

Worship @ Home Guide – Nov. 1, 2020 – All Saints’ Day

Woodstock Presbyterian Church, 142 E. Court St., Woodstock, VA 22664

RECONNECT

Gathering Music/Announcements – “Eternal Father, Strong to Save”

Welcome & Call to Worship

Our help is in the name of the Lord,

Who made heaven and earth.

In life and in death

We belong to God.

Baptized into Christ’s death

We live unto Him.

Come, let us Worship God!

Hymn - “In Times of Great Decision”

Text: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

Tune: AURELIA 7.6.7.6 D (“The Church’s One Foundation”)

***In times of great decision, be with us, God, we pray!
Give each of us a vision of Jesus' loving way.
When louder words seem endless and other voices sure,
Remind us of your promise: your love and truth endure.***

***O God, whose gifts are countless, you send us bearing peace.
You fill our dreams with justice for all communities.
You give us global neighbors, that all may justly live.
May those we choose as leaders reflect the life you give.***

***O God, you bridged the distance; you opened wide your door.
You call us by our presence to reach to serve the poor.
You teach us: Welcome strangers! Seek justice on the earth!
May those we choose as leaders see every person's worth.***

Reading - from John Donne’s Meditation XVII of *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*

“The church is catholic, universal, so are all her actions; all that she does belongs to all. When she baptizes a child, that action concerns me; for that child is thereby connected to that body which is my head too and ingrafted into that body whereof I am a member. And when [the church] buries a person, that action concerns me. All [of humanity] is of one author, and is one volume;

when one [person] dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated. God employs several translators; some pieces are translated by age, some by sickness, some by war, some by justice; but [the Lord's] hand is in every translation, and [God's] hand shall bind up all our scattered leaves again for that library where every book shall lie open to one another.

As therefore the bell that rings to a sermon calls not upon the preacher only but upon the congregation to come, so this bell calls us all. . . .

No [one] is an island entire of itself; every[one] is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were.

Any[one's] death diminishes me, because I am involved in [hu]mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

Hymn - #499 "Bread of the world in mercy broken", *Author: Reginald Heber*

*Bread of the world, in mercy broken,
Wine of the soul, in mercy shed,
By Whom the words of life were spoken,
And in Whose death our sins are dead.*

*Look on the heart by sorrow broken,
Look on the tears by sinners shed;
so may be your feast become the token,
That by your grace our souls are fed.*

READ

Scripture Reading

Matthew 5:1-12

¹When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

REFLECT

Message “ of Divided Minds”

Rev. Kate Rascoe

The Beatitudes have always perplexed me with their simplicity and duplicity – how on earth can one be both inflicted and “blessed”? How can suffering and pain be a sign of favor? Who in their right minds endures persecution and rejection now for some heavenly reward? “Blessed are...” rolls of the tongue so sweetly, yet is so very, very, difficult to live.

Perhaps the key to finding the hope in Jesus’ sermon on the mount is to recognize that he addresses both “on earth” and “in heaven” at the same time – two realities for God that we are still hoping to see into fruition. Jesus names the suffering that is a current reality for those who find their true worth and work in God’s realm, in which they are and will be “blessed”.

Followers of Christ must be of such divided minds – able to see current realities to name real sufferings, and also to see the long arc of God’s faithfulness and love. At times, this can be expressed sweetly and with great hope. At others, through cries of desperation. This fall, our women’s group began a Bible Study on Lament. Laments, typically found in the psalms, are honest outcries. They can voice deep emotions and very specific pain, sometimes with very little hope attached. This last month, the group wrote their own laments, and agreed to let me share them with you today. In their words, I hope you hear your own “divided minds” -shared pain, and shared hope in God...

+Merciful Lord, please help us to focus. We know that you have said many times “I am with you” but today our brains are so full of what is happening in this world right now, we forget. We are worn down with health concerns, miss being with family and friends, social issues, this political campaign and for some financial problems. Please help us to cut through these tensions and remember that you are always with us.

+ God our Father, I and many others around the country, lament a sharply a divided country—divided by politics. Many people are sick and dying with Covid 19, too many have lost their jobs, hospitals are running out of beds. It goes on and on. When churches open back up, will everyone come back to their church? Many of us feel sad and hopeless. God, please change the hearts of your people and help us find ways to spread your love to our broken country. To embrace all people as children of God. We need you to love, guide and protect us through this challenging and sad time on our history. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

+ Remind us Lord that you are always with us. You're not in the Sanctuary of a building or on a mountain top! Lord we are facing things we have never seen before – separation from family and friends due to a disease; nastiness as we disagree with our fellow Christians, etc. We feel a sense of having no hope. Help us to cling to you, Lord, as we look to “come out the other side.” Your will be done!

+ God our Father, your children lament a broken world. Some have lost their way to you and are putting their faith in false gods. It is hard on those that love you because we cannot even go into our churches to worship together for peace and healing. We cannot embrace each other and have to wear masks and social distance. We feel lost and alone. God, please change the hearts of your people and help us find ways to spread your love to our broken country. To embrace all people as children of God. We need you more than ever to love, guide and protect us through this challenging and sad time in our history.

+There are perils all around,
I can barely turn without confronting them.
They are masked in many forms, but all threaten me – my health, my happiness –or someone I love.
What was my rock now feels shaky – unsteady and untrusted.
I do not know where to put my next step.
Yet, You, O Lord, are our Rock and the Source of our Shalom.
Hold my hand, Lord...

+Almighty God... God of all humanity
We join together as a faithful community
To realize your assurance
That “Your Will Be Done” on earth.
May we come together as similar minds
To work toward a world
Of civility and tolerance.
Our trust is in You, God.

RESPOND

Affirmation of Faith from the *Second Helvetic Confession*, 5.026

Having heard the Word read and proclaimed, let us affirm what we believe:

**We acknowledge the saints
to be living members of Christ
and friends of God
who have gloriously overcome the flesh and the world.
Hence we love them as brothers and sisters,
and also honor them;**

**yet not with any kind of worship
but by an honorable opinion of them
and just praises of them.**

We also imitate them.

**For with ardent longings and supplications
we earnestly desire to be imitators of their faith and virtues,
to share eternal salvation with them,
to dwell eternally with them in the presence of God,
and to rejoice with them in Christ.**

Holy Communion

Invitation

Today, as we gather around this table, we are united with all who believe in Christ, with all of the saints and sinners who have gone before us, and with all of the saints and sinners we will not meet in this lifetime. We are united with all believers in every time and place. Christ welcomes all of us. As we prepare to celebrate this meal, let us take a moment to remember who is here with us. There is a short tax collector at this table and a woman singled out for a partnered crime. And with them are all of those who shunned and scorned them to hide their own sins. At the table are all of us who have clenched rocks in our fists and finally decided to drop them instead hurling more injury and injustice into the world.

Around this table are holy people who were imperfect and made mistakes and yet found in Christ freedom from sin and death and went on to do God's work in the world. At this table we are surrounded by our enemies and our loved ones. And as we look into the face of each child of God, we realize that the things that divided us on this earthly world do not matter, there are no barriers between us, there are no harsh words or hatefulness, but only love and unity among the children of God. This meal is a foretaste of the coming kingdom of God, where true justice restores us to one another, and where love unites us.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you

And also with you

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

All thanks and praise be to you,

most holy God, giver of all life.

You made us for companionship and shaped us for love;

you gave us your good earth and taught us to care;

you established your law that we might learn justice

and give you honor with our lives.

We forgot how to love;

we ceased to give care
and failed to abide by your life-giving law.
You sent us prophets to call us back to you and,
when that was not enough,
you came—
Word-made-flesh, your very being—
and overwhelmed us with love.
And so we sing with all the saints on earth
and all the angels in heaven:
**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

In Jesus you blessed us as never before.

Thank you for the ways he taught us in word and deed:
he fed us in homes and on hillsides;
he healed us in body, mind, and soul
and showed us that true greatness is in humility
and true power in weakness.

We remember the night before his death,
when he took bread, blessed and broke it,
and gave it to his disciples, saying,
Take, eat, this is my body, given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.
We remember how he took the cup, saying,
This cup is the new covenant, sealed in my blood,
shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.
Whenever you drink it, remember me.

How can we thank you for the gift he gave?

When the world did its worst,
he took on our death
that we might be clothed in light and life.
Great is the mystery of faith:
**Dying, he destroyed our death.
Rising, he restored our life.
Lord Jesus, come in glory!**

Raised to new life, still bearing the scars,
Jesus promised us an Advocate and Guide.
Thank you for the Spirit at work in us and among us,
who strengthens and sustains,
challenges and prods,
gives us life and surprises us with signs of your unending grace.

Pour out your Holy Spirit now upon this bread and wine,
that it may be to us the body and blood of Christ
and anoint us that we might be one with him and one another.

With thanksgiving, we offer ourselves to you now, Holy Three in One—
our bodies to do your work and our voices to sing your praise—
grateful, even now, that when this earthly life is ended
you will welcome us home,
where we will live in eternal joy with you and all the saints,
bathed in light and lost in unending songs of praise.
Blessing and glory and wisdom
and thanksgiving and honor
and power and might
be to you, O God, forever and ever! Amen.

Breaking of Bread & Communion of the People

Prayer

RETURN

Charge - Rev. Kare Ann Charlton, Third Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Saints of God, go out into the world offering forgiveness and love with generous hearts. Remember that we are all one in Christ and seek unity with your brothers and sisters. Seek out the meek and marginalized and lift them up with joy and work to restore them to their rightful place as children of the living God. And in all you do, go with the blessing of God. Amen.

Benediction

**May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May God's face shine with delight
In looking upon you with favor
And may you rest forever in God's peace.**

Sending Hymn - O When the Saints Go Marching In

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