

Sunday May 12, 2019 - 10:00 a.m.

*Please stand if you are able

**Prelude
Welcome**

We Gather Around God's Word

Bells and Chimes Call To Worship:

Introit: #27 "From All That Dwell below the Skies"

***Prayer of Invocation:** 🙏

L: We seek and find you in Creation, O God,
in the world you have made and the people you have called.
Your vulnerable, powerful Lamb is our shepherd and guide,
leading us to share the shelter of your abundant life.

All: Let us recognize you here in the beauty of this morning and in its challenge; may the Risen One, your Shepherd-Lamb, lead us to act for your justice and peace: so that all may drink from your springs of the waters of life, and find their tears of sorrow and pain wiped away. In the name of the Risen One we pray: Amen.

***Hymn: #28 "For the Beauty of the Earth"**

Prayer of Trust from Scripture:

Psalm 23 (NKJV) (See PowerPoint)

Passing God's Peace

*In the spirit of peace and the hope of unity,
let us offer each other a sign of Christ's peace!*

Special Music: by Carol Scribner "**Put Your Hand in the Hand**"

We Engage God's Word

Scripture Readings:

Acts 9:36-43

Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay." So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her up.

Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

John 10:22-30

At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one."

Youth Moment The Lord's Prayer

A Time of Reflection: *"The Work of Jesus Continues"*

"My sheep know my voice and they follow me." This is what we hear from the Gospel of John today and see being carried out in the lives of the disciples in the book of Acts. The people in John wanted a clear answer if Jesus was the Messiah or not to which Jesus responded, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep." So why don't they belong? Not because God has excluded them, but because they have turned a blind eye and a deaf ear to all that Jesus has told and shown them that testify to who he is. They wanted a military Messiah that would crush the enemy by force and instead they received one that came in the form of a baby entrusted into the care of ordinary people and changed the world not by force but through changing people's hearts. "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people." Jeremiah 31:33. Those who believe do more than just proclaim that Jesus is the Messiah, their lives are changed and they participate in the ministries of Jesus. David Lose points out that "there is an important difference between commanding ("do these things in order to be my sheep") and commissioning ("because you are my sheep, you will do these things; trust me, I know you"). And Jesus' promise prompts, rather than merely requires, fidelity."

<http://www.workingpreacher.org/craft.aspx?post=1534>

The work of Jesus continues as the followers of Jesus accept their commissioning, find their purpose in the body of Christ and carry it out. For Tabitha, the only named female disciple in the New Testament, she found her calling in making tunics and clothing which impacted greatly the lives who received these items as was shown in the testimony to her life when they showed Peter all that she had made and given them as a testimony to the love and care shown them through her. Tabitha clearly provided Christ's care through human hands. No huge miracles, but steady daily compassion and care through her ministry. "Because you are my sheep, you will do these things; trust me, I know you."

When Peter raised Tabitha from the dead we are told “many believed in the Lord.” Clearly, once again the people recognized that it was the Lord’s divine power being channeled through Peter that brought about this change of events. Peter had accepted his commissioning and like Tabitha was participating in the ministries of God as he followed in the ways of Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit. “Because you are my sheep, you will do these things; trust me, I know you.”

Eric Barretto describes the scene in this manner: “Many believed in the Lord.” However, belief does not emerge from a dazzling display of power. Belief is rooted in hope and in trust. So, when the residents of Joppa see Tabitha restored to life, they do not join this community of believers so much because they are stunned by this miraculous act of healing but because of what it might mean for them and for the world. If death is no longer a barrier between us, can we dare hope that the ills that plague us, our families, and our communities might also be healed by a God who cares so deeply for us? (http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1625) Resurrection if only a onetime event has no hope, but when we embrace the implications of resurrection that is when hope for a new heaven and a new earth arises.

The same is true today. David Lose says this: “*there is no testimony to our resurrection faith more powerful than doing the works that Jesus did: healing, comforting, freeing, feeding. After all, if Jesus says that his works testify to his identity, will not ours do the same?*” (<http://www.workingpreacher.org/craft.aspx?post=1534>) God’s ministries carried on through those who open their minds, ears, eyes and hearts to God and embrace their commissioning listening to Jesus saying “Because you are my sheep, you will do these things; trust me, I know you.”

So what are the things Jesus is calling us to do and telling us “Because you are my sheep, you will do these things; trust me, I know you.” We know that there is still much division in this world even to the point of hatred. Addictions of all kinds exist holding those affected by them prisoners to those addictions. How is God calling us to respond or participate in bringing about the healing of divisions and hatred and to grow in understanding of addictions of any kind in order to bring healing rather than condemnation into situations and lives? Punishment without understanding underlying causes and treating them will not bring about changed minds, hearts or lives. It is when we seek to gain understanding and wisdom and treat the underlying cause rather than the symptom when true healing takes place. Isn’t that what we tell our physicians when we are frustrated, you are just treating the symptom, but I am not going to be healed until you address the underlying cause of the problem. The same is true when it comes to addressing the ills of our society. Jesus brings about healing through wisdom and understanding and addressing not only the symptoms, but by addressing the root of the evil, illness, addiction, hatred, and so on.

What has caused such hatred in individuals or groups that they should want to belittle, harass and even kill? Us hating back will not bring any healing to the situation. How do we condemn hateful actions without condemning the individual? Maybe we begin by praying for those who persecute others and then listen for God’s voice in directing us how we might respond. Drug addictions whether street drugs or prescription is a very real problem, but addictions of any kind, chemical, sex, technology, gambling, eating, to name a few can be destructive and hold their captives hostage as well as creating collateral damage to the lives of those whom they encounter. So how is God Calling us to respond to the setting of the captives to addictions free? A former confirmand of shared on her Facebook page: “Loving an addict is hard, understanding them is harder.” She then attached a TED talk video (Everything You Think You Know About Addictions is Wrong) to her Facebook page which addresses the

issue of addictions of any kind which I believe shared much wisdom and promoted understanding in order to bring about healing. It definitely provided food for thought. It is in gaining an understanding of addictions that will set those held captive by them free. In gaining understanding it will also help build relationships rather than creating greater divisions. This young woman may not attend church on a regular basis, but I know she has a deep faith and she has heard God's call to promote understanding to bring about healing and has responded faithfully. "Because you are my sheep, you will do these things; trust me, I know you."

Just as the early church was called to carry on the ministries of God, we too are called to carry on the ministries of God. Learning and sharing the stories is an important aspect of that ministry, but discerning God's will and living it out in our lives is just as important. In other words it is hearing the Shepherd's voice and following in the Shepherd's ways not because we are commanded but because we are co-missioned by God. May we hear what God is calling us each to do as a part of the body of Christ and respond faithfully. "God of comfort and compassion, through Jesus, your Son, you lead us to the water of life and the table of your bounty. May we who have received the tender love of our Good Shepherd be strengthened by your grace to care for your flock" and your creation. Amen.

We Respond to God's Word

Singing the Faith ***"Freely, Freely"*** (See PowerPoint)

Sharing Joys, Concerns, and Prayers for the World

Call to Offering/ Offertory

***Doxology:**

**Praise God from whom all blessing flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done: Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen**

***Prayer of Dedication:** 🙏 (In Unison)

***O God, take these gifts and multiply them for the healing of your beloved world;
know that we offer them as praise to you: Blessing and Honor; Glory and Power!***

We Are Sent Into the World

Church News

Sending Hymn:** ***"Pass It On"

*** Benediction and Response:**

GO NOW IN PEACE

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