

Community of Grace

Daily Walk for the week of October 19, 2020

Celebration of Grace...

Worship in Action

Written by Vicar Jamie Witt

Monday, Oct. 19, 2020 *“Here I Am, Lord”*

“And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.” 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7. Worship changes us. Making

space for God in your life makes things happen. We begin to notice places in our community where help is needed. We begin to be led to opportunities to help. We take our worship out of the church and into the community when we act. God hears the prayers of all and sees the difficulties the world faces. God then calls us to intervene and use the gifts we have been given to make a difference. We may be called to witness to God’s love to someone who has never heard the gospel message, or we may be called to donate food to the hungry, or we may be called to check on a friend. No matter the circumstance our worship has prepared us to receive the call and answer, *“Here I am, Lord.”* *Prayer: “Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if you lead me, I will hold your people in my heart. Amen.”*

Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2020

“We Are an Offering”

“Then he [Jesus] said to them, ‘Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’” Matthew 22:21b. What is God’s? The easy answer is everything, but let’s stop and think for a moment. What do we have that is God’s, or should be God’s? Our life and our time. God asks us for our time; to spend some of that time with God. We do that by spending time in worship, in prayer, in conversation,

and in relationship. Our days get crazy and hectic, I do understand. There can seem like there is not enough time in the day to get what you need to get done accomplished, however in the midst of that chaos God wants you to stop and spend some restful time with God. We give of our time to our families, co-workers, volunteer organizations, and the list goes on and on. Difficult as it can feel we need to prioritize that time to make sure God is at the top of that list. Martin Luther once said, “I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer.” He understood that by inviting God in first the rest would get done in its time. Give to God what is God’s...you. *Prayer: “We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you: we are an offering. Lord, use our voices, Lord, use our hands, Lord, use our lives, they are yours: we are an offering. All that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be, we give to you, we give to you. Amen.”*

Reformation Sunday

Written by Mary Anderson

Wednesday, October 21st The New Covenant

“But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, ‘Know the Lord’, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.” Jeremiah 31:33-34. The first covenant God made with Moses and his people was the Law, the Ten Commandments, and they broke it. This new covenant is of God’s unconditional love which Christians believe was made in the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Lord promised to wipe out all sin and this was accomplished in

the crucifixion of his son for all mankind. God forgave all our past sins in the gift of his Son's life and death. When we really think about it, God's forgiveness and grace is overwhelming and hard to fathom. He loves us that much and even when we keep sinning, he still loves us and will forgive us if we only ask. We have been given the greatest gift, God's grace, and need to shout it from the rooftops and share it especially with all who don't know him. **Prayer:** Blessed are you, Lord our God, ruler of the universe. You freely forgive all our sins and accept us as your beloved children. Guide us to share this forgiveness and to love one another with the same generosity you have first shown us. Amen

Thursday, October 22nd God Is Our Strength
 "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult." Psalm 46:1-3. This psalm reminds us God is our strength and is always with us despite the troubles surrounding our community, world and in our own lives. Martin Luther was inspired by this psalm to write the hymn, "A Mighty Fortress", which reminds us too each time we sing it that God is with us always, a refuge and strength, mighty and loving. In our world when we are needing to worship online and wear masks and social distance when out due to the threat of the coronavirus, it is easy to let fear and despair set in. We wonder if it will ever end. The fires in western US states have been more devastating than ever before and hurricanes this season have caused flooding and destruction for many in the southern US. It is hard to remember at times that God is still in control, our bulwark and leader. He knows what is happening and what the future

holds. He is with us and wants us to focus on his Word and truth found in the Bible. He is never changing even though all around us is and has been especially in this year. **Prayer:** Loving God, when we face times of trial, comfort us with your strength and the assurance of your love. Teach us to trust in your word and obey your commandments, so that we may live with confidence and faith. Amen

Friday, October 23rd

God's Voice in the Stillness

"Come, behold the works of the Lord; see what desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. 'Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.' The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." Psalm 46:8-11. This last verse is a repeat of verse 7 and may have been spoken by the congregation, expressing the trust that because of God's presence we, the people, need not be afraid. God delivers us from earthly threats by destroying weapons of war and he is more powerful than any earthly threats we receive or perceive. What brings me the most comfort is verse 10a, "Be still and know that I am God." How hard it is to be still and just listen for God's quiet voice. He is with us in all our turmoil and if we try hard we'll "hear" him when we take time to be still. I read in a devotion this morning about a woman taking yoga and being encouraged to meditate for 5 minutes daily which she always had a hard time doing. The instructor told her to consider it 5 minutes of prayer when she is silent before God. She didn't "hear" his voice during those times but did start feeling his peace. May we listen for God's still voice in the silence and know he is our strength and presence always and in him we have peace. **Pray-**

er: God of righteousness, you have spoken to your people through the words of law and prophets, gospels and epistles. Grant us faith to follow your teaching and wisdom to meditate on your will and listen for your voice. Amen

Saturday, October 24th

God's Truth in Grace

“Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.' They answered him, 'We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying 'You will be made free?'" John 8:31-33. Jesus tells the Jews who believed in him and to us today that He is the truth and his grace has made us free. What a gift he gave us when he died on the cross for all of our sins. His truth is grace. I am reminded over and over when I study God's word and remember all the gifts he has given me throughout my life, how blessed I am. God's truth is his grace and we need to share that with others, in all places and in every opportunity he gives us. We can be kind to our neighbors even as we social distance and wear masks to protect ourselves and our loved ones. Let us enjoy the freedom given to us in God's grace as we live our lives the way God has called us to be. **Prayer:** God of all grace, you revealed yourself through your Son, Jesus Christ, through whom you bring salvation to all. As we wait for his return in glory, help us to live as disciples with integrity and good works. Amen

Sunday, October 25th Christ Makes Us Free

“Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be

free indeed.'" John 8:34-36. John's gospel focuses on Jesus' love for us. Even though we sin, God still loves us and will forgive us. We are a slave to our sins even if we don't like to think that or admit it. We do not do the good we want to, but the evil we do not want is what we do as Paul wrote in Romans 7:19. My prayer every morning follows an example Vernon taught us in Sunday school after a men's retreat, “ACTS”=Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication using a prayer bead bracelet I made and it helps me focus on praising and thanking God before I start asking for things for others and myself. However, each day I seem to confess that I don't put others before myself and the next day am asking God/Jesus to forgive me and I try again. Sometimes during the day I get caught up in reading a novel on my Kindle (most are Christian fiction) and don't take time to call or check on others like I had planned. Jesus secured his place in heaven by following his Father's will on earth and dying on the cross. Because he did we can confess our sins and know they are forgiven and we will have a place in heaven with him now and after we die. **Prayer:** O Lord God, you are the holy lawgiver, you are the salvation of your people. By your Spirit renew us in your covenant of love, and train us to care tenderly for all our neighbors, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen