September 13, 2020

Welcome to God’s church 15th Sunday after Pentecost. These communities of faith, North Beaver Creek and Blair Lutheran Churches have one great aim and purpose: to help people grow in life-giving relationships with their neighbors, their own selves, the earth, and God.

Remember that we are in the holy presence of God. Let us take a moment to prepare our hearts and minds for worship.

Welcome

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. Silence is kept for reflection.

Faithful God,

have mercy on us.

We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.

We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways.

We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves.

We place our own needs before those of our neighbors.

We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves.

Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own.
Hear the truth that God proclaims:

Your sins are forgiven in the name of ✞ Jesus Christ.

Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness
to do God’s work in the world.

Amen.

**Gathering Hymn** 834 – Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise!

2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above

3 To all, life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,
and wither and perish, but naught changest thee.

P: The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the unity of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: And also with you.

**Presentation of Bibles**

**Pastor:** I ask at this time that all 3-year-olds come forward with a parent or guardian to receive their Story Bibles.

**Pastor:** As we celebrate today our return to Sunday School classes, even as they are done over the internet, and at-home, we celebrate that God’s Word and truth comes to us as we are able to hear it. Three-year-olds, are you ready to learn the stories of how God loves each of us? If so, say, “Yes!”

**3YO:** “Yes!”

**P:** Parents and guardians, when your child was baptized, one of the promises you made on their behalf was to put into their hands the Word of God. Now, your children can’t yet read these stories on their own. We know that young children learn best when they are read to by a loving adult. Will you reaffirm your promise
today by agreeing to read with your child, until they can read these stories on their own? If so, say, “Yes, with God’s help.”

Parents/Guardians: Yes, with God’s help.

P: Congregation, the work of raising children in faith is not done in isolation by parents alone. Will you promise to support these parents, support your pastor, support our Sunday School teachers, and support these children through encouragement, communal care, and prayer? If so say, “Yes, with God’s help.”

Congregation: Yes, with God’s help.
P: Let this presentation be a reminder that we are all in need of returning to God’s word in which we find truth, hope, and love. Through the one who is the Living Word, God’s son, Jesus Christ. And all God’s children said: Amen!

[Presentation by WELCA president]
“Receive God’s Word”

P: You can all return to your cars.

I ask that all our Confirmation Students and a parent or guardian come forward.

Pastor: Confirmation students, when you were infants, your parents made promises at your Baptism to bring you to hear the word of God among the people of God. And here you are. But now it’s your turn. You no longer have to wait for someone else to read for you. You are now beginning to make decisions for yourself.

Seventh-graders, as you enter confirmation, eighth-graders as you continue in your second year of confirmation classes, and ninth-graders as you prepare to very soon affirm your baptism in the presence of this community, it is now part of your promise, it is now part of your faith, that your receive God’s word and read it. This will be part of the promise you make at confirmation: to read God’s word and to hear it.
Our congregation gives you this gift of a Bible, and it is now your responsibility and your commitment to keep this Bible, to use it for Confirmation class, to turn to it in times of trouble, and in times of joy, and to read it in faith throughout your lives.

Students will you receive these Bibles and read them as a part of your life in faith? If so, say, “I will, with God’s help.”

**Confirmation Students:** I will with God’s help.

**Pastor:** Parents and guardians, will you continue to help your child in this life of faith? Will you help to answer their questions about faith as best you can? Will you search out the questions together in the Bible, and among God’s people? If so say, “I will, with God’s help.”

**Parents/Guardians:** I will with God’s help.

**Pastor:** Congregation, again, it is my strong belief that we do not live our lives of faith alone. We hold the faith together, and together we hold the faith. Will you support these young people through encouragement, care, and prayer? If so, say, “We will, with God’s help.”

**Congregation:** We will with God’s help.

**P:** Let this presentation be a reminder that we are all in need of returning to God’s word in which we find truth, hope, and love. Through the one who is the Living Word, God’s son, Jesus Christ. And all God’s students said: **Amen!**

**Hymn 595 - Jesus Loves Me – v. 1 and refrain**
Kyrie (spoken)
P: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.
C: Lord, have mercy.
P: For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to Christ.
C: Christ, have mercy.
P: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.
C: Lord, have mercy.
P: For this holy place, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to Christ.
C: Christ have mercy.
P: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.
C: Amen.

Prayer of the Day
O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

First Reading Genesis 50:15-21
Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph’s brothers said, “What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?” So they approached Joseph, saying, “Your father gave this instruction before he died, ‘Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.’ Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, “We are here as your slaves.” But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.” In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.
Psalm 103:1-13
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
    and all that is within me, bless God’s holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
    and forget not all God’s benefits –
who forgives all your sins
    and heals all your diseases;
who redeems your life from the grave
    and crowns you with steadfast love and mercy;
who satisfies your desires with good things
    so that your youth is renewed like an eagle’s.
O Lord, you provide vindication
    and justice for all who are oppressed.
You made known your way to Moses
    and your works to the children of Israel.
Lord, you are full of compassion and mercy,
    slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;
you will not always accuse us,
    nor will you keep your anger forever.
You have not dealt with us according to our sins,
    nor repaid us according to our iniquities.
For as the heavens are high above the earth,
    so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.
As far as the east is from the west,
    so far have you removed our transgressions from us.
As a father has compassion for his children,
    so you have compassion for those who fear you, O Lord.

Second Reading Romans 14:1-12
Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling
over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only
vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who
abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them.
Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own
lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written,

"As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God."

So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

L: The Gospel is from the Gospel of Matthew  Matt. 18: 15-20
C: Glory to You oh Lord

SERMON
**Hymn of the Day**  359 – Where Charity and Love Prevail

1. Where charity and love prevail,
   there God is ever found;
   brought here together by Christ’s love,
   by love we thus are bound.

2. With grateful joy and holy fear,
   God’s charity we learn;
   let us with heart and mind and soul
   now love God in return.

3. Let us recall that in our midst
   dwells Christ, God’s holy Son;
   as members of each body joined,
   in him we are made one.

4. Let strife among us be unknown;
   let all contentions cease.
   Be God’s the glory that we seek;
   be his our only peace.

5. Let us forgive each other’s faults
   as we our own confess,
   that we may love each other well
   in Christian gentleness.

**The Apostle’s 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.

**The Prayers of Intercession**

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

[silence]

You welcome us when we are weak in faith. Uphold your church throughout the world; make it a place of welcome. Strengthen faith through Bible studies, and Sunday Schools, confirmation classes and youth ministries. Nurture our ministries
of education and growth, and may we all covenant to study your Word here and at home. Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

The heights of the heavens show us the vastness of your steadfast love. Have compassion on your creation. Where human selfishness has brought ruin and destruction, we look to you to heal, renew, and redeem your world. Lord, in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Make your ways known to the nations. Speak kindness to our bitter grudges. Settle our hearts when we want to settle accounts with violence. Bless our leaders with patience and wisdom. Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Bring healing and justice wherever harm is dealt. Provide vindication for all who are oppressed. Free victims of human trafficking and forced labor; deliver all who are bound by debt. Feed all who hunger, and guard refugees fleeing famine, poverty, and war. Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Teach us to forgive. Remind us that you do not always accuse us. Still our tongues when we are tempted to pass judgment and argue over opinions. Make these congregations into communities of mercy for one another and for all our neighbors. Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Whether we live or whether we die, we are yours. We thank you for those who have showed us faithfulness, for the knees that taught us how to bow to you and the tongues that taught us to praise you (*especially*). Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord. 
*Amen.*

**The Offering**
The Offering Prayer
Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things.
You have set before us these gifts of your good creation.
Prepare us for your heavenly banquet,
nourish us with this rich food and drink,
and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world,
through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.
C: Amen

The Peace
L: The peace of the Lord be with you all.
C: And also with you.

The Great Thanksgiving
The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise!
Let us pray

The Pre-Communion Prayer
It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ;
who on this day overcame death and the grave,
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:
Holy, Holy  (p 153)
C: Holy, holy, holy Lord,
Lord God of pow’r and might:
Heav’n and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

The Words of Institution
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.
Together as the body of Christ,
we proclaim the mystery of faith until he comes:

C: Christ has died.
   Christ is risen.
   Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup we remember your Son,
the first-born of your new creation.
We remember his life lived for others,
and his death and resurrection, which renews the face of the earth.

The Lord’s Prayer
The Invitation
The table is open to everyone, without exception. Behold who you are, become what you will receive. Speak to us, O Lord, in the breaking of the bread, and make us one with you.

Prayer after Communion
We give you thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us with food beyond compare, the body and blood of Christ. Lead us from this place, nourished and forgiven, into your beloved vineyard to wipe away the tears of all who hunger and thirst, guided by the example of the same Jesus Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.
L: We have asked God to change us by his grace, fill us with his goodness and make us a mirrored reflection of the Divine. We ARE the body of Christ – giving ourselves for others. We are the blood of Jesus – may our lives and love be spilled out for those around us who are hurting. We have become what we received.

C: Amen.

Blessing:
..May your life be a brush in the very hand of God—painting new creation into every nook and cranny of reality that your shadow graces. Be courageous. Be free. Prune that which needs pruning, and water that which thirsts for righteousness. You are the body of Christ, the light of the world. Pick up your hammer. Your brush. Your trumpet. Your skillet. Your pen. Lift up your head. And walk. Run. Dance. Fly. The great Artist calls you into being. So go into your world, your valley, your garden, and create with His grace and in His peace. Amen.
Sending Song  665 – Rise, Shine, You People!
1. Rise, shine, you people! Christ the Lord has entered our human story; God in him is centered. He comes to us, by death and sin surrounded, with grace unbounded.

2. See how he sends the pow’rs of evil reeling; he brings us freedom, light and life and healing. All men and women, who by guilt are driven, now are forgiven.

3. Come, celebrate; your banners high unfurling, your songs and prayers against the darkness hurling. To all the world go out and tell the story of Jesus’ glory.

4. Tell how the Father sent the Son to save us. Tell of the Son, who life and freedom gave us. Tell how the Spirit calls from ev’ry nation God’s new creation.

Dismissal
Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.