



## Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Order of Worship for streaming service during COVID-19

July 11, 2020

5:30 pm



### 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 Jack Horner

Gathering songs: (FaithX)

Announcements Pastor Jack Horner

Call to Worship Pastor Jack Horner (based on Matthew 11:28-30)

P: Come, all that are weary, all that are carrying burdens so heavy Jesus will give us rest

C: Amen, make it so, dear God.

P: Come, take what Jesus has to offer: love, forgiveness, and grace Christ will give us peace

C: Amen, make it so, dear God.

P: Come, find rest, and learn from Jesus For our Savior will give us rest for our souls

C: Amen, make it so, dear God.

P: Come, let us worship our Jesus, who leads us into life. Amen

Greeting Pastor Jack Horner

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 Jack Horner

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, we thank you for planting in us the seed of your word. By your Holy Spirit help us to receive it with joy, live according to it, and grow in faith and hope and love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

### ✝ Word ✝

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

Children's Message Pastor John Brock

Sermon and Scripture reflection: Pastor Liz Frey

One Congregation, One Book: Acts

"When God puts the brakes on."

(Sermon and reading reflection for Acts of the Apostles, chapter 16)

Song: "Still" By Molly Reed and Justin Ebach (FaithX ensemble)

Pastoral Prayer Pastor Jack Horner

Lord's Prayer Pastor Jack Horner

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.

### ✝ Meal ✝

When we celebrate communion we remember that Jesus died for us and we experience His love and forgiveness. As we eat the bread and wine Christ is present with us.

Great Thanksgiving

P: Christ is here.

C: The Spirit is with us.

P: With joy, we lift up our hearts.

C: And give thanks to the Lord of Life.

Eucharistic Prayer Pastor Jack Horner

P: Holy God, our Maker, Redeemer, and Healer, in the harmonious world of your creation, the plants and animals, the seas and stars were whole and well in your praise. When sin had scarred the world, you sent your Son to heal our ills and to form us again into one.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

P: Remembering, therefore, his acts of healing, his body given up, and his victory over death, we await that day when all the peoples of the earth will come to the river to enjoy the tree of life.

P: Send your Spirit upon us and this meal: as grains scattered on the hillside become one bread, so let your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth, that all may be fed with the Bread of life, your Son. Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. Amen

Prayer of Preparation

P: Merciful God, we do not presume to come to your table trusting in our own righteousness, but in your abundant mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat and drink the body and blood of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, that we may live in him and he in us, now and forever. Amen.

## ✚ 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 Jack Horner

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.

Dismissal Pastor Jack Horner

P: Go in peace. Christ is with you.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Sending Song:  
(FaithX)

**United and empowered to worship, connect, serve.**

### worship leaders

**Presiding Minister:** The Rev. Dr. Jack M. Horner

**Preacher:** The Rev. Elizabeth E. Frey

**Children's Message:** The Rev. John H. Brock

**Music:** H. Timothy Koch, Debbie D Wilson

**Audio Visual:** Jon Lobaugh, Daniel Andrews

**Bulletin Production:** Steve Kauffman

**Bulletin Artwork:** Trinity Staff

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"Still" By Molly Reed and Justin Ebach. Ó 2015 Dayspring Music, LLC | Wordspring Music, LLC CCLI #1283514.

**Don't just listen to the Sermon...Ponder how you can live it!**

**Use these questions as a starting point to dive deeper into the sermon each week. Can be used individually, with family and friends, or with your Life-group!**

1. Who and/or what is disrupted by the gospel in these stories? Who and/or what is resisting or fearful of the gospel and God's action of putting on the brakes?
2. What might be disrupted by the gospel in our world today? How might God be putting the brakes on 'the way things are?' How might human beings resist or be fearful of the gospel and God's holy disruptions?
3. Are there moments in your life when the gospel disrupted you or God put the brakes on your perceived plan?

## One Congregation, One Book: Acts "When God puts the brakes on."

*The Reverend Elizabeth E. Frey*

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

Today we continue working our way through the book of Acts, diving into Acts 16. This week we are joined by Paul and his friend, Silas as they try to head off into Asia – probably modern Turkey - to spread the good news of Jesus. But, as our theme for today tells us, God has other plans for these men. God puts the brakes on their plans.

The author of Acts tells us that they were “forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia” (Acts 16:6). Forbidden. This is a disruptive action taken by the Holy Spirit. Paul and his friends have a plan for sharing the good news, but the Holy Spirit blocks their way. Their plan is disrupted. God interrupts them. We aren't sure how this happens, but it fascinates me. This action of the Spirit tells us how God guides and empowers the witness of the church in Acts and today.

As I've been reading Acts these last few weeks, I've been reading it through a lens influenced by the work of New Testament professor Matt Skinner out of Luther Seminary. Skinner reads the gospel as “disruptive” in the book of Acts because the people - like Paul and Silas - who live and proclaim the gospel talk about how “God is bringing something new into being, something that challenges ‘the world’” - something that challenges ‘the way things are.’ The gospel message also disrupts those that hear it as the gospel changes them and their lives. Our story for today is filled with several people disrupted – changed – by the gospel. Let's pick back up with our story.

Paul receives a vision: “there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia, and help us.’ When [Paul] had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to

them” (Acts 16:9-10). This vision takes Paul and his friends to Europe; most importantly, this vision takes the gospel to more Gentiles. You see the city to which Paul is headed is Philippi, a very Roman city with few Jews living there.

So, let’s talk about Philippi. It is “a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony” (Acts 16:12). Philippi is an important city for the Romans. It is on a trade route. It is home to fertile, mineral rich farmland. And it is home to an important Roman military base. Philippi was a place of Roman power and was imbued with Roman culture. Philippi was as Roman as one could get without being in Rome.

Once at Philippi, Paul and Silas find a group of women outside the city gates worshipping God down by the river. They encounter a woman named Lydia: a worshipper of God from the city of Thyatira (Thy Ah tie Rah). Like Tabitha in Acts 9 before her, these few verses about Lydia tell us a whole lot. Lydia is a businesswoman: a dealer in purple cloth. She probably was wealthy, owned her home, and rubbed elbows with the rich and powerful. She was also not from Philippi and so Lydia is an immigrant. Acts tells us that her heart was opened by God to listen “eagerly” to Paul and the gospel changes Lydia and her life. Upon hearing the gospel message, Lydia responds with hospitality. She invites Paul and his friends into her home; one outsider welcoming others.

Our story continues with another encounter with a very different woman. As Paul and his friends walk about Philippi, a slave girl with a gift – or a curse – for fortune telling follows them. She is doubly enslaved: enslaved by a spirit that gives her this gift-curse and enslaved by powerful people who exploit her and make money off her.

In what seems to be a comical fashion, she follows these men around declaring, “These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation” (Acts 16:17). This scene repeats itself for several days until Paul can’t stand it anymore and orders the spirit out of her in the name of Jesus. Paul’s annoyance

frees her from the spirit, but what happens to this girl? We never know because the story shifts to the consequence of Paul’s action.

Paul and Silas are arrested because her owners couldn’t exploit her anymore; “their hope of making money was gone” (Acts 16:19). The work of God disrupts their exploitation and abuse of another human being. The charges brought against Paul and Silas are awful and are filled with resentment toward who Paul and Silas are and the message they proclaim. “These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe” (Acts 16:20-21).

Let me repeat this line: “These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe.” What do these charges tell us? There is fear about what might happen if this gospel message flourishes in their city. You see the gospel that Paul and his friends proclaim threatens the ideals and values of Roman culture: “the way things are.” Paul declares God more powerful than the Roman Empire. If the gospel were to flourish in Philippi, this city, its culture and values would be disrupted. So, these men – disrupters of Roman values– are arrested and put into prison.

Our story ends in a very dramatic way. Paul and Silas are in prison when an earthquake shakes things up. It is “so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately, all the doors were opened, and everyone’s chains unfastened” (Acts 16:26). The jailer is awakened by this loud and seismic noise. And when he sees the doors have been opened, the jailer grabs his sword ready to kill himself. But Paul prevents him from taking his own life because he and the other prisoners are still there. Paul proclaims the good news to this man, and the jailer believes in Jesus and is baptized into the faith. In a dramatic fashion, God disturbs the peace and the gospel message disrupts this man’s life. God frees him from chains much like those that shackled his prisoners. The trajectory of his life changes when God puts the brakes on.

What might these stories tell us about our lives and society today? Where is the gospel message disruptive? How is God putting the brakes on “the way things are” today? Do we have examples of moments when the gospel disrupted us, and God changed our lives?

As I see it, the Holy Spirit is at work in our country today and the gospel message is being proclaimed in the streets and from the rooftops of American cities. As we continue to fight a pandemic and racial inequality, there is change happening around us.

We used to take certain people and professions for granted and now, they are our essential workers: restocking grocery store shelves, driving buses, collecting garbage, boxing up online orders, and delivering mail. The pandemic has showed us who is essential and whose work should be valued. All people and all service are valued by God. This is a gospel message.

And as we grapple with racial inequality in our country, we see the gospel taking root and disrupting “the way things are” because Black lives matter. No one deserves to die because of the color of their skin. God creates and loves every human being, and as followers of Jesus, we are created to love and care for one another, sharing the love of God that has been lavishly given to us. This is also a gospel message.

Just as the gospel disrupted and changed the city and people of Philippi, the gospel continues to disrupt and change us. God puts the brakes on and changes the course because God’s way of doing things isn’t always the way the world does things. And just as there was resistance to God and the gospel in Philippi, there will be resistance today.

And yet, God calls us to reimagine our world to see it the way God does. God invites us to reimagine the world where God’s values are our values. God calls us to make God’s love for all our fundamental way of living with each other.

How might the gospel message be disrupting you? The gospel changes how we see ourselves; the gospel changes how we see other, how we

see our world. It might not be an earthquake or a dramatic vision like Paul’s, but could God be creating positive change in your life? And are you open to God’s work or are you resistant?

After Paul receives his vision of the Macedonian man, the author of Acts tells us that they were “convinced that God had called them to proclaim the good news to [those in Macedonia]” (Acts 16:10). They were convinced. They showed faithfulness to God’s call; they trusted that God was guiding them and would accompany them wherever they were going.

Friends, if the gospel is disrupting or if God seems to be putting on the brakes, our immediate reaction might be fear or resistance. Both things often lead to change and change can be scary and we are often resistant to it. But is it possible for us to lean into the gospel and God’s call in our lives more faithfully? Is it possible for us to trust where God leads us?

Yes, it is because God is ever faithful to us. Because God is worthy of our trust. The gospel might disrupt, and God might put the brakes on our plans, but when things change, God does not. Amen.