

Easter #2
(Retirement Sunday)

4-24-2022

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor

Celebrate (Introduction)

“In spite of all we have heard and all we have seen, it is often hard to believe. Because it is hard to believe, we will invest ourselves in the Easter mystery for fifty say (a week of weeks). Because it is hard to believe, John the evangelist will provide sign after sign celebrating Jesus’ victory over death. Because it is hard to believe, the risen Jesus will return to us again and again in the mystery of holy communion, inviting us to touch and taste, his presence, and offering us his peace.”

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

Opening Hymn: [“O God Our Help in Ages Past”](#)

Psalmody: Psalm 118:14-29

“The Lord is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.

¹⁵ Hark, glad songs of victory
in the tents of the righteous:

“The right hand of the Lord does valiantly,
¹⁶ the right hand of the Lord is exalted,
the right hand of the Lord does valiantly!”

¹⁷ I shall not die, but I shall live,
and recount the deeds of the Lord.

¹⁸ The Lord has chastened me sorely,
but he has not given me over to death.

¹⁹ Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the Lord.

²⁰ This is the gate of the Lord;
the righteous shall enter through it.

²¹ I thank thee that thou hast answered me
and hast become my salvation.

²² The stone which the builders rejected
has become the head of the corner.

²³ This is the Lord’s doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.

²⁴ This is the day which the Lord has made;

let us rejoice and be glad in it.

²⁵ Save us, we beseech thee, O Lord!

O Lord, we beseech thee, give us success!

²⁶ Blessed be he who enters in the name of the Lord!

We bless you from the house of the Lord.

²⁷ The Lord is God,

and he has given us light.

Bind the festal procession with branches,

up to the horns of the altar!

²⁸ Thou art my God, and I will give thanks to thee;

thou art my God, I will extol thee.

²⁹ O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;

for his steadfast love endures for ever!"

Hymn of Praise: ["Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"](#)

Prayer of the Day

"O God of life, you reach out to us amid our fears with the wounded hands of your risen Son. By your Spirit's breath revive our faith in your mercy, and strengthen us to be the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.. Amen."

1st Reading: [Acts 5:27-32](#)

2nd Reading: [Revelation 1:4-8](#)

The Gospel: [John 20:19-31](#)

Hymn: ["Blest Are They"](#)

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

I can clearly remember the conversation. After some small talk, Bishop Knoche came to the point. "There is a small congregation near Columbia that is in need of a part time pastor." I immediately interrupted, "But I have no interest in a suburban congregation – my interests are in an urban situation." "Do me a favor," He responded. Go visit with the folks, keeping it in mind that it is only a three year contract." Well eighteen years later here I am standing before you unaware that the Bishop had some mysterious calendar that he was using.. It turns out that he knew me better than I knew myself. Those three years have led me to this moment which I have dreaded would ever come.

But, life and time do not stand still. Age does creep up which places unwanted restrictions upon the physical nature of one's being. That time has come for me to begin a new open ended contract in my life and a new one for you also. It has become a necessity to now step aside as your pastor so that these new calendars of ours can begin.

After 18 years we have experienced so much of life from those moments of extreme joy to times of extreme sorrow and grief. There have been times we shared when life hasn't come up to expectation as well as times when we may have exceeded our expectations. We have not only endured but thrived since together we have shared our love for each other. In no small way we have experienced being the Body of Christ. Our prayers have brought us as individuals through many personal crisis. Being surrounded in prayer by our fellow members when facing surgery, has brought strength and healing to those who were in need. The power of prayer has been a reality within all of us. To be a part of this body of believers has been a continuing mountaintop experience for me and one which has been deeply implanted in my life.

You are a living example of the fulfillment of Paul's words to the Ephesians, "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." To take this further and on a very personal level for me is that you live Paul's further words which I learned as a four or five year old and which have been dwelling in my life ever since. "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you."

These words of Paul have been alive in the life of Epiphany. Even to the casual visitor they can sense a genuine spirit of love for each other. There is a real desire to come together under any excuse possible. Whether it be for worship, Lenten nights, Confirmation classes, coffee hour, movie nights, church picnics, baseball or basketball games, trips, decade nights, hospital visits, lectures, and the list could go on and on. Even during the pandemic there were those who reached out to each other.. It was a real joy to come together again as we worshipped outdoors for months. It has been so amazing to have been a part of this fellowship which experiences the words of Paul. I know it has been vital to my life especially during my senior years.

The cherished memories I have from these 18 years could fill volumes. Each of you could be a chapter or even more for each have been some much a part of my life. More important you have been so much of a vital part which makes Epiphany the Body of Christ. It has truly been amazing how you have contributed. I would often see something which needed to be done and before I could say something I would find that it was done. Many times I never knew who did it in order to thank them. They did it not for the recognition but because it needed to be done. From cleaning to weeding, from planting plants and trimming brushes, from buying supplies to polishing brass, from maintenance projects to council membership, from baking for coffee hour to transporting seniors to teaching children, from printing bulletins to making Chrismons, from decorating for the holidays to being participants in leading worship, for being in the choir or providing music for worship, for setting up for picnics to setting up for worship, and the list could go on and on.

Each of you has been and are important for it is you who have given the on-going life to this church. Many of the traditions which have been established, and which have become a vital part of our life together, have come from you, your suggestions, and your assistance to help them become a reality. As we confess the Apostle Creed, you are truly the church, the communion of saints. You are the embodiment of Paul's words, "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are a varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." He goes on to say "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."

What makes Epiphany so very special is that its life and motivation is driven by God's love. Central to the message which is lived is found in John's words, "God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them." It is clearly evident that you live out this love among each other and extend it to everyone who enters through these doors. I constantly hear from visitors that they felt welcomed and noted how friendly everybody was to them. I know this because I experience it every time I am with you. I have experienced it when I have visited patients in the hospital and find one of you there visiting also. I have experienced it in how you want to pray for those who are sick or in need. That is something very special and central to what the church should be.

I have seen this love for our young people as you have supported them in their endeavors beyond these four walls. You have made a point to encourage them by being present when they may be in some school activity or other outside activity. This support and encouragement has made a big difference in their lives. You have now extended this support and encouragement through opening our doors for youth recitals and concerts. This has actually made a difference in many of their lives. It is through this program that at least two young musicians made the decision to study music in college and now are on the verge of a professional career. This encouragement is an act of love and the young people feel and know it. This program of encouraging the development of God given gifts of talents has and will make the difference in their lives, it gives them a positive self-image and a lifetime full of enjoyment. You have and will continue to have a special place in their lives

Epiphany may be small in numbers but is mighty in its mission. Your love for your brothers and sisters throughout the world is a vivid example of the song "They Will Know We are Christians by Our Love." Over the years you have continually responded beyond everyone's wildest thoughts to the World Hunger Appeal. The first year in which we began the Angel Tree I never imagined it would have the response that it had. This response has continually shown that your love is for real. You continually answer the call of Jesus when he said, "Truly I tell you just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Not only did you give beyond all other years this past year, even though our numbers have dwindled, you came right back requesting an angel tree for the Ukraine. This tree in just five weeks has again shown your motivation of love even to strangers who you may never meet in person but people who are in desperate need. Epiphany is mighty because it knows the love of

God and the joy of sharing this love with others even though it may mean sacrifice. This living love is the greatest gift which I have experienced in my life. With this love as your foundation the future will continue to be that shining city upon the hill and shine even brighter in the years to come. This will happen as you support your new pastor as you supported me throughout these years. It is through working together that you will overcome any challenges which you may face.

With this I can only say thank you for sharing your life and love with me for these past eighteen years. You are and will always be loved within my life as long as I have breath. Paul states it best when he wrote the to the Philippians, "I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. " Again, I give my deepest gratitude to you for sharing the gospel of God's love and your life with me. May God bless you, your mission, and your life together.

Anthem: ["The Prayer" 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

Our loving Father, today your children at Epiphany celebrate the past and look forward to the future. We come to you with thanksgiving for the years of sharing our lives together and with great anticipation look forward to the coming years which your lives will be shared with a new pastor. Be ever present during this time of transition while giving the wisdom and strength to face and overcome new challenges. We not only pray for the future of Epiphany but for all those who are suffering from disease, hunger, disasters, and the devastation of war. Always let us be mindful of those who suffer and give us the ability and will to help end their plight.

We pray for all who need your comforting and healing presence especially Bob and Pat Allen, Eugene Ash, Pam Ash, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Cronin family, Leo Dickel, Dotty Gibson, Nancy Griebel, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, David Kieffer, Pam Lambert, Charles Larsen, Donna Mayhew, the McNamara family, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, Brenda Penyak, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family, Esther and Buck Trautwein,, Pastor Jack,
We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer: ["The Lord's Prayer" Jackie Evancho](#)

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: ["Let All Things Now Living"](#)

Announcements

Sunday May 1 – Please welcome their interim Pastor, Pastor Joseph Lettrich.

*Offering to be sent to
Robert Brackbill
10274 Raleigh Tavern Lane
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