

Durham Mennonite Church – July 4, 2021

Welcome and Opening Prayer

For the healing love you have offered to us;
for the patience you have with us;
for your presence that will never fail,
we give you thanks, O Lord.

Bring our hearts and spirits to you this morning
that we may grow in our faith and service to you
by serving others.

We ask this in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

Call to Worship

After a hectic week you have come to worship God.

Our lives are pulled in so many directions,
we seek God's guidance.

Let go of the burdens that weigh you down.

God will take them.

We thank God for the respite we are given.

Tune your hearts and voices in praise to God.

Let our voices bear the joy we feel
because of God's love for us. AMEN.

Hymn - Come now is the time

Hymn - Draw me close

Call to Confession

Because faith is more than an intellectual pursuit,
because faith is really about how we live each day,
in this time we can reflect on our living,
on the good we have done and the harm we have caused.
Mindful of God's grace and love, let us make our confession,
first in silent prayer.

(Silent Prayer)

Confession of Sin

God of grace and love, hear our prayer:

Have mercy on us for the wrong we have done.

Show us where our service is needed.

Help us set aside our prejudice and bias.

Fill us with a longing to know you better.

Forgive our lukewarm responses.

Kindle in us a passion for your work.

Set us free from sin and fear.

Send us out to be your people.

**This we pray in the name of Jesus,
our leader, our guide, our Savior. Amen.**

Assurance of Grace

Brothers and sisters in Christ, let us proclaim the Good News:
In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, reconciled, loved, and changed.
May the peace of Christ be with all of you. Amen.

Announcements

Offering Prayer

In a world of goodness and struggle,
we are grateful for your blessings, O God.

As we seek to endure life's struggles,
as we seek to claim your life in those hard parts of our lives,
the very places you teach us to look for your freeing presence,
teach us to trust that you are always there.

May these gifts be sent into our community
and into the world around us,
that others may claim the hope of your presence. Amen.

Scripture

Psalm 137:1-6

Lament of the Exiles

By the rivers of Babylon—
there we sat down and wept
when we remembered Zion.
There we hung up our lyres
on the poplar trees,
for our captors there asked us for songs,
and our tormentors, for rejoicing:

“Sing us one of the songs of Zion.”

How can we sing the Lord’s song
on foreign soil?

If I forget you, Jerusalem,
may my right hand forget its skill.

May my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth
if I do not remember you,
if I do not exalt Jerusalem as my greatest joy!

Jeremiah 29:4-14

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” Yes, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them,” declares the Lord.

This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.”

1 Peter 2:9-17

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Revelation 21:22-27

I did not see a temple in it, because the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, because the glory of God illuminates it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never close by day because it will never be night there. They will bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. Nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those written in the Lamb's book of life.

Sermon – Sojourners and Exiles

Hymn - Lord, I Need You

Reflections and Sharing

Praises and Prayer Concerns

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name;

your kingdom come,

your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

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.

Hymn – The Blessing

Benediction

Beloved of God,
Healed and forgiven, blessed and strengthened:
go forth to be a blessing to others,
proclaiming the love and mercy of God
in all that you do and say! AMEN