

CALVIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
A Service for Worship at Home – July 19, 2020

Opening Prayer

Father, Son, and Spirit – one God to whom we call – you are not bound by our limited sight. We cannot predict your coming or going, yet you have invited us in to the story you are writing in this world. So with boldness we ask that you would meet us here. Shape us for service in your world, that our lives may carry the name of Jesus as we live by the power of your very breath. Amen.

*adapted from *Feasting on the Word Worship Companion*, Westminster Knox Press, 2014

Call to Worship

Psalm 42:1-3*

As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God.

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God?

My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually, 'Where is your God?'

*Throughout the summer, as circumstances prevent us from gathering together as we would like, and in recognition of all that is going on in our nation and the world, each Sunday's Call to Worship will be from a psalm of lament; and each Sunday's Benediction will include a passage of hope and promise from that same psalm.

Confession

Romans 8:22

"We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves..."

Lord, we groan inwardly and outwardly. Indeed, all creation groans. We are quick to judge others, certain we know what is the wheat and what is the chaff, even as we fail to see within us that which does not bear good fruit. We confirm our biases, listen only to those who agree with us and assume your will equates with our own. We confess that we do not like to acknowledge the possibility, let alone the reality, that we fail to follow your commandment to love you and love our neighbors.

Forgive us, we pray, for living as if Jesus has not come – as if his joining in our humanity and walking this earth has not placed your sacred touch upon all things. In your mercy, amend what we are and shape us into the people you call us to be.

(personal confession)

*adapted from Rev. Jill Duffield, *Presbyterian Outlook* Liturgy for the 7th Sunday after Pentecost, 2020

Assurance and Peace

Romans 8:16-17

"...it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ..."

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God

May the Peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Scripture

Genesis 28:10-19a *(on back page)*

Questions to Think About

Background: Jacob has tricked his father Isaac into giving him the blessing meant for his brother Esau (Genesis 27). In response, Esau plots to kill Jacob. Jacob flees for his life, and is now on the run in this morning's passage.

Jacob stops somewhere between Beer-sheba and Haran. Notice Scripture does not name the place where Jacob stops for the night; it only calls it "a certain place," or "the place." Why might this be? What does this tell us about this place?

What do you imagine Jacob was thinking and feeling when he laid down to sleep with only a rock for a pillow?

What would the significance be to Jacob to see messengers of God coming and going between earth and heaven in this place?

What is familiar about what the LORD says to Jacob? The covenant the LORD made with Abraham is reiterated to Jacob. Why is that significant?

How does Jacob respond when he wakes up?

What does Jacob learn about even this no-name, in-between place?

Where do you expect God to show up? Where do you have trouble expecting God to show up? Do you have "markers" in your life that remind you of places where God has shown up unexpectedly?

How does Jesus fulfill the connection between heaven and earth seen in Jacob's dream of this ladder with the messengers of God coming and going?

Prayers of the People

Wherever we are, God, you are present with us, we are united in Christ, and the Spirit is interceding for us. There is nowhere we can flee from your Spirit and nothing we cannot bring before you. Therefore in this time and place we share the hopes of our hearts, the questions on our minds, and the worries that keep us up at night. We pray to you, who is like no other, the first and the last, the beginning and the end, the one in whom we live and move and have our being.

Lord, from whom we cannot flee, we ask you for wisdom in the face of ever-growing uncertainties. We remember those in our midst and those known only to you who are consumed with fear – fear not only for their livelihoods, but for their very lives. Grant us the resolve to do whatever is required for everyone to have enough to eat, a safe place to live, the ability to get the care they need. Do not let our imagination fall short of your ability to make all things possible.

Loving God who searches and knows us, reveal to us those places in our hearts that need to be broken so that we might go to the places in the world that break your heart. Do not let us turn away from the people who need to know they are not alone. Ease the loneliness of those unable to see their families and those without family. Expand our vision of what the household of faith is called to be. Do not let us reject those whom Jesus came to save. All those on the margins of our society, the imprisoned and the impoverished, those who have been neglected and those seeking asylum and safety.

Keep us mindful of those who long to be able to gather here, and those with whom we long to gather. Hear us as we lift up those whose names are known to us. We continue to lift those who mourn: we pray for Judy and her family, mourning the death of her daughter Joyce; Cynthia, mourning the death of her uncle John; and we continue to lift up Elaine, and Peter and all who mourn the death of loved ones, family and friends alike. We pray for those with COVID-19 – for Paul’s mother; Lord, we continue to pray for those with other health complications – for Jackie and Chuck, Betty’s friends Maria, Charlene, and Theresa; Linda; Marsha and her mother and father. We pray for Bev and her upcoming surgery this week.

We continue to lift up Elaine, Dot, Marilyn, Miriam, Fran and all those at Madonna Manor, Chapel Hill, Highlands, Waterman Lake, Atria and other assisted living communities; and especially the Holiday Health and Rehab as many residents and staff there are bearing the weight of COVID-19 cases.

We pray for our leaders – community, local, and national. Especially we pray for all the communities in discussions about the next school year. We pray for wisdom and courageous leadership.

[Personal Prayers]

Generous God, who overwhelms us with goodness and mercy, we thank you for waking us up this day, giving us the gift of this life, calling us to be your people. When we are tempted to judge others harshly, remind us to forgive as we have been forgiven. When we feel paralyzed with doubt or awash in anxiety, grant us the peace that passes understanding. When we do not know what to do or where to turn, make your word a light unto our path so that we can take one step closer to Christ as he leads us into the way everlasting.

We make our prayer in the name of the one who meets us in even the most unexpected places, Jesus Christ, who taught us to boldly pray

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 our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Charge and Benediction

Psalm 42:5, 11

My soul is cast down within me;

Therefore I remember you...

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

May the love of God the Father, the grace of Jesus the Son, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now, and forevermore. Amen.

Genesis 28:10-19a (New Revised Standard Version)

¹² Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. ¹¹ He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. ¹² And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³ And the LORD stood beside him and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; ¹⁴ and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. ¹⁵ Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." ¹⁶ Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place-- and I did not know it!" ¹⁷ And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

¹⁸ So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. ¹⁹ He called that place Bethel;”*

*"Bethel" means *House of God*