

## Pentecost 7 Leadership Letter

Dear Friends, this week we continue our study of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Each day's text is short so I'm including them—from the NRSV. You might want to look them up in another version as well. -Janet Hoover

Day 1 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. (Matt 5:8) A pure heart is one that beats with single-minded devotion to God. Jesus calls us to do more than go through the motions of loving service. Disciples, he says, are inwardly what they look like on the outside. Disciples are people of integrity who—no matter where they are, no matter who is watching—are moving to a rhythm of grace. Disciples know that what we think—our motives—are as important as what we do. A pure heart is so full of love for God and neighbor that there is no room for envy and bitterness, for resentment and fear. Just as we need to bathe more than once in our lives to maintain a “pure body”, so we need a daily infusion of God's grace to wash our hearts. When we are tuned in to God in this way, we begin to see with new eyes. All around us are signs of God's goodness. When we focus on God, we discover God in the ordinary moments of our days. We experience God's presence in the hug of a friend, the laughter of a child, the sun breaking through the clouds on a gray winter day. When we focus on God, we discover God in the difficulties and struggles of our days. We experience God's presence through unexpected phone calls of support, words of Scripture, and infusions of strength and courage. Blessed are the pure in heart.

Day 2 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (Matt 5:9) Disciples work so that all people will know the same joy and peace and hope and love that they do. I have a sign over my front door—a wooden carving of the Hebrew letters that spell out the word Shalom—the Hebrew word for peace. Shalom is a word so rich with meaning that there is no single English word that can express it. It means absence of fighting and violence, but it also holds connotations for wholeness and blessing. Every time I leave the comfort of my living room to move out into the chaos of the world, I look at the carving and remember. I remember that God blesses me with shalom—and I remember that I am called to bring shalom into the wounded, hurting places of this world. As long as there are children anywhere crying out for food, there is no shalom. As long as there are men and women who cower in fear, there is no shalom. As long as anyone struggles for meaning and purpose, there is no shalom. Disciples are to keep working for peace even in the face of war and hatred, carrying construction tools with them wherever they go—tools that can be used not to erect walls, but to build bridges of understanding and community. Blessed are the peacemakers.

Day 3 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matt 5:10) So far in Jesus' sermon, the description of discipleship has been a little surprising and somewhat challenging, but now it gets downright uncomfortable. I don't mind acknowledging my need of God or carrying the hurt of the world in my heart. There are times I do hunger for righteousness and meekness, purity of heart and shalom. But persecution? We spend much of our time trying to protect ourselves and our interests, walking the middle of the road so as not to cause trouble, keeping a low profile lest we incur the scorn of those around us. But there it is—blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake... The truth of discipleship is that, as we live according to God's rhythm of peace and justice and love, there will be times that we will suffer for that. It won't be easy to sing a song of love in the midst of a chorus of hate. To walk the path of peace in a world intent on war may carry penalties. Seeking God's ways won't win universal approval and may actually stir up a hornet's nest—and we will be in the center of the swarm. Yet we must remember that the One who calls us to action, the One who speaks these words is the One who lived them out. Our path may lead to the cross, but we can have courage, for the road doesn't stop there but continues on into a future bright with love and joy and hope. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

Day 4 Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely, on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way, they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matt 5:11-12) Something interesting happens in these verses that isn't apparent in the English language. The verb form shifts from third person singular to second person plural. In other words, Jesus begins by talking about those who are disciples then, in these verses, switches to another verb form—as they would say in Oklahoma: Blessed are y'all when... “Ya'll” reminds us that we aren't in it alone. Jesus knows it is hard. He knows that faithfulness to God requires much and that it will be easy to give in and give up. However, we are called to be part of a community. To be Christian is to move from singular to plural. We may suffer and struggle, but we are supported by the witness of those who have gone before—prophets, apostles, martyrs and missionaries, preachers and pioneers, men and women and children who have looked evil in the face

and held firm to love. And we don't walk alone—all around us are others who, in the midst of the chaos and pain of our world, continue to believe in goodness, reach out in love, and seek to live lives of integrity and honor. Blessed are y'all.

Day 5 You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled underfoot. (Matt 5:13) Have you ever noticed how just a little Tabasco can change the taste of a whole pot of chili? And once it's in, there is no removing it. Salt is like that. Even a little changes the substance. When we say "yes" to Jesus, we become salt for the world. We may not feel like what we do or say matters a whole lot in the scheme of national agendas and international relationships, but a little salt here and a little salt there and soon the world is flavored with joy and mercy and understanding. If that task seems daunting, remember—Jesus doesn't tell us to become salt. When we place our feet on the path of Jesus, we are an ingredient in God's recipe for justice and love. Salt adds flavor to the stew of life and keeps sin and heartache from spoiling the mix. All we have to do is be what God has called us to be—salt. Don't be afraid to leave the saltshaker, for it is through you that goodness and love season the lives of all around you.

Day 6 You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. (Matt 5:14-16) A few years ago I spent a week in a small village in Gambia. I experienced a way of life dramatically different from my own—no running water, no phones, no cars, and no electricity. The hardest thing for me to get used to, however, was the darkness. I am a child of the electric generation—I live in a world of streetlights and car headlights and nightlights. While the night sky dazzled my eyes with stars, the blackness of the African night in our hut was so thick I could almost feel it. What was most amazing to me was the difference it made when one little candle was lit. One flickering flame made movement possible, kept me from walking into walls, and kept the fear of the unknown at bay. Even a little light makes a huge difference, for the function of light is not to be seen, but to let things be seen. As we carry our love of God with us, as we speak openly of our faith, as we serve in Christ's name, the flickering flame that is ours makes visible a world of goodness and peace. In the darkness of sin and suffering our words and our actions shine a light that gives glory to the God of light.

### **Information and Updates for the Week Ahead:**

-We were delighted to welcome the members of the Trinity, Herkimer congregation who joined our service last Sunday. Along with serving as one of Zion's supply pastors, Deacon Patsy Glista, is serving in a similar capacity for their congregation, thus the connection with Trinity at last Sunday's service. A total of 58 households from Zion and Trinity joined together for worship, 43 via Zoom and 15 via the livestreamed service on Facebook and/or YouTube. We felt fortunate and blessed to worship with our friends and neighbors at Trinity, Herkimer, and hope there might be more opportunities to join together in the future. And thank you to our new technologist, Shawn Lockwood, who made the arrangements to have the service provided on Zoom as well as suggesting the livestreaming option.

-We invite you to join us for worship this Sunday at 10:00 AM, either by Zoom or by viewing the livestreamed service. Rev. Janet Hoover will serve as our supply pastor.

-This Sunday's worship service on the Zoom platform continues for those with internet access via computer, tablet, or smart phone, or who choose to call in to listen from their phone. To join this Sunday's service on Zoom, same log-in info as last week: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84354840714?pwd=TDJGTkwvSTBER2lNb1o1Qzd6WGxDdz09> Meeting ID: 843-5484-0714, Password: 022654. Or by PHONE, One tap mobile, +16465588656, 84354840714#, 1#, 022654# US (New York)

-If you would prefer to view the service via livestream on our YouTube channel, you can do so by visiting our page at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWzOtbCe2z7-bIPvxp62IA>. Please note that viewing the livestreamed service will not enable you to interact with fellow Zion congregants prior to or following the service.

-Should you not have access to the internet, thus ruling out the Zoom and livestreaming options, you can continue participating in Zion's virtual Sunday 10:00 AM worship service by utilizing the Service of the Word template provided later

in this newsletter. Feel free to use the Service of the Word at any time if you aren't able to join us in spirit at 10:00 AM on Sunday.

-Thank you to everyone who provided feedback on the recently revised Mission Statement and new Values Statement, along with your responses to the questions about Zion for the creation of our Ministry Site Profile (MSP). All told, we received 40 responses: 15 in the pre/post service Zoom breakout room discussions and 25 responses in paper copy or electronic submission. Sara has compiled your feedback, which will be forwarded to the MSP committee. We anticipate that the MSP will be forwarded to the Synod within the next few weeks.

-Our church council met for their regular monthly meeting on Monday, July 13<sup>th</sup>. We had a full agenda and our discussion included a review of our status for returning to in-person worship, the call process, and Zion's overall well-being (spiritual, fellowship, financial, etc.) as the restrictions and concerns presented by the COVID-19 pandemic continue. As has been mentioned recently, we know our worship will continue to be conducted remotely at least until the end of August. Council and the Task Force continue to consider all the available information and recommendations re: in-person worship, including the feedback from our congregants about their readiness (or not) to gather again at our church building.

-Bible Study, led by Rev. Janet Hoover, continues on Zoom this Thursday, July 16th, from 7:30-8:30 PM. 15 members of Zion attended last week's opening session. Each meeting is stand alone, so it is not necessary to attend every session if your schedule does not permit. This week's lesson is on Moses: God's Reluctant Hero. Log-in instructions are: To join on Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83302013288?pwd=cGpwTnYwMjduMk96OE0rQXVNTTREQT09> Meeting ID: 833 0201 3288. Password: 834215. To join by phone: Dial 646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 833 0201 3288, Password 834215.

-The Synod invites everyone to attend the Faithful Learning and Teaching Together (FLATT) program, which includes a number of free learning opportunities. The link to learn more about these exciting and no cost resources is <https://upstatenysynod.org/faithful-learning-and-teaching-together-flatt>.

-We are delighted to let you know that Fran King has returned home to Claudia after spending the past several months in a facility in the Watertown area following treatment and recovery from medical complications. Thanks to all for their prayers and good wishes for Fran and Claudia. Fran's healing continues, so please keep those prayers coming!

-We invite all Zion women to attend by Zoom the upcoming Women's Group on Monday, July 20th at 7 PM. Some of the discussion will focus on the COVID-19 pandemic. Kim Ritchie's daughter, Linnea, has expertise in many of the medical issues associated with the pandemic and will facilitate part of the discussion. To join via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9525418780> Meeting ID: 952 541 8780. No Password needed. Join Zoom over the phone 1-646-558-8656, 9525418780# US (New York) Meeting ID: 952 541 8780. No password needed.

-Finally, in her sermon this past Sunday about the Sower spreading seed, Rev. Jen DeWeerth offered another thought-provoking way to consider the reading from Matthew (Chap. 13). Perhaps we can think about the times when the Sower—our God—spreads the seed (or word, or grace) to each of us. Think of ourselves as the ground upon which the seed falls. When do we receive the seed as the hard-packed path, upon which the seed just sits, only to be eaten by the birds? When are we rocky ground, where God's seed/message can only last briefly because we don't allow the roots to grow deeply? When are we surrounded by distractions, our life full of weeds and brambles that choke off any chance for the seed to grow? And when are we rich soil, allowing the seed to take root, to be nourished, and to flourish? May we all seek to increase the times when the word of our loving God, our Sower who spreads his seed generously and without restriction, can find rich soil in us that benefits from God's grace, allows his message to take root, grow, and then be shared with others.

We hope you all have a great week ahead.

Yours in Christ,

Mark Thompson and Kristen Burson, council co-presidents



SERVICE OF THE WORD  
GATHERING

**WELCOME**

**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.**

**THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

Alleluia! Christ is risen. **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are raised with him to new life. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism. We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning you created us in your image and planted us in a well-watered garden. In the desert you promised pools of water for the parched, and you gave us water from the rock. When we did not know the way, you sent the Good Shepherd to lead us to still waters. At the cross, you watered us from Jesus' wounded side, and on this day, you shower us again with the water of life. We praise you for your salvation through water, for the water in this font, and for all water everywhere. Bathe us in your forgiveness, grace, and love. Satisfy the thirsty and give us the life only you can give. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Opening Hymn:** *Gather Us In* #532, Verses 1 & 2 —Mary Senn

**Vs. 1** Here in this place the new light is streaming, now is the darkness vanished away; see in this space our fears and our dreamings brought here to you in the light of this day. Gather us in, the lost and forsaken, gather us in, the blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall awaken, we shall arise at the sound of our name.

**Vs. 2** We are the young, our lives are a myst'ry, we are the old who yearn for your face; we have been sung throughout all of his-t'ry, called to be light to the whole human race. Gather us in, the rich and the haughty, gather us in, the proud and the strong; give us a heart, so meek and so lowly, give us the courage to enter the song.

**Prayer of the Day**

Faithful God, most merciful judge, you care for your children with firmness and compassion. By your Spirit nurture us who live in your kingdom, that we may be rooted in the way of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**THE WORD**

**First Reading:** Psalm 139:1-12

**Second Reading:** Romans 8:12-25

This morning's lectionary passages weave together to give us a tapestry of promise and hope, challenge, and blessing. The lectionary is a tool used by pastors and congregations to shape the worship service. Each week there are 4 suggested texts: Psalm, Old Testament, Gospel, and Epistle. This morning's Psalm reminds us that God knows us better than we know ourselves, that wherever we go and whatever happens God enfolds us with grace. God goes before us and behind us, God is beside us and above us and beneath us. The passage from Romans reminds us that we not only belong to God, but that it is God's love that pulses through our bodies, that even in what looks like impossibly difficult circumstances, God is present to bring us to new places of healing and wholeness. Matthew's gospel reminds us that our job is not to worry about who is good enough for God. Our job is not to judge others, but to leave that job to God, trusting that the God who knows us better than we know ourselves will bring about the harvest of promise. And then we come to Genesis...a story from our family album that takes these strands and sets before us a remarkable story. The story of a man whom God knew better than he knew himself, who despite the circumstances worked in this man's life to bring about blessing. A man who some would have judged very weed like, but who, through God's nurturing care, became the means through which God's people took shape. I'm talking about the grandson of Abraham and Sarah, son of Isaac and Rebekah—I'm talking about Jacob.

One of the most fascinating personalities in Scripture is Jacob. He is the only person in the Bible whom we see in action from birth to death. We see him interacting with his parents, his brother, his wives, his father-in-law, his children, and his grandchildren. And the pictures aren't always pretty. Jacob is a scoundrel, a liar, a double-crosser who has robbed his brother of his birthright and tricked his own father, and now he is a con man on the run.

Read Genesis 28:10-22

Jacob is running. Jacob is running for his life. Esau's rage at Jacob's trickery is great and Jacob is now a fugitive. Behind him the murderous wrath of his brother, ahead of him miles of wilderness leading to an uncertain future. Finally, alone, and exhausted, he curls up between two rocks and immediately falls into a deep sleep. And he dreams...There was a ladder with its bottom step on earth, leading up and out of sight with the whole company of heaven moving up and down on it. And in a moment of heart-stopping grace, God stands there—on earth—next to Jacob. And amazingly what Jacob hears isn't a litany of threats and warnings, but a song of love. Jacob has cheated, lied, finagled—lived a self-centered life. And it is to this flawed and fallible man that God comes with overwhelming grace, pouring love and forgiveness, promise and possibility into his cracked and broken soul. Jacob doesn't deserve the dream, but he needs it. And what is more, he believes it. Did you notice that Jacob doesn't have to climb the ladder to find God? Instead, through these messengers of God's love moving up and down the ladder of mercy, Jacob receives healing and a new sense of purpose. Through this ladder company, God comes to Jacob just as he was—stained with sin, broken, and wounded by greed and selfishness—to wrap him in grace. As he opens his eyes to see rocks and dirt and birds circling—he sings out: Surely God is here. Here in this place. And he moves forward into the future trusting in God to guide him. But there's more to the story.

Time passes. Life is complicated. Jacob, the deceiver, is himself deceived. Jacob is tired and worried and anxious. He has worked hard in the years since his experience with God in the wilderness. His life hadn't been easy, but God had never left him alone. But Jacob has a problem. God had spoken to Jacob and told him that it was time for him to return to the land of his ancestors—and that means to the land where Esau, his brother whom he had cheated so many years ago, dwelt. Instead of running along the path stretched out before him, he walks hesitantly, preoccupied and anxious. Old memories have been awakened and rising up from the past are the white heat of remembered rivalry and injustice, the shadows of guilt and regret. He was going back to a people who know him not as herdsman and father, but as liar and cheat and coward. He's angry at himself for his mistakes and sin. He's angry at God for bringing him back to this place. He's afraid for his life and for the lives of his sons. When he reaches the banks of the river Jabbok, he sends his family on across and sits alone in the wilderness. Perhaps he thought to protect them by keeping them distanced from him. Perhaps he needed time to figure out how to approach Esau. Perhaps he just needed to be alone. Whatever the reason, Jacob sat alone in the silence and the darkness.

Jacob sits alone, and then it happened. Out of the darkness a shadowy figure leaped upon Jacob, wrestling him to the ground. Jacob was no fool. When attacked, you don't ask the attacker who he is and what he wants, you get busy defending yourself. And that's just what Jacob did. Using every ounce of shrewdness and strength, Jacob wrestled for his life. Hour after hour throughout that long and dreadful night, looking for weak spots, straining for any possible advantage. Jacob and this stranger grappled, the silence broken only by panting and the occasional gasp of pain, on and on until, just before dawn, the stranger touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, and in that instant of blinding, debilitating pain, Jacob knew that his defeat had never been in doubt. Now Jacob clung to the stranger, his grip like that of a drowning man. Bless me, he cried. And then everything changed. The stranger's death grip became an embrace. Bless me, Jacob pleaded. For at last Jacob knew that the blessing he craved—that he had craved since childhood—was not to be gotten by trickery or by hard work or by strength. No one earned or deserved the blessing. It was a sheer and glorious gift. And then as the darkness faded away, Jacob saw the face of his rescuer—a face vast and strong. A face so bright with beauty and love that he had to close his eyes or be blinded by its splendor. Jacob had been wrestled to the ground and marked. He would now limp into the future, his limp a constant reminder of God's gracious, life-saving presence.

Sometimes we are running. Running from our problems. Running from financial worries. Running from health concerns and family crises. Running in circles. Our life is messy and spinning out of control and we are chased by demons from our past—guilts and regrets and wrong choices which haunt our every step. We are tired and lost and lonely. And then in the desolate dryness of despair, God's love wraps itself around us, And God's voice whispers to our hearts: It's all right. I'm with you. You are never alone. And as we relax into God's presence, we see before us and around us a ladder company of God's servants reaching out to encourage and comfort us. That is holy ground—where God's love meets our pain and new life is shaped. Holy ground is the place where God speaks, and we listen. Holy ground is where we are renewed and quieted and rocked to sleep. It is a place of transformation and sending forth.

Sometimes we're not so much running as dragging our feet. We have trust and confidence in God's love, but....we really don't want to put that to the test. We hear Christ's call to feed the hungry, care for the stranger, love the unlovable, forgive, accept, reach out—And we say yeeees. But we don't really want to. We feel inadequate, unprepared, afraid. And so, we sit by the side of the river, looking for easy solutions. But God loves us enough to break into our lives, calling us, challenging us, wrestling us to the ground. Know this—that place of struggle is also holy ground. For holy ground is that place where God meets us, and that doesn't always result in a warm, fuzzy feeling. Sometimes it means difficulty and conflict. Holy ground can be that place where we fling our questions and our doubts and our angers to God, and where God, in turn, takes our excuses and evasions, our attempts to rationalize our way out of discipleship, our efforts to manipulate and control our own lives, and pins them—pins us—to the mat. Holy ground is that place where we are comforted, and holy ground is that place where we are challenged. Holy ground is the scene of desperate midnight encounters, and the place where we witness the dawning of love and courage. Holy ground is a place of blessing, where God's promises of life and love and peace belong not just to the faithful of the ages, but to you. Holy ground is that place where we know the amazing grace of God. A grace that loves the scoundrel as well as the saint. A grace that strives and struggles with us, that meets us as we are and doesn't let go until we relax into the warmth of God's purpose and blessing. Once you bore the name timid, frightened, angry, lonely. As you stand on holy ground, as you are engaged by God, as you seek to be faithful to Christ's call to discipleship, as you hold on even through struggle or pain, you will be given a new name—Child of God. God's spirit beckons us ever forward. There is work to do. There are people to love. We can go into the uncertainty of tomorrow, trusting in the promise of God. There is nothing in all creation that can separate us from God's love through Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### **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. Amen.**



## Prayers of Intercession

Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

God of the nations, teach us your ways that we may walk in your truth. Mend the fabric of the human family, now torn apart by our fearful and warring ways. Guide us by your mercy, grace, and steadfast love. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of hope, you accompany those who suffer and are near to the brokenhearted. Open our hearts to your children who are lonely and abandoned, who feel trapped by despair, and all who suffer in any way. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of the seasons, in the midst of summer, give us refreshment, renewal, and new opportunities. We pray for the safety of those who travel. We pray for those who cannot take the rest they need. 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, peace and comfort for Mary Ellen Van Allen, Gail, Fran and Claudia, Joe and family, Edie Marie, Suzee, Michael Gilleece and family, healing and peace for Jack and Jim, the Nelson family, Your Neighbors clients, Theresa, and residents of the Presbyterian Home, that the light of Christ may shine upon them with hope. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Thanksgiving at the Table

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken unto the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory 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.**

**Closing Hymn:** *Blessed Assurance* #638, Verses 1 & 3 -Mary Senn

**Vs. 1** Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of his Spirit, washed in his blood. This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long: this is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

**Vs. 3** Perfect submission, all is at rest; I in my Savior am happy and blest, watching and waiting, looking above, filled with his goodness, lost in his love. This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long: this is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

## 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.**

## Dismissal

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

*Thank you for joining us today!*

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## Summer Bible Study on Zoom, with Janet Hoover

Bible Study is held on Thursdays from 7:30-8:30 PM. Part of what was discussed last week was, when things are looking bad, God might have a plan. Pr. Janet also related that to this period of Covid-19, maybe some good will come out of it.

**July 23<sup>rd</sup>** Moses: God's Reluctant Hero Exodus 3:1-4:17

**To join on Zoom:** Meeting ID: 833 0201 3288. Password: 834215.

**To join by phone:** Dial 646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 833 0201 3288, Password 834215.



*Women of Zion* are invited to a Zoom meeting to share how each of us is responding to living with the COVID-19 pandemic, being quarantined or having to go to work, missing children and other family members, and how we can help each other. This social, support, and education time will be **Monday, July 20<sup>th</sup> at 7PM**. We are fortunate to have Linnea Ritchie, daughter of Kim and Jeff and a 4th year Biology PHD student with a concentration in antibiotics and virology at Syracuse University, join us as a resource. At the beginning of the pandemic, she was hired by Precision Clinical Laboratories, LLC to set up and run a COVID-19 diagnostic testing facility in Clinton, NY. Linnea will be available to answer your questions about COVID-19, transmission, good safety practices, or any other pandemic related questions that we have.

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### **Enjoy our 13<sup>th</sup> recipe exchange provided to us by chef Jon Daly**

**Zucchini Walnut Bread** – A nice recipe for the extra zucchini in your garden!

Makes two 8x4 loaf pans. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease and flour two 8x4 loaf pans.

**Ingredients:**

3 ½ cups flour, 1 ½ tsp baking soda, ¾ tsp baking powder, 1 ½ tsp salt, 1 tsp cinnamon, 4 Lg. eggs, 2 cups sugar  
1 cup veg oil, 1 tsp vanilla, 2 cups grated zucchini, 2 cups walnuts, 1 cup raisins

**Directions:**

1. Mix flour, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon in a bowl.
2. In a separate bowl, beat eggs, sugar, oil, and vanilla for about two minutes
3. Mix wet mixture with the dry ingredients just until moist.
4. Carefully fold in zucchini, walnuts, and raisins. Do not overmix.
5. Pour into a greased pans and bake at 350°F for 40 to 60 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.

