

Prayer Vigil for Unity

November 3, 2020

WELCOME

Thank you for worshipping with us today!

If you have an email address and want to be on POP's weekly announcement list, please let the church office know. You can find worship each week at <https://princeofpeace-er.org/podcasts/>. DVD's of the previous Sunday's worship are available by contacting the church office at 715-479-9263.

If you would like to support the mission of Prince of Peace so that we can continue worship, community outreach, and other ministries, you can give any amount by cash, check, online, through the Give+ app by Vanco, or by sending a text to 833-394-7887 (text your dollar amount and follow the prompts). Thank you for your generosity.

ORDER OF SERVICE *The assembly speaks the bold verses*

Threshold Moment/Centering Prayer

We come from different places. Different countries. Different streets. Different homes.
Different families. Different histories.

We look around and don't see a single face exactly like our own.

**We come wondering if anyone in the whole world
can really understand us and know us and love us.**

We come from having enough. And we come from scarcity.

We come from joy. And we come from grief.

We come from hope. And we come from hurt.

We come as "all of the above."

Depending on the day.

Depending on the hour.

We come by ourselves, longing, at least in some small way, for connection.

We come deeply aware of our essential aloneness and scared to let go of it.

Yet also, longing to be together.

Because, look...we're here. We're all here.

We are all here...in this place, right now, by the grace of God.

Music **"Only Grace" by The Many**

Things are broken here; things are shared.

Things are carried here, hearts bow in prayer.

Chorus:

It is grace, only grace

That brings us here,

Holds us together here.

It is grace, only grace
That brings us here,
Hold us all together here,
All together here.

Things are dying here; things are torn.
Things are growing here and burdens borne.

Chorus

Bridge
Amazing grace, hear the sound.
Here is where hope is found.

Chorus

Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

You give to us Your heartbeat, Sheltering One, so that light and dark become the same and we will find wonder and life in You; that we might embark into this world to share a new story of Your people, gathered for the healing of the nations. In your name, Prince of Peace, Savior of the nations, we pray. **Amen.**

Music *“Open My Heart” by Ana Hernandez*
Open my heart... (repeated many times)

Confession

Please stand together as we confess our sin before God.

We confess that we would rather not stand together.

We confess that we would rather sit.

We prefer to sit because it's comfortable. And because we're tired.

And because we aren't sure where to go, what to do.

And mostly we're afraid of what standing might require of us.

Sometimes we sit in fear. Sometimes we sit in despair.

And mostly we sit alone.

We'd rather sit alone because "togetherness" is complicated. Loving is a messy, painful business - it's hard enough to love people who are most like us,

But to love those who are unlike us, that seems impossible.

We sit alone, as if our lives depended on it.

We sit alone in our individual little corners of what we call comfort, Missing out on truly living. We hold onto our lives and we lose them.

We sit in fear. We sit in despair.

We sit alone. And we know this is no way to live.

Assurance of Pardon

“For I am sure that neither death nor life, angels or rulers, things present or things to come, not powers, or height or depth, or anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

We do not stand alone.

Nothing can separate us from God’s love.

A Prayer attributed to Francis of Assisi

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. In Jesus’ name. **Amen.**

Music *“Instruments of Your Peace”* - Music & Lyrics by Sherri Hansen
(based on the Prayer of St. Francis)

God, make us instruments of Your peace.
Wherever there is hatred let us sow the seeds of love.
God, help us heal the hurt with Your grace.
Wherever there are doubting hearts, let us sow the seeds of faith.

God, make us instruments of your peace.
To those who are in despair let us be a beacon of hope.
God, where there’s dark, let us shine Your light.
Wherever there is sadness let us bring to them Your joy.

O God, grant that we may give instead of take,
That daily we may die to ourselves.
That we console, when we are hurt, understand when we are wronged
And love, even when we are unloved.

O God, grant that we may give instead of take,
That daily we may die to ourselves.
For in giving we receive, in forgiving, are forgiven
And in dying we will live eternally

Reading from the Epistles *Romans 12:9, 14-15, 17-21 (The Message)*

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord.

Beloved, let us love each other. Love is from God.

Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

Beloved, let us love each other. Love is from God.

Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Beloved, let us love each other. Love is from God.

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Beloved, let us love each other. Love is from God.

Music "*Your Love Is Here*" by The Many

I feel empty, I am worn out.
There is so much I cannot see.
But your love, they say, has open arms
And your grace is waiting for me.

Chorus (repeat twice):

Oh I want to rest in those strong arms,
Yes I want to trust in my heart of hearts
That your love, your love is here.

So I will sing, your love is here
And it's greater than our doubts.
Your love is greater than our fear.
Yes, I will sing, your love is here
and it sees our broken hearts.
Somehow it can heal.
Your love is here.

I am scared, I am scarred.
There's so much I cannot believe.
But your love, they say,
is like a river
Mercy will just wash over me.

Chorus (repeat twice)

So I will sing, your love is here
And it's greater than our doubts.
Your love is greater than our fear.
Yes, I will sing, your love is here
and it sees our broken hearts.
Somehow it can heal.
Your love is here.

We don't have to be strong.
We don't have to be sure.
We don't have to be right.
We don't have to see any blinding lights.
We can just be.

So I will sing, your love is here
And it's greater than our doubts.
Your love is greater than our fear.
Yes, I will sing, your love is here
and it sees our broken hearts.
Somehow it can heal.
Your love is here.

Gospel Reading *John 3:3-12, 34-35 (CEB)*

³Jesus answered, "I assure you, unless someone is born anew, it's not possible to see God's kingdom." ⁴Nicodemus asked, "How is it possible for an adult to be born? It's impossible to enter the mother's womb for a second time and be born, isn't it?" ⁵Jesus answered, "I assure you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, it's not possible to enter God's kingdom. ⁶Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Don't be surprised that I said to you, 'You must be born anew.' ⁸God's Spirit blows wherever it wishes. You hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. It's the same with everyone who is born of the Spirit." ⁹Nicodemus said, "How are these things possible?" ¹⁰"Jesus answered, "You are a teacher of Israel and you don't know these things? ¹¹I assure you that we speak about what we know and testify about what we have seen, but you don't receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you don't believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ³⁴The one whom God sent speaks God's words because God gives the Spirit generously. ³⁵The Father loves the Son and gives everything into his hands.

Music *Love, Listen to Your Children Praying - Ken Medema*

Chorus:

Love, listen to your children praying
Love, send your spirit in this place
Love, listen to your children praying
Send us hope. Send us power. Send us grace.

Something's gonna happen
Like the world has never known
When the people of God get down to pray
Doors gonna swing open
And walls comin' a tumblin' down
When the people of God get down to pray
When the people of God, Oh, the people of God,
When the people of God get down to pray

Doors gonna swing open
And walls comin' a tumblin' down
When the people of God get down to pray
Chorus

You gonna know it
When love stretches out a hand
And the people of God get down to pray
It is gonna be a brand new song of compassion in this land
When the people of God get down to pray
When the people of God, Oh, the people of God,
When the people of God get down to pray
There be a brand new song of compassion in this land
When the people of God get down to pray.

And the people sang love:
Love, listen to your children praying
Love, send your spirit in this place
Love, listen to your children praying
Send us hope. Send us power. Send us grace.

Prayers of the People

At this time, you are invited to light candles, giving your anxiety, worries, struggles to God through the love and mercy of Jesus Christ.

You are invited to light additional candles, draw, write, or silently pray for people, circumstances, and our nation that is on your heart and mind.

Everlasting God, source of all liberty, before whom every earthly ruler must bow and bend the knee, we lay our nation before you as we prepare for an election. Breathe upon us your Spirit of wisdom and discernment. Grant all who seek public office the mind of Christ, who came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life for the freedom of the oppressed. Hold before us those who face uncertain futures, or who have no voice in our political process. Uphold and safeguard poll workers and election officials in their work. Spare us from the crushing weight of cynicism. Give us grace to speak courageously, but with love, without which our words are just noise, and we are nothing. Gather us together under the cross, where, in all of our differences, we can stand as one people, redeemed in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

O God, you crafted the universe as a divine tapestry in which the well-being of the entire cosmos is forever intertwined. In this election season, give us hearts and minds focused on nurturing all that you have made. Forgive us when we are unjust or accept unjust behavior in our leaders. Remind us of your call to not withdraw from the world, but to be in the world as your very own broken and beloved people. Ignite in us a passion for the welfare of those who are most vulnerable, and empower us to lead with a love that reflects your love revealed in Jesus Christ our Savior.

O God of all, with the wonderful diversity of languages and cultures you created all people in your image. Free us from prejudice and fear, that we may see your face in the faces of people around the world.

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son. Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred that infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and, through our struggle and confusion, work to accomplish your purposes on earth so that, in your good time, every people and nation may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne.

Lord God, you call your people to honor those in authority. Help us elect trustworthy leaders, participate in wise decisions for our common life, and serve our neighbors in local communities. Bless the leaders of our land, that we may be at peace among ourselves and a blessing to other nations of the earth through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Almighty God, grant that your holy word which has been proclaimed this day may enter into our hearts through your grace, that it may produce in us the fruit of the Spirit for witness and service in the world and to the praise and honor of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray together the prayer of our Lord.

We will be using a new paraphrase.

Perhaps we can pray it with a new understanding and renewed commitment and faithfulness.

God of love...

**Who we experience as mother, father, friend, our deepest longing,
our best thought, our greatest hope.**

Your love covers the entire earth.

Holding us all in your embrace.

You hold everything together.

We want to know what your vision for the world is - help us.

We want to live in that vision - guide us.

Everything we eat and drink,

Everything that gives us life and joy, it all comes from you.

We thank you for your mercy.

You hold nothing back.

Help us be that open and generous

With others and with ourselves.

You forgive us constantly.

Help us forgive each other.

Deep in our hearts we believe that this is your world and that you love us all. Help us stand with you and with each other in that powerful love.

And together we will sing

Of your mercy and grace and power.

Forever and ever. Amen.

Sharing of the Peace

When we gather together, we practice peace, for peace, after all takes practice.

Peace can be fleeting - hard to grasp, hard to hold - and yet, sometimes just a moment of peace is enough to quell the turbulence within us. As followers of Jesus, we are called to be Peacemakers. As we practice making peace within us and between us here, we build our skills to create and share peace in a world hungry for healing and hope.

You're invited today to help make moments of peace. We're using the same method that the early church used, exchanging the words "Peace be with you." Together, we can speak the gift of Peace into being.

We begin by steadying ourselves, and breathing in the stillness of God's deep and abiding peace. Exhale fear, worry, trouble, doubt and pain. Take a few moments to let the movement of your breath quiet your body and your spirit. When you are ready, turn to someone near you, or send a text message, email, or mailed note and offer the words "Peace be with you" as a blessing.

And now, let the peace of Christ be practiced here.

Music "God of the Movements and Martyrs" by The Many

Verse 1:

God of the movements and martyrs

God of the powerless child

God of the hurt and the hopeless

And unreconciled

God of the just and the faithful

God of the night and the day

God of the whole of creation

In your name we pray

Many have followed the Savior

Into the face of the storm

Strengthened by long generations

By love they were formed

In basements of tall-steepled churches
In shadows of fences and walls
In alleys and hallways of power
They answered your call

Verse 2:

Now it's our turn to do justice
Humbly we rise to the day
Give us the strength and the wisdom
To walk in your way
Gather the loaves and fishes,
Share until all have been fed
Walk in compassion and mercy
By love we'll be led
Standing in circles surrounding
All holding hands while we pray
When powers bear down on the helpless
We'll stand in the way
God of the worn and the wounded
Let us be healed by the truth
When doorways are blocked we will lower
Our friends through the roof

Verse 3:

God of the circle that holds us
God of the ones pushed away
We will reach out to our neighbors
In your name we'll say:
No matter your creed or your country
No matter the hue of your skin
Your age, who you love, or the body
Your soul was born in
No matter the places you're broken
No matter the things you have done
Lay down that weight on the altar
A new day's begun
You are a child of the maker
You are beloved and known
Join us in work of the kin-dom
We welcome you home
Join us in work of the kin-dom
We welcome you home

Benediction

As we go out from this place,
May we know, without a shadow
Of a doubt, that we are not alone.
And know that we are desperately loved by God.

In God's embrace,
Let us not cower in fear,
Let us stand with love.
Let us not huddle in judgment,
Let us stand with love.
Let us not sit in despair,
Let us stand with love.
Let us not walk away in anger,
But by the grace of God,
Let us stand with love.
In the name of the Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

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MISSION STATEMENT

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church is a community who believes in God's love, knows Jesus as Savior, and is blessed by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Thankful for these gifts, we gather to pray and praise, explore God's Word and its meaning for our lives, strengthen each other in our witness, and serve each other and our neighbors in the world.

VISION STATEMENT

Gathered by Grace ~ Sent to serve.
*Core Values: Spirituality, Community,
Grace, Helping Others, Creativity.*

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