

HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH
ORDER OF WORSHIP June 28, 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

P: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

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

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: 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.

C: Lord, have mercy.

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

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: Help, save, comfort and defend us gracious Lord.

C: Amen.

THE HYMN OF PRAISE

ALL: 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 584 Faith and Truth and Life Bestowing

**Faith and truth and life bestowing,
Open now the Scriptures, Lord,
Seed to life eternal sowing,
Scattered on the wind abroad.
Let not hearts, Your Word receiving,
Like a barren field be found,
Choked with thorns and unbelieving,
Shallow earth or stony ground.**

**May the Spirit's pow'r unceasing
Bring to life the hidden grain,
Daily in our hearts increasing,
Bearing fruit that shall remain.
So in Scripture, song, and story,
Savior, may Your voice be heard.
Till our eyes behold Your glory
Give us ears to hear Your Word.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Ezekiel 2:3-5; 3:17-21

He said: "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have been in revolt against me to this very day. The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.' And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious people—they will know that a prophet has been among them..." "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. When I say to a wicked person, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn them or speak out to dissuade them from their evil ways in order to save their life, that wicked person will die for their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. But if you do warn the wicked person and they do not turn from their wickedness or from their evil ways, they will die for their sin; but you will have saved yourself.

“Again, when a righteous person turns from their righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before them, they will die. Since you did not warn them, they will die for their sin. The righteous things that person did will not be remembered, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. But if you do warn the righteous person not to sin and they do not sin, they will surely live because they took warning, and you will have saved yourself.”

Psalm 2

(Read Responsively-Reader=unbold Congregation=BOLD)

Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?

The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the LORD and against his anointed, saying,

“Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.”

The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

“I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.”

I will proclaim the LORD’s decree: He said to me, “You are my son; today I have become your father.

Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.

You will break them with a rod of iron ; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”

Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.

Serve the LORD with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling.

Kiss his son, or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: “The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.” We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

GOSPEL

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 28th chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

Matthew 28:16-20

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

HYMN LSB 411 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

**I want to walk as a child of the light.
I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world.
The star of my life is Jesus.**

Refrain

**In Him there is no darkness at all.
The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.**

**I want to see the brightness of God.
I want to look at Jesus.
Clear Sun of Righteousness, shine on my path.
And show me the way to the Father.
Refrain**

**I'm looking for the coming of Christ.
I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience, the race,
We shall know the joy of Jesus.
Refrain**

Sermon- The Augsburg Confession

We live in an age of religious consumerism. People shop churches like they shop grocery stores. The churches in their immediate area are a religious cafeteria from which they can pick and choose. Some people are looking for a church that makes them feel good. Some are looking for a church with a charismatic preacher. Some are looking for churches that have a political agenda.

They shop until they find the type of church they're looking for and there they roost—until that church does something that gets their nose out of joint. Then, like any dissatisfied customer, they vote with their feet and start shopping again.

It's not surprising that this view of churches has arisen in a society which places such a high value on individual freedom. Our declaration of independence is based upon the innate right of every individual to "...life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" and the first amendment to the constitution guarantees freedom of religious choice. But the passion for religious freedom goes back long before the *Declaration Of Independence* and *The Constitution*.

Roger Williams, the Puritan turned Baptist who founded the city of Providence, Rhode Island, in 1636 rejected all forms of what he called "organized religion" in favor of "freedom of individual conscience." Religion for him was "intensely private" and there was no place for the imposition of creeds or doctrines or ecclesiastical authority, William Penn thought that conscience was the "divine spark" which God placed in man, and that anything which intruded on one's private religious life also intruded on one's relationship with God. Later religious philosophers like Emerson and Thoreau abandoned Christianity altogether to pursue god's revelation of himself through nature and the "inner light" of meditation. The great American poet Walt Whitman carried such thinking to the extreme by worshipping God in birds and boats and blades of grass. The harvest of this historic trend is a wide variety of freestanding churches which are not the least bit interested in placing themselves under any ecclesiastical or confessional authority. The theology of the church is entrusted to the spiritual discernment of the Pastor in consultation with the leaders of the church. Since many of these freestanding churches are doing rather well, it is worth asking whether creeds and systems of doctrine are all that important anymore.

To answer that question, let's consider how man has historically chosen to worship God when he is left on his own. The first form of worship man came up with was polytheism: the worship of nature and of what were thought to be gods that governed nature. There was a god of rain, a god of fire, a god of fertility and so forth. Men would offer sacrifices up to these nature gods in hopes of persuading them to give them whatever they wanted: rain, children, whatever. When Yahweh Elohim revealed himself to Abraham as the one and only God of heaven and earth, monotheism was born. Yahweh promised Abraham that in return for his worship he would bless all his descendants. Later, at Mount Sinai, Yahweh gave Moses clear instructions about how Abraham's descendants were to worship him. But when Moses had descended from Mount Sinai with the God's instructions in his hands, he found that the descendants of father Abraham had built a golden calf and were worshipping it. They chose pagan worship over the worship of the Lord of heaven and earth. Subsequent generations of Israelites followed the same pattern. During the period of the judges everyone "did what was right in his own eyes. "During the entire era of the kings—from Saul to Zedekiah—the Israelites built pagan shrines all over Israel and worshipped Canaanite nature gods like Baal and Ashtoreth. From the beginning, people have preferred to make up their own gods and worship them rather than worship the Lord of heaven and earth. They fail to realize that gods that man creates out of his own imagination are by definition imaginary gods--and imaginary gods can't help us.

Later, when God came in the form of his son, Jesus Christ, he established his church and said that the gates of hell would not stand against it. Jesus made it clear that he was the son of God and that what he taught came directly from God.

But almost as soon as Jesus ascended into heaven, some members of his church began to question whether Jesus was the son of God. Some who called themselves “adoptionists” maintained that Jesus was merely a man whom God had adopted as his son.

Others called themselves “docetists” and claimed that Jesus had no physical body at all but was only a sort of divine hologram. A man named Arius taught that Jesus was not the begotten son of God, but only a created man like all other humans. And there were many more. These teachers and their adherents came to be known as heretics and their false teachings as heresies, or lies. The heretics all had one thing in common: they taught something different from what Jesus had taught. They trusted their own imagination and powers of reason over the word of God. Jesus had said, “If you continue in my Word, then you will know the truth....” But they believed that if they continued in their reasoning and their imagining, they would find the truth. Later, the three great creeds of the church—the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed—were formulated to refute heresies and clarify the basic teachings or doctrines of the new testament. That’s why we confess the creeds every time we worship: to keep our thinking in line with God’s word and not go off on a tangent.

The creeds put the heresies to rest, but about twelve centuries later, a new question arose which sent shock waves through the entire church and started a drama that would change the course of Christian history. The basic question was: where does the church get its authority? The traditional view was that the church derived its authority from Jesus through a line of popes that began with Peter. The reformers, led by Luther, agreed that the church derived its authority from Jesus, but that he conferred his authority through his word, and not through popes. Predictably, a battle erupted between the reformers and the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Rome. The Pope demanded that Luther recant and submit to papal authority. Luther refused to do so and was excommunicated. Things heated up and Luther was commanded by the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire to appear at the city of Worms and recant his views. Luther went to Worms as he was commanded, but he refused to recant. He was immediately placed under what was called the imperial ban, which was a sentence of death. Under the imperial ban, all citizens of the Holy Roman Empire were commanded to either kill Luther or turn him over to those who would. During the following decade a lot of maneuvering took place between the three major parties to the dispute Luther had ignited. First was Pope Leo who wanted to be rid of Luther at all costs. Second was Charles the Fifth of Spain, the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and an ally of the Pope, who also wanted to be rid of Luther. Third was Luther and the reformers who were being protected by the German princes. A fault line had appeared between Germany and the rest of the Holy Roman Empire and war seemed imminent. Finally, the Emperor Charles called a meeting of all three parties at the City of Augsburg in southern Germany to settle the dispute. The stated intention was to iron out their differences, but the real purpose was to force the reformers to abandon their position and submit to the authority of the Church of Rome. Luther was so despised by the papists that they would not lift the ban and allow him to attend the meeting, so he stayed at Coburg Castle, about a day’s journey north of Augsburg. Since he couldn’t attend, Luther appointed his associate, Philip Melancthon, to accompany the German princes who arrived at Augsburg on May 2nd of 1530.

Almost immediately they infuriated the Roman Catholics and the emperor by refusing to kneel and receive Pope Leo's blessing and by refusing to participate in a Corpus Christi parade. The emperor summoned the German princes into his presence and demanded that they return to the fold of the Roman Catholic Church. Prince George, the margrave of Brandenburg, responded for them all by saying, "before I let them take away the word of God, I will kneel and let them take my head." It was a clear threat of war within the Holy Roman Empire, and the Emperor quickly retracted his demand.

Finally, on the last day of the diet, the emperor allowed the Lutherans to read their confession of faith. An attorney by the name of Christian Beyer stepped forward and all the German princes rose to their feet. In a loud, clear voice, Beyer read what came to be known as *the Augsburg Confession*. The effect was immediate and electric. Five Catholic princes immediately professed their adherence to it. Duke William of Bavaria said, "never before has this matter and doctrine been presented to me in this manner!" The Emperor asked the Pope's personal representative, "can we refute this?" He responded, "with the church fathers—yes; with the scriptures—no. The emperor responded: "really? So we rest on the church fathers and the Lutherans rest upon the scriptures!"

The Augsburg Confession became the foundation of the Lutheran church and the theological basis for the protestant reformation. It still stands as the clearest exposition and defense of the Christian religion outside of the bible itself. Even the Church of Rome has finally acknowledged its scriptural accuracy.

How important is doctrine? St. Paul wrote in the sixth chapter of his *Letter to the Romans*: "thanks be to God that though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of doctrine to which you were entrusted. "What Paul is saying is that the teachings, the doctrines of scripture, set us free from the doctrines of man.. Things which we are taught can come to have great power over us. If we are taught man-made doctrines we will remain captives of the human imagination. If we are taught the doctrines of God, we will be connected to the truth. The first way is slavery; the second way is freedom.

Last Thursday, June 25th, was the 490th anniversary of the reading of the Augsburg Confession. It was not constructed out of human reasoning or human imagination. It was built on the solid rock of ages: the Living Word of God. Amen.

APOSTLE'S CREED

All: 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

LORD'S PRAYER

All: 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 694 Thee Will I Love , My Strength, My Tower

Thee will I love, my strength, my tower;
Thee will I love, my hope, my joy.
Thee will I love with all my power,
With ardor time shall ne'er destroy.
Thee will I love, O Light Divine,
So long as life is mine.

Thee will I love, my life, my Savior,
Who art my best and truest friend.
Thee will I love and praise forever,
For never shall Thy kindness end.
Thee will I love with all my heart--
Thou my Redeemer art!

I thank Thee, Jesus, Sun from heaven,
Whose radiance hath brought light to me;
I thank Thee, who hast richly given
All that could make me glad and free;
I thank Thee that my soul is healed
By what Thy lips revealed.

O keep me watchful, then, and humble;
Permit me nevermore to stray.
Uphold me when my feet would stumble,
And keep me on the narrow way.
Fill all my nature with Thy light,
O Radiance strong and bright!

Thee will I love, my crown of gladness;
Thee will I love, my God and Lord,
Amid the darkest depths of sadness,
And not for hope of high reward,
For Thine own sake, O Light divine,
So long as life is mine

BLESSING

P: 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.

C: Amen.