

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
PENTECOST – THE SPIRIT BECKONS
CELEBRATION OF INDEPENDENCE DAY
Pastor John R. Hanson
July 4, 2021, 8:00, 9:15, 10:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

Janet Hanson, Musician

INTRODUCTION The combination of “sentness” and dependence is a strong biblical theme, and it is clearly expressed in the readings this week. What is challenging is that the sending of God is always to service and comes to us as part of the “Sent Community.” In addition, as we are sent, we are called to trust both in God and in those from whom we receive resources and support for our work. This applies, of course, not just to clergy but to all who seek to follow Christ and live as citizens of God’s Kingdom. May we experience both God’s sending and God’s provision as we worship and as we live out the mission of Christ in our daily lives.

AN INDEPENDENCE DAY THEME

O God, you who birthed a nation and made your covenant with people escaping tyranny, you who have watched over the rise and fall of nations, great and small, near and far, you who were present in that stuffy room in Philadelphia when this nation declared its independence, be with us now.

Help us see things as you see them, from your point of view where there are no national boundaries, no ugly black boarder lines on the globe. From your point of view, the greatness of any nation is not measured by its gross national product or its military strength but by the way its people embrace your truth and love their neighbor.

As we strike up the band and light the fireworks, we celebrate our cherished independence. Teach us the discipline of responsibility so that we may use our freedom in ways that help and heal. As the Apostle Paul has said, “Let us not use freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but rather, through love, let us become servants to one another.”

We pray that as a people we may become what you promised to Abraham: A nation by whom all the nations of the world are blessed. Even as we thank you, O God, for what is, we look forward by faith to what will be when your kingdom comes, and your will is done on earth. Amen.

HYMN

“America the Beautiful”

SBH # 346

O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain
For purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain!
America, America, God shed his grace on thee;
And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea.

O beautiful for heroes proved in liberating strife
Who more than self their country loved and mercy more than life.
America, America, may God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness and ev’ry gain divine.

O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years.
Thine alabaster cities gleam undimmed by human tears.
America, America, God shed his grace on thee.
And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea.

CCLI Song # 33368 CCLI License # 1713417

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION God is good. All the time.

GOSPEL: Mark 6:1-13

Jesus preaches in his hometown, but the people reject him because they know him and cannot honor him. Then Jesus sends the twelve out in pairs with no resources to preach, and they go, proclaim Jesus’ message, heal, and cast out demons.

¹[Jesus] came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ²On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being

done by his hands! ³Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.

⁴Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." ⁵And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. ⁶And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³They cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION All the time. **God is good!**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We gather in the name of

the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord, we speak of you as the foundation of life but where do we center our living? Our sin lays as a valley of dry bones before you.

Lord, you call us to righteousness and justice, and you give us the Spirit of truth. But we refuse the love you offer in these gifts by seeking our own kingdoms and security.

We chase explanations of what went wrong rather than visions of your glory in our future. We write new rules to prevent old problems instead of seeing the aim of faithful living. We can barely name our sin! Forgive us, Lord, only you can save us.

It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that we may look deep enough into ourselves to repent fully before God. Fortunately for us, God provides the Spirit. The Advocate reveals the truth of God's great love in Jesus Christ. It is for Christ's sake that our sins are forgiven. Now, with sins forgiven, the Spirit may guide us into all truth.

We will know the glory of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON "CELEBRATION TIME!"

READING 2 Corinthians 12:2-10

Paul refuses to boast in anything except his weaknesses since God has given him a "thorn in his side" to keep him from being conceited, and so he celebrates his weaknesses for it is in them that God's strength is made perfect.

²I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. ³And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows—⁴was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. ⁵On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. ⁶But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, ⁷even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. ⁸Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, ⁹but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

HYMN

"God of Our Fathers"

Green # 567

God of our fathers, whose almighty hand
Leads forth in beauty all the starry band
Of shining worlds in splendor through the skies:
Our grateful songs before thy throne arise.

Thy love divine hath led us in the past;
In this free land by thee our lot is cast;
Be thou our ruler, guardian, guide, and stay;
Thy word our law, thy paths our chosen way.

From war's alarms, from deadly pestilence,
Be thy strong arm our ever sure defense.
Thy true religion in our hearts increase;
Thy bounteous goodness nourish us in peace.

Refresh thy people on their toilsome way;
Lead us from night to never ending day;
Fill all our lives with love and grace divine
and glory, laud, and praise be ever thine.

CCLI Song # 89006 CCLI License # 1713417

SERMON - Sending always happens in “dependence” on God. Paul recognizes that God’s strength is made perfect in his weakness, and so he refuses to boast in anything except his dependence on God.

HYMN

“Battle Hymn of the Republic”

Burgundy # 297

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword: His truth is marching on.

Glory, glory! Hallelujah! Glory, glory! Hallelujah!
Glory, glory! Hallelujah! His truth is marching on.

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgment seat.
Oh, be swift my soul to answer him, be jubilant my feet. Our God is marching on.
In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea
With a glory in His bosom That transfigures you and me
As he died to make men holy, let us live to make men free, while God is marching on.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION
THE LORD’S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

You break in on our confusion and astonish us, O God! Continue to refresh your people! You claim us again and empower us with your presence in the bread and wine of forgiveness. Silence our desire to have the right words for every occasion that we might bring the whisper of the wings of your Spirit to all the world. Amen

BENEDICTION

May God’s Holy Spirit, sent in Christ’s name, teach us and remind us of Christ’s words. “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Do not be afraid.” Christ’s peace go with you, a peace that the world cannot take away. May Christ’s peace, and the Spirit’s presence, remain with you always.

We live, empowered by God’s love.

The peace of God, which goes beyond all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen! We go in Christ’s name, to love and serve!

HYMN

“My Country, Tis of Thee”

SBH 360

My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing.
Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride,
From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

Let music swell the breeze and ring from all the trees, sweet freedom's song.
Let mortal tongues awake, let all that breathe partake,
Let rocks their silence break, the sound prolong.

Our fathers' God to thee, Author of liberty, to thee we sing.
Long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light,
Protect us by thy might, great God our king.

CCLI Song # 5205527 CCLI License # 1713417

Scripture portions are reprinted from Words for Worship, copyright 2014 Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission. Scripture quotations from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Worship, as an action, continues to change.

Use this space to guide your thoughts as the Spirit may lead you.

Use this time to center your distractions in order to help activate your worship.

Two complementary ideas come together in a very challenging way in this week's Lectionary readings. Firstly, the sending of God's people in Paul's ministry, and in both Jesus' work in his hometown and his sending of the twelve to preach and demonstrate God's Reign. Secondly, this sending always happens in dependence on God. Paul recognizes that God's strength is made perfect in his weakness, and so he refuses to boast in anything except his dependence on God. Finally, Jesus sends his disciples out, as he has been sent, with no real resources, but ready to rely on the hospitality of others for their basic needs and depending on God for the power to fulfil their ministry.

The message of this week, flowing out of last week's challenge to live under God's authority, is to embrace the call of God, and go out as servants of Christ in dependence on God's resources, God's strength, to sustain us. An important feature of this "sentness" is that it is inherent in the community of God's Reign. The individuals are sent in so far as they are part of a "sent" community. It's a basic message, and a common one to hear from the Scriptures, but it is also an important reminder that we live by God's purposes and God's resources – which is what ensures that our lives make an impact for God's Reign.

It is all too easy, in our communities and families, to receive God's call to leadership and ministry as some sort of "promotion" to a place of status. It is all too easy to begin to lean on our own wisdom, abilities, and charisma to do the work we are called to do. But when we fall into these temptations, we easily begin to become arrogant and potentially controlling and abusive (at worst) or rigid and closed to teamwork and the ideas of others (at best). Rather, in order to receive and share God's life, we need to learn two important lessons of both leadership and servanthood. The first lesson is to accept that any calling comes only as part of a called community. We are always sent as individuals because of our connection with, and our place in, a "sent community". The second lesson is that we are always sent to serve, which requires both trust in God's message and mission, and the humility to be vulnerable to those to whom we seek to minister. The resources by which we serve are also not our own, but are gifts we receive from God, and from others who are "called" to resource God's work. In this way, ministry becomes an act of community-building and of mutual service and faith. And, when we begin to live and serve like this, we truly begin to experience life as God intended it.

From John van de Laar at <http://sacredise.com>