



December 30, 2018

First Sunday after Christmas

Hope United Methodist Church

301 West St. Marie Street

Duluth MN 55803

Liz Raihala - Accompanist

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Office Hours: Monday - Friday ~ 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

With God's grace, we care for the soul for a lifetime and beyond.

PRELUDE

Kim Anderson, flute & Liz Raihala, piano

CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 148

Praise God! Praise God from the heavens; praise God in the heights!

Praise God, all you angels of God; praise God, all you host of heaven!

Praise God, you sun and moon; praise God, all you shining stars! Praise God, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!

Let them praise the name of God, for God commanded and they were created.

God established them forever and ever; God fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

Praise God from the earth, you silvery fish and all in the deeps, fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling God's command! Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! Animals of the forest and prairies and all cattle, crawling things and flying birds! Princes, Popes, rulers of the earth and all peoples, nobles and outlaws and outcasts! Young men and women alike, old and young together!

Let them praise the name of the Sovereign, whose name alone is exalted; whose glory is above earth and heaven.

God has given voices to the people, and praise for all the faithful. All life witnesses to the goodness of God.

Praise be to God!

***SONG**

"Welcome to Our World"

3067

To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Prayer:

Holy One, we confess that we can miss the miracles of your goodness happening all around us. We can forget to ponder anew, when we love the same old story over and over again so much. The joy that might be found in a new thing is also a little scary. Remind us that you are with us, now and always. Help us to live with spirits of wonder and love and hope and joy and peace all year long. Open our hearts and minds again and again to the surprising presence of your Christ...(silence)

THE 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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not in temptation and deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

KIDS TIME

Jesus is what God looks like in sandals. ~John Dominic Crossan

'Real isn't how you are made,' said the Skin Horse. 'It's a thing that happens to you. When {someone} loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.'

'Does it hurt?' asked the Rabbit.

'Sometimes,' said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. 'When you are Real you don't mind being hurt.'

'Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,' he asked, 'or bit by bit?'

'It doesn't happen all at once,' said the Skin Horse. 'You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand.'

— **Margery Williams Bianco, *The Velveteen Rabbit***

From the very beginning, faith, hope, and love are planted deep within our nature—indeed they *are* our very nature (Romans 5:5, 8:14-17). But we have to

awaken, allow, and advance this core identity by saying a conscious *yes* to it and drawing upon it as a reliable and Absolute Source. *Image* must become *likeness*. Our saying “yes” to such implanted faith, hope, and love plays a crucial role in the divine equation; human freedom matters. Mary’s yes seemed to be essential to the event of Incarnation (Luke 1:38). God does not come uninvited. God and grace cannot enter without an opening from our side, or we would be mere robots. God does not want robots, but lovers who freely choose to love in return for love. And toward that supreme end, God seems quite willing to wait, cajole, and entice. ~Fr. Richard Rohr

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Traditions of Christmas” by Chip Davis
Kim Anderson, flute & Liz Raihala, piano

SCRIPTURE Luke 2:41-52, p. 55

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day’s journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, “Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.” He said to them, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.



Barbara Brown Taylor says that "Jesus grows sturdily from his religious roots, not in spite of them." The temple became “home” for Jesus.

What sense of identity does the church give to our children? What roots do they have in the church? There's also a generational dimension here, for "there may be Simeons or Annas sitting there, just waiting for permission to say what they see when they look at the children of this congregation"

Is church a place where we can, as Taylor says, "talk together about things that matter"? And are we paying enough attention to the young people in our midst who may have gifts and thoughts to share with us, and who need the church to recognize what their parents might miss in an everyday, close-up relationship? Are we helping our young people to discern God's gifts in them, and God's call to use them for the sake of the reign of God? ~ Kathryn Matthews Huey
http://www.ucc.org/worship_samuel_sermon_seeds_december_30_2018

SPECIAL MUSIC

Our spiritual growth, however, is a lifelong experience of questioning, and it's reassuring to know that even Jesus grew, too in character, in body and in mind. What were you like as a teenager? Where do you see the Christ in the presence of teens you know?

"Instead of being brought before God and let to acquire a taste for the holy mysterious transcendence in worship we are talked to and promoted endlessly to do this or that. We are recruited for church roles and positions in which we can validate our presence by our usefulness.

Why did you use my hunger for God to recruit me for your religious prospects? Why did you flatten my longing for God with explanations that will keep me in place?

Every religious community has its dead spots. Your task is to dig wells in the desert." ~ journal entry, 2014

Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person. ~journal entry, 2013

HYMN "Lo, How a Rose"

#216

Justice is what love looks like in public. ~Cornel West

Love cannot remain by itself – it has no meaning. Love has to be put into action, and that action is service. ~Mother Teresa

“Hardly a week goes by without someone saying to me: Rabbi, I’m not religious but I am spiritual.’ They assume I will be happy about this. I always ask these people how much money they donate to help people in need. Or about the last time they visited a hospital to see if anyone needed a sympathetic ear. Or about their diet and what they are doing to minimize animal cruelty, environmental pollution, and exploitation of Third World Laborers. The usual response is that these have nothing to do with spirituality! On the contrary, without care of the world and the healing of it, spirituality is a self-serving waste of time.” ~Rabbi Rami Shapiro Qtd. in Soultsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture By Leonard Sweet

The task of religion is not to turn us into “proper believers,” it is to deepen and open our hearts to embrace the power of life to expand our consciousness in order that we might see things that the eyes don’t normally see. It is to seek a humanity that is not governed by a need for security, but is expressed in our ability to give ourselves away.” ~John Shelby Spong

HYMN

“Love Came Down at Christmas”

#242

Jesus didn’t come to build churches—he didn’t come to found a new religion. Jesus came to be born in you and in me.

*Hard work does make a difference. It is hard work and you get to do it everyday. Hard work takes discipline and the discipline is: What are you doing to help?
~journal entry, 2015*

“Every single creature is full of God and is a book about God.” ~ Meister Eckhart

Whenever the desert fathers and mothers would get absolutely despondent and didn’t know how they were going to put one foot in front of the next, they had this mantra. And the mantra wasn’t “God” and the word wasn’t “Jesus.” But the word

was “today.” That’s sort of the key. There’s a play off-Broadway right now called “Now. Here. This.” It’s “Now,” period, Here,” H-E-R-E, period, “This.” And that’s kind of my — that’s become my mantra. Lately, I’m big on mantras. So when I’m walking or before a kid comes into my office, I always say, “Now. Here. This, Now. Here. This.” So that I’ll be present and right here to the person in front of me. ~ Fr. Greg Boyle

OFFERING

***OFFERING RESPONSE** “Emmanuel, Emmanuel”

#204

***BLESSING**

O God, through the offering of these gifts, we become a more open people—open-minded in hearing your word and wisdom, open-hearted in compassion and peace, open-handed in putting love into action. Thank you for these gifts! Thank you, O Spirit of Christ! Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:12-17, p. 190

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.



“Being privately spiritual but not religious does not interest me. There is nothing challenging about having deep thoughts all by yourself. What is interesting doing

this work in community where people call you on stuff or heaven forbid, disagree with you. Where life with God gets interesting and provocative is when you dig deeply into a tradition you did not invent all by yourself for yourself. So, the next time I'm on a flight to anywhere could I sit next to someone brave enough to encounter God in human community? Because when this flight gets choppy I want someone by my side, holding my hand, saying a prayer and putting up with me and my fears—just like we do at church.” ~Rev. Lillian Daniels

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***HYMN**

“Once in Royal David’s City”

#250

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

**You are invited to stand as you are able*

LARGE PRINT hymnals, bulletins, and Bibles, as well as hearing devices are available from the usher.