

Worship Guide for Sunday, October 11, 2020 | 10:00 am

Watch live on NPC's Facebook Page.

*For those who do not have a Facebook account,
please visit www.newnanpres.org to view the recording.*

PREPARING FOR GOD'S WORD

PRELUDE

Cliff Brock

This is the day the Lord has made. **Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Rev. David Jones

Welcome | We are glad you are worshiping with us virtually. Please let us know that you are tuned in. Visitors, please leave a message in the comments thread. One of our elders will reach out to you this week with a word of welcome. All may view the Worship Guide at www.newnanpres.org if you wish to follow along. You will note that in this service we have added two intentional moments of silence - one following the Prayer of Confession and the other following the Sermon.

Outreach Item of the Month | We will be collecting breakfast cereal during the month of October to be distributed to Bridging the Gap and One Room. You may drop off boxes of cereal to the Church Office during the week or we will host a Barrow Hall Portico Drop-Off on Sunday, October 25 from 11:00 am-1:00 pm.

OPENING PRAYER

As we prepare for a time of worship, we breathe in God's mercy...
And breathe out God's mercy to others...

HYMN 363 Rejoice, the Lord Is King!, vv. 1 & 4

Rejoice, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King adore!

Rejoice, give thanks, and sing, and triumph evermore.

Lift up your heart; lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

***Rejoice in glorious hope! For Christ, the Judge, shall come
and gather all the saints to their eternal home.***

Lift up your heart; lift up your voice! Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

CALL TO CONFESSION

We and our ancestors have sinned. Our ancestors exchanged the glory of God for the image of a golden calf. They forgot God, their Savior, who had done great things in Egypt. While our means are different, our compulsions are the same. Let us confess our brokenness, for God is merciful and just and will forgive us our sin.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Holy God, you are the Lord our God, who brought us out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of slavery. And yet our trust in you is fragile,
easily crushed by our bent toward indifference— the dismissal of your faithfulness
as a result of our forgetfulness. Our trust is fragile, easily broken by the slightest pause—
an answer to prayer not instantly given, a request for peace not immediately felt.
Our trust is fragile, easily displaced by gods of our own making—
the god of self-sufficiency, chased at any cost, the god of illusion, pursued in any form.
Lord, have mercy on us, through Christ, our Lord...**

We keep a moment of silence for personal confession.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Beloved, hear the good news: Jesus Christ came to stand in the breach to reconcile us to God. We are forgiven and freed! **Thanks be to God.**

RECEIVING THE PEACE

Jesus tell us, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." In this time, let peace reign in our hearts as we strive to live out God's will. May the peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

A TIME FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES

Rev. Darcie Jones

GLORIA 583 Glory to God

*Glory to God, glory to God, glory in the highest!
Glory to God, glory to God, alleluia, alleluia!
Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!*

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Rev. Tyler Brock

Holy Spirit of God, shine your light upon this Word and into our hearts that we may be enlightened with fresh understanding. **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Exodus 32:1-14

³² When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." ² Aaron said to them, "Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." ³ So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears, and brought them to Aaron. ⁴ He took the gold from them, formed it in a mold, and cast an image of a calf; and they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" ⁵ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a festival to the Lord." ⁶ They rose early the next day, and offered burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel.

⁷ The Lord said to Moses, "Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; ⁸ they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'" ⁹ The Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. ¹⁰ Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation."

¹¹ But Moses implored the Lord his God, and said, "O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹² Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. ¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, 'I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" ¹⁴ And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

“Building Faithfulness”

I often ask myself the question, “am I correct in assuming I’ve heard this scripture being interpreted this way?” So, I called my wife, Froo, and asked if I was incorrectly recalling the interpretation of the golden calf incident. It turns out that I have encountered this text much like she has. You may agree that you have heard this text preached this way:

With Moses gone so long, the Israelites crowd’s anxiety has them feeling like Moses might be dead. They descend upon Aaron and tell him to create new gods for them. Aaron carries out what they ask because he easily succumbs to peer pressure or because he feels similarly to them regarding their perceived need. Taking the gold collected from the crowd, Aaron creates a golden calf, which represents a foreign god(s) for the Israelites. They worship this symbol. The Lord is angry with the people for their turning away from their right worship, and Moses comes down the mountain and destroys both the commandment tablets and golden calf in a show of anger meant to persuade the crowd to return to God.

This interpretation felt familiar to me. As I returned to this text this week, it felt like being in seminary again and discovering a different, but more honest reading of the text. The first thing that needs explanation is the golden calf. In the ancient world, there was an understanding that the gods had footstools upon which they stood or rode. Footstools could be anything from animals, like the golden calf, to temples, like the stair-step ziggurats. There is a divinity these footstools signify. So, this golden calf might not represent an Egyptian bull god or the Canaanite god Baal, but rather a physical representation of where the gods might rest.

Another point of interest comes from the Hebrew words themselves. What our translation has rendered, “Come, make gods for us” and “these are your gods,” comes from the word, *elohim*, which has been translated as gods. Yet, that same word also can refer to the Lord God. I believe that the correct translation would be the crowd asking Aaron to make the Lord God for them. This group of people, who have been led by God, are asking for comfort that this image will “go before them.” Aaron, having cast the golden calf, hears the people proclaim, “This is your God, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!” Aaron responds by building an altar and declaring, “Tomorrow shall be a festival to the Lord.” This change means that the issue of the text is not that the people worshipped other gods, but that they created an idol and worshipped it. Even if it is meant to be a representation of the Lord God, idol creation and worship is still in violation of God’s commandment, which I read prior to today’s scripture.

In fact, those verses from Exodus 20 offer another textual representation of how our text can be correctly translated as misguided worship of the Lord God and not worship of foreign gods. God tells the people that they shall have no “other gods” before God. If the writers wanted it to be understood that the people were worshipping foreign gods, it is odd that they would not have written that the crowd came to Aaron and asked him to “make other gods for us.” Elsewhere in the book of Exodus, there is another textual intricacy where a single Hebrew letter that renders the translation “the gods.” In today’s lesson, the context indicates pretty strong evidence that the crowd wanted Aaron to build an idol that symbolized the Lord God.

The crowd’s idol worship leads God to become wrathful and consider destroying them. Moses, the intermediary between the people and God, eloquently defends the people from God. He does not argue that what they do is right, but instead remembers aloud how God mightily saved the people from Egypt. He asks the rhetorical question, “won’t that mean the Egyptians might think that God was evil to bring them out of Egypt to destroy them in the wilderness?” Moses ties all of the history of Israel, from Abraham to the present, to plead that God turn from wrath. Our reading ends by confirming that Moses was successful.

How does this scripture help us to understand and seek faith in today’s world? It serves as both warning and reminder of how to proceed in our mission to do God’s work. When we volunteer our resources to the church, we who are the priesthood of all believers would do well to choose not to build idols that separate us from God. The resources of the church are better served in building a society where God’s will and justice is our aim.

Nadia Bolz-Weber once believed she must guide her congregation of former addicts into the traditional church. They met in the basement of a bar on a Thursday evening. She told herself that to be successful, she needed to move them into Sunday morning worship in a sanctuary. This example is just one of many in how we fall in step with thinking that the church must be a certain way.

We are challenged to continue to grow and respond faithfully when these idols of location, time, resources, or belief stand in the way of the Spirit guiding us in new avenues. May we have hearts to hear God's unifying voice amidst the roar of internal and external forces that seek to divide us.

A time of silent reflection follows the sermon.

SERMON HYMN 39 Great Is Thy Faithfulness

***Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father; there is no shadow of turning with thee.
Thou changest not; thy compassions they fail not. As thou hast been thou forever wilt be.***

Refrain:

***Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness! Morning by morning, new mercies I see.
All I have needed thy hand hath provided. Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!***

***Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest, sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.***

(Refrain)

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

“The Blessing”

Andrea Matey and Nick Kantorczyk

by Kari Jobe and Cody Carnes

*The Lord bless you and keep you; make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you;
The Lord turn His face towards you and give you peace. Amen.*

*Dios te guarde y bendiga; Que extienda Su amor y te muestre favor
Dios te mire con agrado y te dé paz; Dios te guarde y bendiga
Que extienda Su amor y te muestre favor; Dios te mire con agrado y te dé paz. Amen*

*May His favor be upon you and a thousand generations
And your family and your children and their children and their children*

*Que te cubra con Su gracia; Hasta mil generaciones
Tu familia y tus hijos; Y los hijos, de tus hijos*

*May His presence go before you and behind you, and beside you
All around you and within you; He is with you he is with you*

*In the morning, in the evening, in your coming, and your going
In your weeping, and rejoicing, he is for you, he is for you. Amen.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of the Covenant, you never abandon your children; your steadfast love endures forever, your faithfulness throughout the generations.

We pray for those in our world whose trust has been broken through exploitation by people in power or abuse by those in intimate circles.

We pray for those whose trust has been broken through abandonment by those who promised to stay or manipulation by those who refuse to let go.

We pray for those whose trust has been broken through cold comfort in times of affliction or callous rebukes of those on the margins.

We pray for those whose trust has been broken through the trauma of war or the chaos of assault. Empower us, your body, to enfold and protect those broken in body, mind, or spirit, through your all-embracing grace, in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray saying...

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

HYMN 526 Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ

*Let us talents and tongues employ, reaching out with a shout of joy:
bread is broken; the wine is poured; Christ is spoken and seen and heard.*

*Refrain: Jesus lives again; earth can breathe again; pass the Word around: loaves abound!
Jesus lives again; earth can breathe again; pass the Word around: loaves abound!*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING

Creator God, you are our generous provider. We give you thanks for all the ways that you sustain us and offer all that we have and all that we are to you, because we belong to you. Bless the gifts that are faithfully given to the mission and operation of the church. We ask that you would bless those who volunteer resources, whether it is the fulfillment of a pledge or the gift of food for the Outreach ministry. Empower your church through the work of your Spirit to follow the instruction that Christ gave. **Amen.**

GOING FORTH TO SHARE GOD'S WORD

HYMN 765 May the God of Hope Go with Us, *sing twice*

*May the God of hope go with us every day, filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.
May the God of justice speed us on our way, bringing light and hope to every land and race.
Praying, let us work for peace; singing, share our joy with all;
working for a world that's new, faithful when we hear Christ's call.*

BENEDICTION

May the Christ who walks on wounded feet walk with you along the way.

May the Christ who serves with wounded hands stretch out your hands to serve.

May the Christ who loves with a wounded heart cause your heart to love.

May you see the face of Christ in everyone you meet, and may everyone you meet see the face of Christ in you. **Amen.**

POSTLUDE

GIVING REPORT

	<u>Giving 2020</u>	<u>Giving 2019</u>
Pledged	\$336,706.61	\$317,478.57
Unpledged	<u>\$24,094.00</u>	<u>\$53,031.49</u>
Total	\$360,800.61	\$370,510.06



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