

Order of Worship for June 29, 2025

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: *“Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus”* – Hymn #685

Service of the Word

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

C: Amen.

Entrance Psalm

P: Show us Your steadfast love, O LORD,

C: and grant us Your salvation.

P: Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,

**C: for He will speak peace to His people, to His saints;
but let them not turn back to folly.**

P: Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him,

C: that glory may dwell in our land.

P: Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;

C: righteousness and peace kiss each other.

P: Righteousness will go before Him

C: and make His footsteps a way.

**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: Show us Your steadfast love, O Lord,

C: and grant us Your salvation.

P: The Lord be with you,

C: and also with you.

Prayer of the Day:

P: Let us pray: Lord of all power and might, author and giver of all good things, graft into our hearts the love of Your name and nourish us with all goodness that we may love and serve our neighbor; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Hymn of Praise: *“O Jesus So Sweet, O Jesus So Mild”* – Hymn #546

Old Testament Lesson: 1 Kings 19:9b-21

R: And behold, the word of the LORD came to Elijah, and He said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, thrown down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” And

God said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, thrown down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." And the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

So Elijah departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. And Elisha left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, "Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And Elijah said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" And Elisha returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel: Luke 9:51-62

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 9th chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

P: When the days drew near for Him to be taken up, Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem. And He sent messengers ahead of Him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for Him. But the people did not receive Him, because His face was set toward Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village.

As they were going along the road, someone said to Jesus, "I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." To another He said, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." And Jesus said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ

Sermon Hymn: “O God, Forsake Me Not” – Hymn #731

Sermon: “Not Alone” - 1 Kings 19:9b-21

Several years ago, former Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy asserted that we are living in an epidemic of loneliness. Why was the surgeon general concerned about this? Loneliness turns out to be more than just a feeling, it can result in a 29% increased risk of heart disease; a 32% increased risk of stroke; and a 50% increased risk of developing dementia for older adults. Loneliness affects us not only as individuals, but it affects our communal connections. Eric Liu, the CEO of Citizen University — a Seattle-based nonprofit that aims to build community and civic awareness nationwide, notes: “When you are alone and disconnected there's more stress, there's more inflammation, there's more anxiety. And that has effects not only on the body but the ways in which we see each other in community and feel connected to one another... So much of the challenge that we have right now is far upstream of electoral politics and policy, it is a culture problem.” Liu also said that the longer a person is disconnected, the easier it is for them to stop believing that others have their interests in mind or that it's possible to find common cause.

Today we hear the story of Elijah facing his own time of loneliness, disconnected and wondering if anyone else is on his side. That’s surprising, because Elijah is one of the superheroes, the great prophets of the Old Testament. He’d performed great signs and wonders to call people back to God. He’d caused a drought on Israel for 3 years to show that God provided the rain, not some pagan rain god. He’d raised the son of a widow from the dead. Most famously, he faced down the priests of Baal on Mt. Carmel, where he called down fire from heaven to prove that God was God and Baal was not. If there was a prophetic superhero in the Old Testament, Elijah was it.

But that’s not what the reading today shows us. Fresh from facing the priests of Baal on Mt. Carmel, the prophet was on the run. What should have been a great victory for the people of Israel who still trusted God instead left Elijah running for his life, faced with the wrath of Queen Jezebel. He traveled to the furthest border of the kingdom, and then fled further into the wilderness. Both in terms of distance and time, Elijah should be safe, because no one else is around. That’s when he collapses under a tree and cries out to God, “Enough of this, God! Take my life—I'm ready to join my ancestors in the grave!” (1 Kings 19:4). He feels all alone. He is over it all and done with it.

But God wasn’t done with Elijah yet. God knew that, like a toddler, Elijah needed food and a nap. God sent an angel to give him bread to sustain him for the journey. He’s given time to rest and regroup, food to strengthen and sustain him in the wilderness. God knows the journey will

be too much for him otherwise.

God doesn't just give Elijah food, though. He's sent further into the wilderness, to the mountain of God, where our reading today begins. And what happens next is truly amazing. One after another, God demonstrates his power in a mighty wind that shook the mountains to their core, a shattering earthquake, and a roaring fire. But God was not in the wind, and he wasn't in the earthquake, nor was he in the fire. Instead, he came in "a voice of quiet calm," or that "still, small voice" as the King James Version of the Bible puts it. God came in a voice. God spoke. God was present in his Word.

However we translate it, this voice seems too miniscule for God's magnificent frame. And that's the point. Elijah is pining for God to do something big and showy, as God had done for Elijah before. He's panicky, thinking he alone is left. In a barely audible whisper, God says, "I've got this. You're not alone. In fact, I have seven thousand more followers, just like you."

And then God gave him instructions for the next phase of his ministry. Elijah was to anoint Hazael king over Aram and Jehu as king over Israel. And then Elijah was supposed to raise up Elisha as an apprentice prophet after him. There was work to do! And Elijah needed to do it! But God in his wonderful grace spoke a gentle Word of encouragement to cheer Elijah along the way. Maybe Elijah was down and out, but with God things were on the rise. No longer would Elijah be alone. God was with him, and Elisha would be too. Not only that, but Elijah was wrong to think that he and he alone was faithful to the Lord. God still had seven thousand people in Israel who hadn't bowed down to Baal. There was a faithful remnant—there always is. Even though we can't always see who our friends and allies are, they're out there, because God never leaves his people all alone. He watches over them and takes care of them so that they can carry out his mission.

So, strengthened by God's Word and food and comforted by his forgiveness, Elijah goes on from there and finds Elisha and calls him to follow him. And for the rest of his life, Elijah carries on a mighty ministry in which he challenges King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, and keeps preaching the Word of God no matter if it's what the people want to hear or not. God came to Elijah at his lowest and raised him up, and gave him what he needed. He had God's word, provision, and forgiveness. He had the others God was placing in his life to encourage and help him in his work. No matter what successes or failures plagued his past, Elijah knew the journey would not be too great for him. He was not alone, and he had a future with his God.

The world is a lot right now. Life is a lot right now. Wars and rumors of wars, economic uncertainty, severe weather, and whatever else is going on can be draining. But this reading is a reminder that it is ok. When faced with challenges and chaos, maybe you do need to be

encouraged to step away. Maybe not flee to the desert, but at least take a nap, eat a snack, find a quiet place. Turn off the news, turn off your phone, and rest. And in doing that, take the time to listen for God's voice and be energized for the work God is calling us back to - work that won't be easy but is ours to do all the same.

But we don't just withdraw. We also reengage. Elijah doesn't just withdraw. He is sent back into the world. He'll be given other people to travel with him. Elijah is given strength, purpose, and community. With God providing those things, Elijah is given a new chance at life, a new life.

Some of you are probably old enough to know the chorus of a song by the Rolling Stones. "You can't always get what you want, but if you try sometimes well you might find you get what you need." The people following Jesus may not have wanted him to die for them, but they needed him to do so. Jonah didn't want to be swallowed by a whale, but he needed to be brought to that turning point where God could use him. Elijah didn't want to run out into the wilderness, but that's where he was refreshed, restored, and redirected.

We, too, are given much from God; not always what we want, but what we need. We, too, are given strength, purpose, and community. God gives us strength as He nourishes us with His Word and Sacraments. A splash of water, a wafer and a plastic cup may seem as insufficient as bread and water did to Elijah, but God comes to us through Baptism and Communion. Still today, the Lord hides in the little, the lowly, the quiet of his Word, his baptism, his meal. The great God still conceals himself in the "still, small voice" of Christ crucified and risen for you. We are given purpose as we live out our vocations, doing God's work in our careers, in our families, and in the world. God gives us community, the family of believers created in Baptism and sustained in Holy Communion. The community that is bound together in Christian love, that cares for us when we are weary and worn, tired and tried, that lifts us up in prayer when we can't form the words ourselves.

The Christian life is full of mountains and valleys, of good times and bad times. Through it all, Jesus comes along beside us to feed us and nourish us and charge us up again. God gives us strength to make it through the hard times in life. God gives us purpose for our lives. God gives us community with our fellow believers. God provides, and in God we're never alone.

Sharing Our Ministry

Offering:

Epistle Lesson: Galatians 5:1, 13-25

R: For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. ...For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Confessing our sins and receiving God's forgiveness

P: Lord God, you call us to love our neighbor as ourselves. But we bite and devour one another as we compete, compare, judge, make excuses, lie to put ourselves first in our lives.

C: We can convince ourselves that since we don't blatantly show the sins of the flesh—sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies--- that we aren't all that bad.

P: But you call us not just to stay away from the works of the flesh, but to show the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

C: Do we see that fruit or do we see so many failed opportunities, weak excuses, false justifications, and running away from responsibilities?

P: We take for granted the freedom Jesus won for us on the cross.

C: Forgive us, Lord.

P: Those who belong to the Lord have their flesh crucified with Jesus. Our sins have been nailed to the cross with Him. By His command and authority I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Walk then as those freed by Jesus.

C: Lord, send us Your Spirit so we walk by that Spirit, that we are filled with the fruit of the Spirit-- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

P: Through Baptism we now walk by that Spirit.

C: Amen.

Responsive Prayer on the Fruit of the Spirit

P: Holy Spirit, give to us the Spirit of love.

C: “A new command I give to you that you love one another as I have loved you.”

P: Holy Spirit, give to us the Spirit of joy.

C: “Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, ‘Rejoice!’”

P: Holy Spirit, give to us the Spirit of peace.

C: “My peace I leave with you. Not as the world gives, so I give to you.”

P: Holy Spirit, give to us the Spirit of patience.

C: “Be patient, therefore, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until it receives the early and late rain. You also be patient.”

P: Holy Spirit, give to us the Spirit of kindness.

C: “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

P: Holy Spirit, give to us the Spirit of goodness.

C: “We ask our God to make you worthy of the life He has called you to live. May He fulfill by His power all your desire for goodness and complete your work of faith.”

P: Holy Spirit, give to us the Spirit of faithfulness.

C: “Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

P: Holy Spirit, give to us the Spirit of gentleness.

C: “Put on, then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, gentleness, and patience, forbearing one another, and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you.”

P: Holy Spirit, give to us the Spirit of self-control.

C: “Do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.”

P: Holy Spirit, give to us your fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

C: “Against such things there is no law.”

P: “We who belong to Jesus Christ have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.”

C: “Since we live by the Spirit, let us also walk with the Spirit!”

Prayers:

Service of the Sacrament

Call to Communion:

P: As those who have received the fruit of the Holy Spirit-- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control—let us hear the call of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who invites us to come to His table and receive His true body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins.

The Words of Our Lord:

Lord’s Prayer

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

C: Amen.

Distribution

Hymns: “*O Blessed Spring*” – Hymn #595,
“*O Holy Spirit, Enter In*” – Hymn # 913

Dismissal:

Closing prayer :

ALL: Heavenly Father, however we are treated by other people, we pray that Your love may shine forth in us. Whatever happens in our lives, we ask that Your peace and joy would abide within us. No matter what difficulties we may encounter in life, teach us to be patient and kind in all our dealings with others and show the goodness and grace in us that only comes from You. However hard times may become, we pray that we may be gentle and self-controlled in our actions and attitudes. May we be good and faithful servants. Lord, we thank You that no matter what happens, even when we step away from You, You remain faithful. Amen.

Blessing (Pastor) C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: “*On What Has Now Been Sown*” – Hymn #921

Postlude