

# *Order of Worship*

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, August 9, 2020

WELCOME

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP          Psalm 103: 1-18          UMH p. 824

HYMN 66      *Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven*      LAUDA ANIMA

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

**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. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE          Acts 2:41-47

HYMN 539          *O Spirit of the Living God*          FOREST GREEN

SCRIPTURE          Luke 11:1-13

MESSAGE          *Sharing and Praying Together*

GENEROSITY, INVITATIONS and CELEBRATIONS

HYMN 2222          *The Servant Song*          THE SERVANT SONG

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

## Prayer Corner

- ♡ Linda White, who is recovering from wrist surgery on August 6.
- ♡ Hayley (White) Wheeler, who is having complications with her pregnancy.

*If you or a loved one would like to be prayed for by the staff and/or congregation, please call the church office to let us know.*

## **Sharing and Praying Together - Luke 11:1-13 – August 9, 2020**

On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable are you with praying out loud with people? Even among people who have attended church for a long time, few people have much confidence or eagerness when asked to share a prayer. When we gather together for Bible studies, meetings, or rehearsals, I'm used to seeing everyone quickly look at their feet or touch their noses and say "Not it!" when asked who would like to lead a prayer. There are fears our prayers will come out of our mouths the wrong way, that people will think we're so 'heavenly-minded' that we're no 'earthy-good', or that we'll say something to make God or other people upset or judge us.

I understand. I was raised in a church where we learned and recited the Lord's prayer, and there were always written liturgical opening prayers, prayers of confession, and prayers during communion and baptism. I was surrounded by prayer but didn't know people were even allowed to pray anything that didn't sound ancient. I wondered if God listens or understands if we forget to use King James English with *Thou's*, *Thy's*, *Thine's*, *Shalt's*, and *Wouldst's*.

Today we're going to take a few steps closer to finding hope and encouragement in approaching our God of grace with confidence together. In Luke 11, Jesus' disciples seem very relatable. They see Jesus praying by himself, and they also want to have a better sense of connection to God.

*He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread.*

- Luke 11:1-3

Both Luke and Matthew have what we call 'The Lord's Prayer'. The Matthew version is closer to what we're used to saying in church, and the Luke version here is even shorter. It is true that powerful prayers can be very short in length, but the point of prayer is not whether it is tweetable. It is also true that in Jesus' day that Jews used a lot of commonly taught and memorized prayers. However, these prayers were intended more as an outline and not as a formula of magic words. The Lord's prayer is the same – it is not an incantation to make everything good come our way and the bad to go away.

The meanings of words and phrases sometimes get lost in translation and time. For instance, I'm willing to bet that none of you have used the word "hallowed" in the past year unless you were reciting the Lord's Prayer. What do the phrases "hallowed by thy name" and "thy kingdom come" even mean? Here's how I think we could translate it today: *May our lives reflect how perfectly awesome you are until you are honored by everyone as the Creator and Ruler of all.* We can continue with the next carb-craving phrase, "Give us this day our daily bread". It was their way of saying, *Thank you for providing us with our basic needs.*

In addition to helping understand the meaning and relevance of what we're praying, it's important to notice the other big idea that Jesus is teaching. He consistently uses a "together" focus rather than a private or individual focus. Even when he was praying by himself, he was praying on behalf of and for the benefit of everyone. Look again at all the "together" words – ***"Our Father... Give us...our daily bread and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial."*** Luke 11:3-4 Let's pause to put those last phrases in a way we would understand it today. I would translate it: *Forgive us for the ways we fail to be and do all that you call us to and help us forgive those who disappoint and hurt us. Help us not to sin when we go through testing and trials.*

When you think about it, Jesus is focusing prayer on being better together in two ways. Not only does he teach us by using *us-we-our* words, but Jesus also emphasizes bringing people together through confession, repentance, forgiveness, grace, and being helpful in difficult times.

Right after Jesus teaches his followers this outline for focusing prayer in a way that honors God, he shares this analogy:

*And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.' Luke 11:5-6*

Before we go any further, let's remind ourselves that this is an analogy for the way Jesus wants us to think about prayer. It includes friends from both near and far, and sharing, both to give grace and save face. When Jesus tells a story or analogy, he often says something that the listeners would find outlandish to capture their

interest. What he says next would have shocked any half-way decent person:

*And he answers from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.* Luke 11:7-8

In Jesus' time and culture, even an indifferent neighbor wouldn't dream of not getting up at any time, day or night, to give someone whatever they needed. To apply this to prayer as Jesus intended the story to be, it is as if Jesus is saying, "Come talk and receive grace from me at any time. Unlike the unwilling 'friend' in this analogy, I'm not sleeping, I'm not inaccessible, I'm not selfish, and I'm not bothered." Jesus sums up the metaphor by saying that prayer is like coming over to a friend's house and finding the relationship and resources that we need. He says,

*So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.* Luke 11:9-10

The opportunity to share and pray together is indeed a blessing that allows us to discover open doors and deeper relationships that truly make us better together. Jesus wraps up this analogy with another one as a final reminder that God is not going to zap or humiliate you for how your honest prayers come out.

*Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!* Luke 11:11-13

Are you willing to trust God's grace, and give each other grace, to share in prayer more intentionally and frequently together? Because as we do, we will deepen our relationships with both God and each other, and that is needed more obviously now than ever.