

HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH
ORDER OF WORSHIP April 26, 2020

Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness (*stand*)

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C: But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination

P: Let us confess our sins to God, our Father.

C: From depths of grief I cry to you, O Lord. My voice is trying to reach your heart and, break through with cries and sighing. If you keep a record of our sin and hold against us what we have thought and said and done, who then, can stand before you?

P: Upon this your confession, I proclaim the full and free grace of God to each and every one of you. Your every sin is completely forgiven and you are washed clean in the blood of Jesus Christ, the true and eternal Lamb of God. You now stand in the assembly of the saints of God clothed with the white robe of Jesus' righteousness as your very own. Rejoice and be glad: Jesus is yours, and along with Him, eternal life.

C: Amen.

KYRIE

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort and defend us gracious Lord.

Amen.

THE HYMN OF PRAISE

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father: We worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God: You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father; receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

HYMN LSB 466 Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia

**Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia!
Rejoice and praise Him, alleluia!
For our redeemer burst from the tomb
Even from death dispelling it's gloom.**

Refrain

**Let us sing praise to him with endless joy
Death's fearful sting he has come to destroy
Our sin forgiving Alleluia
Jesus is living Alleluia!**

**For three long days the grave did its worst
Until its strength by God was dispersed.
He who gives life did death undergo
And in his conquest his light did show.
Refrain**

**The angels said to them do not fear.
You look for Jesus who is not here.
See for yourselves the tomb is all there.
Only the grave clothes are lying there.
Refrain**

**Go spread the news, he's not in the grave
He has arisen this world to save.
Jesus redeeming labors are done.
Even the battle with sin is won.
Refrain**

**Christ has arisen he sets us free
Alleluia to him praises be
Jesus is living let us all sing
He reigns triumphant heavenly king!
Refrain**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Deuteronomy 6:1-3, 10-12

These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you... When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

Psalms 128

Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in obedience to him. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Yes, this will be the blessing for the man who fears the LORD. May the LORD bless you from Zion; may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life. May you live to see your children's children— peace be on Israel.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child; I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 10th chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

Luke 10:25-28

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ” “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ

HYMN LSB 722 Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me

**Lord take my hand and lead me Upon life’s way;
Direct, protect, and feed me From day to day.
Without your grace and favor I go astray;
So take my hand, Oh Savior, And lead the way.**

**Lord, when the tempest rages, I need not fear;
For you, The Rock of Ages, Are always near.
Close by your side abiding, I fear no foe;
For when your hand is guiding, In peace I go.**

**Lord, when the shadows lengthen, And night has come,
I know that you will strengthen My steps towards home.
And nothing can impede me, O blessed Friend!
So take my hand and lead me unto the end.**

Sermon- Growing Up In Christ

“Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.” (1 Corinthians 14:20)

The church in Corinth was an unholy mess. The members of the church were constantly fighting over how the church should be run. In chapter 12 of *1 Corinthians* Paul advises them that since they are all members of same body—the body of Christ—they they should stop fighting and start serving each other in love. His argument reaches its climax in chapter 13, the great “love” chapter in which Paul extols the power of love and describes how it can end fighting and bring peace. Therefore, Paul says, love is the lifeblood of the church: the nourisher, defender, healer and cleanser of the body of Christ.

Love, however, is also hard work. It requires us to renounce our natural selfishness and dedicate ourselves to serving the needs of others rather than to gratifying our own desires.

This requires a self-discipline that comes only with spiritual maturity, and so he urges the Corinthians to strive to grow up in Christ. It reminds me of something C. S. Lewis said—that God is not interested in making us happy as much as he is in helping us grow up. And so, Paul writes: “brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.”

Now this advice has as much relevance for us as it had for the Corinthian Christians. There is an enormous need in the church and in the world today for spiritually mature Christians. In the past 60 years our society has dramatically changed. For one thing, Americans now tend to place a higher value on staying young than they do on becoming mature. The search for the fountain of youth has replaced the desire to grow up. You can see the change reflected in the entertainment media. The traditional family of the 50's and 60's sitcom where father knew best has been replaced by kid-centered families where the parents are more often the problem than the solution. You can see the change in the church: young Christians flock to hear the prosperity gospel with its promise of instant gratification, while outside the church, young people experiment with various kinds of pagan spiritualism.

Our situation bears an uncanny resemblance to the situation in Corinth. Like us, the Christians at Corinth were living in an immoral and corrupt society. Less than a mile from their church stood the temple of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, where ritual prostitution was available to anyone who cared to participate. The intelligentsia of the city prided themselves on having moved beyond “primitive religious values”—like the ten commandments—into the enlightened sphere of tolerance for all religions and lifestyles. The city was so morally decadent that its name became the root of a new Greek verb *κορινθιαζομαι* which meant “to fornicate.” Like us, the members of the church at Corinth lived in two different worlds at the same time: they were members of the body of Christ and they were citizens of a corrupt society. Every day they were inundated with two diametrically opposed messages: one sacred and one profane. One message was the voice of Christ, inviting them to offer themselves up as living sacrifices to God and to their neighbor. The other was the voice of mammon, urging them to seek worldly treasure and find happiness in pleasures of the flesh. The first was the wisdom of the cross; the second was the wisdom of the world. Not much has changed, has it? Now we know what we're supposed to do. We're supposed to obey the first voice and disregard the second. But it isn't easy, is it? Our problem is that we listen with two different sets of ears. One set belongs to our new man—our redeemed spirit—and the other set belongs to our sinful nature. One delights in Jesus' invitation to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow him and the other delights in the invitation of mammon to worship the world, the flesh and the devil. Like the Christians in Corinth, we live conflicted lives: our spirits are committed to Christ and our sinful natures are committed to the world.

How do we deal with this spiritual schizophrenia? How do we hearken to the voice of the new man and ignore the cravings of our sinful natures? Paul's advice is that we grow up in Christ and learn to think like adults. I would like to suggest three things that we can do that will enable us to do this. First, we can put on the armor of God each and every day of our lives.

That means spending time in prayer and in God's word each and every day of our lives. Prayer and God's word are the two sides of our relationship with God: we speak to him in prayer and he speaks to us in his word. This is one thing we can do. All it requires is for us to take our faith life as seriously as we do our other responsibilities.

Second, we can listen for the counsel of the Holy Spirit as speaks to us through God's word and sacraments. And star wars notwithstanding, the Holy Spirit is not a force that is with us; the Holy Spirit is the person of the living God dwelling in us and working in us to help us grow. The Holy Spirit is our divine counselor and if we listen for his counsel, he will enable us to discern it. And the power he can bring into our lives is limited only by our willingness to receive it.

The third thing we can do is tell our sinful nature to go to hell. You're not going to persuade your sinful nature to be any different than it is. As Paul writes, "the sinful nature is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so." All you can do with the sinful nature is mortify it—which is a nice way of saying, "kill it." And the best way to mortify your sinful nature is to deny it two things it needs to stay alive. The first thing it needs is exercise. The more you let your sinful nature have its way with you the more power it will have over you. One of Satan's most appealing lies is that if you indulge your sinful desires, you will satisfy them it's just the opposite. The more you give in to a particular sin, the more your appetite for that sin will grow. A person who has a problem with gossip will find that the more they gossip the more they will want to gossip. The person who has a problem with lust will find that the more he indulges his lustful cravings the more he will want to indulge them. The person who has a problem with anger will find that the more he lets his temper get the better of him, the less control he will have over his temper. The liar will lie more and more, the glutton will eat more and more and the drunk will drink more and more. The devil tries to convince us that our sinful appetites can be satisfied by feeding them. But that is a lie! Sin's appetite can never be satisfied because sin **is** pure appetite—raw, rebellious, self-destructive appetite that consumes the sinner and spits him out when he has been fully digested. In his *Letter to the Romans*, Paul wrote that when men turn away from God, God turns them over to "...the sinful desires of the hearts"—and sin becomes their master. Sin is a cancer that consumes everything it touches and it is not satisfied until it has spread throughout the entire body. But sin can be stopped dead in its tracks by exercising your sanctified will: as James wrote: "resist the devil and he will flee from you." You are not a slave to sin: Christ has set you free and you need only exercise your freedom to say "no." Is this easy to do? No. Is it possible? Yes. And when you do say "no" to sin, you deny the sinful nature the exercise it needs and its hold on you will loosen. The other thing the sinful flesh feeds on is guilt. Guilt can be a powerful enemy of the Christian because on the surface it seems virtuous. If I feel guilty isn't that an indication that I take my sins seriously? And isn't that a good thing? I mean, shouldn't we be ashamed of our sins? Of course we should. But shame is intended to lead us to repentance, not to guilt—and there is a big difference between the two. Repentance is asking God to forgive your sins and help you turn away from them. Wallowing in guilt gives your sins **more** power over you, not less. Repentance sets you free; guilt enslaves you. The first is a road to heaven; the second is a road to hell. If you are struggling with guilt over some habitual sin, remember that God's solution to the problem of sin was not to do away with it, but to forgive it.

Whatever sins you struggle with, as long as you repent of them you are a redeemed and forgiven child of God—washed clean in the blood of the lamb. Sin has no claim upon you because you are not under law, but under grace. The members of the church at Corinth longed for gifts which would mark them as bona fide children of God. They wanted to be able to speak in tongues, to prophesy and to bring about miracles through great faith. They wanted to see dramatic evidence of God's activity in their lives. But Paul reminds them—and us—that the main business of Christians is not to seek signs and wonders, but to practice love. God does miracles for us every now and then, but what he wants most is for us to do the day-to-day work of loving him by loving our neighbor. Our neighbors need God's love—and he has chosen us to deliver it to them. “A new command I give you: love one another as I have loved you.” So put on the armor of God, listen for the promptings of the Holy Spirit close down the gymnasium to the sinful flesh and you will grow up in Christ. Amen.

APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Father in heaven, As we labor under fear of this virus, please give us confident hearts, knowing that you are in control of all things and that you will rein in this disease and deliver our country from economic chaos.

We especially pray for the following people:

- For Milt Colburn who is receiving physical therapy at Anna Maria. Lift his spirits and strengthen his body so that he can return home soon.
- For Glenda Colburn during this time of separation from her husband Milt.
- For Wyatt Mullins, that he will receive an accurate and favorable diagnosis of his liver problems and be enabled to live a normal and healthy life.
- For all healthcare workers who are exposed to the Covid-19 virus every day, that you would keep them safe and healthy and bless the important work that they do.
- We praise and thank you gracious Lord that Carol Ewell's daughter Jaime was able to retain sight in her eye after surgery. Please speed her recovery and alleviate her discomfort as she heals.
- Father, thank you for a successful surgery on Diane Dunbar. Bless her with a speedy recovery.

We pray all these things in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

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.

HYMN LSB 655 Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word

**Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word;
Curb those who by deceit or sword
Would wrest the kingdom from Your Son
And bring to naught all He has done.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, Your pow'r make known,
For You are Lord of lords alone;
Defend Your holy Church that we
May sing your praise eternally.**

**O Comforter of priceless worth,
Send peace and unity on earth;
Support us in our final strife
And lead us out of death to life.**

BLESSING

**The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ☩ give you peace.
Amen.**