

## Morning Prayer 4<sup>th</sup> July 2021

### The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

### Morning Worship with Christine Ghinn



### Personal preparation before the service begins.

Please take time to remember where you are,  
and why you are here.  
Give thanks and become still  
in the presence of God

### Prelude

God in Christ has revealed his glory.  
**Come let us worship.**

From the rising of the sun to its setting  
**the Lord's name is greatly to be praised.**

Give him praise, you servants of the Lord.  
**O praise the name of the Lord!**

### Let us pray with words from Psalm 48

Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised; \*  
in the city of our God is his holy hill.

**Beautiful and lofty, the joy of all the earth, is  
the hill of Zion, \*  
the very center of the world and the city of the  
great King.**

God is in her citadels; \*  
he is known to be her sure refuge.

**Behold, the kings of the earth assembled \*  
and marched forward together.**

They looked and were astounded; \*  
they retreated and fled in terror.

**Trembling seized them there; \*  
they writhed like a woman in childbirth,  
like ships of the sea when the east wind  
shatters them.**

As we have heard, so have we seen,  
in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God; \*  
God has established her for ever.

**We have waited in silence on your loving-  
kindness, O God, \*  
in the midst of your temple.**

Your praise, like your Name, O God, reaches to the  
world's end; \*

your right hand is full of justice.

**Let Mount Zion be glad  
and the cities of Judah rejoice, \*  
because of your judgments.**

Make the circuit of Zion;  
walk round about her; \*  
count the number of her towers.

**Consider well her bulwarks;  
examine her strongholds; \*  
that you may tell those who come after.**

This God is our God for ever and ever; \*  
he shall be our guide for evermore.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit,

**As it was in the beginning,  
is now and shall be for ever.**

### **Song: Lord I Lift Your Name On High**

Lord I lift Your name on high  
Lord I love to sing Your praises  
I'm so glad You're in my life  
I'm so glad You came to save us

*You came from heaven to earth  
To show the way  
From the earth to the cross  
My debt to pay  
From the cross to the grave  
From the grave to the sky  
Lord I lift Your name on high*

CCLI Song # 117947

Rick Founds

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## **The Collect for today, the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost**

Creator God,  
you made us all in your image:  
may we discern you in all that we see,  
and serve you in all that we do;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## **The reading is taken from Ezekiel 2:1-5**

Let us prepare ourselves for the word of God  
**Our hearts and our minds are open**

The Lord said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you. And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me. He said to me, Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day. The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, "Thus says the Lord God." Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them.

This is the word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## The reading is taken from Mark 6:1-13

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

**Glory to you, O Lord**

Jesus came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Homily

### Too close to home

I've got a friend who is quite outspoken. She doesn't beat around the bush when it comes to airing her opinion and judgments and is one who 'knows it all'. Diplomatic communication seems to be a foreign concept to her.

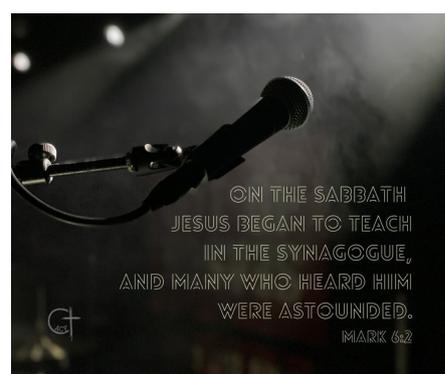
Yet, even though it took some time and work, I have learned years ago to fully love and accept her - just the way she is. I can see the heart of gold and the deep care that's behind her direct words. When this friend drops one of her comments I smile inwardly and think, in a very good-natured way, "This is so you!".

I also have a sister who shares my friend's direct style of communicating. And guess what, even though we both have been working on our relationship for a long time, I do still get irritated and deeply hurt by her comments. In the heat of the moment, it's almost impossible for me to see the good intention and love that lies beneath it all. With my sister, it's all too close to home.

Oh, or let me tell you about that thing that just happened the other day, when I burst into tears several times during a meeting - all because the conversation involved my children and the way they are or are not appreciated by others. The whole conversation hit too close to home.

And, if we're at it, I might as well tell you about another close relative of mine and about how they live their relationship with God, handles their health and spends their resources. I could (and have done numerous times) go on a very long rant about all they are and do and believe.

All the while I have over the past few years worked on becoming less judgmental about people's life choices and the way they see the world and faith. Cultivating a curious mind and an open heart is wonderful and



deeply connecting... until I start thinking about that particular person. Gone is my self-perceived, saint-like gracious attitude, because with them it's all too close to home.

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I guess you too have those people in your lives, that just push your buttons, right? Fall-outs around the Christmas table or at family reunions have become a cliché and don't just happen in highly dysfunctional relationships. And even though I don't want it to be true, I do very often play my part in picking a quarrel with the people closest to me.

Today we read the story of Jesus' childhood acquaintances acting just like I do in challenging situations with my relatives: They are hurt, adjudged and offended. "Isn't this the little boy, that used to play with my own children?", we hear them say. "This is only Jesus, who used to come around with his dad and brothers to carry out repairs on our house! And now here he is: trying to explain the world to us and showing off with little magic tricks!" Behind their questions lies even more than outrage. Their words are insults in first century culture, hinting at his illegitimate lineage by mentioning only his mother and siblings, but not Joseph.

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But how does Jesus deal with being at the receiving end of rejection and insult? There are a couple things that stand out to me:

The first one is, that he seems to feel ambiguous about what's happening. Jesus knows and communicates that being rejected by one's own folk is a completely predictable occurrence, yet he is still hurt by this very rejection! To him, both is true at the same time: "Prophets are not without honour, except in their hometown." and also "He was amazed at their lack of faith."

The second thing I'd like to comment on is a sentence, that jumped out to me the first time reading through this passage 10 days ago: "And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them." Aside from the fact, that to me this casually thrown in "except from curing a few sick people" sounds like quite a big deal, I'm really touched by Jesus still doing the best he can for the people he is encountering. He does not turn around, sulking and annoyed, but gives the people of Nazareth the care he is able to.

In this narrative we meet a Jesus who is realistic, vulnerable and caring - just the way he encourages his disciples to be in the second half of our reading, when he sends them out into the villages to preach and heal. The disciples are portrait as Jesus' apprentices: watching their master do his craft before being commissioned into having a go for themselves. And the guidance he gives mirrors Jesus' own realistic, vulnerable and caring attitude when visiting Nazareth:

He is realistic about the mission he sends his disciples on: "Yes, there will be people that oppose you!"

He puts them into a vulnerable state: "Only take the bare minimum and rely on the kindness of others and God's provision!"

He wants them to be caring: "Go out and do as much good as people allow you to!"

Jesus teaches them, and us, to act with much love and healthy boundaries. He wants them to be diligently at work in the places that receives the, but get out of situations that are pointless or even abusive.

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However, we would be fooling ourselves, if we'd identify only with Jesus' disciples, being sent out to do good and proclaim the gospel, despite opposition and rejection. At least I for my part have found myself in the words and actions of the people of Nazareth. The

situations I shared earlier are only the tip of the iceberg from recent weeks. If a wise outside observer would analyse my thoughts, words and actions for any amount of time, they would, just like Jesus, be "amazed at my lack of faith". This makes me wonder how often I have hindered Christ working in, through and around me.

It is hard for us humans to separate the message from the messenger, who is at times too close to home. And relationship dynamics, the way they are portrait in today's reading are just the beginning of the dilemma. Because the way we process messages, prophetic or otherwise, is hijacked by an unbelievable amount of biases. Starting to grapple with biases and how they influence our thinking is as necessary as it is overwhelming. I don't think I'm the right person to educate you on this, as I have only scratched the surface on understanding how our brains work. I have a hunch though that scientists exploring cognitive biases are worth listening to - even, or perhaps especially, when it comes to things like faith.

So where do we go from here, in our quest of learning to recognise and welcome prophets instead of insulting and rejecting them? A good starting point might here to work on adapting Jesus' attitude in today's reading. Being realistic, vulnerable and caring doesn't just help in being a prophet, but also in noticing and engaging with one.

So let us be realistic about limitations in ourselves and others - be it regarding relationships, biases or otherwise. This would also include learning to perceive what the people around us are open to, and what not.

Let us be vulnerable by holding our convictions loosely and recognising our dependency on God's provision, community and the Holy Spirit's still small voice.

And let us be caring by encountering the other with love, attention and kindness and being prepared to have our minds changed by them.

As we go out into our week, both as disciples on a mission and people meeting prophets in our day-to-day, may we be realistic, vulnerable and caring and thus prepare the ground and bearing witness to Christ doing, as Mark puts it, 'deeds of power'.

**Amen.**

### **Song: I, the Lord of sea and sky**

I, the Lord of sea and sky,  
I have heard my people cry.  
All who dwell in dark and sin,  
My hand will save.

I who made the stars of night,  
I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear my light to them?  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.  
I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of wind and flame,  
I will tend the poor and lame.  
I will set a feast for them.  
My hand will save.

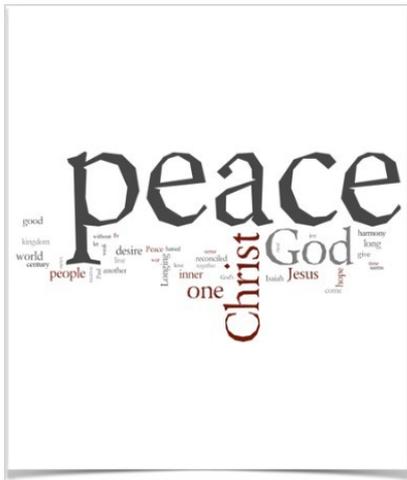
Finest bread I will provide,  
Till their hearts be satisfied.  
I will give my life to them,  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.  
I will hold your people in my heart.

## Intercessions (by Klaus)

### The Lord's Prayer

In the language of our hearts, let us pray as our Saviour taught us .....



### A sign of peace

God is love  
And those who live in love live in God  
And God lives in them.  
We meet in the name of Christ and share his peace.

### Song: We Are Marching

We are marching in the light of God  
We are marching O-oh  
We are marching in the light of God  
We are marching O-oh  
We are marching in the light of God

We are living in the love of God  
We are living in the love of God  
We are living in the love of God  
We are living in the love of God  
We are living O-oh  
We are living in the love of God  
We are living O-oh  
We are living in the love of God

We are moving in the power of God  
We are moving in the power of God  
We are moving in the power of God

We are moving in the power of God  
We are moving O-oh  
We are moving in the power of God  
We are moving O-oh  
We are moving in the power of God

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Anders Nyberg | Andrew Maries  
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## Sending & Blessing

Let us go out in the spirit of the twelve,  
no purse,  
no spares,  
no insurance,  
no pride.

There, in the world,  
may we meet the vulnerable,  
the kindly,  
those ready to receive us  
with generosity and grace.

And in this meeting,  
may we see our God,  
incarnate,  
reborn,  
eternal:  
in love and hope.

**Amen**

May the God of hope  
fill us with all joy and peace in believing,  
through the power of the Holy Spirit;  
and the blessing of God Almighty -  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit -  
be with us, now and forever.

**Amen**

## Postlude

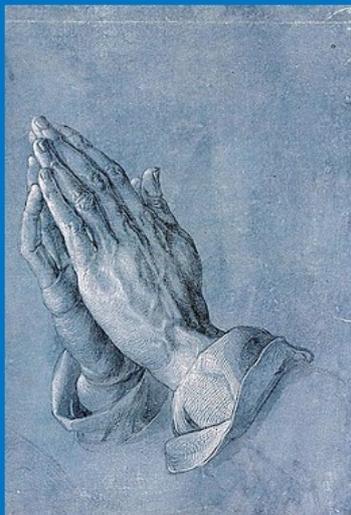
## Announcements

Look forward to our next service

with Christine + Iris

11th July 2021

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost  
11:30 hrs, Zoom link see website  
and in person in the church 😊



### Evening Prayer on Wednesdays

Wednesday, 7th July 2021  
9pm (for 20-30min)

(Please use the usual  
Sunday service Zoom link.)