

April 20, 2020

Christ is Risen! Alleluia
(He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!)

I hope you were nourished by yesterday's posted worship service. As usual, Steve Pastena's playing of the organ and piano was stellar and Grant Wills vocal leadership was outstanding. Both Steve and Grant put in lots of time practicing and preparing for each worship service, which is very evident and much appreciated.

Seminarian Katy Moran provided a thoughtful and inspiring sermon, entitled, "The Mysteries of (Not) Seeing and Believing." I am attaching it to this message so you can read it again. We have been blessed by our seminarian. Keep Katy in prayer as she continues her seminary studies on-line. That much time in front of a computer screen can be very tiring. Being separated from the rest of the campus community is also difficult. I don't think Katy will be able to forget her first year in seminary with all these additional challenges.

Several persons have asked about who has been taking the additional pictures and inserting the lyrics and responses in the taped worship services. That would be Steve Pastena. He has put in many hours learning, editing and adding to the "tapes" before they are posted. What a talented guy we are fortunate to have on the Haven staff.

We will be checking the church sound system before the next service is taped. I don't think it was up to par yesterday. We don't want folks to have to strain to hear. Wish us luck.

Now, for those of you who are curious but too polite to ask. I DID have a little "buddy" on a wheeled plant stand moving and, sometimes, entangling me as I moved around the altar. That is my "wound V.A.C." It is attached to me by a long length of tubing. The black sack you were seeing is the actual machine that extracts fluids from the wound so it can heal properly. No pain involved. No infection. Just this "buddy" that has to come with me everywhere. To allow my hands to be free, I tried letting it be carried by the wheeled plant stand. I hope it was not too distracting. I will hopefully get more adept at maneuvering with it during worship for a few more Sundays. Keep those prayers coming. Healing never goes at the speed we want, does it?

Since my cat, Isabella, has been walking and sitting in front of the computer monitor, I guess it's time for me to sign off for the day. I'm off to the post office to mail bulletins and sermons to some of our homebound members. Then I'm going to swap jigsaw puzzles with Nancy Newkirk. (Social distancing properly practiced.) We figure if the puzzles were first put together in 2019 or earlier, before the coronavirus existed, they would be "safe" after cleaning the outer boxes with Clorox wipes. Oh, how we are learning to adapt. Please do something that will bring you joy today. Notice God's goodness, Know your are loved.

God's peace IS with you,
Pastor Linda M Alessandri

PAUSE IN GOD'S WORD

Read: Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 (*Will be used in worship for the Third Sunday of Easter*)

¹I love the LORD, who has | heard my voice,
and listened to my | supplication,

²**for the LORD has given | ear to me
whenever | er I called.**

³The cords of death entangled me; the anguish of the grave | came upon me;
I came to | grief and sorrow.

⁴**Then I called upon the name | of the LORD:
“O LORD, I pray you, | save my life.”**

¹²How shall I re- | pay the LORD
for all the good things God has | done for me?

¹³**I will lift the cup | of salvation
and call on the name | of the LORD.**

¹⁴I will fulfill my vows | to the LORD
in the presence of | all God’s people.

¹⁵**Precious in your | sight, O LORD,
is the death | of your servants.**

¹⁶O LORD, truly I | am your servant;
I am your servant, the child of your handmaid; you have freed me | from my bonds.

¹⁷**I will offer you the sacrifice | of thanksgiving
and call upon the name | of the LORD.**

¹⁸I will fulfill my vows | to the LORD
in the presence of | all God’s people,

¹⁹**in the courts of | the LORD’s house,
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. | Hallelujah!**

Reflections: "How shall I repay the LORD for all the good things God has done for me?" That is a question from one who is grateful. It is a question from one who has noticed blessings and goodness in their daily lives and in extraordinary circumstances. The psalmist goes on to list numerous things he will do for the LORD and in honor of the LORD. Today, I am captured by this, "I will fulfill my vows to the LORD," which is said twice

It seems the psalmist had a role in the worship life of God's people, perhaps as a priest. ("In the presence of all God's people;" "In the courts of the LORD's house.") But I am taken to another set of vows --- our baptismal vows. We don't usually call them vows but covenantal promises. But they are vows, promises, we make in response to the Lord who loves us unconditionally and give us the unearned, undeserved, the unnegotiated gift of grace and life eternal. These baptismal vows are made on our behalf by our parents and church if we were baptized as children. They are the vows we ask young people to affirm as they conclude their confirmation studies. They are vows that we affirm periodically during worship each year. The presider says: "Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

to live among God’s faithful people,
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord’s supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

If so, answer, "I do, and I ask God to help and guide me." And we answer, "**I do, and I ask God to**

help and guide me."

"How shall I repay the LORD for all the good things God has done for me?" The truth for the psalmist and for us is that there is no way we repay the Lord. You can't out give God. Yet, our gratitude is powerful and yearns to be expressed. Our baptismal promises point us toward a way of life that will be pleasing to the Lord we want to thank. These promises are deep and rich with meaning and direction. I would invite us to linger on them today. Like the psalmist, tell the Lord what you are honored to do in thanksgiving for all God has done for you, for us. Our baptismal promises are a good place to start.

Practice: Read through the baptismal promises one at a time. Think about what it means and how you live into that promise out of love for the Lord who first and forever loves you.

Psalm Prayer: God of mercy and compassion, through the passion and resurrection of your Son you have freed us from the bonds of sin and death. Be with us on our pilgrimage, that may we offer you a sacrifice of thanksgiving, fulfill our vows, and glorify you in the presence of all your people; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Music:

"For the Beauty of the Earth" ELW#879 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTcJ_SQruhE
(Rutter) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTOfSKXkRa0>

"Mighty to Save" Hillsong <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5ghKwGEQRA>

"This I Believe" (Creed) Hillsong https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRzI_FbWTkg