

ST. DAVID'S (SHERMAN'S) UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
August 16, 2020

WELCOME

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

God of all people, whose healing grace answers our cries of faith, open our eyes to see Your wonders, our hearts to experience Your love, our lips to share our faith. Move us from self-concern to inclusive actions, that all Your children may be encouraged to explore a vital relationship with You that has a positive impact on Your world. AMEN

OPENING HYMN: "Praise to the Lord, The Almighty"

PRAISE TO THE LORD! THE ALMIGHTY, THE KING OF CREATION!

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation;
O my soul, praise Him, for he is thy health and salvation:
All ye who hear, now to His temple draw near,
Praise Him in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth;
Shelters thee under his wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen how thou desires e'er hath been
Granted in what He ordaineth?

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee;
Surely his goodness and mercy here daily attend thee.
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
If with his love he befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before him.
Let the Amen sound from his people again;
Gladly for aye we adore him.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: Miss Dee, "The Owl"

CALL TO CONFESSION

What attention have we given this week to our covenant with God? Do we recognize God's law, and walk in it? Have we remembered the ways God has led us and provided for us? Or are our lives full of other concerns? Let us turn back to our Creator.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God, our thoughts are not full of Your love. We forget to listen for Your guidance. When we speak to You, it is often to beg or complain, not to give thanks. Our greed outruns our gratitude. We live fearfully rather than faithfully. When You assure and bless us, we are not satisfied. O God, we cannot turn ourselves around. Help us to change.

TIME OF SILENT PERSONAL CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God is merciful toward us and listens to our honest prayers. Our thoughts and deeds are fully known to God, who is eager to forgive and to lead us to new understandings. When we earnestly seek God's help, we are set free from our past sin. Even in the worst of circumstances, God works with us to bring something good. May God be praised.

HOLY SCRIPTURES: Genesis 45:1-15 Matthew 15:10-28

GENESIS 45:1-15

JOSEPH MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN

¹ Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. ² And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it.

³ Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! ⁵ And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. ⁶ For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. ⁷ But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

⁸“So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. ⁹ Now hurry back to my father and say to him, ‘This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don’t delay. ¹⁰ You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. ¹¹ I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.’

¹²“You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. ¹³ Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly.”

¹⁴ Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. ¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

MATTHEW 15:10-28

¹⁰ Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. ¹¹ What goes inside a man’s mouth does not make him ‘unclean’, but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him ‘unclean’.”

¹² Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?”

¹³ He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. ¹⁴ Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit.”

¹⁵ Peter said, “Explain the parable to us.”

¹⁶ “Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. ¹⁷ “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? ¹⁸ But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man ‘unclean’. ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. ²⁰ These are what make a man unclean’; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him ‘unclean’.”

The Faith of a Canaanite Woman

²¹ Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²² A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon possession.”

²³ Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.”

²⁴ He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

²⁵ The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said.

²⁶ He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs."

²⁷ "Yes, Lord," she said, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

²⁸ Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

SERMON: "No Coincidence"

PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Be aware in new ways of God's presence. Be open to God's gifts and God's call. Holiness and mercy are all around us. On every hand, there are resources to strengthen us. All praise to our God!

CLOSING HYMN: "Bless the Lord, O My Soul"

BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL (Psalm 103:1)

Bless the Lord, O my soul

Bless the Lord, O my soul

And all that is within me

Bless His Holy name.

(REPEATS)

PRAISE TO THE LORD! THE ALMIGHTY, THE KING OF CREATION

The author of the original German text is Joachim Neander (1650-1680), who studied theology in Bremen. His life was cut short by tuberculosis. His text first appeared in *A und Ω Glaub-und Liebesübung* in 1680. Neander was a Calvinist schoolmaster who was influenced by the pietist theologians Philipp Spener (1635-1705) and Johann Jakob Schütz (1640-1690), the latter also a hymnwriter. In 1674, Neander became the rector of the Latin School at Düsseldorf, a Calvinist German Reformed institution.

In a curious historical coincidence, Joachim Neander's move to Düsseldorf placed him in a region of Germany now called Neandertal or sometimes "the Neander Valley" where nearly 200 years after Neander's untimely death the skull of the first example of *Homo neanderthalensis* was discovered in 1856 by workers in a limestone quarry named Neandershöhle (Neander's Hollow) after pastor Joachim Neander. "Neander" is the Greek translation of the family name "Neumann", both of which mean "new man." Pastor Neander is said to have loved the natural beauty of this valley named for his family and it inspired many of his hymns.

For example, selected stanzas from the following hymn, "Heaven and Earth, and Sea, and Air," published in German in 1680 as "Himmel, Erde, Luft und Meer" and translated by Catherine Winkworth, may well reflect the splendor that Neander found in one of his many walks in this region:

BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL

The words to this hymn are taken from **Psalm 103:1**, "*Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.*" (NIV). This hymn appears in various hymn books and the author is listed as "anonymous." In some hymnals, the editors note that a hymn's author is unknown to them, and so this artificial "person" entry is used to reflect that fact. Obviously, the hymns attributed to "Author Unknown" "Unknown" or "Anonymous" could have been written by many people over a span of many centuries. "Bless the Lord, O My Soul," can be found in different tune settings in various hymnals, one dated 1915. The version used in today's service first appeared in "THE KING'S SONGS—YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHURCH of the AIR Hymn Book," no. 98, compiled by Ruth D. Crawford and Percy B. Crawford, M.A., Paperback: 179 pages, Publisher: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. (1938). The tune is attributed to H.H. Planck. There is no biographical information for H.H. Planck.