

**First Presbyterian Church - Rouses Point NY**  
Virtual Worship May 24, 2020

Greeting

**PRAYER OF PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP**

Most Gracious God, we bow our hearts before you this day. Strengthen us in our innermost being and dwell in our hearts through faith. May we be rooted and grounded in Christ, whose love is beyond all knowledge. Grant that we may experience the fullness of your presence with us as we worship you in our homes this day. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. From everlasting to everlasting you are God.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Gracious God, whose chosen dwelling is the heart that longs for your presence and humbly seeks your love, we come to you confessing our sinfulness. We have sinned against you, Lord, in thought, word, and deed. We repent of these transgressions, as well as the sin of what we have failed to do and say. Forgive us for the sake of Jesus, in whose name we pray and by whose death and resurrection we are saved. Amen

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Readings and Proclaiming God's Word

Old Testament: Psalm 25:4-10

New Testament: John 17:1-26

Sermon "Freedom and Unity in Christ"

\*Affirmation of faith: Apostle's Creed

Prayers of the People

Lord's Prayer

\*Benediction

SERMON SUMMARY- JOHN 17:1-26

TOMORROW OUR NATION CELEBRATES MEMORIAL DAY, A DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR ALL WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN SERVICE TO OUR NATION.

PRESIDENT REAGAN ONCE SAID ABOUT THIS DAY: "AS WE HONOR THEIR MEMORY TODAY LET US PLEDGE THAT THEIR LIVES, THEIR SACRIFICE, THEIR VALOR SHALL BE JUSTIFIED AND REMEMBERED FOR AS LONG AS GOD GIVES LIFE TO THIS NATION."

WE SHOULD INDEED REMEMBER AND BE GRATEFUL TO THOSE WHO DIED TO PROVIDE AND PROTECT OUR CIVIL LIBERTIES.

AND PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S WORDS ABOUT THIS DAY CAN BE HEARD NOT ONLY ABOUT MEMORIAL DAY BUT ANOTHER AND GREATER SACRIFICE WE SHOULD REMEMBER.

HE SAID, "AS WE EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE WE MUST NEVER FORGET THE HIGHEST APPRECIATION IS NOT TO UTTER WORDS, BUT TO LIVE BY THEM.

THE APOSTLE PAUL WROTE ABOUT THIS KIND OF THING WHEN ADDRESSING CHRISTIANS ABOUT ANOTHER TYPE OF FREEDOM IN GALATIANS 5:1: "FOR FREEDOM CHRIST HAS SET US FREE. STAND FIRM THEREFORE AND DO NOT SUBMIT AGAIN TO A YOKE OF SLAVERY."

TODAY'S GOSPEL PASSAGE DRAWS OUR ATTENTION TO THE PROVISION JESUS MADE FOR THIS LIBERTY.

HE FREEDOM JESUS DIED TO SECURE FOR US IS MORE PRECIOUS AND PERMANENT THAN IS POSSIBLE IN ANY NATION ON EARTH, INCLUDING OUR OWN. IT IS NOT GOVERNED BY OR DEPENDENT UPON- POLITICS, ECONOMICS, CULTURE, OR NATIONALISM, BUT IS FOUNDED UPON GOD'S LOVE AND GOVERNED BY GOD'S GRACE.

HERE IN THIS PRAYER OF PREPARATION BEFORE HIS SUFFERING AND DEATH, JESUS GIVES TO HIS DISCIPLES THEN AND NOW, HIS OWN DEFINITION OF WHAT ETERNAL LIFE IS. IF WE LISTEN CLOSELY WE WILL LEARN JESUS IS NOT SPEAKING AS MUCH ABOUT LONGEVITY OR QUANTITY OF LIFE, AS HE IS MORE SPECIFICALLY ABOUT QUALITY OF LIFE.

LISTEN AGAIN TO WHAT HE SAYS TO HIS FATHER- "AND THIS IS ETERNAL LIFE, THAT THEY MAY KNOW YOU, THE ONLY TRUE GOD AND JESUS CHRIST WHOM YOU HAVE SENT."

JESUS IN HIS EXPLANATION OF ETERNITY IS SPEAKING ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. OR AS ANOTHER PREACHER INTERPRETED CHRIST'S WORD: "ETERNAL LIFE- IS LIFE SATURATED WITH THE AWARENESS OF GOD".

AND- WE MIGHT ADD, WITH THE AWARENESS OF GOD'S GREAT LOVE FOR US AS SHOWN IN CHRIST'S GLORY ON THE CROSS. THIS IS A RELATIONSHIP THEREFORE THAT IS ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN MUTUAL LOVE THAT PRODUCES INTIMATE AND JOYFUL COMPANIONSHIP.

LISTENING TO THIS PRAYER, WE HEAR THE ESSENCE OF CHRIST'S PETITION CONCERNING HIS DISCIPLES' RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. JESUS IS SO FOCUSED ON THIS RELATIONSHIP BECAUSE EVERYTHING IN ETERNAL LIFE IS BASED ON OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, AND RETURNS TO IT.

THUS TO LIVE IN CHRIST AND HAVE CHRIST LIVE IN US IS A COMPLETION OF OUR SELF, NOT SELF DESTRUCTION. AND IN ORDER TO LIVE WE MUST BE NOURISHED. SO-ETERNAL LIFE WITH GOD IS ROOTED, GROUNDED, AND NURTURED IN GOD'S LOVE FOR US AND THE GROWTH OF THAT LOVE WITHIN US, SO WE MAY BE A BLESSING TO OTHERS.

JESUS ENDS HIS PRAYER IN VERSE 26 WITH THIS PETITION CONCERNING ALL OF HIS FOLLOWERS: "I HAVE MADE YOUR NAME KNOWN TO THEM, AND I WILL MAKE IT KNOWN, SO THAT THE LOVE WITH WHICH YOU HAVE LOVED ME MAY BE IN THEM, AND I IN THEM."

AND IT IS IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS CLOSING SUPPLICATION WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND THE UNITY AMONG HIS FOLLOWERS JESUS PRAYED FOR. THE STRONGER AND MORE INTIMATE A RELATIONSHIP WE HAVE WITH GOD AND JESUS, THE GREATER THE CHANCE WE WILL EXPERIENCE THE FRUIT OF CHRIST'S DESIRE THAT ALL OF HIS DISCIPLES WILL BE ONE.

AND-DRAWING CLOSER TO JESUS IS ONE WAY WE CAN LIVE MORE FRUITFULLY, AND FREELY IN THE MIDST OF THIS PANDEMIC, EVEN IF IN MANY PLACES WE CANNOT LITERALLY MEET TOGETHER.

SO LET US REMEMBER AND BE THANKFUL THAT NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO US OR AROUND US, WE HAVE VICTORY THROUGH JESUS. AND WE ARE JOINED WITH HIM EVEN WHEN WE APART FROM ONE ANOTHER AND FROM THE CHURCH BUILDING AMEN

