



July 21, 2020

How is everyone doing? It has been four months since we have had a service inside and many things have happened in our society since then.

We are starting to have **in-person Worship again at Holy Cross**, taking advantage of the summer

weather. We are holding services outside, in the **Courtyard/Garden** area with proper social distancing and places for you to worship in your car if you would rather. (As we told you in an earlier letter, please wear a mask to our worship outside; if you are in your cars, no mask is required).

We would love to see you this **Sunday, July 26th at 10am** if you can make it, but *we understand people's need to stay home during these times*. (Please RSVP to the church office 503 364-6041 so we can figure out the distancing/spacing.)

All of what we are doing outside this summer is helping us to plan and modify our worship experience to conform to Federal and State Guidelines as we move indoors most probably to the Fellowship Hall/Gym at first. We have three teams that have been meeting over the past months to prepare in the reopening of the building so our community groups can get restarted in their activities and our church family can come together safely to worship Christ and have fellowship in Him.

Please feel free to call me at 541-971-0095 or email bgstruve@gmail.com with your thoughts or concerns –

Bryan Struve, Council President Holy Cross Lutheran Church

What is God Saying Today? (our 5pm Thursday Bible Study with a Covid-19 response)

Friends, have you been thinking about joining our Bible Study? Holy Cross has a long history (almost 4 years) of meeting weekly (Verse by Verse Bible Study)

After Covid became an issue, we moved to Zoom for Bible Study (and put it at 5 pm in order to allow our worship members to attend), and we moved the focus to What is God saying today? Looking at the Old Testament readings for our lectionary and connecting them to our current world view.

Last week (July 16) we took the class HYBRID! Some folks have a rough time with zoom, so this group is now Zoom AND in person (6 ft apart with social distancing – in the gym with lots of air movement). *We had some sound issues, but I would like to try again THIS Thursday, July 23rd at 5 pm.*

Here's the info on the zoom

Topic: What is God saying today?

Time: Jul 23, 2020 05:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 782 5295 9541

Passcode: 9ZvcXn

Here's our topics for the next few weeks:

July 23 **Genesis 29:15-28**

July 30 **Genesis 32:22-31**

August 6 **Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28**

August 13 **Genesis 45:1-15**

August 20 **Exodus 1:8--2:10**

See you there! – Pastor Patricia+

A sermon for July 19, 2020 A familiar God in a strange place. Genesis 28 – I am going to encourage Bible reading to each of you this morning. What a shock, right, a pastor encouraging bible reading. Here's why. The sweeping story in Genesis of a family blessed by God is our story. Because we are blessed by God, but we are flawed. You are flawed, I am flawed. And God continues to bless us, to make promises to us to use us for God's purpose. Even when the pattern of our lives is disrupted, and our way forward is confusing. The story of Jacob brings that to life for us.

Genesis 28 is about Jacob, fleeing the home in the land promised to his grandfather Abraham – the land of Israel – which continues to be populated mostly with Canaanites – the people who were there when this family came – directed by God to this fruitful land. This has been their land, given to them by God for parts of 3 generations now, and yet they still are keeping apart from the locals – Esau the brother who gets tricked and shunted aside by both Jacob and his mother Rebekah, has married into these locals. I bring it up because Genesis brings it up – that Rebekah doesn't like it – they aren't our people. So, if we assume the brothers are at least 20, Rebekah has been there 40 years, and she still doesn't like the neighbors. There is a connection to our times – when distrust of the neighbor who is/looks different continues to be a barrier to community and care.

But I digress – let's look at the action in Gen 28 – Jacob is on the run, leaving the promised land to go back to Rebekah's hometown, Haran, at least partly to find a wife from his mother's own people. Partly just to keep from being killed by Esau for his treachery. And he lays on a stone for a pillow, and dreams. He sees a great ladder in his dream with angels ascending and descending. And God – YHWH speaks to him, much as God has done with Abraham before him. God confirms to Jacob that God will bless the world through him, and his family. Jacob wakes with a new resolve. He sets up a standing stone – a typical marker of something of great importance at this time, and declares, that he will serve God, and worship God, especially in this place. Noticeably, however, he has a disclaimer at the beginning of his declaration – if God will continue to bless me as promised, I will keep this bargain – and give 10 percent of what I have to God.

This is such a bible story for Covid times. And I am Jacob. And so are you. We live as aliens in our own land right now. The virus around us has required us to make changes, and sacrifices, and isolate ourselves in many ways. This isolation has even affected our worship life. We worship now in online formats, and here at Holy Cross, we are beginning to find a way to worship in outside venues, where the airflow and distancing can help us and our neighbors stay safe. But we seem to carry this bubble around us now, appropriately in order to protect our neighbor. I don't like the bubble very much. No one likes the bubble. And yet I think it's where we need to be in order to keep infection down. But, like Jacob, when God reiterates God's promise to us, in prayer, in our worship life, when God reminds us that God will protect us, our response is often – thank you God, and if you keep doing that, my worship of you will continue. These are important concepts for life today. God's love of you and of me is not about a transaction – you be good and God will bless you. That's just not true. Stop believing that. God blesses Jacob even though Jacob is a cheater, and more. God will surely bless you and me and our neighbors out of the love God has for us, and out of God's purpose of blessing the world. We continue to adapt our lives to the infection of Covid 19 around us in these days, not out of expectation of God's blessing – there is no holy transaction in life. The blessing comes from within, from our resting in God's care and gifts, no matter what outside events assail us. The stairway to heaven that Jacob sees is confirmation of God's action in the world where we live. Knowing God is there and that God's promise is still with us can mean a lot in times of uncertainty and fear. God is with us. Even in this strange place where we find ourselves, as we run from the dangers around us. We can make an altar to God's presence, and carry the knowledge of God's love within us as we live another day in changing times. Amen – Pastor Patricia Hughes+

Praying together at Holy Cross – July 26, 2020

This summer, we are ‘searching for significance’ in this life of faith. When the world is full of change, we could choose to ‘lay low’ and wait for things to blow over. Or we could search for our own significance as the Body of Christ. We pray, Lord, for your help and guidance as we journey together toward that goal.



Lord, in your mercy Hear Our Prayer

We pray for those in leadership in our country, our state and our cities. May God sustain them and continue to point them to compassionate, quick and well-informed response.

Lord, in your mercy Hear Our Prayer

We pray for those who are ill with Covid19, especially those who we know personally. Give researchers and caregivers gifts of discernment. *(specific people are mentioned here)*

Lord, in your mercy Hear Our Prayer

We pray for your intervention in conversations and connections in our land. Let people listen to each other. *(specific people are mentioned here)*

Lord, in your mercy Hear Our Prayer

We pray for all families and individuals trying to find a new normal in these days of isolation and concern. *(specific people are mentioned here)*

Lord, in your mercy Hear Our Prayer

We pray for our love of worship. Help us each find a way to worship that works with our needs in this time of stress. *(specific people are mentioned here)*

Lord, in your mercy Hear Our Prayer

For this and all those matters, circumstances and individuals whose needs are brought to mind at this time. *(specific people are mentioned here)*

Lord, in your mercy Hear Our Prayer

We pray for Holy Cross leadership as they imagine new ways of being of service in your community, Lord. Thank you, Lord, for loving us. It is what makes all the difference. Amen.

WORSHIPPING AT HOME WITH HOLY CROSS
SUNDAY, JULY 26, 2020 – EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
whose steadfast love is everlasting,
whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation.

Amen.

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Reconciling God,

**we confess that we do not trust your abundance,
and we deny your presence in our lives.**

**We place our hope in ourselves
and rely on our own efforts.**

We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.

We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.

**We fear difference and do not welcome others
as you have welcomed us.**

We sin in thought, word, and deed.

By your grace, forgive us;

through your love, renew us;

and in your Spirit, lead us;

so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.

Beloved of God,

by the radical abundance of divine mercy

we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus,

through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.

Our sins are forgiven.

Let us live now in hope.

For hope does not disappoint,

because God's love has been poured into our hearts

through the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN – Children of the Heavenly Father ELW 781

1 Children of the heav'nly Father
safely in his bosom gather;
nestling bird nor star in heaven
such a refuge e'er was given.

2 Neither life nor death shall ever
from the Lord his children sever;

unto them his grace he showeth,
and their sorrows all he knoweth.

4 Though he giveth or he taketh,
God his children ne'er forsaketh;
his the loving purpose solely
to preserve them pure and holy.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

READINGS AND PSALM

Genesis 29:15-28

Leah and Rachel become Jacob's wives

Psalms 105:1-11, 45b

Make known the deeds of the LORD among the peoples. Hallelujah!

Romans 8:26-39

Nothing can separate us from God's love

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Parables of the reign of heaven

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

God of goodness and growth,
all creation is yours,
and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.
Water and word, wine and bread:
these are signs of your abundant grace.
Nourish us through these gifts,
that we might proclaim your steadfast love
in our communities and in the world,
through Jesus 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 The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace. **Amen**

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

**LIFE IS SHORT
AND WE DO NOT HAVE
MUCH TIME TO
GLADDEN
THE HEARTS
OF THOSE WHO
TRAVEL WITH US
SO BE SWIFT TO LOVE
MAKE HASTE TO BE KIND
AND GO IN PEACE
TO LOVE AND SERVE
THE LORD**

ALAN - FREDERIC AMIEL