

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
WILLMAR, MN  
MAY 10, 2020**



**Prelude**

**Preparing Our Hearts**

*As you join us this morning for Facebook Live worship, I invite you to prepare your hearts and minds for worship as we sing together, "Holy Spirit."*

**"O Jesus, I Have Promised"**

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O Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end;  
be thou forever near me, my Master and my Friend;  
I shall not fear the battle if thou art by my side,  
nor wander from the pathway if thou wilt be my guide.

O let me feel thee near me! The world is ever near;  
I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear;  
my foes are ever near me, around me and within;  
but Jesus, draw thou nearer, and shield my soul from sin.

O let me hear thee speaking in accents clear and still,  
above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self will.  
O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control;  
O speak and make me listen, thou guardian of my soul.

## **Welcome to Worship**

Friends, we are doing worship in a new way during this season. The sanctuary is empty, but we are still the church. The church has always been the people, not the building in which we gather. Even if we cannot be together in this place, we are together in worship today by the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives and by the digital signal that helps us connect to one another.

Friends, wherever you are, and whether you are watching it live or as a recording, this is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

## **Opening Hymn**

### **“Who Am I”**

words and music by Mark Hall  
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Who am I, that the Lord of all the earth  
would care to know my name, would care to feel my hurt?  
Who am I, that the Bright and Morning Star  
would choose to light the way for my ever wand’ring heart?

Not because of who I am, but because of what You’ve done.  
Not because of what I’ve done, but because of who You are.

I am a flower quickly fading, here today and gone tomorrow;  
A wave tossed in the ocean, a vapor in the wind.  
Still You hear me when I’m calling. Lord, You catch me when I’m falling.  
And You’ve told me who I am: I am Yours, I am Yours.

Who am I, that the eyes that see my sin  
would look on me with love and watch me rise again?  
Who am I, that the voice that calmed the sea  
would call out through the rain and calm the storm in me?

Not because of who I am, but because of what You've done.  
Not because of what I've done, but because of who You are.

I am a flower quickly fading, here today and gone tomorrow;  
A wave tossed in the ocean, a vapor in the wind.  
Still You hear me when I'm calling. Lord, You catch me when I'm falling.  
And You've told me who I am: I am Yours, I am Yours.

### **Opening Prayer/Prayer of Confession**

written by Brian Draper, and posted on the *Monthly Prayers* page of the [Christian Aid](#) website.

#### **Call to Confession**

If we say we are completely put together, the truth is not in us.  
But if we confess our distractions, our errors, and our anxieties,  
God will meet us and renew us.

#### **Prayer of Confession**

Before God and God's people, we confess that we have  
been reluctant to speak out clearly,  
naming the injustice we see and declaring God's vision.  
Before God and one another,  
we confess our reluctance  
to receive our calling as God's people,  
made by God and chosen as witnesses  
to God's dream of justice and joy.  
Remind us, God,  
that you have made us for your service  
and recharge us with your Word.  
Renew us, God.  
Grant us courage to live out your Way of peace and grace.  
We ask it in Jesus' name; Amen.

#### **Assurance of Forgiveness**

God has promised that whenever we repent  
and seek a new union with God,  
forgiveness is ours.  
That promise comes true now.

Sisters and brothers, know that in Christ Jesus,  
you are forgiven.  
Thanks be to God! Amen.

## **Prayer Response**

### **“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light” (verse 1)**

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I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to follow Jesus.  
God set the stars to give light to the world. The star of my life is Jesus.  
In him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike.  
The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

## **Scripture Lesson**

### **John 14:1-14**

**14** “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe<sup>[a]</sup> in God, believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. <sup>4</sup> And you know the way to the place where I am going.”<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you know me, you will know<sup>[d]</sup> my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

<sup>8</sup> Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” <sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup> Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. <sup>11</sup> Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup> Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am

going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> If in my name you ask me<sup>[e]</sup> for anything, I will do it.

## Message

### **“Followers of the Way” Rev. Scott L. Thompson**

As a young boy I spent a lot of time with my Grandpa in his wood shop. He was an expert woodworker who could build, repair, and refinish furniture. Our farm and homes were filled with things that Grandpa had meticulously and lovingly crafted in his shop. We kids would spend any moment we could alongside of him in his shop as he worked. He would give us some hand tools and a few scraps of wood to tinker with alongside him as he worked on a project, whiling away the hours.

For me, a goal that’s turned out to be 40 years in the making, has been to create a woodworking shop like my Grandpa’s and to develop some of the skills that he had. So after our most recent move to our new home a couple of years ago, I’ve taken over a stall in the garage and have been slowly accumulating tools and knocking out projects. It will take decades of woodworking to get as good as my Grandfather was. But that’s the point, isn’t it? To do something that you love, that follows in the footsteps of someone you love. Something that you do because it is something you’re inspired to do because of someone you admired.

Pastor and author Michael Slaughter talks about the sorts of passions and devotions that pass from person to another in his book, “Momentum for Life.” Our passions are those things which others will know about you from observing you. They will see how you spend your time and energies and they will be able to *smell them on you*. These are the sorts of things that our children learn about us. He says, “our children pick up on our passion far more than they hear our words. Their views and values are more influenced by the objects of our devotion than by our stated beliefs.” We communicate our passions whether realize them or not. We pick them up by osmosis from others, we can *smell* them on the other. A young boy catching his Grandfather’s love for woodworking is therefore no surprise.

In this well-known gospel passage from John, Jesus says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (v. 6). For this morning, I'd like us to carefully consider the first part of this phrase, "I am the way." Did you know that the first Christians didn't call themselves Christians? The book of Acts chapter 11 tells us that it wasn't until years after the first Easter when the disciples were first called Christians in the city of Antioch during their missionary journeys. Before then early Christians called themselves the followers of "The Way."

These early Christians called themselves the followers of, "The Way," because of the profound influence of Jesus upon their lives. They had spent so much time living with him, following him, devoting themselves to his teachings that Jesus' passion had seeped into them. His values had become their values. His teachings had become their ground of being.

You can hear the disciples come to this understanding in today's text. Both Thomas and Philip are awakening to a deeper understanding about "The Way" they are to follow. Thomas asks him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Philip says, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus reminds them that to know him is to know the Father. To know Jesus is to know God. To trust in Jesus is to trust in God. To follow the way of Jesus is know the way of God.

You see this all throughout the history of the disciples that follows as Luke writes of it the book of Acts. You see a people who have taken Jesus' way of sacrificial love and put it into practice. You see a people who heal the sick, care for the poor, offer love to the outcast and rejected, and proclaim the good news of the Grace of God in Jesus Christ.

In other words, we see the evidence of a people who smelled Jesus' passion, who caught his teachings, who became followers of his way. They replaced their way with his way. And by doing so, they grew from a few scattered and fearful people huddling behind locked doors following the crucifixion, to a movement that has spanned the globe.

So, a question and a challenge for each of us this morning. If someone were to spend a significant amount of time with you, what sort of passion would they smell? What sort of way would they observe you following? What sort of passion would be caught and taught from your proximity? If you have children or grandchildren that spend a lot of time with you, what sort of values are

they picking up from you? Is a beloved hobby like woodworking, fishing, sewing, or gardening? Is it devotion to a favorite sports team? Is it the endless hours you spend at work? Is it something else? I'd like to encourage you to take an inventory of your life and do an honest bit of introspection, and as yourself, "What story of devotion is my life teaching? What is the "way" my own life teaches?

When you do this, ask yourself, "Where is the way of Jesus in the midst of my life?" If Jesus is the way and the truth and life, and you find yourself following a different way altogether, where does the way I'm actually following lead? Does my current way lead to life? Is it a path of truth? What sort of fruit is my life bearing from following this path I'm on?

Maybe after you've examined all of these things, you'll find that you've drifted a long way from the way of Jesus that leads to truth and life. We often find ourselves in such situations. All is not lost, we just need to change the path we're on to get back on, "The Way," of Jesus. In the Bible this is called repentance. In its original Greek the word for repentance, *metanoia*, literally means to find yourself going down a wrong path and to change course – to find yourself having an incorrect thought, and changing your mind. When Thomas found himself confused about the path he was on he asked. He said, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" And Jesus met him in that place of and led him down the path that was the way, and the truth, and the life.

Over the past couple of days and weeks, I've been doing something rather fun. I've been getting my daughter Abigail out in the wood shop with me. We've been building bird boxes and furniture together. I'll make a measurement or a cut, and she'll make a measurement or a cut. She's a quick study. So far she's learned how to use a miter saw, router table, jig saw, hand drill, and more. Truth is, we're learning together. I'm following in the way of my Grandad. Maybe she's following in the way of her Dad?

Whose way are you following in? What way do you want to leave behind? Whatever it is, I hope you encounter Jesus on that Way. Also hope it's a way that you chose to bless others as you travel it. May it be a way of truth and life.

Alleluia, and Amen.

## **Hymn of Affirmation**

### **“What a Friend we Have in Jesus”**

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What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit; O what needless pain we bear,  
all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer!  
Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer!

Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Savior, still our refuge; take it to the Lord in prayer!  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
In his arms he'll take and shield thee; thou wilt find a solace there.

## **Prayers of Intercession**

Here is a pastoral prayer inspired by the suggested scripture readings for the fifth Sunday of Easter, Year A. It was posted on *Life in Liturgy*.

Lord God, we give you thanks for all your gifts to us—  
for daily food, for health, for each breath we take,  
for freedom to choose kindness,  
and for the gifts of your word, your power and your love.  
Our hearts are truly overwhelmed, O God,  
when we consider how you have entrusted so much to us.  
May we be worthy of that trust—  
may we be a people who are unafraid to live  
as fully and as richly as you want us to live.

Help us, O God, as followers of Jesus,  
to multiply all that you have given us,  
to risk spreading your word and perhaps see it misunderstood,  
to gamble by loving those whom others think worthy only of hate,  
to take chances by doing good to those who have not done good to us.

Help us be faith filled and desire  
to increase your glory and your goodness in this world.  
Make us people who share in both word and deed  
that which you have given to us.

We pray for the church gathered today,  
both here and around the world,  
that it may encourage all of its members  
to discover, develop and use all their gifts,  
those of nature and those of grace.  
We pray for those who are poor in body or in spirit,  
for those oppressed and heavy laden,  
for those sick or in despair, especially\_\_\_\_\_.  
Minister by your Spirit and by us,  
to all those for whom we have prayed,  
and help us walk faithfully in the path of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And now, with the confidence of the children of God,  
we pray the prayer which Jesus taught us:

**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.**

### **Invitation to the Offering**

*Friends, we cannot pass an offering plate online. I want to thank you for  
continuing to give generously, sending your offerings to the church. Your gifts  
allow us to continue to be the church. So, I would like to take this moment to say  
thank you, and to bless the offerings you make on a regular basis: your financial  
gifts; and your lives offered to God's service. Let us pray:*

## **Offering Prayer**

excerpted from a longer piece by Roddy Hamilton, and posted on **Listening to the Stones**. <http://newkilpatrickblog.typepad.com/nk-blogging/mucky-paws/> Used by permission.

May we honor your name  
not by paying it lip service, Lord Jesus  
but by trusting the vision it speaks of  
and the way it calls for

May we honor it by following you  
speaking into the word with our actions  
and showing who we're chosen to follow

May we love in your name  
speak in your name  
care in your name  
that willingness to touch the outcast  
feed the hungry  
remember the sick  
visit the imprisoned  
clothe the naked  
give water to the thirsty  
in your name

## **Closing Hymn**

### **"Shout to the Lord"**

words and music by Darlene Zschech  
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My Jesus, my Savior, Lord there is none like you;  
All of my days I want to praise the wonders of Your mighty love.  
My comfort, my shelter, tower of refuge and strength;  
Let ev'ry breath, all that I am, never cease to worship You.

Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing.  
Power and majesty, praise to the King.  
Mountains bow down and the seas will roar

at the sound of Your name.  
I sing for joy at the work of Your hands,  
forever I'll love You, forever I'll stand,  
nothing compares to the promise I have in You.

### **Charge and Benediction**

If the God who raised Jesus from the dead is for us, who dare be against us?  
We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

Step out into the world in humble confidence:  
there is nothing about to happen that God has not foreseen,  
and no situation where Christ will not be there ahead of you,  
preparing a place and an opportunity for you.

The peace of God, which goes beyond all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds  
in the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ, God's Son.  
And the blessing of God all-loving,  
the Creator, Redeemer and Counsellor,  
will be with you now and always. **Amen!**

Go in peace to the follow the way of Christ.

Wash your hands.

Love your neighbors.

You are not alone.

Alleluia! Amen.