

St Paul United Church of Christ
5312 Old Blue Rock Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45247
Allen M. Fluent, Transitional Pastor
Order of Worship for Festival of the Holy Trinity
Memorial Day Weekend
May 30, 2021

(Although we are now holding worship in our building, we are conscious of the ongoing challenge of in-person worship while the coronavirus persists, and the need many feel to avoid the possibility of contagion. Therefore, we will be continuing the practice of sending a worship bulletin to all who are on our mailing lists for email or hard copy. Those who will be worshipping from home and who have computer access will also be receiving a recorded version of the service that will be sent out by email on Sunday afternoon and also can be seen on our Facebook page. We welcome your participation in any way that is convenient for you, and we encourage you to share our worship service with any person you know who may appreciate receiving it.)

Welcome, Announcements and Prayer Concerns

Prelude (recording begins) **“Star Spangled Banner”** Jake Rizer & Dave Suder

Opening Declaration from Romans 11:33-36

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are God’s judgments and how inscrutable are God’s ways.

For who has known your mind, Lord? Or who has been your counselor?

Or who has given a gift to you, to receive a gift in return?

For from you and through you and to you are all things.

To God be the glory forever. Amen.

***Hymn** **“Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!”** **#136**

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning, our songs shall rise to thee.

Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty! God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee, casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;

Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee, who wert and art and ever more shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee, though the eye made blind by sin thy glory may not see,

Only thou art holy, there is none beside thee, perfect in power, in love and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth and sky and sea.

Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty! God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Opening Prayer (unison)

Dear God, our heavenly Parent, our Savior, and our ever-present Advocate and Guide, we have come on this Memorial Sunday to your house of worship mindful of the many souls who have gone before us in life's bitter struggles and in life's victories. We remember today those fallen in war, and all whose lives were committed to works of justice and peacemaking in our communities and in all the world. May their sacrifices never be forgotten, and may they lead us to earnest prayer and effort for the cause of peace. Amen.

Hymn

"Eternal Father, Strong to Save"

#74

***Eternal Father, strong to save, whose arm has bound the restless wave,
Who told the mighty ocean deep its own appointed bounds to keep;
O hear us when we cry to thee for those in peril on the sea.***

***O Christ, whose voice the waters heard and hushed their raging at your word,
who walked across the surging deep and in the storm lay calm in sleep:
O hear us when we cry to thee for those in peril on the sea.***

***Creator Spirit, by whose breath were fashioned sea and sky and earth;
who made the stormy chaos cease and gave us life and light and peace:
O hear us when we cry to thee for those in peril on the sea.***

***O Trinity of love and power, preserve our lives in danger's hour;
from rock and tempest, flood and flame, protect us by your holy name,
and to your glory let there be glad hymns of praise from land and sea.***

Scripture Lesson: Romans 8:1-25

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven

and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, also that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Gospel Reading: John 14: 15-17, 25-27

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you....

I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

Sermon

On this day, we are gathered to give thanks for the faith of those who have provided for us a sound spiritual and moral foundation and have made great sacrifices so that the peoples of all nations might live free from oppression in a just and peaceful world. Still, the world does not live in harmony, and there is much work that needs to be done. To guide us, we have the teachings of our faith in the God who suffers the hurts of creation and promises to send forth the Spirit of Christ's love to sustain us each day of our pilgrimage of faith and ministry.

Special Music "Blades of Grass and Pure White Stones"

Pastoral Prayer

God of all places and every generation, you are known to us as the One who creates, redeems and sanctifies the world and every one of us within it. From our brokenness comes conflict, and from our conflict, war, and we confess that some of the best of us have been sacrificed by our failure to understand that you are the Parent of us all. We remember before you this day all those who have lived and died in the quest for a world transformed by your justice and unified by your love in the anticipation of the coming of your Day of Peace. For the works and the faithfulness of your righteous ones whose lives we remember today, we give you thanks, and we pray that our remembrance

awakens within us a renewed commitment to the ways of justice and understanding in our world.

We lift up in our prayers today the governments of many nations – the free and open ones, the oppressive and controlling ones, the struggling ones that are challenged by poverty and disorder, those seeking to prosper by controlling the destiny of others, and those that have become pawns in the hands of global politics beyond their ability to control. We lift up as well the people of these lands – the arrogant ones, the impoverished ones, the angry ones who turn to violence and the ones who spend days and years seeking to escape. We pray especially for those whose life is good, that they may find ways to use their gifts for the benefit of those in need.

Dear God, may our own hopes and dreams reflect our thanks for the sacrifices of many who have gone before us, and may our prayers go out for all those in our own land and in all places of the world who struggle to share in the fulfillment of those same dreams.

As members of the fellowship of Christ, we pray today for those in our fellowship and throughout the church to be filled with the knowledge of the Spirit of God, encouraging our daily lives and labors. For those who are sick, for those recovering, for those facing grief, for those dealing with financial insecurity, for those who worry about the future, and for those who do not believe in the future, we pray for the encouragement of the Advocate of love who was promised by Jesus to all who follow his way.

As Jesus has taught us, so we pray:

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors,
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

***Closing Hymn**

"For the Healing of the Nations"

#621

***For the healing of the nations, Lord, we pray with one accord,
for a just and equal sharing of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action help us rise and pledge our word.***

***Lead your people into freedom, from despair your world release,
that, redeemed from war and hatred, all may come and go in peace.
Show us how, through care and goodness, fear will die and hope increase.***

***All that kills abundant living, let it from the earth be banned:
pride of status, race, or schooling, dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice may we hallow life's brief span.***

***You, Creator God, have written your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness, bring the life of Christ to mind;
that by our response and service earth its destiny may find.***

***Benediction from the words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 13:11-13**

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, encourage one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Postlude