

The Seventh Sunday After Pentecost  
July 19, 2020  
Online Worship

Welcome

Opening Song

“My Lord, What a Morning”

ELW #438

Refrain: My Lord, what a morning;  
My Lord, what a morning;  
Oh, my Lord, what a morning,  
When the stars begin to fall.

You will hear the trumpet sound,  
To wake the nations underground,  
Looking to my God's right hand,  
When the stars begin to fall.  
(Refrain)

You will hear the sinner cry,  
To wake the nations underground,  
Looking to my God's right hand,  
When the stars begin to fall.  
(Refrain)

You will hear the Christians shout,  
To wake the nations underground,  
Looking to my God's right hand,  
When the stars begin to fall.  
(Refrain)

## **Opening Litany Isaiah 44:6-8**

Pastor: The Prophet Isaiah addressed the people of Israel.  
This is what the Lord—Israel’s King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty—  
says:

“I am the First and the Last;  
there is no other God.  
Who is like me?

**All: Who else can tell you what is going to happen in the days ahead?  
Let them tell you if they can, and thus prove their power.  
Let them do what I have done since ancient times  
when I established a people and explained its future.**

Pastor: Do not tremble; do not be afraid.  
Did I not proclaim my purposes for you long ago?  
You are my witnesses—is there any other God?

**All: No! There is no other Rock—not one!”**

## **Song**

## **“Everlasting God”**

**Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord,  
We will wait upon the Lord, we will wait upon the Lord.  
Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord,  
We will wait upon the Lord, we will wait upon the Lord.**

**Our God, You reign forever.  
Our hope, our strong Deliv’rer.**

**You are the everlasting God,  
The everlasting God  
You do not faint  
You won’t grow weary.**

**Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord,  
We will wait upon the Lord, we will wait upon the Lord.  
Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord,  
We will wait upon the Lord, we will wait upon the Lord.**

**Our God, You reign forever.  
Our hope, our strong Deliv'rer.**

**You are the everlasting God,  
The everlasting God  
You do not faint  
You won't grow weary.**

**You're the defender of the weak,  
You comfort those in need.  
You lift us up  
On wings like eagles.**

**Our God, You reign forever.  
Our hope, our strong Deliv'rer.**

**You are the everlasting God,  
The everlasting God  
You do not faint  
You won't grow weary.**

**You're the defender of the weak,  
You comfort those in need.  
You lift us up  
On wings like eagles.**

**Words and Music by Brenton Brown and Ken Riley @ 2005 Thankyou  
Music, CCLI#**

## **Confession and Forgiveness**

Pastor: Everlasting God, you offer mercy to everyone who comes to you with a repentant heart and confesses their sin. Hear our confessions:

Time for reflection

Pastor: Oh God our creator,

**All: we grieve the ways we have sinned. We have not placed you first and have not loved you above all others. We have not loved ourselves, and others, with the dignity and respect we deserve as your treasured creation.**

**Forgive us for times when we have acted selfishly, taking more than our share.**

**Forgive us for times when we have lashed out in undeserved anger.**

**Forgive us for closing our eyes so we don't have to see people desperate for help, or hear their cries for justice.**

**Forgive us when we turn from you and try to go it alone. Bring us back to you, and back to community with our brothers and sisters.**

**Amen.**

Pastor:

God is a judge who views us through the lens of love. Through God's great love and mercy your sins are forgiven. Go in peace and sin no more. You are Christ's new creation.

**All: Amen. Thanks be to God.**

## **Sharing of Peace**

Pastor: May the peace of God be with you all.

**All: and also with you.**

Pastor: take a moment to share God's peace with each other in your home. You can also share the peace with others by using the chat button on the Zoom tool bar.

Come, ye thankful people, come;  
Raise the song of harvest home.  
All is safely gathered in  
Ere the winter storms begin.  
God, our maker, doth provide  
For our wants to be supplied.  
Come to God's own temple, come,  
Raise the song of harvest home.

All the world is God's own field,  
Fruit unto his praise to yield.  
Wheat and tares together sown,  
Unto joy or sorrow grown.  
First the blade and then the ear,  
Then the full corn shall appear.  
Lord of harvest, grant that we  
Wholesome grain and pure may be.

Even so, Lord, quickly come  
To thy final harvest home.  
Gather then thy people in,  
Free from sorrow, free from sin,  
There, forever purified,  
In thy garner to abide.  
Come, with all thine angels, come,  
Raise the glorious harvest home!

Prayer of the Day

Pastor: Faithful God, most merciful judge,

**All: you care for your children with firmness and compassion. By your Spirit, nurture us who live in your kingdom on earth, that we may be rooted in the way of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

**Amen.**

## The Word

### **Genesis 28:10-19**

Meanwhile, Jacob left Beersheba and traveled toward Haran. <sup>11</sup> At sundown he arrived at a good place to set up camp and stopped there for the night. Jacob found a stone to rest his head against and lay down to sleep. <sup>12</sup> As he slept, he dreamed of a stairway that reached from the earth up to heaven. And he saw the angels of God going up and down the stairway.

<sup>13</sup> At the top of the stairway stood the LORD, and he said, "I am the LORD, the God of your grandfather Abraham, and the God of your father, Isaac. The ground you are lying on belongs to you. I am giving it to you and your descendants. <sup>14</sup> Your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth! They will spread out in all directions—to the west and the east, to the north and the south. And all the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants. <sup>15</sup> What's more, I am with you, and I will protect you wherever you go. One day I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have finished giving you everything I have promised you."

<sup>16</sup> Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I wasn't even aware of it!" <sup>17</sup> But he was also afraid and said, "What an awesome place this is! It is none other than the house of God, the very gateway to heaven!"

<sup>18</sup> The next morning Jacob got up very early. He took the stone he had rested his head against, and he set it upright as a memorial pillar. Then he poured olive oil over it. <sup>19</sup> He named that place Bethel (which means "house of God"), although it was previously called Luz.

### **Romans 8:12-25**

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it. But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)

### **Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43**

Here is another story Jesus told: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. But that night as the workers slept, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat, then slipped away. When the crop began to grow and produce grain, the weeds also grew.

"The farmer's workers went to him and said, 'Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?'

"'An enemy has done this!' the farmer exclaimed.

"'Should we pull out the weeds?' they asked.

“No,’ he replied, ‘you’ll uproot the wheat if you do. Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn.’”

Then, leaving the crowds outside, Jesus went into the house. His disciples said, “Please explain to us the story of the weeds in the field.”

Jesus replied, “The Son of Man is the farmer who plants the good seed. The field is the world, and the good seed represents the people of the Kingdom. The weeds are the people who belong to the evil one. The enemy who planted the weeds among the wheat is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world, and the harvesters are the angels.

“Just as the weeds are sorted out and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the world. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will remove from his Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. And the angels will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father’s Kingdom. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!

The Word of our Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Sermon**

## “Pointing to God”

Let’s begin today with a short review of a slice of Biblical history found in Genesis, the first book of the Bible. This story starts with Abraham, known as the Patriarch of not only the Jewish people, but also claimed by Muslims and Christians. He was the first person God called to gather people to form Israel. God asked a lot of Abraham---he wanted him to leave his family and his country and move to a new land. In return for his obedience, God promised Abraham that he would be the father of a great nation.

He obeyed God and moved to a new land with his wife Sarah. They became parents of two sons. One named Ishmael was the son of Sarah's slave, and he and his mother were abandoned in the wilderness by Abraham. Ishmael is considered the founder of the nation of Islam.

Abraham and his wife Sarah's other son, Isaac, was God's choice to continue the legacy of his father within the people of Israel.

Moving our story forward quickly, Isaac married Rebekah and they had twin boys, Esau and Isaac. These boys could not have been more different from each other. Esau was the first-born son, which meant his father Isaac's inheritance and blessing should rightly have gone to him. But Jacob tricked his brother and stole the birthright and blessing for himself. Esau discovers the theft and rages that he will kill Jacob.

Today's scripture reading picks up the story at this point. Jacob escaped his brother by going through the wilderness to seek refuge at his uncle's home. It is a long trip through the dry and dangerous wilderness. He stopped one night to camp. He found a stone to use as a pillow and fell asleep.

The dream Jacob has that night is specially well known by artists. There are hundreds of paintings of angels going up and down a ladder that reaches from earth to heaven.

Bethel is the place where Jacob himself personally encountered God. Before that time Jacob did not acknowledge God. When he talked with his father, he always referred to "Your" God. Your God, Dad, not mine. Here, at Bethel Jacob's life was forever changed and he called out to "My God."

I've often wondered why the angels moved up and down the ladder. Were they carrying things? Messages perhaps? Perhaps Jacob's sins, his self-centeredness, his greed and his deceitful ways were being brought before God? And in return, did angels bring back from God gifts which changed Jacob--- forgiveness and love?

Jacob listens to God speaking directly to him from the top of the ladder. God was not looking for a perfect person to carry on plans for Israel. No, God was looking for Jacob. God never calls perfect people to work in the Kingdom. He calls specific people and then equips them for specific ministries.

Jacob leaves Bethel a changed man. He continues his pilgrimage as a humble and trusting man. To mark this transformation, he built what today we call a cairn. He uses the same stone he used as a pillow the night before and sets it upright, so it points to the source of life and marks the spot where God was present.

A cairn can be a pile of rocks or stones, or stones can be stacked one on top of the other. They can memorialize people, a location, or an event. You can often find them along pilgrimage paths. They are found throughout the world. For example, there is a stone cairn at the location of Henry David Thoreau's cabin, the spot where he wrote *Walden's Pond, a Life in the Woods*. At that cairn people come with a stone and add it to the pile, while other people come and take a stone home with them.

The story of Jacob and the ladder to heaven is mentioned in the book, *An Altar in the World*, the book our Tuesday evening discussion group is currently reading. Barbara Brown Taylor begins her book with an experience of her own that reminds her of Jacob. While walking along the ocean in Hawaii she came upon a small tidal pool. She wrote, "After the crashing of waves, the sanctuary of the still pond hit me with the sound of sheer silence. The calm water lay so green and cool before me that it calmed me too. Nothing stirred the face of the water save the breeze coming off the ocean.

Walking around the pool, I came to three stones set upright near the edge where the water was deepest. All three were shaped like fat baguettes, with the tallest one in the middle. The other two were set snug up against it, the same grey color as humpbacked whales. All together, they announced that something significant had happened in that place. I was not the first person to be affected by it. Whoever had come before me had set up an altar, and though I might never know what that person had encountered there, I knew the name of the place: Bethel, House of God."

We have developed many ways to point to God---stacking of rocks in a cairn, a church steeple, a statue, music, architecture. The most important way, however, is for us to become living stones; to let our lives point to God. In other words, to let our light shine. Like a compass that always points north, our very lives can always point to God. We allow others to see our authentic self when we acknowledge the presence of God within and around us.

Once we have awakened to the presence of God, we like Jacob, continue our journey, but with new eyes and a new heart. We can travel so much lighter and faster when we don't have to drag along all the things that hold us back---our guilt, our insecurities, our anger and hatred. Only God can take the most hideous things off our souls and make us new.

In the incarnation Jesus becomes the one who travels the ladder up and down between heaven and earth. He stoops to be with us, bringing with him the essence of God the creator. Jesus returns to heaven, bringing with him our prayers and our lives as gifts to the Triune God.

Amen.



## The Affirmation of Faith –Creed from the Iona Community

We believe in God above us, maker and sustainer of all life,  
of sun and moon,  
of water and earth,  
of male and female.

We believe in God beside us,  
Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh,  
born of a woman's womb, servant of the poor.  
He was tortured and nailed to a tree.  
Knowing full passion and deep sorrow, he died forsaken.  
He descended into the earth to the place of death.  
On the third day he rose from the tomb.  
He ascended into heaven to be everywhere present,  
and his kingdom will come on earth.

We believe in God within us,  
the Holy Spirit of Pentecostal fire,  
life giving breath of the church,  
She is the Spirit of healing and forgiveness,  
source of resurrection and life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn

“Cry of My Heart”

BOB #42

Chorus: It is the cry of my heart to follow You.  
It is the cry of my heart to be close to You.  
It is the cry of my heart to follow  
All of the days of my life.

Teach me your holy ways, oh Lord.  
So I can walk in Your truth.  
Teach me Your holy ways, oh, Lord.  
And make me wholly devoted to You.  
(Chorus)

Open my eyes so I can see  
The wonderful things that You do.  
Open my heart up more and more,  
And make me wholly devoted to You.  
(Chorus)

Words and music by Terry Butler, @ 1991/1997 Mercy Vineyard Music,  
CCLI#155875

### **Prayers of the People**

Pastor: We are led by the Holy Spirit to pray for the church, all of creation and for those who need special blessings.

*(after each petition)*

*Pastor: Lord in your mercy,*

***All: Hear our prayer.***

Pastor: Great and mighty God, . . . . .

### **We Remember in Prayer :**

**Those in need of physical, mental or emotional healing:** Mary Lou, Mason, Evelyn, Carson, Bertha, Kevin, June, Susan, Anne, Tim, Barry, Bonnie, Barbara, Rose, Bill, Emma, Carl, Laura, Marian, Ronnie, Amanda, Pat, Tim, Clara

**Those who mourn:** Vernon, Betty Ann, Erika, Beth & Gregg, Tony & Narrie; and the family and friends of Jeanne, Bill, Tony, Anne & Bob.

For these prayers, and for all the things you know are needed, we trust to your mercy and grace. We pray in the name of Jesus the Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

### **THE COMMUNION MEAL - Communion Litany**

Pastor: May the Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Pastor: Accept our thanks and praise offered to you, holy, almighty and merciful God.

Just as you promised we feel your presence in our lives.

We flourish with the food you offer in Holy Communion.

As we come to Christ's table, we thank you for his life of teaching and healing among us, his willing sacrifice to die on a cross, and his glorious resurrection.

**All: Amen.**

Pastor: No Words of Institution on screen.

Pastor: We pray as he taught us:

### The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread,  
and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us;  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever.  
Amen.**

(Pastor (explains distribution))

### Distribution of Communion

### Post Communion Blessing

Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**All: Amen.**

### Post Communion Prayer

Pastor: Life giving God,

**All: you have fed untold numbers of faithful people at your boundless table. Joined together we are a communion of saints, united in praise and thanksgiving for your very real presence in our lives. Amen.**

### Closing Song

**"Soon and Very Soon"**

**ELW #439**

**Soon and very soon  
We are goin' to see the King,  
Soon and very soon  
We are goin' to see the King,  
Soon and very soon  
We are goin' to see the King.  
Hallelujah, hallelujah,**

**We're goin' to see the King!  
No more cryin' there,  
We are goin' to see the King,  
No more cryin' there,  
We are goin' to see the King,  
No more cryin' there,  
We are goin' to see the King.  
Hallelujah, hallelujah,  
We're goin' to see the King!**

**No more dyin' there,  
We are goin' to see the King,  
No more dyin' there,  
We are goin' to see the King,  
No more dyin' there,  
We are goin' to see the King.  
Hallelujah, hallelujah,  
We're goin' to see the King!**

**Soon and very soon  
We are goin' to see the King,  
Soon and very soon  
We are goin' to see the King,  
Soon and very soon  
We are goin' to see the King.  
Hallelujah, hallelujah,  
Hallelujah, hallelujah.**

### **Benediction**

**Jim: Go in peace and serve the Lord!  
All: Thanks be to God.**