



September 8, 2020

As I write this letter this morning, there are evacuations, and fire danger, as well as smoke in the air. Several of you are dealing with health problems due to the smoke, and a bunch of you have had your plans changed because of the fires and smoke. Please hear this – be at

peace! God is with you. Ask for help as you need it, and offer help as you can!

Thank you all for 'holding the fort' while Joe and I made a trip to the Midwest to see family. Although it was very different (we camped so we would never be indoors with folks because of the virus) and much too short, Joe and I needed to connect with family in these unusual times. I am thankful for your help in making that happen. AND, I pray you are able to connect with family – to be together in whatever way emerges for you!

*Beginning with Sunday, Sept 13, 2020 – our mailout as well as our in person worship will focus on this theme – “**God’s Work, Our Hands**”. The ELCA has focused on that theme the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of September for about 15 years. I like the theme so much, I think we’ll focus on that until *Reformation Sunday at the end of October!**

What does this mean? It means that we are God’s hands and feet in the world, and it is up to us to accomplish God’s good works for our neighbor! Bless you all.

**Is this the time you start attending a bible study? Join us in person in the gym at the church or on zoom on Thursdays at 5 pm. We are covering the Old Testament readings for the following Sunday together, asking “What is God saying today?” (Let’s also focus on God’s Work, Our Hands, in this Study)**

**Sept 10 – Exodus 14:19-31 (The miracle at the red sea)**

**Sept 17 – Exodus 16:2-15 (The miracle of manna)**

**Sept 24 - Exodus 17:1-7 (The miracle of water from the rock)**

**October 1 - Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20 (The Ten Commandments)**

**COMING UP** – This week – Property Tuesday morning, Sept 8<sup>th</sup>;

Sept 9<sup>th</sup>. Better Together conversation about upcoming Blessing of the Animals on Zoom – Wednesday Sept 9<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm.

Thursday, “What is God Saying today?” at 5.

Topic: What is God Saying today?

Time: Sep 10, 2020 05:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84055018008?pwd=SlJHN0lkcWhlUVF3aWE4MkEzV1BRdz09>

Meeting ID: 840 5501 8008

Passcode: 569519

AND Re-opening Task Force (and Worship Reopening Task Force!)

Meeting Thursday Sept 10<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm!

Topic: Reopening Task Force and Worship task force

Time: Sep 10, 2020 06:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82423697384?pwd=RzhHejZlZkQ4M2s3NmZbExHSHhLdz09>

Meeting ID: 824 2369 7384

Passcode: 728329

Family Promise is coming up, too. Call Doug Odell if you have the ability to volunteer with meals to deliver to the Family Promise house (churches aren't being used yet to house the families due to the pandemic).

Bless you all – and may you be filled with the Holy Spirit in these changing times.

Pastor Patricia\_

**Sermon for Sunday Sept 6, 2020** Liturgy is the order of a worship service. Liturgy is not a word you're going to use in a lot of everyday conversations, but when you and I, gather together in a communal way, we lean on a liturgy to show us the way. Even in this time of adaptations during a pandemic, we lean on the liturgy. We have a time of confession and forgiveness, then we often have a song or two to draw us in, to sanctify the space, to remind us all, as we pray together, Lord, have mercy. Our reading today from Exodus is all about Liturgy. And since I didn't get to preach to you last week, let me just frame our discussion a bit –book of Exodus, the story of the family of God in this time, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who have settled in Goshen, a part of Egypt, where they started as friendly neighbors but are now in a full blown war with the Pharaoh – the king of Egypt- who has declared genocide against the Hebrew people, because he fears their numbers. A deliverer, Moses, Has been raised up from the Hebrews, called by God in a holy fire, and sent to demand that Pharaoh let my people Go. And Pharaoh refuses. God sends plagues to break him, but Pharaoh will not give in. So his people endure frogs, and bugs and the river turned to blood, they endure a horrible plague of skin ulcers and more. And now, finally, God sends the angel of death to kill the firstborn in every home that does not declare God as Lord by taking a hyssop branch and marking the door frame with the blood of a blemish free lamb or goat which is then roasted, and eaten by the family gathered, with their sandals on their feet and their belt cinched around their waist ready to move at God's command. It's a battlefield. It's a battle of wills. And God prepares the people by giving them liturgy – mark the doorposts just so – choose the perfect animal for dinner just so – roast the animal in this way. But, pull that telescope we are using to watch this story, back, and you will see that this liturgy for preparing the Passover meal is not a liturgy for a one-time meal on the eve of battle. It is the liturgy for an entire nation, an entire people, an entire way of life. The Passover is the seminal event for people of the book – for Jews, and for Christians alike. The reading in Exodus urges families to join together to share a lamb or goat if their family cannot consume a whole animal. The reading tells us how to prepare it – they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. This Passover shall be a perpetual ordinance – something to be done in memory of this event in history forever. I have a lovely memory in my heart of sharing the Passover meal with our last confirmation class and their families. Talking about the bitter herbs, and the traditions that Jewish families today use to remember this even from nearly 4000 years ago was a pivotal piece of their learning. Because Jesus celebrates the Passover also, with his friends on that night before he was killed. The Passover shall be a perpetual ordinance. God gives us a liturgy, a pattern, a plan a communal way to draw closer to God. Jesus shows us this plan still holds up, as he meets in the upper room that Maundy Thursday. And so must we, as we meet in these days of war – against a common enemy – illness and death from covid 19. We lean into the liturgy – a well known and heartfelt drawing near to God in prayer, in music, in togetherness. Togetherness is the hard part isn't it? I just came back from seeing family we had been unable to visit for so long – a little granddaughter I had never seen who turned 1 year old while I was with her. And her mother is a doctor, and so we smiled at each other, and giggled, and played, and yet, I never held her, nor touched her. It was important you see, for me to protect her life, and, for her family, to protect our lives. But we spent a happy day hiking together, me giggling at her in the backpack. We saw more family – 3 little boys all growing up so tall. We played games, and sat around a campfire, and we prayed before meals. We were together. And I call my uncle Charles every 2 weeks or so and talk about his chemo, and the paralysis he has now, and he is so happy to be on our prayer chain. We are together. These are the family I have Passover with in my heart. And then there is all of you, and our connection, and of course, connections you have with each other, and your neighbors, and your community. God gave us a liturgy – a pattern of living to include all the world, our whole community- in these behaviors, and prayers and rituals that bind us together – against the current threat. God is good. And we are together. Today's Gospel makes that point so well That reading ends -For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them. Your job and mine in these days my friends is to gather – and to find new ways to gather – on the phone, in letters, on zoom – and to care for all in the name of Jesus Christ who binds us together. Amen. – Pastor Patricia+

**WORSHIPPING AT HOME WITH HOLY CROSS**  
**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2020 – GOD’S WORK, OUR HANDS SUNDAY**

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, One God, who creates, redeems and sustains us and all of creation. **Amen.**

**Faithful God, have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen**

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ. Let by the Holy Spirit, live in Freedom and newness to do God’s work in the world with our own hands.

**GATHERING HYMN– O Christ, Our Hope ELW 604**

1 O Christ, our hope, our hearts' desire,  
creation's mighty Lord,  
redeemer of the fallen world,  
by holy love outpoured,  
by holy love outpoured:

2 How vast your mercy to accept  
the burden of our sin,  
and bow your head in cruel death  
to make us clean within,  
to make us clean within.

3 But now the bonds of death are burst,  
the ransom has been paid;  
you reign above at God's right hand,  
in robes of light arrayed,  
in robes of light arrayed.

4 Oh, let your mighty love prevail  
to purge us of our pride,  
that we may stand before your throne  
by mercy purified,

by mercy purified.

5 All praise to you, ascended Lord;  
all glory ever be  
to Father, Son, and Spirit blest  
through all eternity,  
through all eternity!

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

### **READINGS AND PSALM**

#### **Exodus 14:19-31**

*Israel's deliverance at the Red Sea*

#### **Psalms 114**

Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the LORD. (Ps. 114:7)

#### **Romans 14:1-12**

*Accepting diversity in the community of faith*

#### **Matthew 18:21-35**

*A parable of forgiveness in the community of faith*

### **Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.\***

**On the third day he rose again;**

**he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (see attached prayers)**

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. You have set before us these gifts of your good creation. Prepare us for your heavenly banquet, nourish us with this rich food and drink, and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Christ, our strength and our song.

**Amen.**

### **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

When our congregation gathered for the celebration of Holy Communion, we heard again the story of God's mighty acts and of the love shown us in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. With thanksgiving we remembered that "in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

The people of our congregation were given assurance of our Lord's presence through the gift of his Holy Spirit. As you worship in your homes, we remember the gift of communion that we share.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall never hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

***At this time, you may remember the gift of holy communion with your own bread and cup.***

### **COMMUNION BLESSING**

God of the welcome table,  
in this meal we have feasted on your goodness  
and have been united by your presence among us.  
Empower us to go forth sustained by these gifts  
so that we may share your neighborly love with all,  
through Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life.

**Amen.**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.  
**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.

### **BLESSING**

The God of compassion, hope and joy,  
Our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,  
Bless your feet to carry you into places of need.  
Bless your lips to proclaim love and mercy.  
Bless your heart to love and listen to those you encounter.  
Bless your hands to care for the needs of your neighbors.  
Bless you to be a blessing to others.  
Now and always.  
**Amen.**

**Praying together at Holy Cross – Sept 13, 2020**

**As we begin a season of “God’s Work: Our Hands”**

With open hands and open hearts, let us pray for the needs of all the world.

Generous Provider, renew the strength, energy and courage of your church. Through our acts of service, may your love overflow and your grace be proclaimed for us, for our neighbors and for all the world. God of abundant grace,

**Open your healing hands.**

Generous Provider, we celebrate the earth that yields its fruit in due season. Make us good neighbors to every corner of creation. Save us from our desire to hoard abundant resources for ourselves at the expense of other people and of the earth itself. God of abundant grace,

**Open your healing hands.**

Generous Provider, guide leaders who set economic policy. Set free those burdened by debt. Provide assistance to those who cannot make ends meet. Teach us to steward our gifts with generosity and with concern for the whole community. God of abundant grace,

**Open your healing hands.**

Generous Provider, raise up daily bread where there is famine. Bring nourishing food to those who live in food deserts. Create networks of support to feed the hungry in our communities. God of abundant grace,

**Open your healing hands.**

Generous Provider, you heal all diseases, comfort all sorrows, restore all things. Make our hands, our feet, our mouths and our hearts agents of that healing in the world. Bring healing to those suffering from the coronavirus and lead researchers to a vaccine. Guide us in boldly serving the needs of neighbors near and far. God of abundant grace,

**Open your healing hands.**

Generous Provider, your love holds us in life and in death. Thank you for the faithful witness of those who have died. Direct our vision to the time when every knee shall bow, every tongue confess and every hand reach out to serve in praise of you. God of abundant grace,

**Open your healing hands.**

We commend these and all things to your gracious care, trusting in Christ Jesus, our Savior. **Amen.**

