

Pentecost #10

8-01-2021

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor

Celebrate (Introduction)

“Apparently not satisfied by Jesus feeding of thousands, some who were there press him for a sign of his power; perhaps it is daily manna they want. As always in John’s gospel when people want a sign, Jesus offers himself. He is the bread come from heaven to give life to the world. He calls us to come to him and believe in him, and through that relationship to know the one who sent him”

We come together in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Opening Hymn: [“As We Gather At Your Table”](#)

Psalm: Psalm 78:23-29

“Yet he commanded the skies above,
and opened the doors of heaven;
²⁴ and he rained down upon them manna to eat,
and gave them the grain of heaven.
²⁵ Man ate of the bread of the angels;
he sent them food in abundance.
²⁶ He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens,
and by his power he led out the south wind;
²⁷ he rained flesh upon them like dust,
winged birds like the sand of the seas;
²⁸ he let them fall in the midst of their camp,
all around their habitations.
²⁹ And they ate and were well filled,
for he gave them what they craved.”

Hymn of Praise: [“My God How Wonderful Thou Art”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“O God, eternal goodness, immeasurable love, you place your gifts before us; we eat and are satisfied. Fill us and this world in all its need with the life that comes only from you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.”

1st Reading: [Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15](#)

2nd Reading: [Ephesians 4:1-16](#)

The Gospel: [John 6:24-35](#)

Hymn of the Day: [“Now We Join In Celebration”](#)

The Message: [\(Video Link\)](#)

This past week the Olympics dominated much of the time for many people. Like all Olympics the athleticism of these athletes as individuals and as teams represents many hours, days, and years of preparation and practice. To reach this pinnacle of success takes a life almost totally dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in their field of endeavor. Every contest brings with it “The thrill of victory and the agony of defeat.” In observing this we experience mixed emotions of being happy for the victorious and sadness for those who suffered defeat especially when the results are agonizingly close.

Losing in the competitions is not the only agony which some of these top athletes may endure. Injuries and sickness may force some to withdraw from having their long held dreams being fulfilled. This is especially true this year with possibility of becoming a victim of the Covid-19 virus which several have experienced. This not only affects the individual athlete but victimizes their team or country because of their absence. What is so amazing is when this happens to a team member the team rallies behind the lost member instead of being angry or placing blame on them.

This became very evident when perhaps the world’s number one female gymnast had to withdraw from the competition. This withdrawal could very well have cost the team’s goal of a gold medal. To the outsider the reason for withdrawal, mental disorder, was not totally understandable. As a result Simone Biles has come under ridicule by some for letting her teammates and country down. But her teammates understood that this often occurs with gymnast and even has a name “twisties” which can cause series injury. This is especially true when performing difficult aerial flips and twists the brain loses orientation. Instead of blaming her for their plight they rallied around her giving her their loving support. Even though she couldn’t compete she cheered her team into winning a silver medal.

It is important to note that within sports each team member brings their particular strength to the team and encourages each other to develop their skills. In this they find unity of purpose and performance. Even if one member has to be absent the absent member is still a part of that team by encouraging and supporting them in their performance. It is interesting to note that Simone remained on the team sideline encouraging each of her teammate’s performances and could very well have helped propel Suni Lee on to winning the gold for all around gymnastic competition.

The Olympics are a visible example of not only how teams come together in a strong bond of unity but also athletes from all across the globe become unified in their competition with each other in spite of their nationality and even language barriers. Their respect for each other’s abilities solidifies this unity to the point that they may cheer for each other. This feeling of unity

is one of the reasons why the Olympics are so popular. It is two weeks when we can escape for a brief moment in time into what we wish life would be everyday – a world of diversity and competitiveness but yet unified in respect and the spirit of love and peace.

This is what we long for and this is what Paul in his letter to the Ephesians says that we have been called to live. “I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Some may say that Christianity and the church are irrelevant to the problems which we are facing today. This may be true when it loses its message as found in these words of Paul. When the church sees its success in terms of society’s goals of egocentricity, pride, and wealth only giving lip service to God’s message, it becomes a part of society’s problem and not the solution. Sadly this all too frequently may be the case. It doesn’t have to be that way for we know that we are called to be that living example as found in Paul’s challenging words. Though, in many cases we have discovered that living this love for others gives us the bond of unity. This unity in God’s love must find ways to be expressed far beyond our fellowship together.

It is important that we do not become complacent and stagnant in our life together. We must continually help each other as a team. Each of us has a unique gift to share with each other and to the life and purpose of our life together. The stronger we are not only as individuals and in our faith the stronger we are as the Body of Christ which we call Epiphany. We may believe that the Olympics bring a momentary sense of unity and peace but sadly that is just momentary. The church’s relevancy to this troubled filled nation and world should be that we can live this love and peace everyday as a member of the Body of Christ. It is not just momentary but lives on every minute of our lives.

There is little doubt that deep within the lives of people is the need for experiencing this life of unity in the spirit of love and peace. The Olympics show this. In so many ways the church can be that ever present oasis in the dry, barren desert if it strengthens its resolve to do so. We need each other and each other’s gifts in order to do so. Literally we need all hands on deck sharing our talents and giving continual encouragement to not only each other but letting this blessing we share be known to and with others. This means that we must use all of our creative talents, thinking, and abilities to find ways to become more effective in our call as members of this Body of Christ.

It is so easy to put off the challenges which face us and just live somewhat comfortably wondering why things may be different from the past. The problem, reality, and challenge is that we live in the present not the past and the future depends on what we do today. We can become controlled by the frustrations of today for they are many and continually confront us. It is so easy to become overwhelmed and say what’s the use and lose any sense of hope.

Needless to say that we live in troubling times is almost an understatement and it is so easy to get lost in the jungle of hopelessness and frustration. This calls for us to become more effective in how we share our lives with each other and then with the world in which we live. Again, just listen to Paul's words. "We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love."

Paul is saying that there is hope even though we are confronted with so much that seems hopeless. Hope lies in the fact that we must not let ourselves be overwhelmed by the deceitfulness which tries to enter our lives. We must be able to help each other see the truth through the eyes of God's love. By helping each other in this way than together we will be able to meet the challenge of being the Body of Christ, the Church. It is through this that we will not only grow personally but find hope not only in the present but the future. We will find this as a reality because others will see our unity in love and peace and will want to experience it themselves. They will see that hope can be seen in our living the life and message of Jesus. This is why the church can be and is in many cases, still very relevant even during these very troubling times. Remember this, God's love as shown through Jesus may not always seem to win, but through the ages it has endured and in many ways still is alive and well in our lives so long as we stay within the unity of the Body of Christ. Living in God's love we are a beacon of hope. For this we give thanks.

Anthem: ["Song of Peace" Agne G.](#)

Offering*: ([On-Line giving Link](#))

We give thee but thine own, what e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

The Prayer

Lord, we are in the midst of a crisis which is striking us from several different directions. Perhaps the most damaging to our society and lives is that many cannot decipher truth from fiction. Help us to open our minds in order to get beyond what we wish to be true to the actual truth. Open our eyes to see false prophets who for their own agendas and prophet are causing many people to suffer and even die. Give all of us the strength, perseverance, and wisdom to overcome the deep problems we as a nation and world face.

Increasingly many are suffering today not only from the pandemic but also for tragic and devastating wildfires, floods, famine and droughts. Protect and comfort your suffering children and bring them relief and strength to face their future.

We pray for all who need your comforting and healing presence especially Bob and Pat Allen, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Cronin family, the Elshafei family, the Fultz family, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Charles Larsen, Donna Mayhew, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, David Otto, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Linda Rigby, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family,, Della , Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Linda Williamson, Wyatt Lee Wolf, Pastor Jack,
We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you;
The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters
Live on knowing God's love,
The joy of living this life of love,
And the peace which only comes through the power of His presence within you.
So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

Closing Hymn: ["God Be With You 'Til We Meet Again"](#)

Announcements

Vicar Karen Pugatch will be ordained and installed as associate pastor at St John's Lutheran Church in Linthicum, August 7th at 2:00 PM. – 300 W. Maple Rd., 21090

Services will be outdoors unless inclement weather conditions force us indoors. Face masks and social distancing outdoors are not required. An email will be sent late Saturday afternoons stating whether indoors or outdoors.

*Offering to be sent to:

Bob Brackbill
10274 Raleigh Tavern Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church
9122 Sybert Drive
Columbia Hills
Ellicott City, MD 21043

<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org>

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online giving with the link found after the offering designation or here: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291