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**SADDLE RIVER
REFORMED
CHURCH**

“Old Stone Church”

Communion

Worship Team
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WORSHIP COMMUNION LITURGY
September 13, 2020

This is the liturgy for Communion at the Saddle River Reformed Church. It will be used in our live streaming and recorded worship service. In preparation before worship, please have a bread on a plate (roll, loaf, gluten free bread, or cracker) and the drink in a glass/cup, (wine, grape juice or drink, or any beverage available). Remember, this is in commemoration of the last meal of Jesus, so the elements (to eat and drink) need to be something you would include in the meal as a drink (from fruit) and bread.

Once you have the elements, place them on a table of some form and begin worship.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Votum Our help is in the Name of the Lord who made both heaven and earth.

HYMN 451 A Christian Home
O give us homes built firm upon the Savior,
Where Christ is Head, and Counsellor and Guide;
Where ev'ry child is taught His love and favor
And gives his heart to Christ, the crucified:
How sweet to know that tho' his footsteps waver
His faithful Lord is walking by his side!

O Lord, our God, our homes are Thine forever!
We trust to Thee their problems, toil, and care;
Their bonds of love no enemy can sever
If Thou art always Lord and Master there:
Be Thou the center of our least endeavor:
Be Thou our Guest, our hearts and homes to share.

Sentences: Psalm 114
Why is it, O sea, that you flee?
 O Jordan, that you turn back?
O mountains, that you skip like rams?
 O hills, like lambs?

Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,
at the presence of the God of Jacob,
who turns the rock into a pool of water,
the flint into a spring of water.

Pastor:

God has called us together, to be his people, and to hear his Good News. Let us worship and greet this day with the words of the psalmist... This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

*THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Pastor:

Receive the blessing God sends to us.
The Peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

OUR HUMAN CONDITION (UNISON)

Liturgist:

Let us join together, in silent prayer and confess our need for God as we prepare for the Lord's Supper.

Let us pray.

OUR ASSURANCE

Liturgist:

God so loved the world that he gave us his only Son, not to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Amen.

OUR NEW LIFE: The Commandments to Love.

Pastor: Jesus has promised us a new life.

First, we shall love the Lord, our God, with all our heart, soul, mind, and body. Second, we shall love our neighbors as ourselves. On these two commandments depend all of God's words and law.

PRAYER FOR INSPIRATION

Liturgist:

Gracious God. Let these words and your Holy Spirit live in our words and actions, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSON Matthew 18:21-35

Forgiveness

21 Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church/assembly sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' 22 Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven* times.

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

23 'For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. 24 When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents* (over \$160 million dollars) was brought to him; 25 and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment

to be made. 26So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, “Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.”

27And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. 28But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii;* and seizing him by the throat, he said, “Pay what you owe.”

29Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, “Have patience with me, and I will pay you.” 30But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt.

31When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. 32Then his lord summoned him and said to him, “You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?” 34And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt.

35So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister* from your heart.’

MEDITATION “Forgiveness, Judgement, and Discernment.”

‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.’

When I was a kid... OK, even now... I like cartoons. And, I am a cartoon purist. While I always enjoyed Disney movies, I was not a big fan of their characters – Mickey and the rest.

No. I was Warner Brothers all the way! Drawing a blank. I am talking about Bugs Bunny, Elmer Fudd, the Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote, Tweety Bird, and the rest.

Through these cartoons, I learned about classical music, such as Richard Wagner’s where Bugs is Brünnhilde opposite Elmer Fudd’s Siegfried in “What’s Opera, Doc?,” and Rossini’s “William Tell Overture.” (as I was writing this sermon, Siegfried was playing on the radio and I started to sing along... “Kill the Wabbit, Kill the Wabbit...”)

I always got a kick out of the chase and escape. Whenever Bugs or the Road Runner was able to outsmart their opponent, the action would stop and Elmer or Wile E.’s head would transform to a large lollipop with ‘Sucker’ stamped on the wrapping.

How do you feel when someone takes advantage of you... They don’t keep their word, or worse, lies to you... or as in the case of this parable by Jesus, steals from you?

We all harken to that old saying, “Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.”

Now Peter was getting the idea that patience, kindness, and forgiveness is part of the life when we become followers of Jesus. I think he was proud of himself to us the complete number of creation (7) as the goal and limit of forgiveness.

But, Jesus's response was 77 or in some translations, 70 x 7. Both numbers were intended to direct you to be as forgiving as God has forgiven you. Think about it.

As we have been going into stores during the pandemic, you have people at the door with one of those hand counters, clicking as each one of us enter in.

Well, think of God looking at you with one of those hand counters clicking each time you have sinned. Over your entire life, how many times would that clicker be marking out a sin... a lie, a hate, an insult, a prejudice... anything that separates you from the other person – diminishing them, abusing them, or simply failing to see the other person as worthy of your concern or care.

Yet, God forgives you. Not because you earned it or have proven yourself... but because he loves you and has chosen you as his own. The long and short of it, we are to do the same... especially when we are dealing with one another, as Peter was saying – ‘One of the congregation.’

But, we have all lived long enough to know an individual or more, who abuse our personal expectation to forgive as God has forgiven us.

How do we deal with our head being turned into a Tootsie-pop with the word ‘Sucker’ emblazed on it?

Even St. Paul gets into the action when he asks in Romans 14:10 “Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister?* Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister?* For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God.*”

I have heard this in conversations when someone is being challenged about behavior or beliefs that defy Jesus' Command to Love one another... and hearing “You can't judge me!” Even Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7, “Do not judge, so that you may not be judged.”

And they are right if we use judgement as an excuse not to care or be interested in the plight and suffering of another. Or if we use judgement as a way of lifting yourself up on the limitations of another. So, how are we to make decisions about how we are to interact to the benefit of others, the congregation, and to the Church given to us by God, through Jesus?

It is called discernment. Now, when I first came across this word years ago, I felt like it became the new piece of jargon used for what jargon is good for – separating the in crowd from the out crowd. In my frustration, I just wanted move on from discernment and make a decision. On or off. Up or down. Yes or no. Good or bad.

But all those decisions are lines in the sand... dares and barriers to reconciliation.

No, there really is a different way we Christians are supposed to deal with one another become better disciples – to be disciplined in the way of Jesus. And, when there is a transgression, hurt, or betrayal – there is a Christian way to deal with the loss and hurt.

Remember – Jesus taught in the passage before today’s lesson about how to deal with a brother or sister when they have sinned against you.

15 ‘If another member of the church* sins against you,* go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one.*

16But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

17If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector.

18Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. 20For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.’

And you thought that 2 or 3 gathered in my name was about worship...

But, this brings us into the process of being able to ‘discern’ the correct course of action in our decisions and how we treat one another.

Well, here are a some of things that separates Christian Discernment from human plus/minus, win/lose, decision making.

1

Always remember to "test the spirits." 1 Jn. 4:1 says, "Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world."

An example would be in today’s world would be if someone said it is OK to hate black or brown people, or a poor people, or whatever, because they are not one of us. That is a false spirit.

2

Remember to always, always be wise. Jesus said in Mt. 10:16, "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." Jesus wants us to understand evil without letting it make us evil. We need to be as "wise as a serpent."

Just because someone tells you a story doesn’t mean that you have to believe them – without checking it out. Now if you do check it out and they are telling the truth and your response is... “I don’t care.” They the sin is upon you if you had the ability to help.

3

Strive to grow into full maturity in your Christian walk.
This is a hard one because it takes work... a lot of work.

Hebrews 5:14 says, "Solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil."

The more we practice being able to tell good from evil, that is the more we judge situations based on what the Bible says, the more mature and wise we become as Christians. Then we will be able to eat solid food, which is the deeper things in the Bible. Then we will be able to see through Satan's schemes and lies, which is our having discernment.

4

Remember that Jesus said in the last days many false teachers would arise.
Now I don't know if we are in the last days or not, but there are a lot of people who seem to be working in the minor leagues of false teachers waiting to get into the Majors

Jesus said in Matthew 24:24, "For false Christs (Messiah's/Anointed) and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect." We have are not to be gullible. No matter how good a salesman or woman – beware of those who seek power for their own aggrandizement.

5

Watch out for teachings that cause division in the body of Christ. 1 Tim. 6:3 says, "If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people."

6

Renew your mind. Romans 12:2 says, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." We cannot really have discernment until we allow God to renew our minds. This means cleaning out the worldly ways of thinking (separation and suspicion) and bringing in Biblical ways of thinking (Unity, love, mercy, and justice) . This means allowing God to control our thoughts and not our selfish motives, and not Satan.

7

Be discerning of what a person's fruit is. Jesus said in Mt. 7:18-20, "A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.....Thus you will recognize them by their fruits." A person may appear to bear good fruit, but you always need to look closer. It could be just an act or a show. Are they genuinely loving others or just pretending to? Do they genuinely have peace, or are they just good at appearing like they do? Are they patient, self-controlled, gentle, joyful, and generally good?

Finally....

8

Always, always test what someone teaches by the word of God. Don't just take their word for it. See whether what they are teaching is actually Biblical. Learn to read and understand the Bible for yourself. Every Christian has the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is who gives us spiritual eyes to see. So any Christian can see the truth for themselves. You do not need to depend on someone else to explain everything to you, if you truly do have the Holy Spirit inside of you.

Take on you Christian discernment in all that you hear, listen, and say. When we do make judgements and decisions, let them be in accordance with the will of our heavenly Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

WE RESPOND TO GOD COMMUNION

This is the liturgy for Summer Communion at the Saddle River Reformed Church. It will be used in our live streaming and recorded worship service. In preparation before worship, please have a bread on a plate (roll, loaf, gluten free bread, or cracker) and the drink in a glass/cup, (wine, grape juice or drink, or any beverage available). Remember, this is in commemoration of the last meal of Jesus, so the elements (to eat and drink) need to be something you would include in the meal as a drink (from fruit) and bread.

Once you have the elements, place them on a table of some form and begin worship.

WE RESPOND TO GOD COMMUNION

Pastor INVITATION

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Supper we are about to celebrate is a feast of remembrance, of communion, and of hope. We come remembering that our Lord Jesus Christ completely fulfilled the law, even to death on the cross. Because of God's eternal covenant of grace, we are accepted. We will never be forsaken.

We come to commune with this same Christ who has promised to be with us always. Christ is the true Bread which nourishes us and the Vine in whom we must live if we are to bear fruit. The Holy Spirit unites us into one body and in communion with all the saints. So we receive this supper in Christ's love and our affection for one another.

We come in hope believing that as surely as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we will be raised from the dead.

This is the Lord's Table. Come, for all things are now ready.

Communion Prayer
Pastor Let us pray.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, almighty and everlasting God. You created the heavens and the earth; you preserve us with your care; you revealed the fullness of your love for us by sending Jesus Christ. By his life, death, and resurrection you have reconciled us to yourself. With the heavenly host and with the saints of all times and places, we lift up our hearts in joyful praise...

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of Power, God of Might,
Heaven and earth are full of your Glory,
Hosanna in the Highest.

Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the Highest, Hosanna in the Highest.

Gracious God send your Holy Spirit upon us, we pray, that the bread which we break and the cup which we bless may be to us the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Accept the gift of our lives that we may live in you and serve your kingdom. Being joined together in Christ, may your whole church be one; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Pastor

Communion

The Lord Jesus, the same night that he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me"

And in the same way, he took the cup when they had finished dinner, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ. (eat)

The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ. (drink)

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

Pastor: Bless the Lord, O my soul, And all that is within me, bless his holy name,

People: Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not his benefits,

Pastor: Who forgives all your iniquity, Who heals all your diseases,

People: Who redeems your life from the Pit, Who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy.

Pastor: The Lord is merciful and gracious Slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

People: He does not deal with us according to our iniquities, For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

Pastor: As far as the east is from the west, So far does he remove our transgressions from us;

People: As a Father pities his children, So the Lord pities those who fear him.

Pastor: Who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, and will also give us all things with him.

People: Therefore, shall my mouth and heart show forth the praise of the Lord, from this time and forevermore.

Pastor: Let us pray.

Hear our need for you O God.

silence

Make us strong in body, soul, and spirit.

silence

Heal those who are in need of your care.

silence

Be with your world, its people and their leaders. Help us to promote and seek peace, righteousness, and justice.

Silence

Care for your children gathered here, lead this congregation, and guide, strengthen, and protect all who proclaim the name of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

And we gather together with the prayer he taught us, 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 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.

BENEDICTION

*CLOSING HYMN

496 No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus

If my heart could tell a story
If my life would sing a song
If I have a testimony
If I have anything at all

(Refrain)

No one ever cared for me like Jesus
His faithful hand has held me all this way
And when I'm old and gray and all my days
Are numbered on the Earth
Let it be known, in You alone
My joy was found
Oh my joy, my joy

Let my children tell their children
Let this be their memory
That all my treasure was in heaven

And You were everything to me (Refrain)

I'm still in love

You're still enough for me

Still all I want

You're still my everything

I'm still in love

You're still enough for me

Still all I want

You're still my everything (Refrain)