

Order of Worship for July 4, 2021 8:30 AM

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: “O Christ, Who Called the Twelve” – Hymn #856

Confession and Forgiveness

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: God has placed us in the world under the care of our parents and by extension from them under the direction of teachers, bosses, supervisors, and our government. He calls on us to be good citizens, who obey the laws of our land and serve the nations we belong to.

C: Yet, we disobey—our parents, our leaders, our government. We complain that things are not done our way. We take for granted the protection and blessings that we have from our nation.

P: We call ourselves patriots when it is convenient for us, when it serves our purposes and makes us look better than others.

C: Then we forget that being patriots involves commitment and sacrifice, giving to help others. Forgive us, Lord, for how we sin against You by sinning against the authorities over us and by being so ungrateful for what You have given us in our country.

P: Our Lord Jesus Christ took His authority and used it to serve all people, to go to the cross and die with our sin. By His command and by His authority I forgive you all your sins in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm:

P: Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!

C: Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!

P: For the LORD has chosen Zion;

C: He has desired it for His dwelling place:

P: “This is My resting place forever;

C: here I will dwell, for I have desired it.

P: I will abundantly bless her provisions;

C: I will satisfy her poor with bread.

P: Her priests I will clothe with salvation,

C: and her saints will shout for joy.”

ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P: Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!

C: Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!

Prayer of the Day:

P: O God, Your almighty power is made known chiefly in showing mercy. Grant us the fullness of Your grace that we may be called to repentance and made partakers of Your heavenly treasures; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Hymn of Praise: “Lift Every Voice and Sing” – Hymn #964

Old Testament Lesson: Ezekiel 2:1–5

R: The LORD said to me, “Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you.” And as He spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard Him speaking to me. And He said to me, “Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel, to nations of rebels, who have rebelled against Me. They and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day. The descendants also are impudent and stubborn: I send you to them, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD GOD.’ And whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house) they will know that a prophet has been among them.”

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: 2 Corinthians 12:1–10

R: I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man 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. And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. Though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. So to keep me from being too elated by the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions,

and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel: Mark 6:1–13

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the sixth chapter.

C: Glory to You, o Lord.

P: [Jesus] went away from there and came to His hometown, and His disciples followed Him. And on the Sabbath He began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard Him were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to Him? How are such mighty works done by His hands? Is 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. And Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.” And He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief. And He went about among the villages teaching. And He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts— but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. And He said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon Hymn: “*I’m But a Stranger Here*” – **Hymn #748**

Sermon: “*Home*” – **Mark 6:1-13**

How do you define home? Maybe you think of the phrase, “Home is where the heart is.” Maybe you think of the house you live in now, or the house you grew up in, or a place that gave stability to a childhood that didn’t have much. For poet Robert Frost, “home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.”

The people of Israel in the Old Testament are immigrants, travelers, wanderers, who are often away from home. Abraham is called by God to leave his father’s land to travel to a land God has promised him and is described as a wanderer. Abraham’s grandson Jacob goes on a long, rambling journey to escape the anger of his brother Esau after tricking their father to give him the birthright. Joseph doesn’t have much choice in the matter, but is sent down to Egypt after his brothers sell him into slavery; and his brothers follow him later. After Moses leads the people out of Egypt, they wander through the wilderness for forty years. The people of Israel spend a lot of time looking for home, wandering and traveling.

In the New Testament, there's a lot of wandering away from home. Jesus and his disciples are always traveling from place to place. Study Bibles have maps that show Paul's missionary journeys that span the Mediterranean Sea, looping from place to place. The author of Hebrews reminds the early Christians that they are strangers and exiles on the earth, wanderers like the people of God before them, without a place to call home.

In a very real sense, though, we're never really home no matter where we go in life. We may say, "There's no place like home;" but after the Fall, this world full of sin was never meant to be home. As we just sang, "I'm but a stranger here. Heaven is my home." Ultimately, wherever we go on earth it's just a rest stop, a layover. We know we're just passing through, looking for home.

Jesus knew the transitory nature of life. As he traveled from town to town, he never had a place of his own. Describing himself, Jesus said, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20). He knew he was a stranger on Earth, and any place that he had here was only temporary. He and his disciples wandered around Galilee, Jerusalem, and Judea, never staying in one place for long. Even though we hear brief mentions of their homes, they don't stay there.

Jesus has trouble when he tries to go home. While others know him as a teacher and a miracle worker, those in his hometown of Nazareth know him because of his family. They know his mother and brothers and may have even known his father. They know Jesus not as a teacher, but as a worker. Perhaps a carpenter, perhaps some other sort of skilled laborer who knew how to build things. Not someone who could teach them about God. Not a prophet. Not a miracle worker. Certainly not the Son of God.

Jesus faced challenges in his hometown. His mother and brothers didn't seem to know what to do with him. The rest of the townspeople were skeptical at best, violent at worst. When a visit to Nazareth is recorded in other Gospels, the townspeople try to throw Jesus off of a cliff; they're so offended by his claims and teachings.

Jesus faced those challenges, though, to give us a home. Jesus gave up everything for you, including earthly comforts like a home, so he could be your savior. He died on the cross for you, and was laid in a borrowed tomb. He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to bring you home to meet his dad and be with them forever. He came to fix the effects of sin, and prepare the way for the new heaven and the new earth that will be home like this world was supposed to be home.

Jesus also sent out his disciples to be homeless, or at least housing insecure. They'd left their boats and booths and homes behind to follow Jesus. Now they imitate him, going from home to home, town to town. They are to find homes, places where they are welcomed and treated with

hospitality, places where people are open to the message they're sharing, about the coming of the kingdom of God in Jesus. Those homes will only be temporary, as they'll travel to other towns to continue to share the Good News of Jesus.

As we get ready to celebrate our pandemic-delayed 80th anniversary, the theme is Home Away from Home, celebrating the way that Memorial has specifically been a home away from home for college students over the years. In campus ministry, students are still wanderers, still on a journey. Like Abraham and his descendants, they've left their homes to travel someplace else, but where they are they think is a temporary resting point on the way to the Promised Land of graduation and gainful employment. Students travel from towns near and small to come together for an education, and then are sent out to share what they've learned. Some return to those small towns, while others brave the challenges of the big city. Many continue to move after graduation, moving from job to job and place to place, advancing and wandering. And some just never leave and make their homes here.

The same holds true even more so for international students. Students come from China and South Korea, India and Indonesia, South Africa and Ethiopia and Brazil and countries in-between. The best and brightest students of these countries and their families travel to the United States to do further research, to study under experts in their fields, to improve their English skills. They sojourn here, living in Ames for a few months or a few years, before returning to their homelands or heading off to somewhere new with new skills and knowledge, new ideas, and hopefully a new faith.

As we journey through this world looking for home, though, we know that we do not travel alone. The people of Israel were led by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night as they traveled through the wilderness. We have Jesus, the Word of God, who became flesh and wandered among us without a home. He went out and met the disciples where they had wandered after his crucifixion on the road to Emmaus or on the lakeshore in Galilee. The apostles were sent out on journeys of their own, to wander among different peoples and share the Good News of Jesus with all people, continuing to point people to their true home.

Although we're pilgrims and travelers on the earth, weighted down by all the baggage we carry, we don't give up or lose heart. We have joy in the journey, knowing that Jesus died on the cross, taking away the burden of our sin and bearing the load for us. He came down from heaven to give us life and give us hope—and to point the way to journey's end. We don't know what heaven will be like; but we know that it's where we want to go, because of the one who prepared a place for us. Jesus went without a home on earth so he could give us a home with him forever in heaven. What a wonderful promise.

Raising the 80th Anniversary Banner

Nicene Creed:

Prayers:

P: God of the nations, on this holiday of stars and stripes,

C: we praise You for creating this world and the land in which we live.

P: God of the nations, on this holiday of fireworks and sparklers,

C: we praise You for bursting through the darkness of our sins with the brightness of Your glory.

P: God of all nations, on this holiday of barbecues and picnics,

C: we praise You for providing all that we need to support this body and life.

P: God of the nations, on this holiday of games and activities,

C: we praise You for the fun we can share with family and friends.

P: God of the nations, on this holiday of celebration and joy,

C: we praise You for the ways You have blessed our nation and our world.

Prayers (P: Lord, in Your mercy; C: Hear our prayer.)

Service of the Sacrament

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

The Words of our Lord:

Lords' Prayer: (Inside back cover of the hymnal.)

Distribution:

"What Is the World To Me" – **Hymn #730**

"Before You Lord We Bow" – **Hymn #966**

Closing Prayer:

P: Heavenly Father, You led Your people Israel through the wilderness by a cloud and pillar of fire. You fed Elijah as he fled from Jezebel. You guided the Wisemen by a star. Bring us through all our journeys in this life to our eternal home with You, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing: (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: *"God Bless Our Native Land"* – **Hymn #965**

Postlude