

*Worship Resources - **Trainees** - <https://youtu.be/cN4Y6iasmQo>

2nd Sunday of Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, Year A,

7th June, 2020

2 Corinthians 13:11-13 CEV / Matthew 28:16-20 CEV

Intro/Prelude ***Swing Low, Sweet Chariot***, arranged by Lee Evans,
performed by church musician Annie Center

<https://youtu.be/Ry2ldvlaPMI>

Welcoming/Announcements

Welcome to online worship with Olympic View Community Church. We welcome all of God's children to join us in bearing witness to the radically transforming power of God's love.

We continue to monitor the COVID19 situation in our area and we are committed to ensuring the safety of our church members. Our community has not yet reached a point where it is safe to worship in-person, so we will continue to gather online, and continue to explore new options to fellowship virtually.

Part of our tradition is sharing words of peace and welcome with each other when we gather. Since we can't greet each other in person to pass the peace of Christ, Let's instead think of those we would like to offer peace, whether those in our church family, or others we can think of who would benefit from the sharing of peace today. Feel free to say their names aloud, to pray for peace for them, or simply think a peaceful thought for them silently.

We are blessed this morning to be able to share Mike Stern's new song, Shadows. Let's listen to the words and reflect how important those personal connections we have with each other are, and how they hold us up when we find ourselves in shadow.

Interlude - *Shadows*, written and performed by Mike Stern,
used with permission,
<https://youtu.be/gLSGxKw23dc>

Let's take a deep breath, quiet our minds and hearts, as we light a candle to represent the Spirit among us. Let us call ourselves to worship.

Call to Worship

The words God speaks are the life and sustenance of all that exists. The life Jesus gives is the re-creation and renewed birth of all that is broken and worn.

The Spirit's stirring in our souls is the inspiration for creativity, compassion, joy, and community.

Invocation

Life-giving, life-restoring, life-fulfilling God;
may our whole lives be worship.
In all things, may we seek to connect with
and to reflect your love and your hope.

Our first scripture the benediction of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. This was a particularly difficult letter to a church working through a trying time filled with conflict. Let's listen to these words from Paul and reflect how the Spirit does, or should guide us when we find ourselves in similar times.

Scripture Reading **2 Corinthians 13:11-13 CEV**

Good-by, my friends. Do better and pay attention to what I have said. Try to get along and live peacefully with each other. Now I pray that God, who gives love and peace, will be with you.

Give each other a warm greeting. All of God's people send their greetings.

I pray that the Lord Jesus Christ will bless you and be kind to you! May God bless you with his love, and may the Holy Spirit join all your hearts together.

Scripture Video **2 Corinthians 13:11-13 *Final Greetings***

Lectionary bible reading

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5G3iLAAY6I>

A Time of Prayer

So as we come to our normal time of sharing prayer together from a distance. I have included those concerns shared from my conversations with some of you, in our prayer today. If you have items you would like lifted in prayer, please leave a comment below, or email myself at vicarglenn@gmail.com, and I will make sure to include them next week, as well as send a prayer chain email, unless directed otherwise.

Joys and Concerns

I want to start by sharing a couple of joys with you.

First, the joy of fresh flowers. Nancy Bedada had this present waiting for me on Monday when I dropped off the mail from the church and it has been giving me joy all week!



She even managed by chance to pick flowers that I'm not allergic to.

My second joy this morning is I had the opportunity to talk with Roger and Kathy Edmark on the phone this week. They send their greetings and they are doing well, taking a lot of hikes in and around Hiroshima, and taking some beautiful pictures.

But this morning we also have a number of prayer requests as well.

This morning, let's remember Goldie Barnes' sister Shirley, as she continues her treatment for lung cancer.

But we can also express joy that Shirley's granddaughter and great grandson successfully recovered from the Coronavirus at home.

Let's also remember Eileen Birky, and her coworkers in food services at UW as they face a furlough for at least the summer in the coming week.

Also include Grace Edmark in your prayers, who had 4 teeth pulled this week, that she be blessed with healing and comfort.

Finally, let's keep all those involved in the protests in our prayers, as well as the police and the leadership of our communities and countries. May God watch, protect, and lead them to make choices that lead us to undoing the violence and racism that has plagued our country and world for far too long.

Join me in prayer.

Pastoral Prayer

Gracious God,

In these days of knowing, not knowing, We, like the buds on the trees, Are eager to burst forth into the world. Hold us gently in place until we are certain in the ways of loving our neighbor.

Let us not toss ourselves and neighbor into thoughtless harm. Let us recall that all life is sacred in your eyes, not only that of the young child, but also those with lines of life lived etched upon their hands and faces, and including those whose immune systems are compromised. These, too, are your beloved, whose care we are blessed to bear.

And we seek blessing upon those who have answered a call to care for us in our times of physical healing, no matter our opinion, our ideology, our hardship, Lord. These, we hold in our care as neighbors.

Help us to hear that caring for one another is your command on our lives. Open our ears to hear the tragedy in this time of coronavirus, and not only our own anxiety and grief that may come on blustering words and tired rhetoric. Instead, let us think on how we will make the world a better place.

Instead, let us think on what kindness, however small, we might offer someone.

Instead, let us remember that our life is not our own, but belongs to you.

Instead, let us dream how we might enter our communities to be a beacon of hope for those living in disorder to come alongside them while they find order; alongside them while they reorder their lives.

Help us always, Lord, to remember our promise to you that we will care for our neighbor as ourselves. **Amen.**

Our gospel reading this morning shares Jesus' farewell and final instructions to his disciples from the Gospel of Matthew. He is pushing his disciples into the world on their own, with a pretty tall order of what's expected of them. As we listen to this reading, let's think about our own place in this Great Commission, and where we rely for our help.

Gospel Reading Matthew 28:16-20 CEV

Jesus' eleven disciples went to a mountain in Galilee, where Jesus had told them to meet him.

They saw him and worshiped him, but some of them doubted.

Jesus came to them and said:

I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth!

Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

and teach them to do everything I have told you. I will be with you always, even until the end of the world.

Gospel Video

Matthew 28:16-20 - *What Jesus' Followers Must Do*

Lectionary bible reading

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiZ2wJeimZE>

Message – Trainees

We can all identify, I'm sure, with the anxiety of starting something new, of taking on a new role or responsibility we've never done before. It might be a new role at work or church, a new hobby, or even becoming a parent, or maybe especially becoming a parent. It can be very intimidating taking on something you have never done before. We get a serious case of the “what ifs,” what if this or that happens, what if it doesn't work, what if I utterly fail at this. We like to feel confident, to feel comfortable knowing what we are doing and that we can do it well. Often, we prepare ourselves with training, or by reading up on what we are planning to take on, so we can anticipate potential problems and know the appropriate solution beforehand. Yet, we often find that no matter how hard we prepare, there are those unexpected problems that arise that we have to find a solution to. And that is what causes our anxiety. For example, and this is purely hypothetical of course, one can think they really have this YouTube gig all figured out, and then one of the videos goes live upside down and garbled. Or you read all the best books on being the perfect parent, and have a strategy for every possible behavior, only to find that your children don't react like the book says they are supposed to. Like it or not, we can never start something new with complete confidence. And that is why we often feel so anxious because we don't have the comfort of knowing we have control of the situation.

In our gospel reading this morning, the disciples find themselves in this same boat. They have been in training for three years with Jesus, being taught and observing him at work. Now all of a sudden he is leaving his position, and they have to step up to fill the role he has filled all along. It's not unlike when one's boss gets a promotion, and then you have to fill his or her shoes. You've watched them at work for years, and think you know the job, but you're just not sure of all the ins and outs of what they do from day to day. All of a sudden you go from trainee to trainer. Like us, they had their doubts, their insecurities. He had just told them they were to become the teachers of everything he had taught them, of all the lessons he had shared with them. And like us, guilt probably tagged along with that doubt. After all, they should trust what Jesus had told them. They should trust that he wouldn't leave them hanging, that the Advocate, the Spirit would be there to guide them. But that is also what makes them human.

In his book, *Spiritual Depression*, Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes: “Doubts are not incompatible with faith...Some people seem to think that once you become a Christian you should never be assailed by doubts. But that is not so, Peter still had faith (as he panicked in the storm in Matthew 14)...His faith was not gone, but doubts nevertheless mastered him and

overwhelmed him and he was shaken. Even the disciples were subject to human doubt. And to add to their anxiety, Jesus was also expanding the scope of the job. They had largely been traveling around Judea and Samaria this whole time, ministering and teaching those who already had a foundation in the Jewish faith, those who had a firm foundation in the scriptures that Jesus was expanding on and clarifying. Now they were to go to the ends of the earth with his message. The Great Commission includes “all nations.” This was not in the technical manual. The training barely touched on this. Sure they had a few encounters with Romans and Samaritans, but never any extensive field training in that arena. Yet Jesus gives them their final instructions, and ascends into the clouds, and has made his last physical appearance to them.

Can you imagine the panic they must have been feeling coming down from that mountain? I can imagine the discussion. How are we going to do this? What do we do next? Where do we even start? They knew their roles well as disciples and students of the rabbi. I'm sure they were skilled at organizing travel and accommodations, keeping the books of donations and handling charitable expenditures. But now they were to be the ones in the forefront, the ones preaching to and teaching others. And even more, they were to be training the trainers, teaching others to be teachers. They were faced with a choice we all face when presented with the challenge of a new role, to go big, or go home. They had that choice. They could have just dispersed back home: back to fishing, to tax collecting, to being a physician, to whatever their “normal” life was before they joined this mission. Like us, they had the choice to move forward and embrace the change and uncertainty, or to choose to stay in the familiar; to offer hope in something new, or to be resigned to living in the hopelessness of the status quo. However, this choice, like many of the choices we face in life, affected others besides themselves. If they just gave up, what hope did the world have of anything different? What chance was there of a more just life for anyone who suffered under oppression and discrimination? What would happen to hope itself? What choice did they really have? After all, so much of what Jesus said and did in their presence was concerned with the welfare of others, with the whole concept of the “other.” They couldn't just walk away and do nothing. So they took that first step at being the body of Christ left behind to carry out the work of Jesus. And as we read last week in John, they did have the help of the Spirit to guide and support them.

But Paul's second letter to the Corinthians shows us that there was definitely a learning curve, that like with any new challenge we take on, we learn as we go, and learn from our mistakes. Many in the Corinthian church lost their focus, their sense of world changing and “other” changing mission. They let too much of the same injustice outside, inside, and their focus shifted to the inside. They argued over whose gifts were more valued, and focused on themselves and their insular community. So trainer Paul hones their focus back on others, on forming a just community focused on love of the other, and ensuring all were treated justly and fairly, on the picture that was bigger than the Corinthian sanctuary on a Sunday morning. How can you share the holy kiss with someone who you do not care about and value? How can you share the love and peace of Christ with others, seeking to expand the training program outside the church doors, beyond a handshake or hug once a week?

Thankfully they wrote these experiences down and took time to record the lessons they learned.

We have a training manual to start from. We have some training scenarios to reflect on. But like the early disciples and the churches they established, we learn on the job too. We too can be intimidated by the job at hand, and we too can lose our focus, getting too caught up in our own little groups and our own little community. After all, we like comfort and having control. But we still have that same calling as those first disciples, to work towards the just kin-dom here and now. Do we go big, or go home? Do we accept the challenge of our calling as the body of Christ and work together to figure out how we can make a difference with the gifts we've been given? Or do we just give up and sink further into irrelevance? It may sound harsh but it is the reality of our situation.

We all see what is going on in the world around us. We see the protests against centuries of systemic racism in the streets, we see the people struggling to survive in the face of pandemic and the economic impacts of that new reality. We see the division among us as a culture, the hate and distrust fomenting every day. It's overwhelming the work that needs done, and the scope of the task is intimidating. It's not unlike any new responsibility we take on in our lives. If we obsess over the big picture, and all the "what ifs," we can be paralyzed by anxiety. But if we take it one step at a time, and focus on the task at hand, it is more manageable and less scary. The important thing is to take that first step, and see where it might lead us. It might start with educating ourselves on what being an ally means, and what work that entails. It might mean reaching out to other faith communities and seeing how we can work together with limited resources to make a difference. It might mean redirecting some of our resources to others who are better suited for some of the work that needs done. Whatever that first step is, it's important that we take it. We're very familiar with the manual, we've spent many years studying its every detail. It's time we shift our focus to on-the-job experience. We can choose to be perpetual trainees or start doing the work. Maybe like the early Corinthian church we need to start with ourselves.

What work do we need to do to adjust our own biases and shortcomings? Often it's in this process we gain the understanding and insight to help others do the same work. Many in our particular community have physical limitations but there are many ways to be involved. We all have a voice, and can speak up in the opportunities that we all have, and not choose to be silent and polite. We all have something we can contribute, whether it's our voice, our financial resources, or simply our time to educate ourselves and discover what we can do from our own circumstances. What is important is that we do something, that we step up and be the body of Christ, to be the beacon of hope those first disciples decided to be despite their doubt, despite their anxiety. They started as a small band of outcasts in the backwaters of an empire, and sparked a movement that changed the world. Sadly, much more change is still needed. I hope and pray we can be the force of change, the hope that the world so desperately seeks. The alternative is more of the same. May we be the change we seek to see in the world. Amen.

Call to Serve

God has abundantly bestowed upon us the gift of life. Our best response is to offer our whole lives as agents for God's mission in the world. Give as you are able to build the community of God in our homes, our congregation and around the world.

As we continue to seek to be a source of light and love in times such as these, we ask that you give prayerful consideration as to how you may support our efforts. If you would like to make a donation, gifts can still be mailed to our church office, or online donations can be made through the link in the video description. Thanks again for all your support, and may we continue to work together to keep being a place of ministry and peace in these difficult days. As we listen to the following interlude played by Annie, let's reflect on what steps we can take this week to get involved, to learn about the issues of injustice around us, and find our places in undoing them.

A Time for Reflection

Reflection on the Word [video] *Nearer, My God, To Thee*

Music by Sarah F. Adams and Lowell Mason,
arranged by Lee Evans,
played by church musician Annie Center
<https://youtu.be/RRz2p8afXms>

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

Receive these gifts, even our very lives for your service. Multiply them and our effort to meet the need. We are yours God, use us we pray, **Amen.**

Benediction/Blessing/Assurance

“Remember, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” Christ is with us, now and always. The Holy Spirit is in our midst, now and always. God the Creator is creating something new, now and always. We are always loved, always forgiven, always known to God and cannot be forgotten. Know this, and share the Good News. Amen.

As we extinguish this candle, may we keep it's light alive, it's Spirit shining through our own lives, as we seek to find that Spirit at work in the world around us.

Postlude - *Once To Every Man and Nation*, Words by Russell Lowell,
music by John Zundel, arranged by Melody Bober, played by church musician Annie Center
<https://youtu.be/DLodXmgjBJE>