

Spirit, transform us by your truth, and give us language to proclaim your gospel, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen!

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Must Jesus Bear Another Cross?”

Geoffrey O’Hara

David Newman, soloist

FIRST READING

Isaiah 6:1-8

This reading narrates Isaiah’s vision of the Lord surrounded by angels. They sing “Holy, holy, holy,” a song the church sings at the beginning of the great thanksgiving. This liturgical text invites the church and all creation to sing in praise of God’s glory. That glory is God’s mercy toward sinners.

¹In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. ²Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. ³And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

⁴The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. ⁵And I said: “Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”

⁶Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. ⁷The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: “Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.” ⁸Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!”

Reflection

This text is the introduction to the call of Isaiah to be God’s prophet. Isaiah sees a vision of the Lord. Where is the vision set? (verse 1) What part of the Lord does Isaiah see, because it filled the temple? What do you remember about what happened to people who looked at God? (See Exodus 33:20) Who is attending God, like courtiers attend a king? (verse 2) How is their appearance, especially their wings, described? They also apparently could not look at God. (No one knows for sure what seraphs are; notes in the Lutheran Bible suggest that they were heavenly beings, in the form of winged snakes: the same word in Hebrew is used to describe the poisonous (or fiery) serpents in Numbers 21.) What is the song of the seraphs? (verse 3) When do we sing this song, along with all the church and all heavenly creatures? What happens to the temple in this vision? (verse 4) What is Isaiah’s response to this vision? (verse 5) Note that Isaiah’s “unclean lips” are not his own individual sin, but part of the sin of all humanity that separates us from God. What does he think might happen to him? What does the seraph do for Isaiah? (verses 6-7) What does Isaiah hear then? (verse 8) What is his response? Have you ever responded to a call from God in this way, if not with these exact words? Were you ready, or were you fearful, or both?

PSALM 29

- ¹Ascribe to the | LORD, you gods,
ascribe to the LORD glo- | ry and strength.
- ²**Ascribe to the LORD the glory | due God's name;
worship the LORD in the beau- | ty of holiness.**
- ³The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; the God of | glory thunders;
the LORD is upon the | mighty waters.
- ⁴**The voice of the LORD is a pow- | erful voice;
the voice of the LORD is a | voice of splendor.**
- ⁵The voice of the LORD breaks the | cedar trees;
the LORD breaks the ce- | dars of Lebanon;
- ⁶**the LORD makes Lebanon skip | like a calf,
and Mount Hermon like a | young wild ox.**
- ⁷The voice | of the LORD
bursts forth in | lightning flashes.
- ⁸**The voice of the LORD | shakes the wilderness;
the LORD shakes the wilder- | ness of Kadesh.**
- ⁹The voice of the LORD makes the oak trees writhe and strips the | forests bare.
And in the temple of the LORD all are | crying, "Glory!"
- ¹⁰**The LORD sits enthroned a- | bove the flood;
the LORD sits enthroned as king for- | evermore.**
- ¹¹O LORD, give strength | to your people;
give them, O LORD, the bless- | ings of peace.

Reflection

How does the psalmist describe this encounter with God? Is it calming and peaceful? This reminds me of Isaiah's vision in our first reading. What does the psalmist ask of the Lord? (verse 11) How can the God of the storm (if that's what this is) bring the blessings of peace?

SECOND READING

Romans 8:12-17

In describing the new life of faith, Paul refers to all three persons of the Trinity: the Spirit leads us to recognize that we are children of God the Father and sisters and brothers with Christ the Son.

¹²Brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—¹³for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Reflection

What does Paul say is the source of life? (verses 12-13) How do we know we are children of God? (verse 14) What do you think is the spirit of slavery? (verse 15) What does it lead to? How would you describe the spirit of slavery and what it brings? I think of fear, terror, following the spirit of this world.... From whom do we receive the spirit of adoption? What are we freed to do when we receive the spirit of adoption? Who are we when we have that Spirit? (verse 16) What is our relationship then to Christ? (verse 17) Does that mean we will never suffer? What can we expect when we are joint heirs with Christ? How does suffering lead to glory? (I suggest you turn to the first verses of Romans 5 as you ponder this question.)

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

“Halle, Halle, Hallelujah”

ELW 172

Halle, halle, hallelujah.

Halle, halle, hallelujah.

Halle, halle, hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

***GOSPEL**

John 3:1-17

Jesus’ miracles prompt Nicodemus to visit him in secrecy. Jesus tells him about being born of the Spirit and about the Son who has been sent by God to save.

¹Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” ³Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” ⁴Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ ⁸The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” ⁹Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

¹¹“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

Reflection

Who do we meet in verse 1? When does he meet with Jesus? (verse 2) For the significance of darkness and light in John’s gospel, refer to John 3:19-21. What does his coming to meet Jesus at night tell us about Nicodemus at this time? What is his question of Jesus? How does Jesus

answer this implied question? (verse 3) Nicodemus does not use his imagination when he responds to Jesus. How does he interpret Jesus' response? (verses 4-7) How does Jesus steer Nicodemus as he answers him? (verse 5) In Greek, the word for Spirit and wind are the same. What does this tell you about the freedom of the Spirit? (verse 8) Does Nicodemus "get it"? (verse 9) What does Jesus expect from Nicodemus? (verse 10) In verses 11-12, Jesus is speaking not just to the individual, Nicodemus (the word for "you" in these verses is plural, not singular) but to all who Nicodemus represents—the Jewish authorities, those who do not believe Jesus, all sinful humanity? What do you think? Where does Jesus come from? (verse 13) Jesus refers then to the story of the fiery poisonous serpents (or seraphs) in Numbers 12. If you didn't already look that chapter up, this would be a good time to do it to remind what happened with the Israelites and the serpents. What more does Jesus, the Son of Man, give to people than simply life? (verse 15) Why did God send Jesus into the world? (verse 16) Why did God NOT send Jesus into the world? (verse 17) God is not interested in condemning people to hell! What do you think?

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Eugene Lickenbrock

SERMON

"One Purpose"

Rev. Roger Lenander

SONG OF THE DAY

"If We Just Talk of Thoughts and Prayers"

If we just talk of thoughts and prayers
And don't live out a faith that dares,
And don't take on the ways of death,
Our thoughts and prayers are fleeting breath.

If we just dream of what could be
And do not build community,
And do not seek to change our ways,
Our dreams of change are false displays.

If we just sing of doing good
And don't walk through our neighborhood
To learn its hope, to ease its pain,
Our talk of good is simply vain.

God, may our prayers and dreams and songs
Lead to a faith that takes on wrongs –
That works for peace and justice, too.
Then will our prayers bring joy to you.

***APOSTLES' CREED** (*refrain, all three verses, refrain*)

**I believe, I do believe, truly I believe it,
truly I believe it, truly I believe it,
I believe, I do believe, truly I believe,
truly I believe it, truly I believe it.**

**I believe in God the Almighty Lord Creator,
Mighty Lord Creator, Mighty Lord Creator.
I believe in God the Almighty Lord Creator,
Mighty Lord Creator, Mighty Lord Creator.**

**I believe in Jesus the Savior of all people,
Savior of all people, Savior of all people.
I believe in Jesus the Savior of all people,
Savior of all people, Savior of all people.**

**And I do believe in the Power of the Spirit,
Power of the Spirit, Power of the Spirit.
And I do believe in the Power of the Spirit,
Power of the Spirit, Power of the Spirit.**

**I believe, I do believe, truly I believe it,
truly I believe it, truly I believe it,
I believe, I do believe, truly I believe,
truly I believe it, truly I believe it.**

***PRAYER SONG**

"The Spirit Intercedes For Us"

ELW 180

**The Spirit intercedes for us
with sighs too deep for words to express. Oh, oh.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Filled with the Holy Spirit, we join with the church in every place, praying for the world that God so loves.

A brief silence.

Abba, when we cry to you, your Spirit bears witness with our spirit. Give to your church the confidence of the children of God, so that we boldly share with everyone your world-saving love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

The whole earth is full of your glory: cities teem, fields flourish, mountains soar, and waters abound. Blot out our sin of spoiling your creation. Send us to go for you, mending what is torn and tattered in your world. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You so loved the world that you gave your only Son. In these days, when nation condemns nation, save us. Give us strength and fill us with your justice and peace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Your people cry out to you, seeking the goodness and hope of your holiness. Let the wind of your Spirit blow into the lives of all who suffer from injustice, want, or anguish of any kind. We *especially* lift up to you those in need of your healing hand: *Dorothy, Mary Anna, Kay*, and for those we name before you aloud or silently in our hearts (pause for 10 seconds). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In our living and in our dying, we belong to you. In loving remembrance, we honor those who live with scars or have died defending our nation. Beat our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning hooks, and teach us your ways. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

With affection we remember the saints now departed and rejoice in their faithful witness. Through their example, provoke us to holy lives of loving service in your name. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

By the sure guidance of your Holy Spirit, O God, we lift up our prayers in trust and thanksgiving; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen!

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

☞ *The peace of Christ be with you always.*

☞ **And also with you!**

OFFERTORY

"Praise to You, O God of Mercy"

ELW 208

Praise to you, O God of mercy:

thanks be to you forever!

Raising high the weak and lowly:

thanks be to you forever!

From of old you loved and sought us:

thanks be to you forever!

Truth and justice you have taught us:

thanks be to you forever!

Strong is your faithfulness,

strong is your love,

rememb'ring your covenant of life with us.

Praise to you, O God of mercy:

thanks be to you forever!

Raising high the weak and lowly:

thanks be to you forever!

Thanks be to you forever!

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

“Thank the Lord”

Thank the Lord and sing his praise;
tell ev’ryone what he has done.
Let ev’ryone who seeks the Lord
rejoice and proudly bear his name.
He recalls his promises
and leads his people forth in joy
with shouts of thanksgiving.
Alleluia. Alleluia.

***OFFERING PRAYER**

P *Merciful God,*

C **you open wide your hand and satisfy the need of every living thing. You have set this feast before us. Open our hands to receive it. Open our hearts to embrace it. Open our lives to live it. We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen!**

***DIALOGUE**

P *The Lord be with you.*

C **And also with you.**

P *Lift up your hearts.*

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

C **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

***PREFACE**

P *It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God.
You reveal your glory
as the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit:
equal in majesty, undivided in splendor, one Lord, one God,
ever to be adored in your eternal glory.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:*

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord God,
God of might and power;
Holy is the Lord.
Holy, holy, holy,
Holy Lord God,**

pg. 181

**God of might and power;
Holy is the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest,
Hosanna here on earth
Blest is he who comes
In the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest,
Hosanna here on earth.
Blest is he who comes
In the name of the Lord.**

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

P *In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Together as the body of Christ,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes:*

C **Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.**

P *With this bread and cup we remember your Son,
the first-born of your new creation.
We remember his life lived for others,
and his death and resurrection, which renews the face of the earth.
We await his coming,
when, with the world made perfect through your wisdom,
all our sins and sorrows will be no more.*

C **Amen! Come, Lord Jesus.**

P *Holy God, holy and merciful one, holy and compassionate,
send upon us and this meal your Holy Spirit,
whose breath revives us for life,
whose fire rouses us to love.
Enfold in your arms all who share this holy food.
Nurture in us the fruits of the Spirit,
that we may be a living tree, sharing your bounty with all the world.*

C **Amen! Come, Holy Spirit.**

P *Holy and benevolent God,
receive our praise and petitions,
as Jesus received the cry of the needy,
and fill us with your blessing,
until, needy no longer and bound to you in love,
we feast forever in the triumph of the Lamb:
through whom all glory and honor is yours, O God, O Living One,
with the Holy Spirit, in your holy church, now and forever.*

C **Amen!**

***LORD'S PRAYER**

P *Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.*

C **Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P *Come, let us eat, for now the feast is spread.*

***BLESSING**

P *The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and
keep you in his grace.*

C **Amen!**

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P *Jesus Christ, host of this meal,*

C **you have given us not only this bread and cup, but your very self, that we may feast on
your great love. Filled again by these signs of your grace, may we hunger for your reign
of justice, may we thirst for your way of peace, for you are Lord forevermore. Amen!**

***BENEDICTION**

P *May God, whose power working in us
can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine,
grant you the gifts of faith and hope.*

*Almighty God, Father, \dagger Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.*

C **Amen!**

***SENDING SONG**

“Forever”

**Give thanks to the Lord
Our God and King
His love endures forever
For He is good He is above all things
His love endures forever
Sing praise sing praise**

**With a mighty hand
And an outstretched arm
His love endures forever
For the life that's been reborn
His love endures forever
Sing praise sing praise**

Refrain

**Sing praise sing praise
Forever God is faithful
Forever God is strong
Forever God is with us
Forever forever**

**From the rising to the setting sun
His love endures forever
And by the grace of God
We will carry on
His love endures forever
Sing praise sing praise *refrain***

***DISMISSAL**

P *Go in peace. The Spirit sends us forth to serve.*

C **Thanks be to God!**