

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

“Gathered by Grace - Sent to Serve”

“Open the Eyes of My Heart”

(Ascension Sunday)

Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 24, 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.”

Silence for Individual Reflection and Prayer

SPENDING TIME TOGETHER

We have been celebrating Easter for an entire season and next week, Pentecost, is the last week of the Easter Season. But just like Jesus has been reminding his disciples since the resurrection, this is not the end of his presence with the world, but the beginning of how we will carry his heart within ours. And so it is. As we gather together today, and every time that we gather together—physically, virtually, in small groups or simply together in our memory of one another, Christ is still with us:

*“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

"Shout to the Lord"

#821

**My Jesus, my Savior,
Lord, there is none like you.
All of my days I want to praise
the wonders of your mighty love.
My comfort, my shelter,
tower of refuge and strength;
let ev'ry breath, all that I am
never cease to worship you.**

**Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing
power and majesty, praise to the King.
Mountains bow down and the seas will roar
at the sound of your name.
I sing for joy at the work of your hands;
forever I'll love you, forever I'll stand.
Nothing compares to the promise I have in you.**

Text: Darlene Zschech, b. 1965. Text © 1993 Darlene Zschech/Hillsong Publishing, admin. in the USA & Canada by Integrity's Hosanna! Music (ASCAP) c/o Integrity Media, Inc., 1000 Cody Road, Mobile, AL 36695. Text: William Kethe, d. c. 1594

BREAK BREAD

BLESSING THE MEAL (prepare your meal or snack)

Ever-Present God
Ever-Present 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...

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Together, gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, we pray as Jesus taught us.

**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 us 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.**

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

Gospel Reading: Luke 24:44-53

Jesus said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law from Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. He said to them, “This is what is written: the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and a change of heart and life for the forgiveness of sins must be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. Look, I’m sending to you what my [Abba, God] promised, but you are to stay in the city until you have been furnished with heavenly power.”

He led them out as far as Bethany, where he lifted his hands and blessed them. As he blessed them, he left them and was taken up to heaven. They worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem overwhelmed with joy. And they were continuously in the temple praising God.

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 1:15-23

Since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people, this is the reason that I don’t stop giving thanks to God for you when I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Sovereign of glory, will give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation that makes God known to you. I pray that the eyes of your heart will have enough light to see what is the hope of God’s call, what is the richness of God’s glorious inheritance among believers, and what is the overwhelming greatness of God’s power that is working among us believers. This power is conferred by the energy of God’s powerful strength. God’s power was at work in Christ when God raised him from the dead and sat him at God’s right side in the heavens, far above every ruler and authority and power and angelic power, any power that might be named not only now but in the future. God put everything under Christ’s feet and made him head of everything in the church, which is his body. His body, the church, is the fullness of Christ, who fills everything in every way.

MEDITATION

Lord, I lift your name on high;
Lord, I love to sing your praises.
I'm so glad you're in my life,
I'm so glad you came to save us.
You came from heaven to earth to show the way,
from the earth to the cross, my debt to pay,
from the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky;
Lord, I lift your name on high.

Text: Rick Founds, b. 1954. Music: Rick Founds. Text and music © 1989 Maranatha Praise, Inc. admin. Music Services.

Action Response

What does it mean to look through the eyes of our hearts? How do we see things around us in a heightened way? When our level of love goes up, our level of appreciation and gratitude goes up as well. I invite you to look around you. What do you see in front of you that may be something or someone you see every day but could see with new eyes of gratitude? Let your gaze rest of at least three things or people in this moment.

Breaking Open our Lives with Discussion

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. Let's share today about a new way of seeing with our hearts, with an eye of heightened gratitude.

What did you just see when you looked around, and did looking at it with “the eyes of a grateful heart” offer you a new perspective?

What else are you grateful for at this moment?

What do you want to “elevate” in your commitment to make the world a better place?

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 have an elevated sense of gratitude for _____.”

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

"O Beautiful for Spacious Skies"

#888

O beautiful for spacious skies,

for amber waves of grain,

for purple mountain majesties

above the fruited plain:

America! America!

God shed his grace on thee,

and crown thy good with brotherhood

from sea to shining sea.

O beautiful for heroes proved

in liberating strife,

who more than self their country loved,

and mercy more than life:

America! America!

May God thy gold refine,

till all success be nobleness,

and ev'ry gain divine.

O beautiful for patriot dream

that sees beyond the years

thine alabaster cities gleam,

undimmed by human tears:

America! America!

God mend thine ev'ry flaw,

confirm thy soul in self-control,

thy liberty in law.

Text: Katherine L. Bates, 1859-1929

HAVE GOODWILL

"You are not alone. I am here. You are beautiful in the eyes of God's heart." What can we do to create more "heart-full-ness" in our household, in our family, in our relationships with those we cannot be with right now? How can we offer our hearts to those who are working so hard right now? How can we tell others that we have hope? Make your own plan today.

Stained Glass Hearts - Use tissue paper, cardstock, wax paper, and glue, you can make colorful hearts to hang in your windows as a reminder to look at the world with the eyes of our hearts. Or hang them in a tree outside for others to enjoy as they go by.

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.*