

JUNE 27, 2021 Pentecost 5 Service of Word and Prayer

We always celebrate on the Sunday before Canada Day and this year is not any different. So wear something red & white for fun! Have something red & white ready for your treat after worship. CALL ANOTHER MEMBER that you have not talked to in a while, on Sunday and have a chat!

We are using parts of the Service of the Word liturgy this morning, from your green hymn book, the Lutheran Book of Worship, page 126. The prayers are based on Sundays & Seasons. Shut off all the distractions in your home. Perhaps print out copies of this for all. Enjoy the quiet for a bit – take in some deep breaths. Light your candle. May your family be blessed in this time together.

The Gathering

Greeting: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Call to Worship: Creator of earth and sky, of endless space and burning stars, we come together in the belief that we are important to you. You created us; you sustain our lives; you fulfil us with hope. We give thanks for the miracle of summer and for the power of new life within us and our world; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn: ELW 641 - All are Welcome

God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

The 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 church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Lord be with you ~ and also with you.

Prayer of the day: Holy Trinity, one God, you show us the splendor of diversity and the beauty of unity in your own divine life. Make us, who have come from many nations, with many languages, a united people that delights in our many different gifts. Defend our liberties. Give leaders the spirit of wisdom, that there may be justice and peace in our land. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our sovereign and our Savior. Amen.

The Word

The First Reading is from **Lamentations 3: 22-33**

Psalm 30 found on page 228 (LBW)

The Second Reading is from **2 Corinthians 8:7-15**

Please rise for the gospel lesson. ***Holy, Holy, Holy, our hearts adore you. Our hearts are glad to say the words: you are Holy God.***

Gospel **Mark 5: 21-43**

The Sermon is delivered by Rev. Christie Morrow-Wolfe, Assistant to the Bishop of the Eastern Synod.

His name was Jairus. She, on the other hand, had no name—defined in Scripture by only her disease...the Hemorrhaging Woman.

He was part of the temple elite. She was not welcome in the Temple—her continuous, 12-year hemorrhage made her ritually unclean.

Jairus had wealth and power. The woman had nothing having spent everything she had searching for a cure.

Jairus and the woman with the hemorrhage couldn't be any more polar-opposites if they tried. And yet, on this day, we hear that they shared something very important. Desperation.

This morning, we hear a story within a story. We begin with Jairus. A leader in the community. Probably a man used to being in control of the situation and in command of his resources. Today, however...he is desperate. His only child is near death and there's nothing he can do about it except beg Jesus to come and lay hands on her so she may be made well and live. Not hesitating...Jesus, follows him towards his home.

On their way, a large group of people surge around Jesus. Hidden within the faces of this crowd, is a woman who has been bleeding for 12, long years. Not only has her health be impacted by this disorder, but so has her social and emotional well-being. Her condition has made her an outcast, making contact with her family, friends and worship community, impossible. Having heard about Jesus, she pushes her way through the crowd, only hoping to touch the hem of his cloak. She too is desperate.

The first miracle occurs when she does exactly that. It was that simple...that easy...in the blink of an eye, she has her life back. Her bleeding stops...and so does Jesus. Having felt power leave him, he addresses the crowd to find out who has touched him. In fear and trembling, the woman approaches this teacher-healer, falls at his feet, tells him her story and begs for mercy. Jesus stops and pushes pause in his journey to get to Jairus' daughter to bless this woman with compassion. He calls her 'daughter,' acknowledges her great faith, and then sends her on her way to live her life in fullness once more.

But this interaction delays him from getting to Jairus' daughter. Word comes that the young girl has now died. But Jesus is undeterred. He comforts Jairus' as they continue to the family home ...'do not fear, only believe,' he tells the distraught temple official. And upon pushing his way through the gathered mourners who were already weeping in grief, he enters the house, he takes the child by her hand and tells her to get up. And she does just that. She walks about, and then, I imagine, goes to the kitchen to find a snack.

Now I know and understand that depending on where you're situated, you may have more or less of a degree of hindsight as we begin to transition out of this time of pandemic. As more and more people are vaccinated, I feel more and more hopeful. And maybe this is why I was readily able to see some parallels between our Gospel story today and the time and place in which we have found or continue to find ourselves over the past 15 months.

In a blog-post from the end of April, Diana Butler Bass talks about "displacement" and how the pandemic has led to a feeling of being removed from our everyday lives and the way we relate, move and have our being.¹ The woman with the hemorrhage and Jairus have also been displaced by the events in their lives and I would imagine, are feeling rather discombobulated by their circumstances. The woman with the hemorrhage has effectively been physically removed from her worshiping community as well as her social relationships. She has been in self-isolation, if you will, for twelve long years.

Jairus has had his world turned upside down by a sudden illness and subsequent death of a loved one—an experience devastatingly familiar to over 25,000 Canadians and 3.69 million people world-wide who have lost loved ones to this virus.²

The woman with the hemorrhage and Jairus have experienced their fair-share of grief and loss. The woman by the loss of the life she once knew; separated from those things and people who give her life meaning and depth. She has been languishing; likely grieving and feeling the loss of the life she once lived.

Jairus' grief is more acute but incredibly profound. His daughter, who was gravely ill, has died. Suddenly. In an instant, life as he knows it has made an unwelcomed turn. He is living every parents' worst nightmare. His grief, however short-lived, is palpable.

It's into this mess of emotion...of illness, grief and loss, of languishing and despair that Jesus comes alongside. Over the past 15 months or so, there have been many people the world over, I'm sure, who have prayed for God to intervene in this pandemic. To bring an end to the illness, loneliness, isolation, fear, desperation. And while most of us have experienced a sense of this at one time or another, the

¹ Diana Butler Bass. <https://dianabutlerbass.substack.com/p/religion-after-pandemic?token=eyJ1c2VyX2lkljozMzg0NTkwNCwicG9zdF9pZCI6MzU2MDU3ODIsI8iOiJZOHRTYSlmIhdCI6MTYyMTYyMDEwNywiZXhwIjoxNjlxNjlxNzA3LCJpc3MiOiJwdWltNDc0MDAiLCJzdWIiOiJwb3NOLXJlYWN0aW9uIn0.TloC0lCd-32geEXgesQnuIVTc3AsXL1VeqfAQMfQXMQ>

² At the time of writing this sermon (June, 2021). <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus-data>

inequities laid bare by this pandemic mean that certain sectors of our society have borne the weight of the catastrophic outcomes of COVID-19. I'm thinking of racialized front-line workers who have no choice but to show up to work so the rest of us can stay home, thus exposing them to a higher proportion of illness and sometimes death. I'm thinking of women who have bore the economic consequences of reducing their hours to care for children who are at home, or have lost their jobs entirely. I'm thinking of our elderly and most vulnerable population who were most susceptible to COVID-19 in the first and second waves and yet, in some places in Canada, still remain under lockdown; unable to see their families or have much interaction with the outside world. I'm willing to bet that many people have found themselves praying for a miracle...praying for God to show up; to finally end this thing, or, in the words of my five-year-old, asking almost daily: "why can't God just make COVID go away so I can go back to school, see my grandma and grandpa, and play with my friends?"

I think one of the most important things coming out of this time is how we have now been given the miracle of sight—an opportunity to see with our own eyes, the inequities laid bare by this pandemic. And with this new sight and insight, those of us in a position of privilege have the obligation to give voice to these inequities and advocate for real and lasting change so that life can be better for everyone. And if our eyes have been opened to the disparities that drive despair during this time of pandemic, maybe this is our call to keep our eyes open to see suffering and to work for justice and equity in our communities; across our country and the world-over.³ We cannot squander or ignore what this pandemic has revealed to us.

This miracle of sight and awareness is both an opportunity and responsibility. But we do not walk this journey alone. We have each other and we have God. These miracle stories as they're told, are not stories that promise a cure for everyone who has faith...but what these stories do, is tell us of a Saviour—a teacher-healer who hears us; who cares for us...who comes alongside us, and who promises to always be with us in times of trouble...in times of joy and in all times in between. Nothing can stop God from being present...not even death.

Barbara Brown Taylor writes: *Jesus' miracles remind us that the way things are is not the way they will always be. Every healing, every banishment of evil is like a hole poked in the opaque fabric of time and space. The kingdom breaks through*

³ [nytimes.com/2020/03/15/world/europe/](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/15/world/europe/), accessed on June 1, 2021.

*and for a moment or two we see how things will be—or how they really are right now in the mind of God— and then it's over.*⁴

The true miracles are ordinary...the way God bumps up against us every day...through prayer... through worship...through our interaction with each other, and when we are changed in some way by this contact. Sometimes, we are given new sight and insight and called to new action to help reveal God in the here and now. This is the hope of our faith...the ordinary miracles as they unfold each and every day, calling us to new understanding of compassion and grace; to work alongside God whose reign of justice and equity strives each and every day to make life better for everyone. And so we do our best to walk alongside and to live in fervent hope that the way things are now are not the way they will always be. May it be so. Thanks be to God. **Amen**

Hymn: ELW 733 / WOV 771 - Great is thy Faithfulness

Our Response

OFFERING PRAYER Gracious God, receive our gifts as you receive us. You walk beside us and you meet us in hunger with bread from heaven. Nourish us anew in your tender care, and empower us in faithful service to tend to others with this same love, through Jesus Christ our saving grace. **Amen.**

Prayers of the People by Cathy Zimmerling

Let us come before the triune God in prayer.

A brief silence.

God of hope, the ministry of your church extends across borders, from nearby neighbors to far and distant countries. Accompany all those who labor eagerly in service of the gospel, that through your good news all might experience transformation. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, we give you thanks for the air we breathe, the water we drink, the land that provides our food. Guard all species of plants and animals from harsh

⁴ Barbara Brown Taylor, *Bread of Angels*, Cowley Publications, 1997, pp. 136-137

changes in climate and empower us to protect all you have made. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Righteous God, we pray for nations and their leaders. Give them a spirit of compassion and steer them towards a fair distribution of resources; that none among us would have too much or too little. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of healing, your touch has the power to make us whole. We pray for those suffering from physical or mental illness. Embrace those who are ill *especially* Surround them with your unwavering presence. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for this faith community. Revive our spirits, renew our relationships, and rekindle our faith, that we might experience resurrection in this community. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the faithful ancestors in every age whose lives have pointed us towards you. Envelop them in your love, that we may be reunited with one another in the last days. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your abiding grace. **Amen.**

The peace of Christ be with you always and also with you.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray **The Lord's Prayer:**

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.

**National song: Finland's National Anthem and the words apply to all countries ~
tune Finlandia.**

Benediction

God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved fill you; and the Holy Spirit the comforter keep you in peace. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace, and remember your neighbor! **Thanks be to God.**

National Anthem: O CANADA