

January 24, 2020 – At-Home/Email Worship

A blessed Sabbath to you, and welcome to worship for our Third Sunday after Epiphany ☺ This past week included the presidential inauguration in the USA, and the coming week includes Bell's Let's Talk day – a day to recognize the reality of mental health fragility in our world. January is delivering to us the expected grey and cold weather, and today the teaching will focus on Psalm 62 from our lectionary so be prepared to do some reading and prayer with the Psalm in the midst of the sermon – this week it is a collective effort ☺

This week I want to again announce CANCELLATION of our Annual General Meeting (AGM) tentatively scheduled for January 31st, in the sanctuary following worship. Council is communicating AGM on March 21st, 2021 with the intention of using Zoom to meet on this date if in-person gathering remains unavailable. In the past week, a letter was sent out and is making it's way to VOTING members of our congregation. **Please carefully follow and respond to this letter, to ensure that you do your part in congregational decision-making, if your membership makes you eligible to vote per our church's constitution:** *"A voting member is one who has been confirmed in this congregation, or received by adult baptism, or received by transfer as confirmed members from another Lutheran congregation or another congregation in full communion with the ELCIC, or received by affirmation of faith as baptized adults. Voting members must have received Holy Communion and have made a contribution of record within the current or preceding calendar year."*

Since the beginning of January, many of you made baked goods or foods that I then delivered with doorway visits of home communion kits. All cookies, squares, soups and chilli that I got were delivered ☺ I am now in possession of a large bag of flour, plus a variety of take away containers to give to the next baker/soup maker/chilli maker in line ☺ Please consider being a link in this chain of giving and sharing our love – the most valuable communion of ALL ☺

This Sunday, your worship service is available to you:

- in print copy (if you prefer to receive it this way, please call Bonnie Scott at the church office, 519-653-4721), **PLEASE NOTE, in 2021, the print copy will arrive in the week following the Sunday service, as this allows me to better focus on pastoral care duties during each week.**
- As an online service you can go through at your leisure, with music links provided via our St Peter's YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdxKUbGybZi4PN_R36KPeiw/videos), or
- As a live, gathering of people for worship on the Zoom video/audio conferencing platform.

We are still experimenting on Heide's Zoom service for live online worship. This allows us to gather together for worship from our respective homes. The church is now looking into investing in our own Zoom license.

You don't have to have a computer or internet to connect to any of the Zoom services; you can also just call in on one of these numbers (long distance charges may apply):

1 587 328 1099 or
1 647 374 4685 or
1 647 558 0588 or
1 778 907 2071 or
1 204 272 7920 or
1 438 809 7799

Use your telephone keypad to enter the meeting ID and Passcode when asked.

Heide Emrich is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting for Sunday Worship

Jan 24, 2021 09:45 AM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81379383255?pwd=S0lDMnlkK1hmcmhibUtPVUIWZEHlQT09>

Meeting ID: 813 7938 3255

and

Passcode: 706075

With the provincial State of Emergency and Stay at Home order, in-home visits are being avoided. If you need a phone or video call, doorway or distanced outdoor visit, please do reach out by email or phone:

pastor@st-peters-cambridge.org or 519-653-4721 ... The church office is closed, but walking visits, brief front porch/screen door visits (whose duration depends on the fall in body temperature of your pastor), video phone visits or regular phone visits remain available ☺ Have a blessing filled week, and please do be in touch if I may be of help or support in these times!

- with love, in Christ, Pastor Janaki.

Click for land acknowledgement, email service:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9Zar8-GeUs>

**Please take a few moments of silence,
 prepare your heart,
 centre yourself for worship.**

Gathering Hymn: Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters ELW 445 Beach Spring

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VRxVTHUewU&t>

Author: Ruth C. Duck (1987); Copyright: Words © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House
 Beach Spring, Music: The Sacred Harp, Philadelphia, 1844; arr Selected Hymns 1985; Tune: © 1978, Augsburg Fortress
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Greeting:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all, in your home and in mine.

Prayer of the Day: God of the sunrise and the daylight, God of the sunset and the night: you have given us the light of Jesus, to shine a way through for us. We are thankful for the light of Jesus, especially in these cold winter days. Keep us mindful that, if we rely on you and your provisioning in our lives, we have nothing to fear. We may shine our light without fear, in, with and through Jesus. Amen.

The Lesson: 1 Corinthians 7:29-3

I do want to point out, friends, that time is of the essence. There is no time to waste, so don't complicate your lives unnecessarily. Keep it simple—in marriage, grief, joy, whatever. Even in ordinary things—your daily routines of shopping, and so on. Deal as sparingly as possible with the things the world thrusts on you. This world as you see it is fading away. [The Message Translation]

Word of God, word of life. C: Thanks be to God.

The Holy Gospel according to Mark 1:14-20

Glory to you O Lord.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him. [NRSV]

This is the Gospel of our Lord. Praise to you O Christ.

Acclamation of the Word: Jesus, Oh What a Wonderful Child ELW #297

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59JIsulUmcl>

Text African American Traditional; Music African American Traditional; Contributor: Jeffrey Radford; arr. Bradley Moggach
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Sermon & Reading combined...

This Sunday I wanted to remind us of the dialogue, the conversation which was familiar when we would gather together on Sundays, and read the Psalm together. So, those at home with a print/email version of the service, if you are alone, you may have to imagine a voice here ... but hopefully technology will cooperate and for those who can access the audio or Zoom, I hope you will also will read responsively. Sarah's voice will be the responsive congregational voice.

For God alone my soul waits in silence,
 for my hope is from him.
 He alone is my rock and my salvation,
 my fortress; I shall not be shaken.
 On God rests my deliverance and my honor;
 my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.
 Trust in him at all times, O people;
 pour out your heart before him;
 God is a refuge for us.
 Those of low estate are but a breath,
 those of high estate are a delusion;
 in the balances they go up;
 they are together lighter than a breath.
 Put no confidence in extortion,
 and set no vain hopes on robbery;
 if riches increase, do not set your heart on them.
 Once God has spoken;
 twice have I heard this:
 that power belongs to God,
 and steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord.
 For you repay to all
 according to their work.

You may remember that song, whether the Boney-M version, or the Reggae version: By the rivers of Babylon. Wikipedia reliably (??) tells me that "Rivers of Babylon" is a [Rastafari](#) song written and recorded by the [Jamaican reggae](#) group [The Melodians](#) in 1970. The lyrics are adapted from the texts of [Psalms 19](#) and [137](#) in the Hebrew [Bible](#). The song was re-popularised in Europe by the 1978 [Boney M.](#) cover version.

The words of this top-ten-all-time best-selling singles in the UK (according to Wikipedia) come from the Psalms, which were written to reflect and serve our need for prayer and communication with God.

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down
 Ye-eah we wept, when we remembered Zion

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down
 Ye-eah we wept, when we remembered Zion

When the wicked
 Carried us away in captivity

Required from us a song
 Now how shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land ...

When we hear these words sung, we are hearing an ancient prayer that recalls a time in which the Jewish people were taken captive, to a place called Babylon. They were made a mockery of by their captors, and told to sing, not for worship, but for entertainment. They ask the heartfelt question: how shall we sing the Lord's song, in a strange land?

Maybe you can relate. Why the heck is pastor asking us to read Psalms, doesn't she realize that we are in a pandemic? That we are under lock down and stay at home order? That reading Psalms is not going to help??

The answer is, yes, I realize that we are indeed in a very strange land. We are in an unrecognizable land of mask wearing, distancing, and only going out for essential things. We are sitting in our own homes, by the strange realities in the midst of what used to be familiar, and maybe we do weep when we remember the pre pandemic, pre COVID world. When we think of the time before this wicked virus took the whole world captive.

But praying through the Psalms is a powerful tonic, and with today's Psalm, we pray together...

Last Sunday we talked about the Lord's Prayer and I focussed on the fact that it is almost a part of our muscle memory in that we can call on the Lord's prayer and not have to think about what words come next. Sometimes, words just don't come, and in times like these:

- when we are being gathered up in divine collective my common experience – not unlike Jesus gathering disciples
- in times like these when, as the Corinthians reading from today says, the world as you see it is fading away
- in times like these sometimes we need words from somewhere else with which to pray!

The Psalms provide a similar readily accessible source of prayer.

This week's lectionary Psalm provides a section from Psalm 62 that is particularly encouraging and reassuring as the Psalmist returns to the central position of acknowledging that God alone is a resource or a rock and our salvation.

For God alone, my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from God.

God alone is my rock, my fortress, that which saves and sustains me ... and I will not be shaken.

If we stop to really think about these words and really invest our worried minds and our anxieties as well as our hopes and our dreams in these words we also arrive at a position from which we cannot be shaken.

If we really understand that ultimate deliverance rests, ultimately, not on safety measures:

- not on social distancing
- not on mask wearing
- not on vaccines

But ultimately our deliverance rest entirely on God, it has the potential to take away a lot of worry, a lot of anxiety, a lot of fear.

Trusting in God at all times is not easy.

Pouring out our hearts before God is also not easy. There is a huge power and a huge sense of our own control in holding everything in.

Now, don't get me wrong here, I'm not suggesting that we go around the place pouring out every emotion that we have, every anxiety that we have, on every passerby - while not wearing a mask ... I'm not saying that at all.

I'm not saying that we shouldn't social distance or we shouldn't be vaccinated - what I am talking about here is much more along the lines of how we cope with what we are experiencing and how we rely upon our relationship with God to be a place where we can share all of our experience, knowing and trusting that God is available for us and that God an ever-available, non-judgmental, healthy, safe refuge.

We speak to God, we pour out our hearts before God not as an act of psychotherapy, not as an act of that modern inclination to speak ad nauseum about our feelings ... but we speak to God through prayer, as an action of communion and relationship, pouring all that is in us – pouring it all out to God because we understand and have faith that God is indeed a refuge for us.

The Psalm goes on to identify that it doesn't matter whether we are high or low because how we feel and where we stand in society - these are fleeting things. As the Psalm says: in the balances they go up and they go down. The ways in which we identify our emotional state or our social state become irrelevant before the act of pouring ourselves out before God. We don't have to identify a pathology to pour ourselves out before God. This unburdening, this offloading is a good, natural and healthy part of our relationship with infinite Creator who is capable of receiving all.

We do not put or confidence in things that are less substantial than God. The Psalm cites some examples of things we should not put confidence in: extortion, robbery, riches.

A more contextual way to pray this phrase might be:

Put no confidence in infection,

set no vain hopes on vaccination,

if immunity increases do not set your heart on it.

Why do you imagine the Psalmist tells, us exhorts us not to put confidence in these earthly things?

The answer to this question is given in the next few verses: once God has spoken, that power belongs to God, and steadfast love belongs to God too.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

During this time of lockdown and quiet and cold, during this time of waiting and watching and experiencing our own helplessness over so many things, we have a variety of ways to pray and one of those ways is using the Psalms.

For in God alone my soul waits in silence and my hope is from God.

God alone is my foundation.

God alone saves me.

In God alone will I seek protection and solace.

I will not I shall not be shaken.

My salvation and my deliverance all depend on God .

God is our refuge. Trust in God at all times and pour out Your heart before him.

Let the words of my mouth

And the meditations of our hearts

Be acceptable in God's sight.

Amen.

Hymn of Day (for youtube missal): Boney-M By the Rivers of Babylon

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUFTEDYik2Y>

**** Prayers of the People**

As we celebrate the manifestation of Jesus, to all people in this time after Epiphany, let us pray for the needs in our world, responding to the call: God who provides all, with hear our prayer.

Gracious and Holy God, your eternal purposes revealed in Jesus demonstrate your love extends to the ends of the earth, far beyond our capacity to imagine. We give thanks for your expansive love, and for the abundant ways in which you make yourself known to us.

We pray for all who believe in you,

Too often afraid of the rich diversity you have designed,

Too often timid in our proclamation of the good news of your love-example, before the rulers and powers of this world.

Strengthen our witness, our voices, hearts and minds.

Fill us with Divine Spirit, that we may be bold and courageous, to live our witness of faith in Jesus.

God who provides all, hear our prayer.

Heal divisions in our world of knowledge, belief and power,

So that your world may know the unity of love, sharing in the promises of Jesus,

Knowing the peace those promises provide.

God who provides ALL, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who are struggling in and with darkness,

Darkness of health, of soul, of mind, of spirit.

We call upon your power to make apparent and manifest the knowledge of Jesus,
The light which darkness cannot overcome.

God who provides ALL, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have little power according to the world's measure of power.

Guide us to be your defense in the cause of the poor, according to your will;

Guide us to be your hands and feet in deliverance of those in need, in ending oppression, according to your will.

Bring your healing to those in need, your comfort to those who are hurting. Show us how to help.

God who provides ALL, hear our prayer.

Help us to be your light that makes Jesus manifest in our world. Show us the way, we pray, in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

Let us share the peace of Christ:

The Peace of Christ be with you always, in your home and in mine, and throughout God's creation.

Meal:

Click here if you are accessing YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0YEYAO080U>

I invite you to prepare your table with bread and wine, or crackers and juice, whatever is available to you, so that you may participate in the meal. All are welcome.

****Prayer after Communion**

People of God: arise and shine, for your light has come and the glory of God shines through you.

Get up: shake off apathy, despair and all that brings you low.

People of God: show the light and love of Jesus,
so that others may know Jesus who is in you,
and shines from within you.

Take all that today's worship has filled you with, and pour it out in the coming week ☺

Amen.

(note from pastor: I am replaying this HYMN because I love it and haven't heard or sang it in so long!)

Sending Hymn: There's a Wideness in God's Mercy ELW 588; Bradley Moggach, Organ

Click here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x40YdUod_ng&feature=youtu.be

Text: Frederick W. Faber, Tune: North American, 19th cent.; Tune Name: Lord, Revive Us

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Blessing:

May the love of God uphold you;

the light of Christ guide you;

and the fellowship of Spirit fill you with joy,
now and forever.

Amen.

Dismissal: Go with Jesus, shining Christ light into the world. *Thanks be to God.*

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