



Worship Bulletin

Dear Ones,

What a time to be alive! So much uncertainty, so many opportunities for fear and for faith. When Ezra gathered folks to return to Jerusalem with him, he knew it would be at best a challenging journey and at worst, dangerous, even life-threatening.

Ezra does not ask the King for an armed escort; rather, he prays and fasts with his people and then sets out on the journey.

Verse 31 of Ezra 8 says, 'The hand of our God was on us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambushes on the way'.

Ezra faces an unknown enemy and ambushes. Unseen enemies really do exist and they are terrifying. The hand of God is our safety net and our GPS and our armed escort on our journey.

He remains steadfastly good and loving toward His own.

Warmly,
Steve

God the Father Calls Us to Worship Him

The Fifth Sunday in Lent

In the Christian year, we are now in the season of Lent. Lent is a time to ask God to help us confront our own mortality and sinfulness, to ask Him to show us our need for grace, to grow in repentance, and to reflect on the amazing truth of the Church's participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The season of Lent—the period between Ash Wednesday and the Saturday before Easter—lasts 40 days (not including Sundays), reminiscent of the 40 days Jesus fasted in the wilderness.

Preparation for Worship

Seek Him for a Safe Journey

"We are not called to build the kingdom of glory, but to carry a cross in the kingdom of grace." -Edmund Clowney

"That doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints is, I believe, as thoroughly bound up with the standing or falling of the Gospel as is the article of justification by faith. Give that up, and I see no Gospel left." -Charles Spurgeon

Call to Worship

Psalm 65:1-4

Praise awaits You, our God, in Zion; to You our vows will be fulfilled.

You who answer prayer, to You all people will come.

When we were overwhelmed by sins, You forgave our transgressions.

Blessed are those You choose and bring near to live in Your courts!

We are filled with the good things of Your house, of Your holy temple.

Invocation

Song of Adoration

ALL CREATURES OF OUR GOD AND KING

All creatures of our God and King;
Lift up your voice and with us sing:
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Thou burning sun with golden beam,
Thou silver moon with softer gleam...

*O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

O rushing wind that art so strong,
You clouds that sail in Heaven along,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
O rising moon, in praise rejoice,
O lights of evening, find a voice!...

All you who are of tender heart,
Forgiving others, take your part,
O sing ye! Alleluia!
All you who pain and sorrow bear,
Praise God and on Him cast your care!...

Let all things their Creator bless,
And worship Him in humbleness,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, Three in One!...

*"Let them praise the name of the Lord, for His name alone is exalted!"
-Psalm 148:13*

Text: Francis of Assisi (1225), trans. William H. Draper (1926)

Tune: LASST UNS ERFREUEN, Geistliche Kirchengesänge, Cologne (1623), arr. Ralph Vaughn Williams. Public domain.

Welcome

We are glad you have joined us this morning! If you are "visiting" our church for the first time, we encourage you to send us an email at mail@wepc.org to introduce yourself, request prayer, or request more information about our church.

Declaring the Faith

The Apostles' Creed

The Apostles' Creed is a concise summary of the teachings of the apostles of Jesus Christ as they are recorded in the New Testament. This creed originated as a baptismal confession, probably in the second century, and developed into its present form by the sixth or seventh century. The Apostles' Creed is recognized to contain the essential beliefs of Christianity by all Protestant, Roman Catholic & Eastern Orthodox Churches.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Reflecting on the Apostles' Creed

Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 54-55 (1563)

Christian, what do you mean when you say you believe in “the holy catholic church”?

I believe that the Son of God through His Spirit and Word,¹ out of the entire human race,² from the beginning of the world to its end,³ gathers, protects, and preserves for Himself a community chosen for eternal life⁴ and united in true faith.⁵ And of this community I am⁶ and always will be⁷ a living member.

What do you understand by “the communion of saints”?

First, that believers one and all, as members of this community, share in Christ and in all His treasures and gifts.⁸ Second, that each member should consider it a duty to use these gifts readily and joyfully for the service and enrichment of the other members.⁹

¹ John 10:14-16, Acts 20:28, Rom. 10:14-17, Col. 1:18; ² Gen. 26:3b-4, Rev. 5:9; ³ Isa. 59:21, I Cor. 11:26; ⁴ Matt. 16:18, John 10:28-30, Rom. 8:28-30, Eph. 1:3-14; ⁵ Acts 2:42-47, Eph. 4:1-6; ⁶ I John 3:14, 19-21; ⁷ John 10:27-28, I Cor. 1:4-9, 1 Pet. 1:3-5; ⁸ Rom. 8:32; I Cor. 6:17; 12:4-7, 12-13; I John 1:3; ⁹ Rom. 12:4-8, I Cor. 12:20-27, 13:1-7, Phil. 2:4-8

Gospel Reading

John 10:22-30

At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.”

Prayer for Restoration and Renewal

Our “Prayer for Restoration and Renewal” comes each week from Matthew Henry's *Method for Prayer* (www.matthewhenry.org).

Pray for God's Church universal, wherever she is dispersed. For the Church's worship, ministry, and authority.

***Please email the staff at mail@wepc.org with any of your prayer requests. We welcome your prayer requests and commit to praying for them each week.

Offering

If participation in the offering is part of your weekly worship, please either mail your offering to the church office (9008 Quioccasin Road, Henrico, VA, 23229) or visit our website (www.wepc.org/resources/giving) for online giving options.

Song of Praise

DEAR REFUGE OF MY WEARY SOUL

Dear refuge of my weary soul, on Thee, when sorrows rise,
On Thee, when waves of trouble roll, my fainting hope relies.
To Thee I tell each rising grief, for Thou alone canst heal.
Thy Word can bring a sweet relief, for every pain I feel.

But oh! When gloomy doubts prevail, I fear to call Thee mine.
The springs of comfort seem to fail, and all my hopes decline.
Yet gracious God, where shall I flee? Thou art my only trust.
And still my soul would cleave to Thee,
Though prostrate in the dust.

Hast Thou not bid me seek Thy face, and shall I seek in vain?
And can the ear of sovereign grace, be deaf when I complain?
No, still the ear of sovereign grace attends the mourner's prayer.
Oh may I ever find access, to breathe my sorrows there.

Thy mercy seat is open still, here let my soul retreat.
With humble hope attend Thy will, and wait beneath Thy feet.
Thy mercy seat is open still, here let my soul retreat.
With humble hope attend Thy will, and wait beneath Thy feet.

“For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy.” -Psalm 61:3
Text: Anne Steele (1760); Tune: ©1998 Kevin Twit Music. Used by permission.
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God the Son Renews Us through His Word

Scripture Reading

Ezra 8:1-36

¹ These are the heads of their fathers' houses, and this is the genealogy of those who went up with me from Babylonia, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king: ² Of the sons of Phinehas, Gershom. Of the sons of Ithamar, Daniel. Of the sons of David, Hattush. ³ Of the sons of Shecaniah, who was of the sons of Parosh, Zechariah, with whom were registered 150 men. ⁴ Of the sons of Pahath-moab, Eliehoenai the son of Zerariah, and with him 200 men. ⁵ Of the sons of Zattu, Shecaniah the son of Jahaziel, and with him 300 men. ⁶ Of the sons of Adin, Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him 50 men. ⁷ Of the sons of Elam, Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah, and with him 70 men. ⁸ Of the sons of Shephatiah, Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him 80 men. ⁹ Of the sons of Joab, Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him 218 men. ¹⁰ Of the sons of Bani, Shelomith the son of Josiphiah, and with him 160 men. ¹¹ Of the sons of Bebai, Zechariah, the son of Bebai, and with him 28 men. ¹² Of the sons of Azgad, Johanan the son of Hakkatan, and with him 110 men. ¹³ Of the sons of Adonikam, those who came later, their names being Eliphelet, Jeuel, and Shemaiah, and with them 60 men. ¹⁴ Of the sons of Bigvai, Uthai and Zaccur, and with them 70 men.

¹⁵ I gathered them to the river that runs to Ahava, and there we camped three days. As I reviewed the people and the priests, I found there none of the sons of Levi. ¹⁶ Then I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, leading men, and for Joarib and Elnathan, who were men of insight, ¹⁷ and sent them to Iddo, the leading man at the place Casiphia, telling them what to say to Iddo and his brothers and the temple servants at the place Casiphia, namely, to send us ministers for the house of our God. ¹⁸ And by the good hand of our God on us, they brought us a man of discretion, of the sons of Mahli the son of Levi, son of Israel, namely Sherebiah with his sons and kinsmen, ¹⁸; ¹⁹ also Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiah of the sons of Merari, with his kinsmen and their sons, ²⁰; ²⁰ besides 220 of the temple servants, whom David and his officials had set apart to attend the Levites. These were all mentioned by name.

²¹ Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe

journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. ²² For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king, "The hand of our God is for good on all who seek him, and the power of his wrath is against all who forsake him." ²³ So we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty.

²⁴ Then I set apart twelve of the leading priests: Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their kinsmen with them. ²⁵ And I weighed out to them the silver and the gold and the vessels, the offering for the house of our God that the king and his counselors and his lords and all Israel there present had offered. ²⁶ I weighed out into their hand 650 talents of silver, and silver vessels worth 200 talents, and 100 talents of gold, ²⁷ 20 bowls of gold worth 1,000 darics, and two vessels of fine bright bronze as precious as gold. ²⁸ And I said to them, "You are holy to the LORD, and the vessels are holy, and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering to the LORD, the God of your fathers. ²⁹ Guard them and keep them until you weigh them before the chief priests and the Levites and the heads of fathers' houses in Israel at Jerusalem, within the chambers of the house of the LORD." ³⁰ So the priests and the Levites took over the weight of the silver and the gold and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem, to the house of our God.

³¹ Then we departed from the river Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go to Jerusalem. The hand of our God was on us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambushes by the way. ³² We came to Jerusalem, and there we remained three days. ³³ On the fourth day, within the house of our God, the silver and the gold and the vessels were weighed into the hands of Meremoth the priest, son of Uriah, and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinehas, and with them were the Levites, Jozabad the son of Jeshua and Noadiah the son of Binnui. ³⁴ The whole was counted and weighed, and the weight of everything was recorded.

³⁵ At that time those who had come from captivity, the returned exiles, offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel, twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and as a sin offering twelve male goats. All this was a burnt offering to the LORD. ³⁶ They also delivered the king's commissions to the king's satraps and to the governors of the province Beyond the River, and they aided the people and the house of God.

Sermon

God the Holy Spirit Transforms Us by His Grace

Confession of Sin

Pardon our sins, merciful Lord. We have been fearful and prove to seek safety in our own resources. We have been slow and superstitious in prayer. These sins lead to so many others. Keep us from withholding true worship from You, which Your glory is due, and which our hearts so urgently need. Wipe out our sins, known and unknown, felt and unfelt, remembered and forgotten. Grant us power to believe Your blood cleanses us from all sin, Your Spirit leads us in all prayer, Your grace overwhelms all evil, and Your Good News is our sole life and message, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Silent Confession of Sin

LORD, HAVE MERCY

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy on us.

"God, have mercy on me, a sinner." -Luke 18:13

Ancient Greek hymn, 4th century; arr. Trenton Durham, 2019

Words of Encouragement

Hebrews 7:25

He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Songs of Response to God's Grace

A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and pow'r are great, and armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing,
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabbaoth His name, from age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us;
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly pow'rs, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours
Through Him Who with us sideth;
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.

"The God of Jacob is our fortress." -Psalm 46:7

Text: Based on Psalm 46; Martin Luther (1529); Tune: EIN FESTE BURG, Martin Luther (1529). Public domain.

JESUS PAID IT ALL

I hear the Savior say,
"Thy strength indeed is small.
Child of weakness, watch and pray
Find in Me thine all in all."...

*'Cause Jesus paid it all.
All to Him I owe.
Sin had left a crimson stain;
He washed it white as snow.*

Lord, now indeed I find
Thy pow'r and Thine alone,
Can change the leper's spots,
And melt the heart of stone...

And when before the throne,
I stand in Him complete,
Jesus died my soul to save,
My lips shall still repeat...

*"You are not your own; you were bought at a price." -I Corinthians 6:19
Text: Elvina M. Hall (1865); Tune: ALL TO CHRIST (Grape). Public Domain.*

O LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET ME GO

O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

O light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain,
That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

*"I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness." -Jeremiah 31:3
Text: George Matheson (1882); Tune: ©1997 Christopher Miner Music.
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DOXOLOGY

*"Let everything that has breath praise the LORD." -Psalm 150:6
Thomas Ken (1709); Tune: "Old 100th", Louis Bourgeois (1551)*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below.
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

Benediction

Pastor Steve Shelby preached today's sermon. Worship was led by Pastor Kevin Greene. Pastor Joe Brown, Elder Rick McWhorter, & Jay Smith managed today's video live stream. Kevin Shaffer & Worship Arts Coordinator, Becca Wethered, led this morning's congregational singing.