

**First Presbyterian Church** Rouses Point NY  
Virtual Worship May 17, 2020

Greeting

**PRAYER OF PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP**

Lord of wondrous light and power, we come to you this day to learn of your will for our lives. Heal our wounds; lift our spirits; give us courage and confidence to boldly serve you in all that we do. Amen.

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Praise the Lord, who is our refuge and our keeper. Let open our hearts and spirits to God this day.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Lord of mercy, there are so many times in our lives when we feel alone. We wonder where you are. We cry out to you in our confusion, pain, and hurt. And when you do not immediately grant the prayers of our cries, we begin to doubt that you even care or exist. Stop us from going down this path of self-destruction. Help us look around and find the many ways in which you have blessed our lives. Forgive us when we are so quick to doubt and so arrogant in our demands of your responses. Give us a spirit of patience, and strengthen us. In Christ's name we pray. Amen ASSURANCE OF PARDON

**Readings and Proclaiming God's Word**

Old Testament: Psalm 66:8-12 & 16-20

New Testament: John 14:15-21

**Sermon "Not Abandoned"**

\*Affirmation of faith: Apostle's Creed

**Prayers of the People**

**Lord's Prayer**

\*Benediction

SERMON SUMMARY- JOHN 14:15-21

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING HELPS TO EMPHASIZE THE FACT THAT WHILE JESUS IS NOT WITH US IN THE FLESH, HIS PRESENCE NONETHELESS, REMAINS REAL AND POWERFUL.

THE PASSAGE FROM JOHN'S GOSPEL WE HEARD THIS MORNING TAKES PLACE SHORTLY BEFORE JESUS WAS ARRESTED. HIS DISCIPLES ARE SAD AND ANXIOUS BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN SPEAKING ABOUT LEAVING THEM.

THE STATEMENTS THE SAVIOR MAKES IN CHAPTER FOURTEEN ARE MEANT TO COMFORT AND REASSURE THEM THAT HIS ABSENCE DOES NOT MEAN THE END OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.

INDEED CHRISTIANS THROUGHOUT THE AGES CONTINUE TO BE REMINDED BY SCRIPTURE: THAT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD IS NOT BASED ON FOND MEMORIES OF HIM, BUT HIS CONTINUING PRESENCE WITH US. OUR TASK THEREFORE IS TO BELIEVE THE SAVIOR'S PROMISE HE WILL NOT ABANDON US, NO MATTER HOW SAD, SCARY, OR DIFFICULT, LIFE GETS.

LISTEN TO A SUMMARY I FOUND, ON THE MEANING OF THAT PROMISES, IT SAYS: "REMEMBER THIS: NO MATTER HOW BAD IT GETS JESUS IS STILL WITH US. JESUS IS STILL A LIVING PRESENCE IN OUR LIVES."

THIS IS A MESSAGE WE NEED TO HEAR AND BELIEVE DAY BY DAY AS WE FACE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE PANDEMIC AND THE CHOICES WE MUST MAKE BECAUSE OF IT.

SO LET US REMEMBER AND GIVE THANKS THAT- JESUS IS INDEED WITH US ALWAYS. AND THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT, HE CONTINUES TO COUNSEL US, NOT ONLY DURING DIFFICULT TIMES, BUT ALSO THROUGH THE ORDINARY TASKS OF LIFE.

LOOK AT HOW THE READING TODAY BEGINS WITH JESUS EXPLAINING WHAT IT MEANS IN PRACTICAL TERMS FOR US TO LOVE HIM- "IF YOU LOVE ME, YOU WILL KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS."

FOR US TO KEEP CHRIST'S COMMAND TO LOVE GOD -IS TO MAKE THAT OUR PRIORITY. IT IS TO LIVE IN A WAY THAT CONTINUALLY DISPLAYS OUR LOVE. SO ALSO IS LOVING OTHERS AS OURSELVES.

WE ARE COMMANDED TO LOVE FELLOW BELIEVERS NOT ONLY WHEN WE ARE PLEASED WITH THEM- BUT ALSO WHEN WE ARE NOT. LOVE, IN

THIS SENSE IS NOT A FEELING BUT A WILLFUL ACT, ONE THAT REQUIRES DETERMINATION AND CAREFUL ATTENTION.

FORTUNATELY, JUST LIKE HE PROMISED, JESUS DID NOT LEAVE HIS FOLLOWERS WITHOUT ANOTHER HELPER-ONE WHO CAN AND WILL EMPOWER US TO LOVE GOD, AS WELL AS ONE ANOTHER. THE SPIRIT IS THE PRACTICAL PRESENCE OF CHRIST- LIVING WITHIN ALL HIS DISCIPLES.

THE SPIRIT IS THE FORCE THAT BINDS THE PEOPLE OF THE CHURCH TOGETHER IN CHRIST'S NAME, IN ORDER TO CONTINUE HIS MISSION IN THE WORLD. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE ONE WHO CAN HELP US APPLY JESUS COMMANDMENTS, AND INDEED ALL OF SCRIPTURE, TO OUR DAILY LIVES.

WHEN WE ALLOW THE SPIRIT TO WORK WITH OUR SPIRITS, WE ARE TRANSFORMED BY GOD. ONE ASPECT OF THIS IS THE ABILITY TO FOR FREELY BOTH GIVE AND RECEIVE LOVE.

ANOTHER PART OF THE BENEFITS OF THIS LIFE-LONG TRANSFORMATION IS THAT WE MAY BETTER ALLOW THE LORD TO WORK WITH US IN ORDER TO HELP US FLOURISH IN THE USE OF OUR GOD-GIVEN TALENTS.

THE SPIRIT SEEKS TO COMPLIMENT OUR ABILITIES AND TO BRING OUT THE BEST IN US, BY LEADING US TO A LOVING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GOD WHO FIRST LOVED US.

AND SINCE GOD IS WITH US, WE KNOW WE ARE NEVER ALONE. WE KNOW WE ARE NOT ABANDONED OR ORPHANED TO FACE THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES OF LIFE ON OUR OWN.

LET US REJOICE IN THE FULFILLMENT OF JESUS' PROMISE THAT WE ARE NEVER WITHOUT HIS PRESENCE, BECAUSE THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR GUIDE AND HELPER. AMEN