

Alexandra Presbyterian Church

## **Sixth Sunday of Easter**

*Mother's day*

**May 9, 2021**

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

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

**PRELUDE**

"We Gather Together"

Callahan

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

#### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

In the name of our Lord Jesus, the King and Head of the Church, you are very welcome to join in this worship service provided. We would be so happy if we were able to meet in the sanctuary and be together on the Lord's Day.

Honour your father and your mother is a commandment given us by God. On this day we will especially give thanks for the one who gave birth to us. The love of God is so often demonstrated by the love a mother gives so unselfishly to the child she bears. So whether still with us or with the Lord, we say thanks for the love shown before and after our birth. Let us worship God.

Our first hymn is "For the beauty of the Earth" – number 434 in the Book of Praise. Please note verse four: "For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child..."

**HYMN** 434

For the beauty of the Earth

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

Let us pray. Dear God, our Father in Heaven, we come to you this day to express our love and thanks. As you look into our hearts, may you see there a deep thankfulness for the one who gave us birth and the family into which we were born. You blessed us with people who cared for us and treated us as a gift from you. With all our hearts we thank you for the love which greeted us when we came upon this earth. Enable us this day to remember and give sincere thanks. We confess that we could have shown more love and support for those who first held us in their arms. We could have been more understanding and grateful. We could have returned their love in so many ways. Thank you for the example set by our mothers and for the caring ways in which they taught us how to love others. We ask in the name of our Lord and continue in prayer saying:

## **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**

When we have confessed our sins, we believe that God has provided His loving forgiveness. Let us not continue to bear the weight and the guilt of that which the Lord has taken away from us. Go now believing in the mercy of God and heeding His words to go and sin no more.

## **WE HEAR GOD'S WORD**

**RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 27:1-11**

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
**whom shall I fear?**

The LORD is the stronghold of my life;  
**of whom shall I be afraid?**

<sup>2</sup> When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh –  
my adversaries and foes – they shall stumble and fall.

<sup>3</sup> **Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;  
though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.**

<sup>4</sup> One thing I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after:  
**to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,  
to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.**

<sup>5</sup> For you, Lord, will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;  
you will conceal me under the cover of his tent; you will set me high on a rock.

<sup>6</sup> **Now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me,  
and I will offer sacrifices in the Lord's tent with shouts of joy;  
I will sing and make melody to the LORD.**

<sup>7</sup> Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me!

<sup>8</sup> **"Come," my heart says, "seek the Lord's face!" Your face, LORD, do I seek.**

<sup>9</sup> **Do not hide your face from me.**

Do not turn your servant away in anger, you, who have been my help.

**Do not cast me off, do not forsake me, O God of my salvation!**

<sup>10</sup> **If my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will take me up.**

<sup>11</sup> Teach me your way, O LORD, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies.

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

## SCRIPTURES

Exodus 2: 1-10

Hebrews 11: 23-28

**HYMN** 348

Tell Me the Stories of Jesus

## MEDITATION

### **"A Mother's Love"**

This is Mother's Day. That says something about my age. I still prefer to call this Mother's Day even though I believe Christian Family Sunday is okay as well. I think that our mothers deserve their own day. Years ago there were several songs that spoke with great feeling about mothers. Remember the one "Tell Mother I'll be There in Answer to Her Prayer". Or there was another that would bring tears to many eyes "My Mother's Prayers Have Followed Me." But now there is so much said or written about not promoting one gender above the other, or advising us that we should not identify someone as either gender. We are told not to talk about the traditional roles that were given to male or female. I have a problem with a lot of what is promoted in our day. On this special day I am going to talk about a mother. I do not apologize should that upset someone. After all our Scriptures say: "Male and Female created He" — 'He' being God. The mother I want to talk about is famous because of her son. She was a mother who not only gave birth to one of the greatest but also saved his life when he was an infant. She was a mother many years ago in the Old Testament time. The sermon today is about Moses' mother. Now I think I would be safe to offer a prize to anyone who could tell me her name. You could probably tell me several things about Moses and how important he was to the people of Israel. You might mention things like the burning bush, the Ten Commandments and the journey to the Promised Land. But my question is simple. What was his mother's name? It takes some searching to find out what her name is. When you do find it you have to know who she was married to. She was married to Moses' father of course, she was Mrs. Moses and his name was Amram. In the book of Exodus chapter six and verse 20, you will find this: "And Amram married his father's sister Jochebed who bore him Aaron and Moses. Amram lived 137 years."

I have known men who hardly ever spoke their wives' names for some reason. Some have dared to call their wife "the missus". Others living very dangerously would refer to her as the "old lady" or "the better half". I have even had to figure out who they were talking about when they simply said "she". I think using names like that today is largely condemned. Husbands had better not neglect to call their wives by their given names. You are going to

hear that being the mother of Moses was an extremely important role to play in the Old Testament times and in the whole history of the people of God. You should know as well that in those days things were not great for the women folk. The husband was head of the house and the women were very often reduced to a role much like a servant. And when you think of it, it has not been that long since the role of the wife changed for the better. Even in my life time there has been a change that indicates a larger change. If you look at the write ups or the history of our congregations – you will not find a married woman being referred to by her own name. It was always Mrs. John Doe; or Mrs. Robert Smith...most you remember that well. And the title was almost always there – Mrs. Brown – and in the case of the unmarried it would be Miss. Jones. And remember the Marriage Ceremony? The father of the bride was involved and they labeled one part of the ceremony “The Giving Away of the Bride.” It indicated that the bride belonged to her father and now she will belong to her husband. The marriage ceremony today permits the father of the bride to give his blessing to the marriage but more often the father will say “her mother and I give our blessing.”

That has been a welcome change and should have changed. But I have been concerned about something else that has changed and maybe not for the better. The role of the mother in the life of the children has been lessened. Due in part to the feminism movement there has been somewhat of a reduction of the attitude towards motherhood. Parenting is now to be an equal sharing of responsibilities. The mother is not to be any more important than the father and the father is not to be any more important than the mother. I really feel that something is lost when the vital role of the mother in the home is diminished.

Back to Jochebed and the mother we are looking at today. Amram and Jochebed lived in a terrible time. Their people were in Egypt and were slaves. They suffered mistreatment and lived in utter misery. The Pharaoh kept making it harder and harder for the Israelites to even stay alive. They worked long, long hours. They had quotas to meet and were punished for not meeting those requirements. Then the pharaoh realized that the Egyptian birthrate was less than the Israeli birthrate. If it continued the Israelites would maybe outnumber the Egyptians. That would mean big trouble. So the Pharaoh came up with a ruthless law. Politicians can come up with bad things if it will keep them in power!

He passed a law that the midwives were not to allow the Israeli male babies to live. They were to suffocate them or whatever and kill them as soon as they were delivered. That did not work however, because the midwives feared God. When they were questioned why so many male babies lived, they said the Israeli mothers are vigorous and by the time we get there the babies are already born. So the new law said that any Egyptian could take an Israeli baby and throw it in the river Nile.

Well Jochebed had another baby. It was a beautiful child – like all babies are. She hid him as long as she could – for three months. By then he was quite noisy and she feared the Egyptians would find him. I think you know the story, don't you? She would put him in the river Nile, yes, but she got a papyrus basket, covered it with pitch and put Moses in it. She set him adrift in the river. But she instructed Miriam, Moses sister, to keep an eye on him and see what would happen. Jochebed had the loving heart of a good mother – there was no way she would even think of her little one being drowned. She committed him to God's care – and we certainly believe she paced the floor and never stopped praying that her baby Moses would be safe – that someone would rescue him. She committed her beautiful baby

boy to God's care. What a horrible time she must have spent awaiting some word about Moses.

We know God was working out an amazing thing for this little boy. It just happened – as some would say – that the pharaoh's daughter came down to the river to bathe. She heard a baby cry, sent her slave girl to rescue him. The slave girl would most likely be an Israelite! The crying baby melted the princess's heart and she could not throw him back into the Nile. She knew he was an Israelite baby and she knew what the law was. But do you see what is happening? A woman, even a princess, finds the baby. If it were a tough soldier what chance would Moses have had?

Miriam did what she was asked to do. She slipped over to where the Princess was and said – if you need someone to care for that child, I think I know someone who would be just the right person to do it. That's a great idea – the Princess agreed. Who got to look after Moses and would feel well cared for in doing so? Jochebed? Can we believe that this event was all a coincidence? Do we not see that there were just too many things that took place for them to be “a stroke of luck?” Jochebed knew this was a special child to her – but no way could she could not have ever dreamed what a special child Moses would be to all of history. How could she even imagine that these thousands of years later we would be talking about her and her son? Her greatest desire was for this one she had carried those nine months – that he would have a chance to live.

The Egyptians might see him as a threat and just another Hebrew child. Jochebed treasured him as a gift from God. Now you should know that doing what this mother did could have put her in great danger. In fact she could have been killed if the authorities found out she disobeyed the decree of the Pharaoh. Who would have advised Jochebed as to how to go about making it possible for Moses to be spared? We have to believe she was a woman of faith and that her thinking and her planning were directed by God. God knew who Moses was and what he would become. But a mother's love and a mother's faith brought it to pass.

The results were more, much more than this dedicated mother ever could have imagined. Never would she have dreamed that this little baby to whom she gave birth in secret would be the one who would lead her people out of slavery and into the Promised Land. No price was too great for her to pay, No risk was too much for her to take. In fact, I am sure; she would choose to die if her little son could live. There is no way to measure the love of a mother. There is no scale on which to rate how much a woman cares the child she carried and then nurtures. Is not the love of a mother a wonderful reflection of the love God has for his children?

There is a saying that could be expanded. It has been said about some folk, very unkindly – it was a face that only a mother could love. How many mothers have spent numerous sleepless nights, have whispered endless prayers, and have grasped unflinching hopes that her child is going to be all right. That child who has wandered so far away, that child who has put her through hell on earth, that child others have said – he is a hopeless case. Forget about her – don't bother with him or her – get on with life and forget they ever lived. You will be better off without them. But no! A thousand times no – the hymn we have sung through the years has that question – can a mother's tender care cease towards the child she bore? And the answer sounding from earth to heaven is – no, never, no!

What do you see in him? I see someone that I have carried, someone I have nourished—someone whose bumps and scrapes I have kissed until they were better – someone I would die for. That is what we should celebrate today. How dare people say as has been heard at a child’s funeral, “Oh well, just be thankful you have other children...that will help you bear this!” It won’t. For each child, each individual son or daughter holds all of a mother’s heart, is the object of every ounce of a mother’s love and a part of the caring mother dies whenever a child is taken from her. And that part is never the same again – never again fully lives. There is always a hole in the heart. Only a mother can understand this.

Jochebed may have lived to see some of what happened to her son Moses. Perhaps she saw him grow up in the Palace. Did she see him in his princely robes at special parades? She may have had some access to him over the years – we do not know. It is our hope that she was able to rejoice when he became like Pharaoh’s son...a mighty Prince. Did she ever know that Moses one day stood up to protect another Israelite? Did she ever hear he even killed an Egyptian who was brutally treating a fellow Israelite? And what about Moses? Did he always remember where he came from? We believe she had a number of years to care for him and influence him until he had to leave and stay with the Princess? The New Testament says: By faith Moses when he had grown refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter choosing rather to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for as short time. That’s his mother coming out through him.

What influence does that prove? His mother’s and the influence she had on the child she delivered and saved. We need the influence of dedicated, loving and faithful mothers today. Let’s all pause and give praise to God for the one who gave us life and who guided our little steps. Let us never diminish the vital role of a mother. Thank God every day for the one who gave birth to you.

### **WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD**

#### **\* 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.

#### **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Loving God, your blessings enrich our lives every day we live. We pause to remember those priceless gifts that have been ours since the moment of birth. Thank you for the love we have experienced from our mothers. Take, bless and use these gifts that others may learn of your love because we have given this day. In Jesus name we ask, Amen.

#### **PRAYERS THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION**

Our Father we bow now to offer thanks and also to present our hearts’ desires. Words fail us when we try to express how much we appreciate your daily care. In the little details we see your loving care. We thank you for food and clean water. We thank you for health to enjoy the brightness of the sunshine or the refreshing showers. We thank and praise you for the comfortable home in which we live. And this day we thank you for the welcome we

received from the ones who gave birth to us. We acknowledge that it must have been a struggle for our mothers in many cases. But we are grateful that their love persevered, they wiped away our tears, they spoke a gentle word and they embraced us when we were afraid. They taught us what love is really like. Thank you for the way you ordered things for the human race.

We have much for which we should pray this day. We know that there is so much need among the mothers of the world this day. We pray for those whose hearts are breaking because their little ones do not have enough to eat. We know there are mothers trying to care for their children in refugee camps. We pray for those who are shedding tears each day as they strive to take care of their sons or daughters. Bless the agencies that seek to respond and provide support.

We pray for the homes of our land. We give thanks for faithful mothers and fathers who desire the best for their children. We thank you for those who are setting a good example. We ask that there would be a concern for the spiritual needs of the children as well as their physical needs. Bless the congregations that are reaching out to the little ones and offering opportunities for the children to learn about you.

We continue to pray for those loved ones and neighbours who are facing challenges today. Touch and heal many whose names we would mention. Give comfort and peace to those who have lost a loved one. May they have that blessed hope that their loss is but for the time being.

Grant you blessing to our country as we continue to deal with the virus in our midst. May it soon be a thing of the past. These prayers and the prayers of our hearts we now leave in your keeping. May we believe that the answers will come soon and that your name will be praised in all that happens. In the name of Jesus our Lord, we pray, Amen.

**HYMN 703**

Happy the Home

**\* BENEDICTION**

May you be blessed by the presence of God the Father,  
the love of God the Son and the peace of God the Holy Spirit.  
Continue your journey knowing that you will never walk alone.

**\* CHORAL AMEN**

**POSTLUDE**

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**In Our Prayers**

Edith Cowper  
Bruce Wheatley  
Jeannie Carmichael  
Joan MacQueen

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