

To our Zion family,

I'll be honest in saying that I began last Sunday's worship service with a heavy heart, conveying to those attending that long-time Zion member, Michael Gilleece, had passed away a few days earlier. Michael had been through so much in his life, all undeserved. Thank God for Rev. Janet Hoover, the music provided by Marcus Corasanti, and the readings for that day, especially Philippians 4: 4-9. The Philippians reading, especially verses 8 and 9, provided some comfort as I thought about Michael. *Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.* When I heard these words, I felt some sense of peace, as this was the way Michael lived his life, despite plenty of justification to feel angry and bitter. I got to thinking about Michael, now joining his dad and Peggy, Barb, and Doris, all gathered up in the arms of their loving God. My heart felt lighter.

Announcements and updates:

Sunday Worship Services

Aug. 22nd -at Zion, Deacon Patsy Glista presiding.

Aug.29th and Sept. 5th at Our Saviour, Pastor Anita Mohr presiding. (This service also begins at 10:00)

To join on Zion's Sunday services at 10:00 AM via Zoom, use the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84354840714?pwd=TDJGTkwvSTBER2lNb1o1Qzd6WGxDdz09>,

Meeting ID: 843 5484 0714, Password: 022654. Or by PHONE, +16465588656, 84354840714#, 1#, 022654#. If you are joining us on Zoom, please be sure you are on mute and that your video is turned off from 10 AM when the service commences until it ends and the "Joyful Chaos" begins. To join the service by Livestream on our YouTube channel, you can do so by visiting our page at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWzOtfCe2z7-bIPvxp62IA>

The service at Our Saviour will take place in their sanctuary and also Zoomed. The Zoom link will be sent in the leadership letter prior to that week's service.

Sad News

Michael Gilleece and his family were long-time members of Zion prior to their move to Florida several years ago. Michael, 44, **passed away late last week.** As many of you know, Michael courageously battled a number of significant health issues throughout his life and underwent 48 surgeries, many of them significant procedures. He never complained and overcame tremendous odds to make the most of his life. We were fortunate to have had Michael and his family as members of our Zion congregation for so many years. Please keep the Gilleece family in your prayers.

"God's Work, Our Hands" Sunday—Sept. 12th

Zion will be helping to support the Morrow Warming Center in Utica for this God's Work, Our Hands Sunday. Morrow works to assist the homeless: feeding them, offering help with places to sleep, and providing work opportunities. Immediate needs: Milk, coffee, sugar, cereal, snacks, mayo, laundry detergent, dryer sheets, paper lunch bags, syrup, plastic ware, napkins and paper towels. Pillow cases and clean bedding are also welcomed. Drop off your donations in the downstairs coat room at Zion between now and Sept. 12th, Mon-Thurs, between 9:30-1:30, or at this week's church service.

Task Force for In-person Worship

The **Task Force for In-person Worship has completed its work**, having established health and safety protocols to guide decisions of our church council about safe in-person worship. The protocols are based on recommendations of the CDC, NYS, and Oneida County Health Department recommendations, and guidance from the Upstate New York ELCA Synod. We will remain masked at Zion, regardless of vaccination status, both during Sunday services and when visiting the office, as long as the COVID infection rate in Oneida County remains over 3%. The church council will continue monitoring infection rates locally. Once these rates fall below 3% for several consecutive weeks, we will re-examine the requirement for continued masking for those who have been fully vaccinated. All those who are unvaccinated will be required to continue masking, regardless of the infection rates.

Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteers to help with the work of four committees. Please consider sharing your time and talents to carry out the work on these issues important to the life of our church. The committees and contact persons:

- a newly-formed **Technology Committee** (Mark Thompson, mdthompsonphd@gmail.com)
- the **Christian Education Committee** (Matt LaFave, mattswoodcrafts@gmail.com)
- the **Transportation Committee** (Dan Rodahan, rodahan2@yahoo.com)
- and **Disabilities Ministry** (Dan Rodahan, rodahan2@yahoo.com)

Rev. Janet Hoover concluded her sermon this past Sunday with a homework assignment—to visit the YouTube channel and listen to the song, *Grateful*, written by John Bucchino and sung by Art Garfunkel. I did my homework and it was a very satisfying assignment. Here's the link for those with access to the internet, the words and illustrations that accompany the song are by Anna-Liisa Hakkarainen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wyBDuy8HiRw>: For those who don't have access, here are the words: *There may be times when I lose the light and let my spirits sink, but I can't stay depressed when I remember how I'm blessed. In a city full of strangers, I've got a family of friends. No matter what rocks and brambles fill the way, I know that they will stay till the end. I feel a hand holding my hand. It's not a hand you can see. But on the road to the promised land, this hand will shepherd me. Through delight and despair, holding tight and always there. In a world that can bring pain, I will still take each chance, for I believe that whatever the terrain our feet can learn to dance. Whatever stone life may sling, we can moan, or we can sing. Grateful, grateful, truly grateful.*

I am grateful for our Zion family, for this family of friends. I hope you, too, can find the many things for which you might feel grateful, even when life is difficult. Have a good week ahead.

Peace and good health to you and all in our community,
Mark Thompson, church council co-president

A message from Claudia King

There was a room available at the Siegenthaler Center and Fran is there now. Fran can receive visitors. If you wish to visit with Fran, please call Claudia ahead of time so that she can keep track of who will be coming. Claudia's cell phone number is: 315-749-4354.

Siegenthaler Center | Hospice & Palliative Care
4277 Middle Settlement Rd.
New Hartford, NY 13413
315-735-6484

We are all keeping Fran and Claudia in prayer.

Zion Lutheran Church
New Hartford, NY
15 Pentecost



August 22, 2021

WELCOME

PRELUDE *Prayer, by Gordon Balch Nevin* -Kelli Watson

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting, whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation. **Amen.**

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin. Reconciling God,

We confess that we do not trust your abundance, and we deny your presence in our lives. We place our hope in ourselves and rely on our own efforts. We fail to believe that you provide enough for all. We abuse your good creation for our own benefit. We fear difference and do not welcome others as you have welcomed us. We sin in thought, word, and deed. By your grace, forgive us; through your love, renew us; and in your Spirit, lead us; so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.

Beloved of God, by the radical abundance of divine mercy we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus, through whom we have obtained grace upon grace. Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope. For hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn: *Here I Am, Lord, vs. 1 & 3 Hymn #574* -Kelli Watson

Vs. 1 "I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry. All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save. I, who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright. Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?" Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.

Vs. 3 "I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame. I will set a feast for them. My hand will save. Finest bread I will provide till their hearts be satisfied. I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?" Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.

Prayer of the Day

Holy God, your word feeds your people with life that is eternal. Direct our choices and preserve us in your truth, that, renouncing what is false and evil, we may live in you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading: Joshua 24:1-2, 14-18

Second Reading: Ephesians 6:10-20

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Halle, Halle, Hallelujah

Hal-le, hal-le, hal-le-lu-jah. Hal-le, hal-le, hal-le-lu-jah. Hal-le, hal-le, hal-le-lu-jah. Hal-le, hal-le, hal-le-lu-jah. Hal-le-lu-jah. Hal-le-lu-jah. Hal-le-lu-jah.

Gospel: John 6:56-69

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon: -Deacon Patsy Glista

A big part of preparing a sermon is listening for God's message. And so in the wee hours of the morning at the point at which I thought my sermon had pretty well been wrapped up the day before, God put a hymn by Georg Neumark on my heart. *"If you but trust in God to guide you with gentle hand through all your ways, you'll find that God is there beside you when crosses come, in trying days. Trust then in God's unchanging love; build on the rock that will not move."* Trust, have faith, believe. And so trusting I began again.

For the past several weeks, we have had the privilege of Pastor Janet's wonderful sermons from Philippians; thus, it may not be on your radar that today's gospel lesson is the fifth in a row in which Jesus tells us He is the bread of life, sent from God, come down from heaven. For the past five weeks, all our gospel lessons have come from the 6th chapter of John.

What follows is my CliffNotes version to help provide some context for today. Chapter 6 begins just before the Passover with Jesus and his disciples on the mountainside. A crowd gathers and Jesus teaches. As the day progresses, more people gather - Jews, Gentiles, believers, nonbelievers, young, old, complainers, the disheartened, disappointed, and curious. As the sun lowers in the sky, Jesus is faced with a large hungry crowd. Blessing a young boy's five barley loaves and two fish, he feeds everyone, about five thousand people - no one is turned away. Everyone ate their fill and there were 12 baskets of leftovers - wouldn't our local food pantries be happy! This visual with real bread satisfying the human hunger pangs sets the stage for the rest of the chapter. The next day John tells us, the crowd looking for Jesus, follows him to Capernaum on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus tells them they are only looking for him because he fed them and invites them to work instead for the food that provides eternal life. His words to them, found in verse 35, are probably familiar to you, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." Jesus identifies himself as the bread of life, the gift from his Father God to the world. And this is where the complaining begins. The Jews question, "How can he say 'I have come down from heaven?'; isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph the carpenter? In Jesus response we hear a foretelling of his crucifixion. "Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." In last week's gospel we heard a reference to the forthcoming resurrection in Jesus' words, "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day." In today's lesson, Jesus says, "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them," a reference to his sharing the bread and wine with his disciples on the Passover, a meal remembered and shared by us each time we gather for communion. The verse immediately following today's text is a reminder that Jesus chooses us, Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve? Yet one of you is the devil." This verse also foretells Jesus' betrayal by Judas.

God's message has been consistent through time. God always cares for his people, gives unconditional love and invites us to believe and do His will. In our Old Testament lesson, Joshua gathers all the tribes of Israel - calling all God's people together. He didn't differentiate between those who had always followed God and those who had turned away and maybe worshipped the gods of the countries through which they had journeyed. Through Joshua, God reminds all his people that he has provided for them throughout their captivity and exile. God calls them to be His people - to live in sincerity and faithfulness; to put away other gods - those things which distract; and commit to serve God who has protected and cared for them throughout history.

In our Gospel, Jesus offers us the bread and cup of salvation and eternal life if we but believe in Him and know in our hearts that he is the Holy One of God. He tells us that His words are spirit and life. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has gifted us with grace and all that we, the Church, need to be in His service.

The question, much like Joshua's question to the Israelites, becomes, 'who will we serve?' It seems that the bigger question is, 'do we believe, do we have faith that Jesus is the Son of God, the bread of life from heaven?' John tells us that Jesus' teaching was too difficult for some, so they left. Others stuck around but complained and grumbled, disappointed that Jesus wasn't the revolutionary leader they had hoped would take up arms against the Roman soldiers. Feeling betrayed, some turn against him; Judas goes so far as to betray Jesus. So, Jesus' question to the disciples and to us is, "Do you also wish to go away?"

As Michael Chan, Assistant Professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary, indicates in his blog, John's gospel draws us in from the hunger pangs of our humanness through God's gift of manna to the Israelites in the wilderness toward the ultimate gift of eternal life through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection; from gifts of the flesh to gifts of the spirit. What is our response to these gifts?

Like the disciples, we may at times say – 'this is a hard teaching.' It isn't easy to follow Jesus in the midst of a pandemic when, for months, we couldn't even gather in our church building, when we had to figure out technology that was sometimes, 'too difficult' so we could join worship virtually, or now when we are still socially distanced and again wearing masks. It isn't easy to believe and feel the presence of 'the Holy One of God' when we are still in the call process for a new pastor. It isn't easy to believe when a tropical storm follows an earthquake in Haiti; when wildfires, droughts, swirling tropical storms, and increasing COVID cases disrupt lives every day; or when we can't hug our family members; when the car won't start, when a job is lost, or any number of things that, at times, seem insurmountable and cause us to wonder, 'where are you God?'

Are we able, like Peter, to have faith despite everything and respond, "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

I have been rereading Elizabeth Gilbert's book, *Eat, Pray, Love*. In it, she shares some thoughts about faith that I found helpful in understanding faith, "Faith is a way of saying, 'Yes...I embrace in advance what I am presently incapable of understanding.'" She goes on to say, "If faith were rational, it wouldn't be – by definition – faith. Faith is belief in what you cannot see or prove or touch. Faith is walking face-first and full-speed into the dark. If we truly knew all the answers in advance as to the meaning of life and the nature of God and the destiny of our souls, our belief would not be a leap of faith..." Or, as it says in Hebrews 11:1, '*Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*'

Paul writing to the Ephesians from prison is certain in his faith and commitment to Christ. In Chapter 1, Paul writes, '*In him [God] we have redemption through his [Jesus] blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us.*' Paul writes not just to the Ephesians but to the early church, the new community of people of God, both Jew and Gentile. Paul writes to encourage them to continue strong in their faith. He also invites us to 'be strong in the Lord and put on the full armor of God.' He lays out the tools needed to be the church together, using an analogy that may have appealed to those early followers seeking a revolutionary leader. Listen to Paul's words as translated by Eugene Peterson –

"God is strong, and he wants you strong. So take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way...Be prepared. You're up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it's all over but the shouting you'll still be on your feet. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You'll need them throughout your life. God's Word is an indispensable weapon. In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other's spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out."

These are the gifts and the tools we need to be the church together - first our faith and belief in Jesus and to be strong in that faith. Then, as we go out into the world to serve as God's faithful people, we need to remember to speak the truth, to wear our faith – be sure that others can see it; to be righteous in our actions, to speak the gospel of peace; to share the Word of God with all; to support one another and to persevere – not to give up when the road seems too rough and the journey makes us weary; and to PRAY!

One of my favorite communion hymns sums up Jesus' invitation to abide with him, '*Eat this bread, drink this cup, come to me and never be hungry. Eat this bread, drink this cup, trust in me and you will not thirst.*' As members of Christ's church, we are called to put on the full armor of God and go forth faithfully, proclaiming Jesus Christ as the bread of life come down from heaven to live among us that all people might have life eternal. Confident in Christ's love and grace we can, in the words of Neumark's last verse, '*Sing, pray, and keep God's ways unswerving, offer your service faithfully. Trust heaven's word; though undeserving, you'll find God's promise true to be. This is our confidence indeed: God never fails in time of need.*

Go forth in faith to serve and share the Good News.
Amen.

Apostles' Creed

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.

ANTHEM: Abide With Me, by William H. Monk -Kelli Watson

Prayers of Intercession

Made children and heirs of God's promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

God of courage, bless all leaders of your church. Make them ready to proclaim the gospel of peace and strengthen them to preach your loving word. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

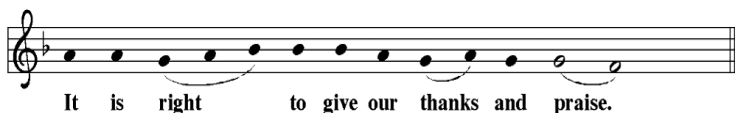
God of compassion, bless all who are in any need. Accompany all who are lonely and feeling abandoned and remind them of your abiding presence. Accompany all who are persecuted and exploited and open us to their cries. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of change, bless our transitions. Guide all who are embarking on new stages in life such as a new job, new school, or new community. Sustain enduring friendships and kindle new relationships and interests. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Listen to the cries of your people waiting patiently for your healing hand and comforting Spirit, especially those who suffer with chronic pain and all cancer patients, Pr. Mary Etta, Rosemary, Chuck Carlson, comfort for Fran King at this time, Claudia, Shirley, Steve, comfort for the families of Barb Reinshagen and Doris Berry, healing for Joyce, Carole, Gail, Pr. Roger, Patsy, Wesley Williams, Ed and family, comfort for the family of Michael Gilleece, and Theresa, that the light of Christ may shine upon them with hope. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

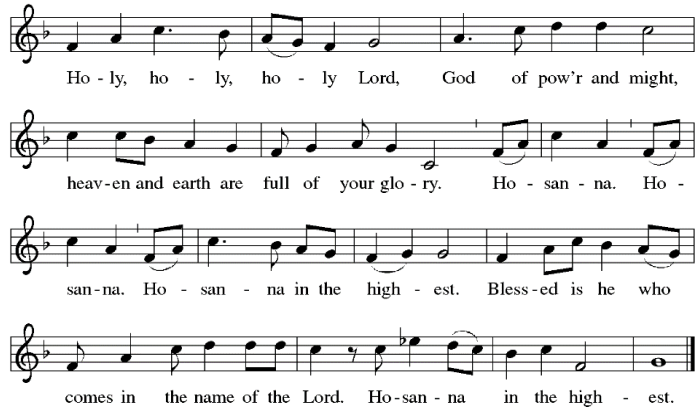
THE GREAT THANKSGIVING DIALOGUE



PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy... and join in their unending hymn.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all. 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. Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory. Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all glory and honor, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION,

Friends of Jesus, come to the table. Receive nourishment for your journey.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of the welcome table, in this meal we have feasted on your goodness and have been united by your presence among us. Empower us to go forth sustained by these gifts so that we may share your neighborly love with all, through Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life. **Amen.**

Blessing

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. God, the creator, Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love. **Amen.**

Sending Song: *How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds, vs. 1 & 4 Hymn #620 -Kelli Watson*

Vs. 1 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear! It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds, and drives away all fear.

Vs. 4 By thee my prayers acceptance gain although with sin defiled. The devil charges me in vain, and I am owned a child.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you. **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude: *In Excelsis Gloria, by H.P. Hopkins -Kelli Watson*

Thank you for choosing Zion Lutheran Church to be with today.

“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday



Sept. 12
2021

This day is an opportunity to celebrate who we are at Zion Lutheran Church— one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor.

⇒ **This God’s Work Our Hands Sunday, Zion will be helping to support the Morrow Warming Center in Utica. Morrow is working with the homeless- feeding them, offering help with places to sleep, and providing work opportunities such as cleaning streets and gardening.**

Warming Center Immediate needs: Milk, coffee, sugar, cereal, snacks, mayonnaise, laundry detergent, and dryer sheets, brown paper lunch bags, syrup, plastic ware, napkins, paper towels, and we will always take meals or cookies, fresh fruit, (softer is better because of teeth) and we could use pillowcases.

*****You can drop off items at Zion in the downstairs coat room from now until September 12th, Monday-Thursday between the hours of 9:30-1:30 or during a church service. Thank you!*****
