

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

“Gathered by Grace - Sent to Serve”

“Hearts Overflowing” Fourth Sunday of Easter May 3, 2020

WELCOME

Thank you for worshipping with us today!

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*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Each week includes sharing food, so preparations include **making a meal or snack** to be ready at the time of the gathering. Other items to gather are a **candle** and a **“worry stone”** with a heart painted or drawn on it or some other word or picture that reminds you that Jesus is present with you. You can also make or color a heart every time you hear the word “heart.” **In addition, this week, you will want to have a glass full to the brim with water into which you can drop your worry stones.** Please place the glass in a larger bowl to contain the splashed water. If you are worried about the paint or marker on your stones coming in contact with water, you can use different, plain stones or marbles or whatever you have on hand.

Silence for Individual Reflection and Prayer

SPENDING TIME TOGETHER

We continue with our Easter Season because Easter isn't just one day. It is the message of God's desire for us to live fully *every* day. The early church practiced their hope in this way:

*“Day by day, as they **spent much time together** in the temple, they **broke bread at home** and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, **praising God and having the goodwill** of all the people.” (Acts 2: 46-47a)*

We create a “temple” of worship in our hearts that connects us across boundaries, distance, and time. But as we share this worship, we will stay connected. At the “heart of the matter,” we are connected through the Spirit that makes us one in love.

OPENING ACT OF CENTERING OUR HEARTS AS ONE

We are going to center our hearts as one to begin.
Let's take a deep breath together.

I invite you to place your hand on your heart and let's lightly tap together in a slow heartbeat rhythm:

Holy Living God,
Heartbeat of Creation,
help us to take this time to center on you,
for you made us,
you gave us life,
and you continue to be with us
every moment...
every breath...
every step.

Hear this assurance from God:
Be still, O heart, you're not alone,
your beat is shared with me.
Come now, and calm, and center here,
you're mine, secure and free.

Let's take another deep breath, making sure our shoulders and any tension we feel in our bodies is letting go with the breath.
Let's take another one.

Let us pick up our heart stone, sometimes called a “worry stone,” and let our touch on its surface remind us that God's touch is within us, between us, and around us.

As close and real as this object is in our hands right now,
is how close Love is to us always.
Let us imagine letting go of our worries for now into God's
heart of love.

We offer a prayer of letting go:
Into your care, we offer now,
our worries, fears and strife.
We turn to you and know you're near—
Your light, our love and life.

Let's light our candles now and set our heart worry stones next to it.

HYMN *"Precious Lord, Take My Hand"* **#773**

**Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn. Through the storm,
through the night, lead me on to the light.
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.**

**When my way grows drear, precious Lord, linger near,
when my life is almost gone. Hear my cry, hear my call,
hold my hand lest I fall.
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.**

**When the darkness appears and the night draws near,
and the day is past and gone, at the river I stand,
guide my feet, hold my hand.
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.**

Text: Thomas A. Dorsey, 1899-1993. Music: George N. Allen, 1812-1877, adapt. Thomas A. Dorsey.

BREAK BREAD

BLESSING THE MEAL (prepare your meal or snack)

Shepherding God,
Shepherding God,
We gather in your name...
We gather in your name...
invited by Jesus...
invited by Jesus...

bound together with your Spirit...
bound together with your Spirit...
in union with each other...
in union with each other...

Feed our bodies and our spirits...
Feed our bodies and our spirits...
with your comforting presence...
with your comforting presence...
so that we might be your comfort to others...
so that we might be your comfort to others...

Bless this food...
Bless this food...
and break open our hearts...
and break open our hearts...
Bless this drink...
Bless this drink...
and pour out your love...
and pour out your love...
Amen...
Amen!

And now I invite you to pick up a plate of food or a cup of drink on the table and let us say the one word that is at the heart of the matter in every blessing we do at our tables, repeating after me...

“Grateful!”
“Grateful!”

Let us begin to “break bread” while we “break open the Word” in our scriptures.

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD WITH SCRIPTURE

Scripture: John 10:1-10

I assure you that whoever doesn't enter into the sheep pen through the gate but climbs over the wall is a thief and an outlaw. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The guard at the gate opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. Whenever he has gathered all of his sheep, he goes before them and they follow him, because they know his voice. They won't follow a stranger but

will run away because they don't know the stranger's voice." Those who heard Jesus use this analogy didn't understand what he was saying.

So Jesus spoke again, "I assure you that I am the gate of the sheep. All who came before me were thieves and outlaws, but the sheep didn't listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief enters only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came so that they could have life—indeed, so that they could live life to the fullest.

Scripture: Acts 2:42-47

The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers. A sense of awe came over everyone. God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles. All the believers were united and shared everything. They would sell pieces of property and possessions and distribute the proceeds to everyone who needed them. Every day, they met together in the temple and ate in their homes. They shared food with gladness and simplicity. They praised God and demonstrated God's goodness to everyone. The Lord added daily to the community those who were being saved.

MEDITATION

HYMN

"Shepherd Me, O God"

#780

(vs.1 & 2 and final refrain)

Refrain

**Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants,
beyond my fears, from death into life.**

**God is my shepherd, so nothing shall I want,
I rest in the meadows of faithfulness and love,
I walk by the quiet waters of peace. Refrain**

**Gently you raise me and heal my weary soul,
you lead me by pathways of righteousness and truth,
my spirit shall sing the music of your name. Refrain**

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950, based on Psalm 23. Text © 1986 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

ACTION RESPONSE

Our response today is to place our worry stones in a full glass of water. This glass of water filled to the brim symbolizes the state of grace and love that is always and already what God gives to us. When we drop our worry and grief into it, we will see the love spill over. Placing our feelings and trust into God's love helps us to pour out love all around us, making that love available to everyone. There is always enough to go around.

BREAKING OPEN OUR LIVES WITH DISCUSSION

Our theme scripture says, "they ate their food with glad and generous hearts." One way we can be glad and generous is to share about how we are finding strength, hope, love, and peace in these days. This is part of "breaking bread" with each other as we break open our hearts to one another as well. In this week's scripture, Jesus talks about listening to the Shepherd, not to the things that "rob" us of our well-being.

Who or what have you found to be a "voice of the Shepherd," giving you a sense of well-being and abundance in this time? What things are "thieves," threatening to rob you of a sense of calm and trust?

Or if you can't think of something from this week, what do you have in your memory as something that offers abundance?

Let's take some time at our tables to talk about these questions or write them down in our journals or on notecards.

Let's complete this sentence, "I see abundance (in/when/where) _____."

BREAKING OPEN OUR HEARTS WITH PRAYER

For those who have lost loved ones
For those who are sick and recovering
For those who are caring for loved ones who are sick at home
For those who are caring for persons in medical care
For those who are separated from loved ones
For those who are feeling alone and isolated
For those who are helping and are so very tired
For those who are struggling to find friends, food, and comfort
For those who are afraid

Let us take another breath of Spirit as our “Amen.” We know that God sends out our prayers and the Spirit, Breath of God, is blowing from within us outward, as a Spirit of Compassion and Presence.

PRAISE GOD!

We know Jesus is present among us...

We know Jesus is present among us...

even in this very home...

even in this very home...

We will not let fear be louder than love...

We will not let fear be louder than love...

but with glad hearts and rejoicing souls...

but with glad hearts and rejoicing souls...

we will sing God’s praise...

we will sing God’s praise...

for we are Easter People...!

for we are Easter People!

HYMN

“What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine”

#774

**What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
leaning on the everlasting arms;
what a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
leaning on the everlasting arms.**

Refrain:

**Leaning, leaning, (Leaning on Jesus, leaning on Jesus,
safe and secure from all alarms;
leaning, leaning, (leaning on Jesus, leaning on Jesus,
leaning on the everlasting arms.**

**Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
leaning on the everlasting arms;
oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,
leaning on the everlasting arms. (*Refrain*)**

**What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
leaning on the everlasting arms. (*Refrain*)**

Text: Elisha A. Hoffman, 1839-1929

HAVE GOODWILL

What message does the world need? Perhaps you will decide to create a way to let more and more people know the message of Christ, “You are not alone. I am here. I love you straight from the heart.” What can we do to create more love in our household, in our family, in our relationships with those we cannot be with right now? How can we offer love to those who are working so hard right now? How can we offer love to those who feeling short on love, peace or comfort? Make your own plan today.

Rocks Covered in Love and Hope - Make more “worry stones” to give away. Collect a few rocks that have a surface large enough for a design and smooth enough to paint. Take these rocks – now symbols of the hard things – and cover them in love and hope. Wash the rocks with soap and water, and dry them thoroughly. Using acrylic paint or permanent markers, each person can paint their rock with hearts. You can use Sharpies also. Once they are dry, leave them in places where people can see them (or give them away if you want) and feel hearts overflowed with gladness!

BENEDICTION

(based on Psalm 16)

As we close this time together, remember:
God is always with you. No matter what you face,
no matter what trials or hardships come your way,
God is right beside you, offering love straight from the heart,
guiding and directing your path.
So, acknowledge your fear and your worry
and know it is as true and holy as any feeling,
including joy and hope and love.
Take heart! This is the heart of the matter.
Amen.

POSTLUDE JAM

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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.*