

Sunday Worship - April 21, 2024
Fourth Sunday of Easter



Circa 1000 CE, from the collection of St. Sophia of Kyiv

Narrative Lectionary Year 2 Week 33
Season of Easter: Paul & the Church at Thessalonica
Acts 17:1-9; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

First Presbyterian Church of Mount Vernon, Iowa

*“Striving to live as Jesus lived –
confronting injustice with love, compassion, service.”*

Welcome to Worship

*Please stand if you are able

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Leader: The Lord be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Grace to you, and peace in the name of God our Maker and Jesus Christ our Lord.

ALL: Grace to you, and peace. We give thanks to God for you!

Leader: Together, we come to learn from the Spirit and each other

ALL: and to pass on what we have heard, so together we may grow in Christlikeness.

Leader: We are one link in the chain, one ripple moving outward,

ALL: embodying our faith so all may see and know God's love.

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*OPENING PRAYER

Leader: You have turned the world upside down, O God, bringing life out of death.

Still you shake things up, disturbing our uneasy "peace" by showing us a more excellent way.

Open us today to be persuaded by your word that changes everything.

Strengthen us by prayer, empower us by your Spirit, orient us by your truth,

that we may confidently live lives worthy of your calling,

changing the world with your love. Amen.

~©Teri Peterson for BibleWorm

*HYMN #450 Be Thou My Vision

- 1. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
thou my best thought, by day or by night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.*
- 2. Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true Word; I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tower; raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.*
- 3. Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise; thou mine inheritance, now and always;
thou and thou only, first in my heart, high King of Heaven, my treasure thou art.*
- 4. High King of Heaven, my victory won, may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O Ruler of all.*

*CALL TO CONFESSION & PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION

Leader: To truly come before God requires that we are first honest with ourselves about who we are, about the mistakes we make, and about how well or poorly we care for others.

In this spirit, let us offer our prayers to God:

**ALL: Living God, sometimes it's so hard to live in your kingdom.
You have shown us what is possible, given us glimpses of your glory,
and yet still we are seduced by the rewards of this world.
We confess that we withhold hospitality, unwilling to open our lives to outsiders.
We give weight to voices that praise us for our accomplishments,
and so feed our egos instead of focusing on your call.
We protect the status quo that is comfortable for us,
not wanting anyone to rock the boat, not even you.
Forgive us, O God,
when we have valued our place in the social systems of our world
more than your call to radical love, grace, justice, and hospitality.
Forgive us when we have enforced our vision of calm rather than pursuing your peace.
Forgive us for choosing the rewards of here and now over the abundant life of your kingdom.
Turn us once again to your Way.
Set our eyes on those whose example we might follow,
that in turn our living faith may be an example to others,
and so together we might persevere in love that holds us fast
even through all the challenges of this life.
We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.**

~©Teri Peterson for BibleWorm, adapted

Time of silent prayer

*WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Leader: Know this: you are loved by God, and chosen to live in Christ's way so that others may know love as well. Take up your belovedness, and share it. Amen.

ALL: Thanks be to God! Amen.

*RESPONSE HYMN #583 Gloria, Gloria

*Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!*

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: Hear the teaching of Christ: A new command I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you. The peace of Christ be with you all!

ALL: And also with you.

DISCOVERY TIME Noisy Offering for SELCC's Pool Pass Program

SCRIPTURE READING

Leader: In the beginning was the Word.

ALL: And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Leader: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Acts 17:1-9 (Common English Bible) – Paul and the Church at Thessalonica

Reader 1: Paul and Silas journeyed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, then came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ² As was Paul's custom, he entered the synagogue and for three Sabbaths interacted with them on the basis of the scriptures. ³ Through his interpretation of the scriptures, he demonstrated that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. He declared, "This Jesus whom I proclaim to you is the Christ." ⁴ Some were convinced and joined Paul and Silas, including a larger number of Greek God-worshippers and quite a few prominent women.

Reader 2: ⁵ But the Jews became jealous and brought along some thugs who were hanging out in the marketplace. They formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They attacked Jason's house, intending to bring Paul and Silas before the people. ⁶ When they didn't find them, they dragged Jason and some believers before the city officials. They were shouting, "These people who have been disturbing the peace throughout the empire have also come here. ⁷ What is more, Jason has welcomed them into his home. Every one of them does what is contrary to Caesar's decrees by naming someone else as king: Jesus." ⁸ This provoked the crowd and the city officials even more. ⁹ After Jason and the others posted bail, they released them.

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 (Common English Bible) – Paul's Greeting in 1 Thessalonians

Reader 1: From Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.

To the Thessalonians' church that is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace and peace to all of you.

² We always thank God for all of you when we mention you constantly in our prayers. ³ This is because we remember your work that comes from faith, your effort that comes from love, and your perseverance that comes from hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father.

Reader 2: ⁴ Brothers and sisters, you are loved by God, and we know that he has chosen you. ⁵ We know this because our good news didn't come to you just in speech but also with power and the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know as well as we do what kind of people we were when we were with you, which was for your sake. ⁶ You became imitators of us and of the Lord when you accepted the message that came from the Holy Spirit with joy in spite of great suffering. ⁷ As a result you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸ The message about the Lord rang out from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia but in every place. The news about your faithfulness to God has spread so that we don't even need to mention it. ⁹ People tell us about what sort of welcome we had from you and how you turned to God from idols. As a result, you are serving the living and true God, ¹⁰ and you are waiting for his Son from heaven. His Son is Jesus, who is the one he raised from the dead and who is the one who will rescue us from the coming wrath.

Leader: For the Word of God in scripture, for the Word of God among us, for the Word of God within us,
ALL: Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

Rev. Lori Wunder

HYMN #175 Seek Ye First

- 1. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness,
And all these things shall be added unto you. Allelu, alleluia!*
- 2. Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and you shall find;
knock, and the door shall be opened unto you. Allelu, alleluia!*
- 3. You shall not live by bread alone, but by every word
that proceeds from the mouth of God. Allelu, alleluia!*

SHARING OF JOYS & CONCERNS AND 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.

CALL FOR THE OFFERING

Leader: As recipients of abundant life in Christ, we offer our gifts to God.

GATHERING OF THE GIFTS

OFFERTORY

~ Offerings may be placed in the basket located at the back of church or given online at www.firstpresmv.com

*HYMN OF THANKSGIVING #70 What Does the Lord Require of You?

What does the Lord require of you? What does the Lord require of you?

Justice, kindness, walk humbly with your God.

To seek justice and love kindness and walk humbly with your God.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

ALL: Lord, receive from us what we have to give.

**Not just in terms of the monetary offering we make today or at other times,
but also the skills and talents that each of us possess.**

Take all of this now, and mix it up together with the cohesive powers of your Spirit.

Use what we bring and offer for the good of your world, each and every day.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

*HYMN #300 We Are One in the Spirit

- 1. We are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord;
we are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord,
and we pray that all unity may one day be restored: REFRAIN*

*REFRAIN: And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love;
yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.*

- 2. We will walk with each other; we will walk hand in hand;
we will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
and together we'll spread the news that God is in our land: REFRAIN*
- 3. We will work with each other; we will work side by side;
we will work with each other; we will work side by side,
and we'll guard human dignity and save human pride: REFRAIN*
- 4. All praise to the Father, from whom all things come,
and all praise to Christ Jesus, God's only Son,
and all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one: REFRAIN*

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

Thank you to the following people for helping with our service this morning:

Pat Hogan, Accompanist

Gerald Gerber and Scott Larson, AV

Liturgist

Fellowship Host

First Pres Mount Vernon Staff:

Lori Wunder, Pastor

Kristi Karwal-Clark, Interim Director of Christian Education

Position Vacant, Music Director

Donna Warhover, Office Manager

Jonathan Walsh, Treasurer

Trent Bowman, Custodian