

JULY 26, 2020
EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PRELUDE — *Salvation* - text from "Psalm 126", paraphrased by Ruth Duck.

CALL to WORSHIP

One: O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good,

All: God's steadfast love endures forever!

One: Who alone does great wonders; who by understanding made the heavens; who spread out the earth on the waters.

All: God's steadfast love endures forever;

One: Who made the great lights; the sun to rule over the day; the moon and stars to rule over the night.

All: God's steadfast love endures forever;

One: Who divided the Red Sea in two and made Israel pass through the midst of it; who led God's people through the wilderness,

All: God's steadfast love endures forever;

One: It is God who remembered us in our low estate; it is God who rescued us from our foes.
O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good,

All: God's steadfast love endures forever.

PRAYER of CONFESSION

Merciful God, we want to come home. But we want to come home to "home" as we know it. We don't like change. We don't like new ways of doing things. We especially don't like feeling out of control when that change comes. Even after months living in exile, we still resist your efforts to mold and shape our hearts in new ways. We still pace aimlessly around our living rooms and neighborhoods, angry at everything we can't control. We still take that anger out on unsuspecting friends and family and grocery store clerks who can't restock the produce fast enough to suit us. We still believe that we know best about everything. Forgive us, O God, for thinking that we ever had control. Forgive us, O God, for our lack of trust in you. Forgive us, O God, for making idols of ourselves, our political parties, our churches, our plans, our lives. Forgive us for forgetting that you desire to mold us and shape us in YOUR way, not in our way. Fill us with your Spirit. Open our hearts and our minds to your Word and to your world. Call us back to the only home we need in you.

(Time for silent prayer and confession.)

PROMISE of FORGIVENESS

One: Hear the good news: Do not worry; the Lord is near. God hears our prayers with compassion and with abundant, steadfast love. Rejoice, for in the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

All: Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen!

SCRIPTURE READING — *Ezra 1:1-7, 3:8,10-13*

“In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, in order that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia so that he sent a herald throughout all his kingdom, and also in a written edict declared: “Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of those among you who are of his people—may their God be with them!—are now permitted to go up to Jerusalem in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem; and let all survivors, in whatever place they reside, be assisted by the people of their place with silver and gold, with goods and with animals, besides freewill offerings for the house of God in Jerusalem.” The heads of the families of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites—everyone whose spirit God had stirred—got ready to go up and rebuild the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. All their neighbors aided them with silver vessels, with gold, with goods, with animals, and with valuable gifts, besides all that was freely offered. King Cyrus himself brought out the vessels of the house of the Lord that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods.”

“In the second year after their arrival at the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak made a beginning, together with the rest of their people, the priests and the Levites and all who had come to Jerusalem from the captivity. They appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to have the oversight of the work on the house of the Lord.”

“When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests in their vestments were stationed to praise the Lord with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, according to the directions of King David of Israel; and they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord, “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel.” And all the people responded with a great shout when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and heads of families, old people who had seen the first house on its foundations, wept with a loud voice when they saw this house, though many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping, for the people shouted so loudly that the sound was heard far away.”

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

INVITATION *to GIVE* — *Kum Ba Yah*

AFFIRMATION *of FAITH* - from *A Brief Statement of Faith*

We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life. The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the church. The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the church. In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, Come, Lord Jesus!

PAUSE for PRAYER

At this time, we invite you to take out a piece of paper and a pen, or talk with the people you are worshipping with today, and answer at least one of the following questions as we prepare to turn to God in prayer.

- 1) What emotions are you wrestling with as you think about returning home to worship?
- 2) How do you think "coming home" to church will be different? How do you think you'll be different as you walk through the door?
- 3) How might God still be at work molding your heart for this new beginning?

POSTLUDE — *Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty* – translated by Catherine Winkworth

PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Rev. Rachel Rhodes – Senior Pastor

Rev. Alex Lester-Abdalla – Associate Pastor

Tim Carpenter – Director of Music

A.K. Rosenbaum – Liturgist

Prelude – from Kentucky Harmony performed by Concordia University Chicago Wind Symphony, Richard Fischer, conductor (Their performance altered for this service).

Vocalist: Tim Carpenter.

Invitation to Give – James & Kathryn Gilbride

Postlude – Jason Vodicka, organ

Damon Miller – Communications Coordinator

Photos provided by: Roger Anderson, Joan Barley, Cindy Moskow & Geoff Smith
Additional photos from Unsplash.com.