

# Wisconsin Rapids Moravian Church

310 First Avenue South 715-423-0180 www.wrmaravian.org  
"Sharing Christ, Serving People"

Sunday, September 13, 2020

14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

## CALL TO WORSHIP – Psalm 103: 1-13

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits—

**who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the Pit,  
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good as long as you live  
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.**

The Lord works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel.

**The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.

**For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so great is his steadfast love towards those who fear him;**

As far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us.

**As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.**

## WELCOME & STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

HYMN #546

"O Bless the Lord, My Soul"

(ST. MICHAEL)

O bless the Lord, my soul! His grace to all proclaim! And all that is with-in me join to bless his holy name.

O bless the Lord, my soul! His mercies bear in mind! Forget not all his benefits! The Lord to all is kind.

He will not always chide; he will with patience wait; his wrath is ever slow to rise and ready to abate.

He pardons all our sins, prolongs our feeble breath; he heals all our infirmities and ransoms us from death.

He clothes us with his love, upholds us with this truth; and like the eagle he renews the vigor of our youth.

Then bless his holy name, whose grace has made us whole,  
whose loving kindness crowns our days! O bless the Lord, my soul!

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH PASTORAL 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen**

## SCRIPTURE READINGS:

*Genesis 50:15-21*

<sup>15</sup>Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, 'What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?' <sup>16</sup>So they approached Joseph, saying, 'Your father gave this instruction before he died, <sup>17</sup>"Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you." Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.' Joseph wept when they spoke to him. <sup>18</sup>Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, 'We are here as your slaves.' <sup>19</sup>But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup>Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. <sup>21</sup>So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.' In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

*Romans 14:7-12*

<sup>7</sup>We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. <sup>8</sup>If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. <sup>9</sup>For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

<sup>10</sup>Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God. <sup>11</sup>For it is written,

‘As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,  
and every tongue shall give praise to God.’

<sup>12</sup>So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

*Matthew 18:21-35*

<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came and said to him, ‘Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?’ <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, ‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

<sup>23</sup>For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup>When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; <sup>25</sup>and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup>So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ <sup>27</sup>And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt.

<sup>28</sup>But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ <sup>29</sup>Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ <sup>30</sup>But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup>Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?’ <sup>34</sup>And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup>So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.’

HYMN #586

“Mighty God, We Humbly Pray”

(CULBACH)

Mighty God, we humbly pray, let your pow’r now lead the way  
that in all things may show that we in your likeness grow.

Grant by guidance from above that obedience, faith, and love  
show our hearts to you are giv’n, that our treasure is in heav’n.

May it in our walk be seen that we have with Jesus been,  
that as king o’er us he reigns and unrivaled pow’r maintains.

Then shall we in ev’ry state soul and body dedicate  
unto him who for us died, till with him we’re glorified.

MESSAGE

A LITURGY OF COMPASSION

God hears the cry of the needy and does not wait for us to call before coming to our aid;

**While humanity was still lost in its brokenness, God came to us in the person of Jesus Christ, lived among us, died our death and rose to lead us into life.**

And so we come to worship, to offer God our devotion and love, our thanksgiving and praise.

**For God is worthy of our praise.**

Holy One, you are a God of compassion. You desire that all might be whole.

**In the brokenness of our lives you continue to turn toward us with the hope that we will accept your renewing love and find new meaning for our lives in you.**

You have established compassion as the foundation for all relationships and societies.

**You commanded us to love our neighbors as ourselves and to treat others in the same manner that we ourselves wish to be treated.**

Yet at times we find ourselves preoccupied with our own self-interests at the expense of helping others.

**Teach us to love ourselves in a way that embraces others also. Give us courage to make room at the center of our world where others might be renewed by your healing presence.**

Fill us with your spirit of compassion, Lord, that we might not act or speak out of our own self interests.

**Fill us with the desire to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures. Heal our hearts that we might refrain from acting in ways that will cause pain.**

Open the hearts of all people to the profound truth of Jesus Christ

**Call all nations to repent from any action that would increase the sum of human misery in the name of religion. Replace the apathy and selfishness of the world with passion to cultivate empathy with the suffering of all human beings.**

Lord, redeem us from actions that deny our common humanity.

**We desire peace over war, generosity over greed, patience over intolerance, compassion over callous judgment.**

At the root of God's compassion is the sacrifice of our Lord, Jesus Christ. We are each in need of Christ's compassion. Gratitude is our true response to God who calls us to be Christ's compassion in the world. *How is God inviting you to offer greater compassion?*

(Silent Reflection)

Jesus, in extravagant compassion, has already revealed our forgiveness and calls us to live as those who are renewed and thankful. Receive this grace and share it.

**We are grateful; we live differently because of what you, Lord Jesus, have done for us.**

*Note: We thank the Rev. Rick Beck for this liturgy and permission to share it.*

#### OFFERTORY PRAYER with PRAYER OF SERVANTHOOD

**O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come. We give you thanks for your constant presence. Through seasons of constancy and change, you are with us, calling us out of ourselves into the world to serve others. Grant that we may be united in love for each other and for those we haven't yet met. Grant us wisdom, patience, and perseverance as we work through the details and challenges of the ministry you have placed before us. Continue, O Lord, to bless the work of our hands. Bless the work of our hands. Amen.**

HYMN #587

“Our Lamb Has Conquered”

(OLD 124<sup>TH</sup>)

Our Lamb has conquered; let us follow him, with eagerness of heart and strength of limb,  
brave in endeavor, with your vision clear, and high thanksgiving for God's purpose here –  
Our Lamb has conquered: let us follow him.

In loving service may our lives be spent, in other's gladness finding sweet content,  
striving to show God's fellowship to all. To show God's loving work-the servants' call.  
In loving service may our lives be spent.

Our Lamb has conquered: let us follow him, from life's fair dawning to its twilight dim,  
Fighting with selfishness and all its brood, sin and disease, the enemies of good –  
Our Lamb has conquered: let us follow him.

#### BENEDICTION

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## WATCHWORD FOR THE WEEK

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits.

Psalm 103:2

### Adjusting to a New Normal

How are things in the future? By the quirks of preparation and publication, we write bulletin backs months in advance. Normally it's easy enough to stick to a brief commentary on the scripture, and note some applicable thoughts from life at large.

I'm not sure how things are looking on September 13, but on May 13, "normally" doesn't seem as if it will apply for some time.

That's also what the disciples were looking at in this passage. Not so much thinking about what situation people and congregations might be in six months out, but adjusting to a new normal, thanks to Jesus' presence in their lives. Everything is different from how things were just a little while ago, before Jesus strolled along the shore of the Sea of Galilee and said, "From now on . . ."

When Peter comes to Jesus with his questions about how things would be now . . . okay, about this forgiveness thing . . . Jesus gives him the data, and then provides a narrative parable to illustrate how the numbers applied. You will draw on your faith, and you will act beyond what you think you have capacity for. You think you're done forgiving, and you can just lose it and give in to your feelings, but with my strength you can keep going.

So how are things in September? I invite you to take stock, ponder what you have been through, find the hope and joy you can, and draw on Jesus through the Holy Spirit to say okay, what's next? Oh, if things have changed fantastically for the better, think back six months and give a little extra praise.

*Ian Edwards, pastor, Good News Moravian Church, Sherwood Park, Alberta*

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## The Moravian Church

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 13, 2020

