**Our Redeemer Lutheran Church Prospect Heights, IL**

**4th Sunday after Pentecost Sunday, June 28, 2020**

**HYMN** “Come Thou Almighty King” *LSB* 905

1 Come, Thou almighty King,
Help us Thy name to sing;
 Help us to praise;
Father all-glorious,
O’er all victorious,
Come and reign over us,
 Ancient of Days.

2 Come, Thou incarnate Word,
Gird on Thy mighty sword;
 Our prayer attend.
Come and Thy people bless,
And give Thy Word success,
And let Thy righteousness
 On us descend.

3 Come, holy Comforter,
Thy sacred witness bear
 In this glad hour!
Thou, who almighty art,
Now rule in ev’ry heart,
And ne’er from us depart,
 Spirit of pow’r.

4 To Thee, great One in Three,
Eternal praises be
 Hence evermore!
Thy sov’reign majesty
May we in glory see,
And to eternity
 Love and adore.

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**INVOCATION**

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

**CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION** *Psalm 124:8; 130:3–4*

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the Lord,

**People: who made heaven and earth.**

Pastor: If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

**People: But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.**

Pastor: Because we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition and have sinned in thought, word, and deed, let us employ the faith the Holy Spirit has given us and go to our gracious heavenly Father, asking His forgiveness for the sake of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**People: Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.**

Pastor: Almighty God has given His only Son to bear the punishment of our sins on the cross so that we might know the peace of His presence now and the joys of heaven hereafter. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

**HYMN OF PRAISE:** **“In Thee Is Gladness”** *LSB 818*

1 In Thee is gladness
 Amid all sadness,
Jesus, sunshine of my heart.
 By Thee are given
 The gifts of heaven,
Thou the true Redeemer art.
 Our souls Thou wakest,
 Our bonds Thou breakest;
 Who trusts Thee surely
 Has built securely;
He stands forever: Alleluia!
 Our hearts are pining
 To see Thy shining,
 Dying or living
 To Thee are cleaving;
Naught can us sever: Alleluia!

2 Since He is ours,
 We fear no powers,
Not of earth nor sin nor death.
 He sees and blesses
 In worst distresses;
He can change them with a breath.
 Wherefore the story
 Tell of His glory
 With hearts and voices;
 All heav’n rejoices
In Him forever: Alleluia!
 We shout for gladness,
 Triumph o’er sadness,
 Love Him and praise Him
 And still shall raise Him
Glad hymns forever: Alleluia!

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**SALUTATION AND PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Pastor: Let us pray, Almighty God, by the working of Your Holy Spirit, grant that we may gladly hear Your Word proclaimed among us and follow its directing; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**OLD TESTAMENT READING** *Jeremiah 28:5–9*

Lector: 5Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to Hananiah the prophet in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD, 6and the prophet Jeremiah said, “Amen! May the LORD do so; may the LORD make the words that you have prophesied come true, and bring back to this place from Babylon the vessels of the house of the LORD, and all the exiles. 7Yet hear now this word that I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. 8The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. 9As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes to pass, then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet.”

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**EPISTLE** *Romans 7:1–13*

Lector: 1Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? 2Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. 3Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

4Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. 5For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. 6But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

7What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” 8But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law, sin lies dead. 9I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. 10The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. 11For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. 12So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

13Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**HOLY GOSPEL** *Matthew 10:34–42*

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the tenth chapter.

**People: Glory to You, O Lord.**

34[Jesus said:] “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

35For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. 37Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

40“Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. 41The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. 42And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to You, O Christ.**

HYMN OF THE DAY: “Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus”  *LSB 685*

1 Let us ever walk with Jesus,
 Follow His example pure,
Through a world that would deceive us
 And to sin our spirits lure.
Onward in His footsteps treading,
 Pilgrims here, our home above,
 Full of faith and hope and love,
Let us do the Father’s bidding.
 Faithful Lord, with me abide;
 I shall follow where You guide.

2 Let us suffer here with Jesus
 And with patience bear our cross.
Joy will follow all our sadness;
 Where He is, there is no loss.
Though today we sow no laughter,
 We shall reap celestial joy;
 All discomforts that annoy
Shall give way to mirth hereafter.
 Jesus, here I share Your woe;
 Help me there Your joy to know.

3 Let us gladly die with Jesus.
 Since by death He conquered death,
He will free us from destruction,
 Give to us immortal breath.
Let us mortify all passion
 That would lead us into sin;
 And the grave that shuts us in
Shall but prove the gate to heaven.
 Jesus, here with You I die,
 There to live with You on high.

4 Let us also live with Jesus.
 He has risen from the dead
That to life we may awaken.
 Jesus, You are now our head.
We are Your own living members;
 Where You live, there we shall be
 In Your presence constantly,
Living there with You forever.
 Jesus, let me faithful be,
 Life eternal grant to me.

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**SERMON**

**Father Daniel Berrigan shares these ancient Welsh laws of hospitality:**

* **“Three things which, according to politeness, should be prepared for guests: a kind and affectionate reception, a ready and handsome provision and a friendly conversation.”**
* **“Three things which, according to politeness, should not be asked of a guest: where he came from, his worldly condition, and the place of his destination.”1**

**Hospitality is among the most ancient of human traditions. On the most basic level, it’s about providing the essentials of life for another person, especially another person who’s on a journey. Food, water and a roof over the head: the essentials.**

**But it’s about more than that. The offering of hospitality brings two people, guest and host, closer. They make a connection.**

**Many of us contribute to charitable causes, especially those that aid the needy. As we sign the check or click “enter” to send a contribution electronically, we feel we’ve done our part to ease some of the world’s woes.**

**But that’s not the same as what Jesus recommends in Matthew 10, verse 42: “... whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple — truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”**

**Jesus is advocating a true hands-on mission experience. Don’t just send money, keeping the needy at arms’ length, he’s saying. Get right in there and help God’s suffering children with your own two hands. “... whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones ....”**

**Just a cup of water: how ordinary! But a cup of cold water handed over personally to a person who’s thirsting for it: that’s extraordinary!**

            That little teaching of Jesus wraps up chapter 10, which is wholly devoted to his parting instructions to his disciples before they go on a holy walkabout — preaching the Word, healing the sick, casting out demons and generally trying to convince everyone they meet that both the love and the judgment of God are a lot closer than they think.

            In the earlier verses in chapter 10, Jesus gives his dear friends some parting instructions:

* Preach and teach and heal with boldness.
* If the people in one village want nothing to do with you, don’t waste your time there, move on to the next.
* Travel light.
* Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.
* Don’t worry about what you’re going to say; trust God to give you the right words, in the nick of time — it will happen.
* When things get really bad, and they will — people may even hate you, even your own relatives may hate you — remember they can kill the body, but not the soul. (Now, isn’t that encouraging?)
* “Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.”

            With these and similar words of wisdom, Jesus equips his disciples for their bold, risky and momentous journeys — advance emissaries for the coming reign of God.

            The actor Peter Falk was famed for his role on TV as Detective Lieutenant Columbo. Columbo’s schtick was to fumble around in his rumpled raincoat and battered shoes, looking like the most incompetent detective in history. The murderer would relax — “I’ve got nothing to fear from this fool!” — but then, as Colombo was leaving the room, he would always turn around and say, “Just one more thing ....”

            It was then that he would drop the critical question, the insignificant-sounding afterthought that sprung the trap. The steely logic behind the question would catch the perpetrators unawares, and they would stumble into a contradiction that would incriminate them.

            At the end of Jesus’ long list of parting instructions, it’s as though he turns to go away, then stops. The “one more thing” he says is no logical trap. It’s a vital word of instruction: don’t shrink from offering a cup of cold water to “these little ones.”

            Well, who are “these little ones”?

            They’re actually the very disciples he’s sending out. His instruction here is not for the disciples he’s sending out but for the crowd. And it’s not just for them, but for the whole population of Judea. He’s been telling the disciples what a tough world it is out there, that they’re going to be spurned and rejected in some villages, but that in others they will receive wonderful, spirit-lifting hospitality.

            They’ll never know, as they enter the next village, what’s in store for them. They’ve just got to go there and find out, trusting God every step of the way.

            But then Jesus gives the larger population fair warning, that he expects something of them as well:

* If you welcome me, you welcome God who sent me.
* If you welcome a prophet, you receive the prophet’s reward.
* If you welcome a righteous person, you receive the same reward righteous people receive.

            Then, he adds, “... whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple — truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

A cup of cold water seems like such a little thing. But it’s not. Cold water was a rarity in Jesus’ culture. He didn’t have to add that word. He could have just said “a cup of water.” But he said, “a cup of *cold*water.”

            Well, what’s the big deal about that? Most of us can get cold water whenever we want it. At home, it’s as easy as taking ice cubes from the refrigerator. At work or school, we’ve got refrigerated water fountains and water coolers everywhere. Sit down in a restaurant, and a glass of cold water seemingly just appears. It’s the one beverage you don’t have to pay for — and, usually, don’t even have to ask for.

            Yet, Bible times aren’t our times. Getting a cup of cold water in Jesus’ day was not such an easy thing.

            Running water had not been invented. Nor had refrigeration. A household’s water supply came from the village well. It started out cool in the early morning when someone — usually one of the women or girls — walked down there with a clay jar, filled it, and came struggling back with it balanced on her head. She would place the water jar in a shady space inside the house — but even so, as the hours went by, it lost that cool, crisp, fresh-from-the-well taste. By late in the afternoon, the time most thirsty dinner guests were likely to arrive, you were lucky if room-temperature water was what you had left. At that time of day, a room in a first-century Palestinian house — with its thick walls that delayed temperature changes but couldn’t stop them — was just about at its hottest.

            If someone brings a cup of cold water to one of “these little ones” — Jesus’ disciples, whom he’s sending out to do God’s extraordinary work in ordinary ways — it means she got up, ran to the well, and came back with fresh, cool water. A special trip, a special effort, for a special person.

            That’s what the best hospitality is all about: making that extra effort, going that extra mile to make it just right. It’s the act of kindness you didn’t have to do — nobody expected it — but you did, anyway.

            There’s an ethic, here, of reciprocity. The disciples are going out to share the greatest gift in the world, the good news of salvation. They will offer that gift for free. Some will spurn them, throwing it back in their faces. Others will accept it, but let it drop as soon as they move on — like those handbills you accept from somebody on a city sidewalk or at the mall. Some will say, “Okay, here’s a drink from the old clay water jar, if you still want it, this time of day.” But then, every once in a while, someone will say, “Here, this is for you: a cup of cold water. I fetched it from the well myself.”

            So many gifts in this world are given according to the ordinary calculus of human values, which is merely a positive restatement of the ancient criminal code, “An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.” You take care of me, I take care of you. You scratch my back, I scratch yours.

            In our society, it sometimes seems that entitlement is going to be the death of us. Listen to the political debate these days: that’s about all you hear. Whether it’s public-employee benefits at the state capital, corporate welfare, subsidies, Medicare benefits in Washington or whether some failed nation deserves to be bailed out of its monetary crisis, it’s all about entitlement.

                     Are you starting to realize that cups of cold water aren’t so common today as you may think? They just may be as rare now as they were in Jesus’ time.

            Elderly or disabled people, single-parent families, those who’ve looked diligently for work, but have been unable to find any — do they *deserve* a roof over their heads? What about the alcoholic? Or the able-bodied person who’s clinically depressed? Or the working couple who could just about make it, but they’re both addicted to cigarettes, and the cost of tobacco puts them on a downward spiral, financially and health-wise?

            These are messy situations. But poverty is always messy. The politicians continue to try to boil these complexities down into sound bites, to debate what, if anything, to do about such problems, but we know the answer.

            We know it because we’re Christians. The answer is: a cup of cold water. Not just any water. *Cold* water. A gift nobody deserves. Because it’s grace, nothing but grace. And it’s free. Always has been. Always will be. We received without price. Now, we give without pay.

**Just one more thing (as Lieutenant Columbo would say). Those who have gone on church mission trips may sometimes have an unexpected experience of role reversal. A group of volunteers may be laboring in the stifling midday heat — unloading shingles or spackling a wall or hauling a sack of trash to the pick-up truck — when one of the people they’re helping may come up to them and hold out a hand. In that hand will be a little something for them. A gift. A cup of cold water. As that weary laborer from afar takes the cup, and looks with unexpected gratitude into the eyes of the host, something will pass between them. A kind of understanding. A meeting of the minds, but even more, of the hearts.**

**For we are all alike in our thirst. We are all alike in our need. And the only person who can quench that thirst is the one offers not just ordinary water — but living water forevermore, in Jesus name, Amen.**

**CONFESSION OF FAITH** *Apostles’ Creed*

**People: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life + everlasting. Amen.**

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

Pastor: Let us pray for the Church around the world and for all people in their various circumstances.

In Jeremiah’s day, most of the Israelites were in exile in Babylon. Let us pray for people who are displaced from their homes, communities, and countries.

Heavenly Father, use humanitarian efforts on every level to supply what they lack, until the eyes of world’s power brokers are open to see their plight and put people’s needs above their own political aspirations. Lord, in Your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Prophets regularly “prophesied war, famine, and pestilence.” Let us pray for refugees from warfare, those who lack the basic necessities of life, and all who are dealing with long-term ills or sudden emergencies.

Lord Jesus, use compassionate people and agencies to provide food, clothing, and shelter where they are needed; guide emergency and medical professionals as they tend those under their care; and open our eyes to see opportunities in which we may serve. [*Specific petitions may be added.*] Lord, in Your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Paul wrote that because we belong to one another in the Body of Christ and have died to the law, “we may bear fruit for God.” Let us pray for ourselves and the Church wherever it gathers in Christ’s name.

O Holy Spirit, strengthen us and our brothers and sisters around the world as we seek to give our lives in loving service to You, reaching out to the lost, strengthening the weak in faith, and rejoicing together as we receive the real good that comes to us through Word and Sacrament. Lord, in Your mercy,

**People: hear our prayer.**

Pastor: These and any other things You would have us ask, heavenly Father, grant to us for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, for we dearly desire to sing of the steadfast love of the Lord, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**LORD’S PRAYER** *Matthew 6:9–13*

**People:** **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.**

**BENEDICTION**

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

**People: Amen.**

**HYMN** “Lord of All Hopefulness” *LSB 738*

1 Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
Whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could destroy:
 Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
 Your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

2 Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
Whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe:
 Be there at our labors, and give us, we pray,
 Your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.

3 Lord of all kindliness, Lord of all grace,
Your hands swift to welcome, Your arms to embrace:
 Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
 Your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

4 Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
Whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm:
 Be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
 Your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**