

HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH
ORDER OF WORSHIP May 10, 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: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Silence for reflection and self-examination

All: Heavenly Father, show me the way I should go, for to You I lift up my soul. Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God. I confess that I have sinned against You in my thoughts, my words, and my actions. I have not loved You with my whole heart; I have not loved others as I should. My sins trouble me and I am deeply sorry for them.

P: God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting men's sins against them. By making Jesus, who knew no sin, to become sin for us and to pay the penalty for our sin by dying on the cross, God assures us that we are free of the penalty of our sins; and by Jesus' resurrection we are confident that in Him we are clothed with the righteousness of God. You can be totally sure that if you are in Christ, you are a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come.

C: Spirit of God, move us to cling tightly to Jesus our Savior. 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 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.
Then nothing can impede me, O blessed Friend!
So take my hand and lead me unto the end.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

1 Kings 18:20-29; 38-40

So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him." But the people said nothing. Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only one of the LORD's prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets. Get two bulls for us. Let Baal's prophets choose one for themselves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The God who answers by fire—he is God." Then all the people said, "What you say is good." Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there are so many of you. Call on the name of your god, but do not light the fire." So they took the bull given them and prepared it. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. "Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made. At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed. Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice.

But there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention...Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!" Then Elijah commanded them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!" They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.

Psalm 130

(Read Responsively-Reader=unbold Congregation=BOLD)

Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD;

Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.

If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand?

But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you.

I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.

I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.

Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.

He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.

Romans 1:18-23

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

GOSPEL

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 9th chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

Luke 9: 18-24

Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "God's Messiah." Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

“Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ

HYMN LSB 818 In Thee Is Gladness

**In Thee is gladness
Amid all sadness,
Jesus, sunshine of my heart.
By Thee are given
The gifts of heaven,
Thou the true Redeemer art.
Our souls Thou wakest,
Our bonds Thou breakest;
Who trusts Thee surely
Has built securely;
He stands forever:
Alleluia!
Our hearts are pining
To see Thy shining,
Dying or living
To Thee are cleaving;
Naught can us sever:
Alleluia!**

**Since He is ours,
We fear no powers,
Not of earth nor sin nor death.
He sees and blesses
In worst distresses;
He can change them with a breath.
Wherefore the story
Tell of His glory
With hearts and voices;
All heav'n rejoices
In Him forever:
Alleluia!
We shout for gladness,
Triumph o'er sadness,
Love Him and praise Him
And still shall raise Him
Glad hymns forever:
Alleluia!**

Sermon- "The World's Going To Hell In A Handbasket"

When I was a kid it seemed like the old folks were always griping. They'd say, "The world's going to hell in a handbasket." I wasn't sure—in fact I'm still not sure—what a handbasket is or what it has to do with going to hell, but I got the gist of what they were saying: things are bad and it's getting worse all the time. I remember being a little puzzled by this and wondering, "How are things getting worse? They seem pretty good to me." Now I find myself thinking, "things are going to hell in a handbasket! The old folks were right!" Of course I'm one of the old folks now. Still, there are a lot of Americans who share my opinion. For the last twenty years or so, polls consistently indicate that a majority of Americans believe that our country is headed in the wrong direction. Now if they're right, why might that be? What happened to turn our country in the wrong direction? The best explanation I have ever heard of what causes a country to start going downhill is that of a French philosopher by the name of Montesquieu. Montesquieu had a major influence on our founding fathers—especially on Thomas Jefferson—and that influence is evident in some key parts of the *Declaration Of Independence* where the wording is drawn directly from Montesquieu's writings. For example, it was Montesquieu who said that governments derive their power from the consent of the governed and that if a people do not consent to be governed in a certain way they have not only the right but the duty to abolish their present government and establish a new government. So all government must obtain the consent of the people they govern in order to remain in power. However, he said, different forms of government obtain the consent of the governed in different ways. A monarchy is based upon the people's loyalty to their king. A dictatorship is based on the people's fear of the dictator. But a republic, he said, is the most fragile of all forms of government because it derives its power to govern from what he called the public virtue. By "public virtue" he meant a willingness on the part of the people to put the good of the republic above their own good. In a republic you don't fight for the king or out of fear you'll be shot if you don't: you fight because you believe that your country is worth fighting for and, if necessary, dying for. That spirit is what constitutes the public virtue. But if the spirit of public virtue wanes and gives place to a spirit of self-interest, things go downhill. As Montesquieu put it, when the citizens of the republic begin to vote themselves largesse from the public treasury, it is the beginning of the end of the republic. 60 years ago in his inaugural address, John Fitzgerald Kennedy famously said: "ask not what your country can do for you; ask rather what you can do for your country." In response, thousands of young Americans volunteered for public programs—charitable organizations, the Peace Corps for example. But nowadays, political leaders say, "ask not what you can do for your country, but what your country can do for you." On December 8th, 1941, the day after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, tens of thousands of young men and women enlisted in the armed forces to offer up their lives for their country. When the Covid 19 virus hit and people were urged to stay home and engage in social distancing, hordes of college students hit the beaches to show that no one could tell them what to do. It appears that self-indulgence is now considered a public virtue. This selfishness cuts across all levels of society from top to bottom. It's in the self-satisfaction of the rich man who is blind to the Lazarus lying at his gate. It's in the anger and resentment of the poor man who hates the rich man simply because he is rich. Selfishness has been the curse of the human race ever since Adam and Eve aspired to be like God rather than to serve God. And ever since, one of Satan's most successful tactics has been to convince people that the road to happiness lies in the pursuit of self-interest. It's a lie—a boldfaced lie—but people believe it.

It's a lie that has even taken root in the church. It's called the prosperity gospel or the health and wealth gospel and its message is that God will reward a person's faith in Jesus Christ by bestowing material blessings upon him. Get Jesus into your life and good things will come your way. You'll get a promotion; your kids will grow up to be perfect adults. One of the largest congregations in America hears this message every single week. Luther called it a "theology of glory"—the idea that God rewards those who believe in him by glorifying them during their lives in this world. The problem is that if that's so, then why did God allow some of his most devoted servants—the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles and the martyrs of the early church—to be persecuted and killed for their faith? Where was the worldly glory in that? Isaiah, according to tradition, was sawed in two. Jeremiah was insulted, thrown into a well, and finally led off in chains to Egypt. In the New Testament era all of Jesus' apostles were persecuted and all but one died violent deaths. In the early days of the church, so many Christians were persecuted and killed that the saying arose: "the blood of the martyrs was the seedbed of the church." When Jesus recruited Paul to be his apostle to the gentiles, he didn't promise him honor and glory: he said, "I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." Is this a theology of glory? Sooner or later, every Christian has to face the fact that there are no detours around Calvary. Ours is not a theology of glory, but a theology of the cross. We are not called to indulge ourselves and bask in our worldly success; we are called to deny ourselves, take up our crosses and follow Jesus. This is the lesson of today's gospel. Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" Some of the answers are, "John the Baptist," "Elijah" or "one of the prophets." These were mainly prophets of judgment. John the Baptist described Jesus as, "an ax laid at the root of unfruitful trees"; a caster of human chaff into unquenchable fire"; and the judge of an unrepentant world." Elijah had 450 priests of Baal slaughtered and withheld rain from Israel for three and a half years. Prophets of judgment. But Jesus was different. Jesus drove out evil spirits, healed the sick, cleansed lepers and cured paralytics; restored sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf; and raised the dead to new life. Jesus didn't deal in judgment and punishment but in mercy and healing. He said, "I have come not to judge the world, but to save it." But they were too blind to see! They were so full of themselves they couldn't recognize their own savior, or, for that matter, that they even needed a savior. He brought forgiveness but they saw judgment. He did the work of God and they called it the work of the devil. So Jesus asked them—just as he asks you and me: what about you—who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered: "you are the Christ, the son of the living God." So at least Peter got it right. Right? Not entirely. As soon as Jesus began to explain to them what that meant for him and what it would mean to them, Peter began to argue with him. So Jesus laid it on the line—to Peter, to the other eleven, to the crowd and to us: "if anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the Gospel will save it." He couldn't have put it any more clearly. "You have a choice to make," he said. You can give yourself over to a life of self-service, self-promotion, self-worship and whatever other self-ism you can find. Or, you can give yourself over to me. One way leads to despair and death; the other way leads to joy and eternal life. Now there is no doubt that this is one of the most inscrutable mysteries of our faith—that by denying ourselves we find ourselves, that by dying we find life, and that by becoming slaves we find freedom. Paul wrote: "you are not your own; you were bought at a price." We are either slaves to ourselves or we are slaves of Christ: there is no third alternative. But if we offer ourselves up as slaves of Christ, things that seemed impossible become easy!

Our marriages cease to be battlegrounds where we vie for control and demand “our fair share,” and become sanctified partnerships where we strive to serve each other in love. Our happiness ceases to be a function of wins and losses and flows from a knowledge of the immeasurable blessings God has bestowed on us. Only the eye of faith can see the continuity between the broken figure on the cross and the enthroned son of God. But if we allow ourselves to be guided by this eye of faith, as the world continues to go to hell in a handbasket we will be able to see ever more clearly the splendor of the kingdom God where we will live forever. 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

P: Father in heaven, Please draw close to Glenda Colburn and give her peace upon the death of her husband, Milt. Comfort the entire Colburn family with the knowledge that Milt is even now rejoicing in heaven with Jesus Christ.

For Donna Mattmullers sister, Jane Burns with ovarian cancer now in hospice.

Please continue to destroy this virus, keep the members of our church healthy and hasten the day we can gather together in worship.

In Jesus' name,

C: Amen.

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 LBS 686 Come, Thou Fount Of Every Blessing

Come, Thou Fount of ev'ry blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.
While the hope of endless glory
Fills my heart with joy and love,
Teach me ever to adore Thee;
May I still Thy goodness prove.

Here I raise my Ebenezer,
Hither by Thy help I've come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wand'ring from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be;
Let that grace now, like a fetter
Bind my wand'ring heart to Thee:
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;
Prone to leave the God I love.
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

Oh, that day when freed from sinning,
I shall see Thy lovely face;
Clothed then in the bloodwashed linen,
How I'll sing Thy wondrous grace!
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry;
Take my ransom'd soul away;
Send Thine angels soon to carry
Me to realms of endless day.

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.