

Order of Worship for August 22, 2021

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

Call to Worship:

P: We come into Your presence today, Lord, at the beginning of this academic year, gathering in Your house to hear what You have to say to us.

C: We are here, Lord, a group of people, yet individual persons. We are students who wear masks of confidence during the week, but whose stomachs are churning and whose fears are known to You; the professor who must maintain the standards of the University, but who feels deeply the nervousness of the students; the parent who is not so certain of what makes a good parent, but hopes to be a good one; the housewife, merchant, farmer, workman, who need a new push and a reminder of our purpose as Your people; the children whose problems seem so small to the grown-ups, but are more than they can handle and were more than the grown-ups could handle when they were their age.

P: In many ways Your people are individual strangers who have gathered in this place, Lord. Yet as we make our beginning we do it in the confident hope that You are here among us and within us to bind us to Yourself and to one another.

**C: So we begin this worship and this new academic term by invoking Your holy name:
ALL: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**

Opening Hymn: "*Earth and All Stars*" - Hymn #817

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Our world can seem upside-down as we enter into something new like a school year. But the real fear comes from how we have taken God's world and turned it up- side-down on our sin. So we confess those sins to Him.

C: Lord God, You have made me and the whole world to be Yours. Yet I rebel against that. I have turned my life and all around me up-side-down to center my life on myself and not You and others. I can make excuses, say I didn't know better, blame others, but it is I who have sinned.

P: Our Lord Jesus came to this world to turn it upside-down as He put Himself under all of us to die with our selfishness on the cross. By His power and command 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

P: The Lord be with you,

C: and also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P: Almighty and merciful God, defend Your Church from all false teaching and error that Your faithful people may confess You to be the only true God and rejoice in Your good gifts of life and salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Hymn of Praise: *"Shine, Jesus, Shine"*(Norm)

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 29:11-19

R: And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot read."

And the LORD said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, while their hearts are far from Me, and their fear of Me is a commandment taught by men, therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden."

Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD your counsel, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?" You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, "He did not make me"; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?

Is it not yet a very little while until Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be regarded as a forest? In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see.

The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD, and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: Ephesians 5:21-33

R: Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and is Himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of His body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel: Mark 7:1-13

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 7th chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

P: Now when the Pharisees gathered to Jesus, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of His disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) And the Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” And Jesus said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

“‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me; in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”

And He said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban”’ (that is, given to God)— then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon Hymn: “Thy Strong Word” -Hymn #578

Sermon: “Wisdom?” – Proverbs 9:1-10

The new school year is upon us. How interesting was our Old Testament lesson last week, which is the same at churches all over the world, most of which are not across the street from a university. It is from Proverbs and speaks to us of wisdom. As new students you may well be asking, “Am I smart enough to get through college?” Don’t think that question is limited to you. Traditionally second year students are called, “sophomores” which literally means “wise fools.” The idea behind that is that they may just think they are smart. After that you have juniors who wonder how they are ever going to be patient enough to get through college. Then there are the seniors who may not seem to care, but deep down they still wonder, “Am I smart enough?”

The book of Proverbs takes the idea of wisdom and personifies it as a woman.

Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn her seven pillars. She has slaughtered her beasts; she has mixed her wine; she has also set her table. She has sent out her young women to call from the highest places in the town, “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” To him who lacks sense she says, “Come; eat of my bread and

drink of the wine I have mixed. Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight.”

One of the most famous churches ever built is the “Hagia Sophia” in Istanbul, Turkey. “Hagia Sophia” means “Holy Wisdom” and is in the feminine. But the wisdom that Proverbs speaks of is not what we would think of across the street from the university. It is not a matter of having the right answers and all the right information. It is about how a person lives.

You would think that there would never need to be plumbers or electricians anymore, unless people just didn’t want to get dirty. Think of all the “how-to” videos there are out there. With our unfettered access to reams and reams of information, shouldn’t we be able to solve anything? Shouldn’t expertise be as easy as getting Wi-Fi?

A Polish chemist named Michael Polanyi is also a philosopher. He says, “We can know more than we can tell.” I can readily tie my shoes. But how do I explain that to others? I can put on a tie without thinking, but when my sons asked me to tie one on them, I couldn’t do it. I had to put them on myself, then loosen them, and pull it over their heads. It is so much easier for us to recognize faces than to describe them. We can have confusion when asked to say a password out loud, give directions to a familiar destination, or give clear instructions for a family recipe we know instinctively how to do.

What we know that we cannot always tell is what Scriptures refer to as “wisdom.” It is not so much what is involved in facts that lead to getting a PhD, but life experience which you can see in a grandparent. A Harvard professor was asked by the president of the institution to do a thorough study of new students and what helped them do well in school and later in life. The result of his study was this advice to those students—“Get to know an adult each semester.” It didn’t have to be a professor. It could be a janitor, a cook, someone you work with at a job, or someone you visit in a care facility. These are people who would impart to you not information, but wisdom.

A semester ago when everything was online at Iowa State a record percentage of the student body made the Dean’s lists. Due to the stress from the pandemic professors didn’t have as high a standard as they normally do. But it was also the fact that they were limited by having no face-to-face contact, the education was more centered on information and less on “how to do.” What they were missing was “wisdom.” Our second lesson from Ephesians says, “Walk as children of light.” Notice it doesn’t say, “Learn what light is,” but “Walk in the light.”

For years at the New York Yankees spring training camp in Tampa, Florida this scene took place. An ex-pitcher nicknamed “Gator” drove to the airport to pick up a small, bent over man named “Yogi.” He took him to the local hotel, and each day took him to and from the training center. The pitcher was star pitcher Ron Guidry, and the old man was Yogi Berra. Though Berra’s son is older than Guidry, they were the closest of friends. This happened because of what Guidry continued to learn from Berra. No one would call Berra a genius. He was famous for saying at a Yankees old timer’s game when they showed pictures of ex-players who died, “I hope I never see my face up there,” or when at an event honoring him, “I want to thank everyone for making this day necessary.” But when it came to baseball and life Berra had wisdom. It was a wisdom Guidry gained from him not so much by picking up information from him, but in his playing days imitating the way Berra did things and later from just being with him. This happened even though Guidry was a pitcher and Berra a catcher.

God wants us to have wisdom. He wants us to have more than information, the facts straight, but what we can learn from imitating and experiencing. That is why Proverbs says, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.” God doesn’t just want us to have the facts right like knowing that Jesus came into this world to die on the cross and rise for us. He wants us to live in His wisdom.

That is why we are encouraged to come to worship. Proverbs compares what God offers to us to the invitation to a feast:

Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn her seven pillars. She has slaughtered her beasts; she has mixed her wine; she has also set her table. She has sent out her young women to call from the highest places in the town, “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” To him who lacks sense she says, “Come; eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight.”

In worship we hear God’s Word, receive forgiveness in our confession of sins, partake of Jesus’ true body and blood in Holy Communion, and join with other members of the body of Christ. We do this not so much to receive information—knowledge—but to gain wisdom, experience with God. That is why we want students to know the importance of the wisdom you can get from regularly joining with other Christians for worship. That is why we encourage you to come again and again to this church.

Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed

Student Surveys

Prayers of the Church

P: Lord, in Your mercy . . .

C: Hear our prayer.

Service of Holy Communion

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 Him thanks and praise.

The Words of Our Lord (Pastor)

The Lord’s Prayer

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen

Distribution of Holy Communion

Communion Hymns:

“Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness” –Hymn #563

“Alleluia! Let Praises Ring” –Hymn #822

Dismissal (pastor)

Affirming Our Calling:

P: People of God, both your work and your rest are now in God. In Holy Baptism, you died with Christ Jesus to the forces of evil and rose to new life as members of His body. As we begin this academic year, will you endeavor to be faithful to our Lord Jesus through service, worship, and personal prayer? And will you strive to recognize the gifts that God has given you and discern how they may be used in the building of God’s reign of peace and justice?

C: I will, and I ask God to help me.

P: Be at peace among yourselves. Encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

Blessing (pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: *“Go, My Children, with My Blessing” –Hymn #922*

Postlude