



Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Order of Worship for streaming service during COVID-19

July 5, 2020

9:30 am



about today's service

The book of The Acts of the Apostles is often referred to as "The Gospel of Luke, Part 2." It begins with the founding of the Church through the blessing of Christ and the sending of the Spirit. It deals with the struggles, joys, frustrations, and growth of the Body of Christ throughout those middle decades of the First Century. The book closes with the Apostle Paul in Rome, defending the faith before an unbelieving government. We as a congregation will be looking at this book over seven weeks, and discover how the lives of believers from nearly two thousand years ago match up with the struggles, joys, frustrations, and growth of our lives, today!

P: Presiding Minister C: Congregation L: Lector

✝ Gathering ✝

We gather together to praise God and receive God's love.

Welcome Pastor John Brock

Gathering Song: "Rescuer"
(FaithX video)

Announcements Pastor John Brock

Confession and Forgiveness Pastor John Brock

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

P: Most merciful God,
we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Song "Salvation Belongs to our God"

Verse 1

Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne. And unto the Lamb Praise and glory, wisdom and thanks, honor and power and strength.

Chorus

Be to our God forever and ever.
Be to our God forever and ever.
Be to our God forever and ever. Amen.

Verse 2

And we the redeemed shall be strong in purpose and unity. Declaring aloud praise and glory, wisdom and thanks, honor and power and strength.

Chorus

Bridge: Praise and glory, wisdom and thanks, honor and power and strength.

Chorus

Tag (2X): Amen.

(Faithx Video)

Greeting Pastor John Brock
P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Prayer of the Day Pastor John Brock
P: Let us pray. You are great, O God, and greatly to be praised. You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Grant that we may believe in you, call upon you, know you, and serve you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Children's Message Pastor Liz Frey

✝ Word ✝

We listen to the story of God's mighty acts for the sake of God's people.

Sermon and Scripture reflection: Pastor Jack Horner
One Congregation, One Book: Acts
"The dream that changed the world"
(Sermon and reading reflection for Acts of the Apostles, chapter 10)

Solo: "If You Search with All Your Heart" Craig Courtney
Marianne Brock, soloist; Ron Livingston, piano

Apostles' Creed Pastor John Brock

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the ✝ resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer Pastor John Brock

Lord's Prayer Pastor John Brock
P: Let us pray the prayer our Lord taught us.

C: 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.

Passing of Peace Pastor John Brock
P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

✠ Sending ✠

We have heard the Word of God and offered our gifts. Now we are sent out, strengthened by the Holy Spirit to be God's people in the world.

Blessing Pastor John Brock

P: The Lord be near you at all times, the Lord walk beside you so that you will not be troubled, the Lord fill your hearts with gladness, and your mouth with joyful song; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, ✠ the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you always. Amen.

Hymn "O Beautiful for Spacious Skies"

1. O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain, for purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain: America! America! God shed his grace on thee and crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea.
2. O beautiful for heroes proved in liberating strife, who more than self their country loved, and mercy more than life: America! America! May God thy gold refine, till all success be nobleness, and every gain divine.
3. O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years thine alabaster cities gleam, undimmed by human tears: America! America! God mend thine every flaw, confirm thy soul in self-control, thy liberty in law.

Text: Katherine L. Bates, 1859-1929
(video)

Dismissal Pastor John Brock

P: Go in peace. Christ is with you.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude "Postlude on AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL" John Dixon

United and empowered to worship, connect, serve.

worship leaders

Presiding Minister: The Rev. John H. Brock

Preacher: The Rev. Dr. Jack M. Horner

Children's Message: The Rev. Elizabeth E. Frey

Music: H. Timothy Koch, Debbie D Wilson

Audio Visual: Jon Lobaugh, Zach Weiss

Bulletin Production: Steve Kauffman

Bulletin Artwork: Trinity Staff

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One Congregation, One Book: Acts "The dream that changed the world"

The Reverend Dr. Jack M. Horner, Jr.

Grace and peace be to you from our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

We are continuing our sermon series on the Book of Acts and I want to invite you to read the whole Book of Acts that was written by the evangelist St. Luke. You will find it right after the Gospels. Today we are going to be focusing on the tenth chapter of Acts with a dream that changed the whole world. Well, actually it is two dreams.

And this is what Luke writes beginning in the first verse. In Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Cohort as it was called. He was a devout man who feared God with all his household. He gave alms generously to the people and prayed constantly to God. One afternoon about three o'clock he had a vision in which he clearly saw an angel of God coming in and saying to him "Cornelius!" he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" He answered, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. Now send men to Joppa to a certain Simon who is called Peter for he is lodging with Simon the tanner whose house is by the seaside." When the angel who spoke to him had left, he called two of his slaves and a devout soldier from the ranks of those who served him, and after telling them everything he sent them to Joppa.

About noon the next day as they were on their journey and approached the city Peter became hungry and he went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while it was being prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw the heaven opened and something like a large sheet coming down, being lowered to the ground by its four corners and all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds of the air were in it. Then he heard a voice saying, "Get up Peter kill and eat!" But Peter said, "By no means Lord for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean." And the voice said to him again a second time. "That what God has made clean you must not call profane." This happened three times and the thing was suddenly taken up to heaven.

Two dreams, well actually a vision and a dream if you really want to be specific. Do you dream? Do you remember your dreams? Scientists say that we have up to 5 or 6 a night and they help us with our memories, with our problem solving, they help us process emotions and

help us formulate our thinking. But scientists believe that there is really no consensus on what your dreams may mean. In that way they belong to you, they are for you to figure out the meaning. One psychiatrist said this, dreams are conversation with the self about the self.

Which brings us to our story. Two men very different in ethnic backgrounds, experiences, temperaments become bound together in two different dreams. First there is Cornelius a Roman centurion, a commander of 100 soldiers, a centurion was similar to non-commissioned officers in today's military. He lives in Caesarea the largest and most important port city on the Mediterranean in Palestine and the capital of the Roman Province of Judea and the place where the governor Pontius Pilot lived.

We read Cornelius prayed regularly in the synagogue and cared for the needy. He was probably what was known as a God-fearer, a gentile believer who was interested in learning more about the Jewish tradition and faith and was especially attracted by Judaism's monotheism, the belief in one God, and also the ethics and morality that it professed. He has not made the step of circumcision in the case of being a male believer. In his vision an angel of the Lord tells Cornelius that his prayers and generosity are recognized by God. God notices him for his faithfulness and his giving, and he tells him to send men to meet the Apostle Peter who is about 30 miles away in Joppa, which he does immediately.

Next Peter has a dream; he goes up on to the roof of a house in which he is staying which was no doubt covered for shade and he falls into a deep asleep. And there he has a dream of a sheet descending from heaven with all sorts of animals including some that were considered unclean and by Jewish law and forbidden to eat. The vision was accompanied by a heavenly voice telling him to slaughter and to eat what is provided. But Peter objects, now we know it is probably in his DNA to object, that is something that Peter did rather regularly with Jesus and the other disciples. It's a character trait of his. But he also knows the Jewish dietary laws on the preparation and eating of proper foods and he doesn't want to break them. These laws known as the Kosher laws made fellowship and meals between Jews and non-Jews incredibly difficult. God has to repeat the vision three times for Peter. It takes repetition for him to finally begin to understand and to learn and the dream in which he had signaled a major shift of Christ followers from the Jewish religion. And Peter needs help to understand what the meaning of his dream

is. And so, Luke continues the story in Acts now at the 17th verse.

Now when Peter was greatly puzzled about what to make of the vision that he had seen, suddenly men appeared that Cornelius had sent. They were asking for Simons house and were standing by the gate. They called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was staying there. While Peter was still thinking about the vision the Spirit said to him, "Look three men are searching for you. Now get up, go down, and go with them without hesitation for I have sent them." And so that 's what Peter does. He goes with the three men and when he arrives in Caesarea Peter finds that Cornelius is waiting with friends and relatives that he has invited to meet Peter as well.

Luke continues the story on Peter's arrival Cornelius met him and falling at his feet worshiped him, but Peter made him get up saying, "Stand up I am only a mortal." As he talked with him and he went and he found that many had assembled and he said to them, "You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to visit or associate with a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean for when I was sent for, I came without objection. Now may I ask you why you sent for me?" Cornelius replied, "Four days ago at this very hour, at three o'clock, I was praying in my house when suddenly a man in dazing clothes stood before me and he said Cornelius your prayer has been heard and your olms have been remembered before God. Therefore, send to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter he is staying in the house of Simon, a tanner by the sea. And therefore, I sent for you immediately and you have been kind enough to come. So now, all of us are hear in the presence of God to listen to all that the Lord has commanded you to say."

Now Peter understands, now Peter understands the meaning of his dream. Now we know that Peter is a slow learner, even as he followed Jesus, he didn't always understand the meaning of Jesus' teaching or his mission. I mean, Jesus had said before that all food was clean in Matthews gospel. He didn't understand the meaning of the Transfiguration, the Crucifixion, or Easter, or the Ascension, or even Pentecost. But now he gets it. Because of his dream and his interaction with a Gentile soldier, a Roman, now Peter fully understands the teaching, the mission, and the ministry of Jesus. And that is that there is nothing that is unclean, not food, not people. All who believe are God's chosen people regardless of any differences that they may have, not race, or ethnic background, not rich or poor, not male or

female. The dream of Peter sweeps away centuries of racial and religious prejudices.

Again, we hear from Acts, Then Peter began to speak to them, "I truly understand that God shows no partiality but in every nature anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You and I are judged by God on our faith and how we live out that faith in action in doing right." Peter goes on to share the core message of the gospel with those who are gathered, and this is the center of Christian preaching for 2000 years. He says in verse 36, "You know the message he sent to the people of Israel preaching peace by Jesus Christ He is the Lord of all." That message spread throughout Judea beginning in Galilee and after the baptism that John announced how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power and how he went about and doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil for God was with him.

We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem they put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear. Not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. And all the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives the forgiveness of sins through his name.

As Peter was speaking, Luke tells us that the Holy Spirit came upon everyone that was there and Peter said why shouldn't these people be baptized and then they were baptized. Brothers and sisters, God answers the prayers of those who seek him by sending the right person or the right insight or understanding at the right time. Cornelius sends his prayers to God and God sends his messengers to Cornelius. Cornelius sends his servants to Peter and God sends his Spirit to Peter. The servants send Peter to Cornelius and Cornelius sends his family and friends to Peter. The Holy Spirit is sent to all of them. And in these dreams, we see three important reactions that changed everything.

The first part of the equation is that both Peter and Cornelius listen. They listened to God as God was revealing himself in the dream. The second is that they trusted in God and the third was that they lived it. They offered faithful loving action toward people. All who are open to God's message of love can receive it. All means all. All are welcome, all are equal in God's sight, all are

embraced by the Spirit and giving gifts. God shows no partiality, God made you all unique, you are originals made in his image, beautiful in God's eyes. And I thank God for that. But God also made us pieces of a dynamic and beautiful puzzle. Cornelius and Peter as different as they are discover each other by God's will and grace and holy action and the churches mission, our mission, your mission is to find ways to fit together, to be together in faith and love. For together we create a beautiful image of God that God intends for the church to reflect.

This idea is also reflected in our country's traditional motto, "E Pluribus Unum" Latin for "Out of many, one, unity and diversity." Unified around ideas of freedom of thought religion association expression diversity and the beauty of our world and the variety of cultural expression. You and I have many people in our community that seem different to us. We struggle to understand their lives and their experiences, their motives and their challenges. Some of have been through difficult storms that we can barely imagine, dealt with circumstances both within and beyond their control. The color of their skin, or the balance of their checkbook, or the profession that they choose, or the team that they root for is unlike ours. But in the end, we are all human beings loved by God. "All of us are struggling," as writer Leonard Sweet said, "to survive in a world in which we have been born all striving for love in a world that categorizes far too often between ugly and beautiful, clean and unclean."

The dreams of Cornelius and Peter made long ago make clear that that is not God's intention for you and for me. We may be different, but God shows no partiality. We are one people, one church, chosen and loved by God. Given the Holy Spirit to love and to serve others. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.