

Order of Worship for at Home Use

February 28, 2021

Welcome to worship with Grace@Home!

We pray that you are healthy and well as you worship this week.

If you wish to worship via the video, click this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTPedLInwMI>

As we gather online it is important to remember that we are not alone. We gather with our brothers and sisters in this church and in Christ's church wherever God has placed us. We are, after all, the body of Christ and the family of God. As His people we gather for worship and we are reminded of the promise that Christ will be with us, even to the very end of the age. We are also reminded that as God's children we are a great community and even when distanced we remain God's children in communion with God and one another.

Today as we gather, I encourage you to create a comfortable space for worship where you are reminded of God's presence in your life and that He is with you in this moment. Surround yourself with the symbols of Grace. Find a place that is peaceful so that you might hear the still quiet voice of God when it speaks to you. Maybe light a candle as a reminder of God's light in the world and in your life, have your Bible with you as it is God's revelation to us in this moment.

Pastor Jim

We Gather as God's Family to Worship

Prelude & Candle Lighting "Ah, Holy Jesus" Chorale, Trio, Meditation W. Wold
Dr. David Dorway, organist

Welcome

Pastor Dana Pope

Welcome to worship with Grace at home. We pray that as we worship this weekend, we are drawn close into God's presence, shown a glimpse of eternity, and energized for the journey of life. We continue to worship online and in person, and encourage you to continue to seek God wherever you find yourself.

Call to Worship

Pastor Dana Pope

One: We come to worship our Holy God

All: Our God, Who is the way

One: We come to gather in the light of our LORD

All: Our LORD, Who is the truth

One: We come to sing our praises and enter into God's presence

All: Our God is the way, the truth and the life!

Let us worship God!

Hymn

#147 "How Great Thou Art" vs. 1 & 2

Dr. Lisa Elliott

Sharing the Peace of Christ

not in video

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you...

and also with you.

In this time of social distancing it is important for us to remember that in Christ we are connected to all who believe in Jesus in every time and place. As the world continues to be isolated, and many are feeling anxious, as Christians we share the peace of Christ as a way to offer hope and the joy of Christ. Again today we use the familiar words, "The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you... and also with you."

Now, or after your time of worship, reach out via text, email, phone or video call, to someone outside of your home extending the invitation to enter into the peace of Christ with our faith community.

Praise God, that His peace is with us, always!

Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Pastor Dana Pope

The Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Please pray with me.

Holy One, God of light, life and truth, today we come to Your throne of grace seeking Your face that we might enter into the light of Christ. As we boldly approach Your throne, we seek the truth about our own behaviors, attitudes and ignorance, as well as the truth in our world. Help us to turn away from our brokenness, poor choices, and the many ways we have failed You, ourselves and others. Forgive us and grant us Your mercy that we might live into Your reality - and the truth of who we are in Christ. In this second week of Lent we pray that You would turn us back to You and grant us discipline to seek You with all that is in us.

As we pray today we are grateful for Your provision and for Your hand of healing and comfort in our world and in our lives. We pray that our eyes would be opened to the many ways we are blessed and the work that You are doing in our own lives and in our world. In this continued time of separation, we pray that You would inspire in us new and innovative ways to be connected with our families and our friends. We ask, humbly, that you would guide us into Your way of wisdom and life abundant. We also pray for energy and discernment to help others, in this time of separation and difficulty.

As we see our world slowly coming back together - out of isolation, we pray for protection against COVID, for healing from all disease, and healing in mind, body or circumstance. Holy God, we especially pray on this day for the mental health of all who are consumed by depression, despair or hopelessness. Help us as Your people to be Your hands and feet, to be a voice of hope and witness to the life that is found in Jesus the Christ. Send Your Holy Spirit to guide us that we might be sensitive to those that struggle and know the best ways to reach out.

Most Holy God, Great I AM, we thank You for Your tender mercies as You work in us and in our world. As You call us to lay our hearts, concerns, praises and hurts at Your feet, we thank You for hearing those prayers for Your hand of protection and Your amazing grace and care. We thank You, and we pray all these things, and those things that are hidden deep in our hearts, in the name of Jesus...Who taught us to pray, saying:

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.
Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours,
now and forever. Amen.

We Listen to God's Word

Hymn/Praise

“Jesus Loves Me”

not in video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C63z5hCd7bc>

Children's Message

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

Today I want to ask you to look for binoculars or a telescope in your house. Do you have binoculars or a telescope? Why do we have these things? What do they do for us? They help us see. In worship today I have an antique spyglass. It is a kind of telescope that helps a person see things far away. The ancient people who would sail the seas used spy glasses and telescopes to see things far away. They looked at the stars. You see, seeing the stars they could find the North Star which would give them a reference point. That is a point to follow that would give them direction. By looking closely, they could find the star that would give them direction.

In the Bible Jesus says, "I am the way". Jesus challenges us to follow Him. If we are lost, we are to follow Jesus. If we don't know what to do, we are to follow Jesus, if we don't know what is right or wrong, we are to follow Jesus. When we follow Jesus will lead us in the way of goodness because He is the way the truth and the life.

Special Music

"In This Very Room" R & C Harris

Chancel Choir

Reading of the Word

John 14:1-7

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

¹"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ²My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me so that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going." ⁵Thomas said to him, "LORD, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" ⁶Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

Message "I AM the Way the Truth and the Life" Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

What's in a name asks Juliet Capulet, because her lover, Romeo, was of the house Montague. The Montagues and the Capulet's were sworn enemies and love between the famous Romeo and Juliet could never stand. And so Juliet asks, "what's in a name?..That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

Well, Shakespeare had it wrong folks. I am sorry to offend the Bard, but names are everything. It is in naming something that we give it identity. When a parent names a child, that child carries with them the name of a family, its history and its experiences. Think about it, when Joseph and Rose Kennedy named their son John Fitzgerald Kennedy, it made a difference in his life. He was the grandson of Honey Fitz Fitzgerald the kingmaker in Boston and the political power behind the Kennedy clan. JFK was also the son of Joseph Kennedy the wealthy business investor, whiskey distributor and US Ambassador who represented new money in America. John Fitzgerald Kennedy had a name that opened doors of politics, and wealth. John F. Kennedy's name gave him privilege and opportunity that the little baby born down the hall in the public part of the hospital who was immediately taken to an orphanage, named Jane Doe, would never have.

This is what makes adoption one of the great miracles of our day. A family chooses a child who, for no reason of their own, is in great need, and gives them a name. That name brings with it an identity which that child can choose to live into or not; but, the opportunity is theirs. It is a gift. It is grace.

Names are important. They are so important that when God called people in the Bible He often gave them new names that would identify or predict their accomplishments. Joshua, son of Nun, means, "Our God will save us". Peter means, "Rock" and Jesus would say of Peter, "On this Rock I will build my church". Jesus, Emmanuel, means, "Our God with us".

When God was pressed by Moses to say who he was to the people of Israel, God takes the name, Yahweh, I am who I am, I am whom I shall be, I am. Jesus takes the name of God further when he makes the great "I am" statements of the Gospel of John. Today we continue our study on the great I am statements and as we do so we will answer Juliet Capulet's question, "what's in a name."

Today we are looking at perhaps the most defining "I am" statement of Christ, "I am the way and the truth and the life, nobody comes to father except by me." Jesus gives us this amazing claim near the end of his life. Jesus is in Jerusalem and it is the week He will be betrayed, the first holy week. He has told his disciples He is going to die. He told them that He was going to prepare a place in the Kingdom of God for His followers and that they should follow Him. To this Thomas, the doubter, replies in John 14:5-7 with the following statement.

⁵Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

⁶Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really knew me, you would know^[a] my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

So, what's in a name asks Juliet. Well, Mr. Shakespeare, everything is in a name! In today's text we see the disciples asking the most basic of questions, where are you going? Can we follow you? How will we find you if we don't know where you are going? Don't leave us! Jesus answers all these questions with a simple statement, one that begins with a name. I am, Yahweh. If you want to know where I am going, you need to know, I am God. If you want to know where you are supposed to go, follow me, follow God. If you want to know your way in life, which direction you should go, which choice you should make at this point in your life, Jesus says, I am the way, the truth and the Life, follow me!

This is one of the most exclusive and challenging statements of Jesus Christ,

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

It is in this statement that Jesus says, I am God, and the only way to God is to know me. There are no ifs ands or buts. Christianity makes an exclusive claim that the only way to God is through Jesus Christ. Now we affirm with other faiths that there are things that may lead us to God. There are miracles, there are signs and wonders, there is the majesty of creation and the miracles of the human mind and reason. All these things will point us to God, but only in knowing Jesus will you know God. You can know about God from a variety of faiths, but to know God requires following Jesus.

This idea is offensive to many in today's world who want to say live and let live, if you don't judge me I won't judge you. However, the truth is the truth even when it is hard to hear or painful. The truth about God remains the truth whether or not people believe it. The truth is the truth because it is what God has revealed. He has shown us that some things are right and some are wrong. Failure to share the truth with people does them no good. Just like failing to tell a visitor to your country, the laws by which they must abide. You cannot come before the judge and say, "Oh, sorry, I did not know that murder is wrong in this country." You cannot say, as Steve Martin used to say, I forgot that stealing is wrong. The truth is murder and theft are wrong whether you believe them or not. Ignorance is no excuse for the law. If I could get out of jail or out of trouble just by being ignorant or stupid, I would never be in trouble. Truth is truth, right is right and wrong is wrong. So, it is with God. God is God whether you believe Him or not. God is the God of love and forgiveness whether you want to be loving or not. God remains God even when Christians are hypocrites and God gives us a way to be his children and better our lives and our world, even if we choose not to follow. God is God, He is the way and will be the way whether or not the world chooses to follow.

The truth is not relative. It is true regardless of whether you believe it or not. Now that is good news. You see, I think that all of creation is looking for God and for truth. The apostle Paul tells us this in Romans. As we look at history, we see humankind seeking the truth and ultimately searching for God. The early Greeks sought truth in logic; Plato, Socrates and Aristotle sought universal truth and western thought and its quest for truth was born from Greek thought. The creation of the printing press in the middle ages was driven by the idea that truth and knowledge should be shared with the people. Art, music and philosophy have driven the quest for truth and often the search for God.

In the modern era we have adopted the metaphor of life being a road as evidenced in our music, our art and our literature, with movies like the wizard of Oz and songs like the Long and Winding Road by the Beatles and Kyrie Eleison by the great, and seldom referenced in a sermon, rock band Mister Mister. The term kyrie eleison means in the Christian Coptic tradition, mercy or grace of the lord. The song uses the Latin phrase to say “the Lord have mercy on you as you travel the road of life”. As human beings, we know innately that we are on a journey. It is to this deep understanding that Jesus Christ says, I am the way the truth and the life. Nobody comes to the father but by me.

This, my friends, is a blessing. It is a blessing because we know we are on a journey. Most of us don't like the journey we are on or the direction it is leading us, but we know it is a journey. We are looking for ways to enjoy the ride, but most of us fear the outcome or the challenges that lie ahead. After all, nobody gets out alive and most of us have made mistakes along the way. In fact, most of us are making mistakes as we continue life's path.

You think I am kidding? Let's talk about men for a moment. A recent study published in the Discipleship journal stated for every ten men in church, 10 of them are struggling to balance work and family, 9 will have children who leave the church, 5 have a serious problem with pornography and 4 will get divorced. That study didn't even look at other addictions like alcohol or illegal drugs. Women don't fare much better. They struggle with issues like depression and drug abuse at epidemic levels. According to a recent zogby poll 31 percent of Americans today say that their computer would be a suitable replacement for their spouse. Where is your road leading you and is that, where you want to go?

If you are on the wrong road, Jesus Christ says to you, “I am the Way the Truth and the Life, Nobody comes to the father but by me.” If you are struggling with pornography or an addiction, Jesus says I am the way, follow me. If you are unhappy, lost or frightened of the future, then Jesus says, follow me, I am the way. The only way. If you want to start following the way, the only way, all you need do is start with a prayer that says, Jesus, I know you are the way, I want to follow you. Then tell someone you trust that you said that prayer. Call me or Dana or a Christian friend and ask them to pray for you and with you. Pick up the Bible and begin reading the gospel of John and as you do so pay attention to this Jesus. Get to know him and ask yourself each day how you can act like Jesus.

He is the way, the truth and the life. You cannot come to the father unless you know Him and know Him by name. After all, everything is in a name, His name!

We Respond to the Voice of God

Presentation of our Tithes & Offerings

Pastor Dana Pope

We are blessed with many opportunities to give of our time talents and our resources... Let us now participate in God’s kingdom by returning God’s tithes and our offerings to the church via mail or online giving, using text to give or the following link: <https://onrealm.org/gracepclv/-/give/now>

Offertory

“God Put a Rainbow in the Clouds”

A. Jenkins

BJ Jamison, Kathy Koch, Scott Plummer, Pastor Dana Pope

Offertory Prayer

Pastor Dana Pope

Almighty God, to know you is eternal life. By our giving and sharing of our time and talents, resources and energies, we ask that You reveal Your eternal kingdom. Teach us to know your Son Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life; that following him we may walk in the way that leads to eternal life, giving generously, loving fiercely, helping others with compassion, and learning to be a people of peace and grace; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

We Go with God to Love and Serve

Closing Hymn

“Cornerstone”

W. Bradbury, J. Martin, R. Morgan, E. Liljero, E. Mote

Praise Team

Benediction

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

And now may God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead, the God who said, "I am the way, the truth and the life," be working in you that which is acceptable and pleasing in His sight. May He prepare you for good works and may He show you the way and the truth and the life. Amen

Postlude

"Ah, Holy Jesus" Finale & Chorale

W. Wold
Dr. David Dorway

Acknowledgements

**As you continue to worship this week, please keep the following people
in prayer, and reach out to one another in word or deed.**

In Need of Prayer

Dolores Harris (Merrill Gardens)

Judy Aitken, Becky Aldridge, Fred & Mickie Bratschie, Bernard Buswell,
Bill Carlston, Bob & Joan Clark, Carol Daniel, Ann Donithan,
Rosamaria Duenas, Pennie & Wayne Everhart, Joice Franklin, Mary Gafford,
Charlene Harper, Greta Hougnon, Pam Kodey, Christian and Lara Kolberg,
Dorell Koon, Richard Lyle, Carole McKinnis, Sherrie Miles, Don Moore,
Maggie O'Donnell, Alice Oiler, Dodi Palmer, Mary Phillips, Art Ritter,
Aminta & Jorge Santanilla, Bruce Simon, Marty & Barbara Swartout,
Mike Walsh, and Dick Wohletz

In Memoriam:

Jack Crockett 3/18/2020
Randy Innis 3/18/2020
Clark Trapp 3/18/2020
Ruthy Stull 3/19/2020
Ted Phillips 4/1/2020
Violet Cross 4/4/2020
Bill Franklin 5/4/2020
Greg Holt 5/7/2020
Carol Mohr 5/25/2020
Priscilla Taylor 7/4/2020
Louis Romero 8/8/2020
Bettye Hodgkins 8/11/2020
Gary Oiler 8/23/2020
Donna Gibson 9/14/2020
Audrey Mitchell 12/1/2020
Alice Black 12/23/2020 ?
Phyllis McGuire 12/29/2020
Carol Moore 12/30/2020

Andrew Davis 1/1/2021

Kay Stinson 1/3/2021

Robert "Bob" Lockhart 1/16/2021

Laverne Willman 1/11/2021

Jennifer Moore 2/12/2021

Rev. Joe Fontana 2/22/2021