

Alexandra Presbyterian Church

## **Second Sunday of Easter**

**April 11, 2021**

Minister: Rev. Vern Tozer  
Stephanie Burgoyne, music director  
Kaitlin Vandertuin, soprano

### **GOD'S PEOPLE GATHER**

#### **\* Entry of God's Word, our Holy Bible**

**PRELUDE**

"The King of Love"

arr. Eugene Hill

#### **WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

I look forward to being with you for these eight Sundays counting today. These are different days we have been moving through. Our services have been forced to adjust and make changes. It has gotten us out of our comfort zones and we truly miss being able to shake hands—and hold close and quiet conversations and enjoy what we call fellowship. Who realized how important having a cup of tea together could be? It is great that you make the effort to read this. We trust that something will be shared that you will be able to think about for today.

### **WE ARE CALLED TO WORSHIP**

#### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

I like the blessing that this Scripture promises – They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They will mount up on wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. May God grant that our faith will soar like an eagle; our time with the Lord will allow us to run without being weary and we will be encouraged to walk with the Lord as we continue our life's journey.

**HYMN 78**

This is the Day

#### **\* PRAYERS OF ADORATION AND CONFESSION**

Loving God we come to you this day with open hearts and minds  
to accept the blessing you will bestow upon us.

We come with a hunger to know more about you and your Word.

We do not come to parade our goodness or our great faith—  
we simply come as beggars to a place where food is provided.  
Feed our souls and nourish us.  
Speak through your Word and Lord, may your people be willing to listen.  
We have to confess how weak and foolish we often are.  
We are prone to wander away from you and even forget about you.  
Draw us to yourself and hold us close  
because we need to be assured that you are always there for us.

In the name of Jesus we join our voices in the prayer he shared with his disciples.

#### \* 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

#### ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

As far as the east is from the west so far has our Father removed our sins from us.  
Our Lord says to us as he said to so many while here on earth: Neither do I condemn you.  
Go and sin no more.

#### WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

#### RESPONSIVE READING Psalm 95:1-7

- <sup>1</sup> O come, let us sing to the LORD;  
**let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!**
- <sup>2</sup> Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving;  
**let us make a joyful noise to the Lord with songs of praise!**
- <sup>3</sup> For the LORD is a great God, and a great Sovereign above all gods;  
<sup>4</sup> **in whose hand are the depths of the earth;  
and also the heights of the mountains.**
- <sup>5</sup> **The sea belongs to God who made it,  
and the dry land, which God's hands have formed.**
- <sup>6</sup> O come, let us worship and bow down,  
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

**<sup>7a</sup> For the Lord is our God,  
and we are the people of God's pasture,  
and the sheep of God's hand.**

*"May the Lord bless the reading of His word to our hearts."*

## **SCRIPTURES**

Joshua 2:1-14

Hebrews 11:29-38

**HYMN** 650

He leadeth me

## **MEDITATION**

### **"A Woman like Her"**

I am scheduled to preach for eight Sundays from now to the end of May. I want to use these sermons to introduce eight people from the Bible. Some of them you may know very well and others you may not know their names at all. These eight people played great roles in serving the Lord and in making Him known. It is my prayer that these folk will inspire us and challenge us as we see what the Lord did through them. Four are from the Old Testament and four from the New. Five are men and three are women. These eight are very different from one another. It is a surprise how the Lord used some of them. They all however, can reach us a great deal by their words and actions.

This Sunday I wish to tell you about a woman named Rahab. You probably do not recognize the name. She lived in the city of Jericho in the days of Joshua. It was when the people of God, the Israelites were about to move back into the Promised Land. They had been freed from Egypt's slavery and after forty years, they were about to live in the land of their forefathers. Taking back the land was a challenge and there were many battles they had to fight. One of their greatest challenges was the capture of the walled city of Jericho. The people boasted about how well guarded their city was. They had huge walls, very high and very thick. In fact they had two walls one inside the other. There was a space between the outer wall and the inner wall large enough for people to make their homes there.

When Joshua wanted to get some information about Jericho he sent two spies to look things over and bring back a report. When they needed a place to stay they went to the home of a lady called Rahab. She happened to live right on the city wall. She was a well-known woman and one who had a reputation. In fact she was a prostitute. No doubt the men learned that information and decided to stay at her place because no one would think it strange when some men went to her home. Looking back, we believe the spies were guided by God. But there were also neighbours who kept an eye on Rahab's home. It was their nightly entertainment no doubt. So when two men dropped in to the house, the King soon heard about it. The king was nervous because he had heard reports of what was happening as the Israelites captured one town and one city after another. He wanted to know who the men were and what they were up to.

Rahab had people who reported to her as well. She knew that some servants of the King were coming to check on her visitors. She helped the spies escape to the roof of her house and hid them under some flax stalks. When the guards knocked at her door she did not deny that there had been two visitors at her place. But she told the King's men that they had just left and if they hurried they could no doubt catch them. The guards left. Rahab talked to the two men. She surprised them by saying: "I know that your god is the god in heaven above and on the earth beneath. We have heard what your Lord has been doing for you and we are very afraid. We know he is going to give you this land." This shocked the two spies for they would not expect such faith on the part of a heathen.

She made an agreement with the two men. I have shown kindness to you and I ask that you will do the same for me when you come.... Notice not if you come. I will bring all my relatives here so that they can be saved with me. The spies agreed. She had a long piece of red rope which may have been used before. She let them down the wall with that rope. She was told to leave it in her window so that they would remember what house was to be spared when the city was destroyed. After three days in hiding out in the hills, the men returned to Joshua and gave their report. When the walls of Jericho came tumbling down—Rahab's house was the only one saved. She and her household were spared. The scarlet rope did its job.

Did you find it amazing that the spies would go to that woman's house? And is it not a surprise that of all the citizens of the city she would be the one who believed in Jehovah? She was willing to risk her own life to save God's people. Her faith in the God of Israel was strong enough that she would risk everything. That is all we read of Rahab in the Old Testament. But in the New Testament, in Matthew chapter one and verse five, guess what we read? In among the list of ancestors of our Lord Jesus is the name Rahab. This woman with a past, this woman with her scheming ways—this woman used and abused—despised by others—is listed among the ancestors of our Lord Jesus. She was an ancestor of Boaz and Boaz married Ruth. Ruth was the great grandmother of King David. And we know that Jesus is often referred to as being the son of David. Rahab is one of a few women listed in the ancestry of our Lord.

But there is more! Rahab is mentioned in the letter of James—where he writes: "Was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead so faith without works is dead." Rahab's actions confirmed her faith. But perhaps even more surprising in Hebrews 11:30 and 31, this is what is recorded: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people marched around them for seven days. By faith the prostitute Rahab because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient." There she is listed among the great heroes of the faith. Her faith is praised.

What do we learn from the story of Rahab? We certainly discover that God can work miracles in the life of the most surprising of people. Most would give up on Rahab and say she would never change. Not many Churches would open their doors or their hearts to her. She would be considered beyond redemption. How well would we receive a person like Rahab in our churches? She is a great lesson as to how God will respond to even a mustard seed of faith. It is a good lesson in the grace of God which is beyond description. We can never be too bad so that God rejects us.

We talk and sing about the grace of God. We know that what God did with and through Rahab is repeated again and again. For the grace of God is amazing. We sing it so often "Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me." Some people object to the word wretch. The author of this hymn knew what he meant by calling himself a wretch. He had been one who transported slaves across the ocean to be sold into slavery. What could be a worse sin? He qualified as a wretch! God welcomes all of us who admit to our unworthiness. He can do unbelievable things in response to our faith. We may not have our names recorded in the ancestry list of someone great but they will be written in the Lamb's book of life. Thanks be to God.

## **WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD**

### **PRESENTATION OF OFFERING**

#### **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Our heavenly Father,

there is nothing we have that we can truly say is fully and completely ours.

All that we have you have provided for us.

We bring these gifts

because we wish to share the gifts we have received so that others may be blessed.

Take these gifts we give in faith and make them a blessing to many.

In the name of Jesus we ask, **Amen.**

#### **\* DOXOLOGY**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise Him all creatures here below.

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host.

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

### **PRAYERS THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION**

Our loving Creator and God, we give praise and thanks that we do not have to make an appointment with you. We do not have to plead that you would make time for us. You are so loving and caring whenever a child of yours utters a word or breathes a request you are there and you listen. With that assurance we come to offer ourselves and our praise. We thank you for the daily blessings that enrich our lives. We appreciate the homes in which we live while so many are homeless in our world. We give thanks for the food and clean water which is provided every day. We give you praise for the measure of health that allows us to be up and about. And we thank you for the Saviour who shows his loving care in so many ways.

We are confident as we leave our requests with you, our Father. In days past when we have come you have responded. You have granted what you know is best for us. So this day we would pray for those known to us who are in need of encouragement and healing. Minister in love to those who have been told there is little more that can be done to provide healing. Comfort those who are troubled as they face more tests and surgery. Give courage to those who because of age wonder if they have strength to face another week or even another day.

Bless those who come to our minds whenever we enter a time of prayer. Quietly now we speak their names and commend them and their needs to you... Loving savior we pray for your church and the bodies of believers throughout the world. When there is so much that brings discouragement, grant a fresh infilling of confidence in you and your plans for your church. May there be a great awakening when many will seek you and turn their hearts toward you. Revive your church and make it a blessing to the lost and wandering.

These and all our prayers we leave in your keeping, O God and may your name be praised through the answers that will be granted. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour, Amen.

**HYMN 677**      My faith looks up to Thee

**\* BENEDICTION**

Now may our caring heavenly Father go with you; may God the Son, our blessed Saviour walk with you and may God the Holy Spirit continue to dwell within you--- this day and until the day break and all sorrows flee away and then forever more. Amen.

**\* CHORAL AMEN**

**POSTLUDE**      "Praise My Soul, the King of Heaven" arr. Eugene Hill



**In Our Prayers**

Edith Cowper  
Bruce Wheatley  
Jeannie Carmichael  
Joan MacQueen