

Elim Lutheran Church Service for Sunday, August 9, 2020

Since many of you are unable to view today's worship service, lessons, a short message, and prayers for this day are provided for your devotion.



ANNOUNCEMENT – On Wednesday, August 19th, at 6:30 -7:15, Elim will hold drive-through Communion in the driveway on the south side of the church. Please remain in your cars and Pastor Carol will distribute the Holy Meal as you **enter on the west side** and **exit on the east side** of the driveway.

Also, there will be phone-in Communion available. Please be sure to read your August Newsletter (The Visitor) for details on phone-in Communion, available on Wednesday, August 12, and Wednesday, August 26. Both of the phone-in days will have time slots of 2:00 – 3:00 and 6:30 – 7:30. Choose a time that works best for you.

Greeting

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism.

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

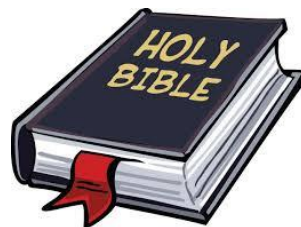
Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

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.



The Word

Today's first reading is from the 19th Chapter of 1 Kings.

⁹At [Horeb, the mount of God,][Elijah] came to a cave, and spent the night there.

Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰He answered, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away."

¹¹God said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass

by.” Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; ¹²and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. ¹³When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” ¹⁴He answered, “I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.” ¹⁵Then the LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. (1 Kings 19:9-15a)

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. I wait for you, O LORD; in your word is my hope. *Alleluia.* (Psalm 130:5)

Today’s Gospel is from the 14th Chapter of Matthew. ***Glory to you, O Lord.***

²²[Jesus] made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side [of the Sea of Galilee], while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. ²⁵And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.”

²⁸Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” ²⁹He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” ³²When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.” (Matthew 14:22-33)

The Word of the Lord. ***Praise to you, O Christ.***



Message

Noise! Noise! Noise! “How often,” or maybe the better way to ask this question would be, “How much of your day is filled with noise – the pounding experience that has become so much a part of our existence that we barely even notice it?” The cars on the highway with loud, penetrating muffler-growling sounds. A plane roaring overhead. The neighbor’s dog barking. Your own television blaring. The vacuum cleaner or the lawn mower...so much noise!

Think about a time when you’ve lost power in your home. You may thought your home was a quiet, peaceful place, but with the power gone, you really notice the quiet. It is so quiet that it’s almost disturbing. You just aren’t used to a world without noise. However, once your ears are accustomed to the lack of sound, it’s really pretty nice.

Now you have the chance to hear the whispering breezes and leaves rustling outside your window. You hear chirp-chirp of birds and crickets. You are able to hear the steady beat of your heart in your ears and the sound of your own breathing. It truly is quiet.



In today’s Old Testament reading, Elijah finds God’s presence not in the wind, earthquake, or fire. Elijah hears the voice of God in sheer silence. That’s quite the opposite of God’s spirit resting upon the people at Pentecost. There the Holy Spirit enters into the people in the rush of a mighty wind. But God’s presence is felt, and God’s voice is heard in deep silence in the story from 1st Kings.

Why is this significant? Instead of calling out to God only when things get challenging and scary, when we face the storms in life, how about hearing God in the middle of peace and calm? We are called to pay attention to God when God creates peace. Of course, it is OK to ask for

God's strength when times are hard. And then how often do we forget about the God who loves us and walks with us in our darkest times?

While the disciples were in the boat, the wind blew powerfully, and they were filled with fear. They did not recognize Jesus as he walked across the water, surrounded by potent waves. After Jesus spoke, they realized it was the Lord. Was it their wee bit of human faith that blinded their eyes to Jesus? Instead of Jesus saying to them "O, ye of little faith," he spoke these words: "Take heart. It is I." They recognize him and the winds stop battering the boat. The sea is calm.

Peter, good ol' Peter filled with faith says. "Lord, if it truly is you, then let me come to you." And he gets out of the boat and walks toward Jesus. Then, can't you just see him stop, atop the water and saying, "Wait. I'm not supposed to be walking on water." His faith wavers and he begins to sink into the deep, dark sea. Peter calls out, "Save me. I'm going to drown, Lord." Jesus reaches out and rescues Peter and asks him why his faith has waned, why is he doubting.



Perhaps Jesus is asking us the same questions that he has asked Peter: Why are you doubting? Where is your faith? Yes, our faith, at many times is weak at best. How often do we pray asking God for immediate relief to all our lives' storms? Our impatience is not what God asks for. We are called to trust, no matter what, in the midst of storms, in the midst of fear. But Jesus entered the boat of the disciples despite their doubts and fears. And Jesus enters our metaphoric boats, even though our faith is weak and our doubts overtake us.

It's easy to know the love of God and hear God's voice after we've been rescued, but do we really remember the love of God in times of silence? But after a tumultuous time, once we've experienced God's saving grace, how quickly do we forget the love of God? Jesus reaches out to us to come to Him and to take his hand and follow and trust in the good times and the bad.

Today Jesus comes to us in our drowning panic, responding to our "Lord, save me" with a quick response. The little faith of Peter (and our little faith) is not only a chiding to "do better" in our faith lives and respond with discipline, but it offers forgiveness: even when we risk and screw up anyway, God's hand is there to reach out and catch us. (Sundays and Seasons, August 2020)

Jesus comes to us in the stillness and silence. Listen, my friends. Jesus is here. God comes to us even when our faith is weak to none. Jesus gives powerful reassurance and the gift of

presence. God is not distant from our fears, but close to keep us safe. And while we are remembering that God is always present keeping us safe, we are sent forth to share the love of God. Though we are not always assertive in stepping out into the waves and storms, we must do so because so many have yet to know God's love does not abandon us.

May each of us be assured of the gift of presence, as in God with us...Emmanuel. Our presence with others can be assurance for those who are sinking in some way. And each of us is sinking in our way. God is not distant from our fears but close to keep us safe. And may you know that God is found in the gift of presence and in the silence.

And in that silence, that is where we hear God's voice. Amen.



Sermon Hymn

You Are Mine

*"I will come to you in the silence,
I will lift you from all your fear.
You will hear my voice,
I claim you as my choice.
Be still and know I am here.
Do not be afraid I am with you.
I have called you each by name.
Come and follow me, I will bring you home;
I love you and you are mine."*

*"I am the strength for all the despairing,
Healing for the ones who dwell in shame.
All the blind will see,
The lame will all run free,
And all will know my name.
Do not be afraid I am with you.
I have called you each by name."*

*Come and follow me, I will bring you home;
I love you and you are mine."*

Used with permission by
Augsburg Fortress during the Global Pandemic
Music and text: Davis Haas

Prayers of the People

Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

For your whole church throughout the world. Give courage in the midst of storms, so that we see and hear Jesus calling: "Take heart, it is I: do not be afraid." May we follow Christ wherever he leads. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the well-being of your creation. Protect waterways, forests, lands, and wildlife from exploitation and abuse. Help the human family endeavor to sustain and be sustained by the resources of your hand. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the nations and their leaders. In you, steadfast love and faithfulness meet, and righteousness and peace kiss. May nations in conflict know the peace that is the fruit of justice, and the justice that is the path to peace. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those in need. Everyone who calls upon your name will be saved. Accompany all who are lonely, hear the voices of those who cry out in anguish, and support those who are frustrated in their search for an affordable place to live. We pray for those suffering this day especially Marilyn Dolezal, Daniel Strand – nephew of Scott and Pastor Carol Strand, Sarah VanRaden, Bonnie Duggan, Jeanne Roen, Edna Mae Lewis, Judy - Curt Meyer's sister, Doug Nordland – family friend of Derek Miller, Rose – Lenora Scheer's niece, Greg Turner, Fern Softing, Brandon - Victoria Savanh's cousin, and all others we name in our hearts before you. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For our congregation. You have gathered us here today as your people and we thank you for this gift. We pray for those who are new to this community, for students and teachers preparing for a new school year, and for those struggling with unexpected hardship. Supply us generously with your grace for our life together. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give you thanks, O God, for the saints of the whole church from all times and places, and for the saints in our lives and in our community whom you have gathered to yourself. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As the Holy Spirit gathers us into one, let us pray together the prayer that Jesus teaches us.

Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed by 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.

Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. Forever and ever. Amen.

Blessing and Sending

"May God give you grace never to sell yourself short, to risk something big for something good, and grace to remember that the world is too dangerous for anything but truth, and too small for anything but love." (Blessing by William Sloan Coffin)

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

