and guide the minds of those who shall choose a pastor for this congregation, that we may receive a faithful servant who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries. Holy Spirit reign down upon us and lead a faithful shepherd and servant to this gathered people. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of the traveler, please protect us on the journey we are about to take, following your call to love and serve the neighbor. Support us with your strength and grace when we are weary. Help us to be mindful of your presence and love in times of stress and guide us to make our time together meaningful and memorable. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of every time and place, in Jesus' name and filled with your Holy Spirit, we entrust these spoken prayers and those in our hearts into your holy keeping. **Amen.**

OFFERING ANNOUNCEMENT

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possession. Use us, and what we have gathered in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

The Holy Living God be with you.

And also 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 our thanks and praise.

God of Grace,

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you.

Your delight filled the skies and land
with colors beyond the spectrum of our knowing.
Your playful creating offered up humankind
with such diversity that we cannot comprehend it.
Your breath left waters frothy and lungs exploding
with the power of life and prophetic utterances.

And yet we back away from such promise,
unable to claim your love as ours.

But here you are to meet us—speak to us—once again,
always faithful, always present
in this Body [the table]... in this Body [the people].

GREAT THANKSGIVING

And so, together we proclaim the praise-filled truth of your glory
along with all the saints:

Holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts!

Blest are they who come in your name!

Heav'n and earth are full of your glory!

Hosanna in the highest!

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.
He proclaimed freedom for the bound,
justice for the oppressed, grace for the lost,
love for the prodigal.
By the power of this message
and the surprise of resurrection in the face of death,
the world is immersed again in the baptism of love
and redemption.

Through the life and ministry of Jesus,
we can imagine and live into a Kin-dom of love.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

And so,
We remember...
We offer ourselves ...
We claim a new freedom in this truth...

Christ has died, yet Christ is risen;
Christ has died, yet Christ is risen;
Christ will come again in glory
Hosanna in the highest!

I invite you to raise your hands in the ancient Christian posture of prayer...

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the vision of your Reign realized,
so that we may be for the world your dream come true.

By your Spirit open us to each other and to the world,
making us one in You, through Christ,
in the power of Your redeeming Grace! **Amen.**

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

“Lamb of God”

Page 154

“For the Beauty of the Earth”

Hymn 879

“God of Grace, God of Glory”

Hymn 705

BLESSING

PRAYER

Life-giving God, through this meal you have bandaged our wounds
and fed us with your mercy. Now send us forth to live for others,
both friend and stranger, that all may come to know your love.
This we pray in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

We Serve the World in God’s Name

BENEDICTION

As you move into the week,
may you engage in reflective practices
that help you deepen compassion for yourself
and love of neighbor.

Know this reflection as spiritual acts of expanding your horizon,
traveling beyond your preconceptions,
and embracing the infinite delight of this earth and its beings.

And may the Creator continue your unfolding,
the +Christ accompany your deeper knowing,
the Spirit enliven your growing,
until one day we all gather in the Kin-dom of Love.

CLOSING HYMN

“This Is My Song”

Hymn 887 vs. 1, 3

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Love thy neighbor.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Zion Lutheran Church

Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Hands

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