

# *Straight from the "Hart"*

Worship Service from June 06, 2021

 HARTLAND

Sharing the journey  
to know, love, and serve God

## **Apostle's Creed**

**Act of Centering** ("....." means pause to reflect) (Portions inspired by Psalm 28)

[musical background begins] I invite you to breathe slowly and deeply. Let the tensions of the week leave you with every exhale, and breathe in God's presence with every inhale. Close your eyes and let your memories enhance and bring to life the senses I put before you today. That day is much like today -- the sun is out bright and hot. But trees are shading you from direct contact on your skin, yet you feel its warmth in the air..... you are walking near water, anxious, searching for something precious..... This water is by a campground park, but it isn't a groomed beach and swimming area..... the smell of fishy water fills your nose..... near a fallen limb, you wade in only a couple steps, but the water is already above your knees..... the greenish dark water laps at your lower thighs while barely seen seaweed tickles your calves and shins and the slimy water bed under your feet feels squeamish and the silt squishes up between your toes as your feet sink in to that soft ground..... Your quest continues..... you've have left the water and the trees and are climbing up a steep sandy dune..... The glare of the sun in the cloudless sky burns your eyes... its heat not only hits you directly but radiates off the sand... you feel the sweat trickling down..... you feel the heat under your bare feet making it impossible to stand still..... and yet with every step the soft sand gives way, its pebbles sliding down the hill and your footstep going with it, making your progress almost nil..... eventually the depth of the sand begins to thin and gives way to stable ground underneath, progress increases, trees begin to line what has now become a path of solid ground, shading the ground and your body from the heat.....

A metaphor for the spiritual journey. Surrounded and threatened by evil, like sand falling away underfoot, we fear being dragged downward. Anxiety blocks reception. We don't feel listened to or spoken to. If it lasts much longer, we'll be lost in the *slimy pit, the mud and the mire*. *We cry for mercy, and our feet are set on a firm place.* (Psalm 40:2) We remember after all, that God is our rock, our fortress, he hears our cries for mercy, he strengthens and shields us. Our hearts reach out in trust, and he helps us. Our hearts leap for joy and we sing praise to him. As we

enter worship today, where are we on our journey? Does it feel like circumstances or situations, or activities of the week have put us in the pit? Are we climbing against it but feel like we are making no progress? Or do we feel like we are on solid, shaded ground today? Think where you are with your journey in life and with God in this next moment of silence. **SILENCE** [music continues and as it ends:] He saves us, he blesses us, he shepherds us forever. Amen.

Wherever we are in our journey today, have confidence that we are -- despite difficult circumstances, despite temporary setbacks, we are headed in the right direction if we are building our lives Jesus, the cornerstone of our faith. Join in the call to worship.

**Call to Worship** (R = Lay Reader C = Congregation)

R: Jesus says his words are reliably rock solid. His teachings are not incidental additions to our life. If we only use his words in Bible studies but don't work put them into practice, then we are like unthinking carpenters who build their house on a sandy beach. Then, when heavy rains pour down and waves rise up, when the winds blow against that house, it will fall with a great crash.

**C: When storms beat against the unapplied life, it will collapse like a house of cards.**

R: But when we hear Jesus teachings as foundational words upon which to build our lives and we work at putting them into practice, then we are like thinking carpenters who prepare their house for storms by digging down until they can affix it to solid rock. Then, when heavy rains pour down and waves rise up, when the winds blow against that house, it will not fall.

**C: When the storms beat against the applied life, it will not be moved.**

R: Therefore, each carpenter should build with care, and lay no foundation other than the one already laid. There is only one foundation.

**C: We will build our lives on Jesus Christ by putting his teachings into practice.** (Inspired by Matthew 7:24-27, 1 Corinthians 3:10b-11, (NIV, MSG, ERV))

**Music (vv 1,2,3) My Hope is Built**

**Theme**

Even the best, sweetest, most tempting "frames", if they are not built on Jesus, will collapse. Build your life on his life, his work and teachings. When we fully lean on him, he "anchors" us his holy presence. That means we don't give in to peer

pressure to veer off of the right path. Sometimes standing fast means standing alone against peer pressure, as we see in this folktale from Africa.

Once five fingers stood side by side on a hand. They were all friends. Where one went, the others went. They worked together. They played together. They ate and washed and wrote and did their chores together. One day the five fingers were resting on a table together when they spied a gold ring lying nearby. "What a shiny ring!" exclaimed the first finger. "It would look good on me." said the second finger. "Let's take it," suggested the third finger. "Quick! While nobody's looking!" whispered the fourth finger. They started to reach for the ring when the fifth finger, the one named Thumb, spoke up. "Wait. We shouldn't do that!" it cried.

"Why not?" demanded the other four fingers.

"Because that ring does not belong to us," said the Thumb. "It's wrong to take something that doesn't belong to you." "But who is going to know?" they all said. "No one will see us. Come on!"

"No," said the thumb, "It's stealing."

Then the other four fingers began to laugh and make fun of the Thumb. "You're afraid!" said the first finger. "What a goodly-goody," sang the second finger. "You're just mad because the ring won't fit you," muttered the third finger. "We thought you were more fun than that," said the fourth finger. "We thought you were our friend."

But the thumb shook its head. "I don't care what you say," it answered. "I will steal." "Then you can't hang around with us," shouted the other four fingers. "You can't be our friend." So they went off in a group by themselves, and left the Thumb alone. As first they thought Thumb would follow them and beg them to take him back. But Thumb knew they were wrong and stood fast. That is why today the thumb stands apart from the other four fingers. \*

And building our life on Christ means, as Paul said elsewhere, that we do not give the devil a foothold, (Eph 4:27) because it has the possibility of becoming (as we said in our imagery) a slippery slope right down to the pit, as this story, *The Camel's Nose*, illustrates...

One cold night, as a sheik lay in his tent, a camel thrust the flap aside and looked in. "I pray thee, master, he said, "let me put my nose within the tent, for it is cold outside. "By all means," yawned the sheik, who was bored and listless from having reposed on his pillows all day. "Do so if you wish." The camel poked his nose in the tent.

"If I might but warm my neck also", he said presently. "It's all the same to me." said the sheik. So the beast stuck his neck inside, and contented itself for a while

by looking about. Soon the camel, who had been turning his head from side to side, spoke up again. "It will take but little more room if I put my forelegs within the tent. I would feel a great deal better." The sheik simply shrugged and rolled to one side to make a little more room. The camel had hardly planted his forefeet within the tent when he said, "Master, I'm keeping the flap open by standing her like this. I think I ought to come all the way inside." "Whatever you like," the sheik nodded, moving over some more so the beast might enter. So the camel came forward and crowded into the tent. No sooner was he inside than he looked hard at the sheik and said, "I think that there is not enough room for both of us here. It will be best for you to stand outside, as you are the smaller. Then there will be room enough for me." And with that he pushed the sheik out into the cold and darkness. \*

And such is the method of evil, getting a foothold, and working its way in until we

\* *Why the Thumb Stands Alone, The Camel's Nose*, in: Bennett, William J., edited with commentary; *The Moral Compass: Stories for a Life's Journey*, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1995.

Instead, we recognize on whom we can rely and who lifts us up and puts us on solid ground and it is to him we give our thanks and praise for what he has done... Let's prepare our hearts for prayer by singing...

### **Prayer Music**    *Father, I Adore You*

**Prayers** Heavenly Father, we praise you with all our hearts for your unfailing love and faithfulness. Your covenant promises are even truer and greater than your reputation. When we cry out to you, you answer in your mercy. You forgive our sins without any recordkeeping. We wait on you with our whole being, even more than the night guards wait for the morning. Though we walk in the midst of trouble, we put our hope in your word, in your unfailing love. That love endures forever. You do never abandon us, the work of your hands. You reach out and preserve our lives from the enemy. You offer full redemption from all our sins. You forgive us and instill us with courage so that we can serve you with reverence, that all the rulers of the earth will praise you when they hear of your ways. For you are great and all glory belongs to you. We honor you for you look with compassionate kindness on all from the greatest to the least.

And that is why we lift up those needs that surround us and throughout the world. We celebrate with Gar and Vivian as they celebrate their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this week. The Schleh's ask prayers for grandson Daniel who is having knee surgery, and daughter Joan who has tests. We also pray for Heidi Williams who is hospitalized with tests. We also ask for peace against political unrest and violence around the world, and while we are thankful that covid is getting better here

statistically, it is not gone; and there are many places worldwide where it is still crippling nations...



**[Quilts]** and Lord we see the eight quilts laying across the kneeling rail. They are on their way to the Royal Kids Camp where they will be laid out on beds ready to greet 8 foster children / campers. We dedicate them with our love and prayers, knowing that you will work through them with the message of your compassionate care. You will write each of their names on your heart. As these fragile lives -- facing so much in their young lives, receive, use and take them with them, may it remind them that they are loved, that they are never alone, that they may feel the peace and comfort from realizing they are ever in your strong hands. We ask this blessing through your loving grace, and in the name of the one who taught us to pray...

### **Lord's Prayer**

### **Bible Reading Intro and Reading**

Today as we wrap up the worship series on the Lord's prayer, let's hear from King David who composed a song that meaningfully summarizes the prayer's call to action, and it especially establishes the basis on why that way of life is a

reasonable, and a most appropriate guide to practical service and spiritual worship, and which is the focus of its concluding phrase. Listen:

The Lord owns the earth and all it contains, the world and all who live in it. For he set its foundation upon the seas, and established it upon the ocean currents. Who is allowed to ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may go up to his holy dwelling place? The one whose deeds are blameless and whose motives are pure, who does not lie, or make promises with no intention of keeping them. Such godly people are rewarded by the Lord, and vindicated by the God who delivers them. Such purity characterizes the people who seek his favor, ... who pray to him. (Psalm 24:1-6 (NET))

**Music Lord's Prayer** (upbeat version)

**Sermon**                      *It is All His*                      **1 Chronicles 29:10-20 (esp 11-14,16)**

Some people wonder why we pray the Lord's prayer. When our culture is quick to dismiss the existence of God and at the same time blame him for everything bad in the world; why do we hold God's name as intimately loving, yet powerfully beyond us and sacred? They wonder, when our world is busy building its own allegedly indestructible castles of achievement, why we are so concerned about his coming kingdom. They wonder, when the popular philosophy is that happiness comes through self (even selfish) fulfillment, why are we calling for God's will to be done here on earth like it is there (in heaven)? They wonder, when there seems to be so much unanswered need in the world, how we can trust him for our daily provision.

When denial and aggressive counterattack is the first defense against failure, and the second, when caught red-handed, is a strategically timed insincere apology, some may wonder why we strive to humble ourselves, admit our failures and seek forgiveness and reconciliation. And when the norm is holding on to grudges and the pursuit of getting even, some wonder why we strive to offer grace and let go of our wounds. And when our culture applauds doing what feels good in the moment, they might wonder why we exercise self-discipline in order to flee or resist urges to do things that the culture would say "comes naturally". We do all these things because Jesus taught us to pray, For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Say it with me,

**Jesus taught us**

**For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.**

This little "doxology", the end of the prayer, is not in Luke's version of the Lord's prayer, or in the earliest records of Matthew's version. And yet it does a wonderful

job of pulling the prayer together into a neat bow, beginning and ending with honoring God. It also answers the question of why we pray the prayer in the first place. It is a model prayer. That means we can pray it literally, (as long as we pray it earnestly -- it is easy to forget that sometimes, isn't it?); or we can use it as an exemplary guide to (1) what to pray -- the kind of items for which we should be praying, (2) and how to pray - the attitudes with which we should be praying, (3) and as a reminder that spurs us on to the Christian way of living, for each item is also a call for us to do something about which we are praying.

### **The Prayer Guides us**

- 1) What to pray**
- 2) How to pray**
- 3) Call to living**

These final words are based on a prayer from David in a critical time in the history of Israel. King Saul was a natural leader who was possessed by his own position and power, so much so that when David came along, he tried to assassinate him because he saw him as a threat to his authority. When David eventually took the throne, he expanded the nation's geography and economy to a golden age that the nation has not seen before or since. He was such a great king that when they said the Messiah would come in the line of David, I suspect it was not only about blood lineage, but also a hope for the kind of king God's chosen would be for them.

King Saul embodied all the worldly values I listed that cause people to question why we pray the prayer. Right on his heels we have the greatest king Israel has ever known as a counterpoint that valued every phrase of the Lord's prayer even though it hadn't been said yet. Now David is about to hand over his reign to his young and inexperienced son -- those are David's words (1 Chronicles 29:1)) young and inexperienced son Solomon. In a theocracy, *everything* depended upon the king's willingness and ability to listen and follow God's instructions. The people must have been filled with nerve-wracking questions about their future in this transition of power. We had a bad one, we've got a good one, what's this one going to be?

They did know the next major step for their nation was to build a temple for God. It was the deepest desire of David's heart, but God said it was not for him, but for his son to take on that task.

On the day of transition, David gathered all the leaders together and paves the way for the making of the Temple (1 Chronicles 29:2ff) This is what he says:

***"In my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures"*** (1 Chronicles 29:3)

The original word is the same word God uses when he speaks of his people as his own prized possession. Ancient

**Prized Possession**

eastern monarchs stored treasures as a security against times of political hardship or disaster. David's gift is more than a gesture of great generosity out of his comfortable excess. He was giving up his guarantee of personal security.

A couple years ago I heard District Superintendent Scott Harmon speak on Jesus' encounter with the rich ruler in Mark 10:17ff. The ruler had done well in keeping all the commandments. But then he asked, What more must I do to inherit eternal life? The paraphrase *The Message* says, "Jesus looked him hard in the eye – and loved him! [But the look must have also revealed something else to Jesus, because *The Message* goes on "[Jesus then] said, "There's one thing left" and as The New American Standard Bible puts it – "Go and sell all you possess..."

Harmon says that last word, while including things he owned, reached the ruler on a deeper level. Jesus

**Reorientation of Identity**

was talking about things, he was talking about his reputation, his security, his image, his appearance, his identity. Everything that made him him. The man went away sad because he was not willing to re-orient his life around following Jesus and his ways. He was not willing to let go of what possessed him. We cannot be God's treasured possession if we possess ourselves with - other things - than God.

In an age when kings and rulers stored vast amounts to safeguard their future, David took a stance (as someone put it) of voluntary vulnerability – for the sake of building God's house. Jesus did the same when he left all the riches of heaven to come to us to humbly live among us as a human. And God did that in Jesus because God considers us worthy -- all of us -- just as we are -- valued and loved and treasured by God. We can find our identity in him in ways that we will never find in any other temporary security.

***"The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and whole-heartedly to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly."***

(1 Chronicles 29:9)

David gives. Then David challenges the leaders of the nation to do the

**Great Giving and Great Joy Go Together**

same, and they too gave a tremendous amount. The people saw and rejoiced at the response because the leaders gave *freely and wholeheartedly*, the Scripture says, freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord. Note that the *focus* in this text is not on the amount given, or the type of giving, or even the potential impact of the gift.



The focus is on the extent of the willingness and joyfulness of their commitment in which the people poured their lives into God's mission.

They didn't do it to get something from God. They did it because they truly and unconditionally loved God and were thankful for the opportunity to give and to serve him with their treasure, their time, their talents -- because of who God is and what he had done.

We don't always see it, in the Old Testament especially, but the people saw relationship with God as a joyful privilege and *everything* flowed from that. True happiness cannot be found in the momentary exhilaration of self-gratification. We are most capable of joy when we can find ways to give ourselves to something greater – something beyond ourselves -- that will make our world a better place for others as well as ourselves...

The immensely accomplished David stands in front of all these admiring people. You'd think this day of his retirement it should have been all about him. David prays. Like in the Lord's prayer, the first thing said makes sure everyone knows it is not about him, it is not about us, it is not about the nation, not even about Temple they are about to build, not about rituals or traditions, nor even about his son who is taking the throne. It is all about God himself. This is how he starts his prayer,

**It is all His**

***“Yours Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.”*** (1 Chronicles 29:11-12)

In the triad of power, glory and kingdom, we see what most people crave – to be secure and have influence, to be appreciated for their impact, and to have control and rule over life.

**Powerful, praiseworthy, possession**

David had more right to claim this triad than anyone, and yet he said every last bit of it belongs to God. ***It is all his.*** David drives this point home as his prayer continues, “who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you. (1 Chronicles 29:14)

The wealth that would fill most people with a sense of pride and power drives David to humbly recognize that, at best; all they were doing was giving back to God what God had graciously granted them to receive in the first place. It was all his before

we had it, It is all his while we have it, it is all his as we use it.

David adds this in his prayer,

**Who are we?**

**“we are foreigners and strangers in your sight, as were all our ancestors.”**

(1 Chronicles 29:15)

– “foreigners and strangers” is a phrase typically used of outsiders who had no rights or claims. God instructed the nation to welcome them because at one time they were the wandering foreigners in need of a home. When David uses this phrase about themselves, he is not only recognizing their history, but also that it is still God who owns everything, and it is only by God’s permission that they are allowed to live and dwell and prosper and have any freedom and any rights at all.

**Foreigners and strangers**

In a day of transition between kings, in a day when the glory of the nation had reached its peak, in a day when the cause of the faith seems lost in a world which enthrones only human efforts, David’s prayer (and the Lord’s prayer) assures us that God is still the king of all, that he desires to welcome us into a relationship with him and he invites us to come before him in humility, and thankfulness, and obedience, and generosity, and especially joy. And with that assurance, David concludes his prayer by turning to the future,

**... keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you. And give my son Solomon the wholehearted devotion to keep your commands**

1 Chronicles 29:18b-19)

he is asking that God would sustain in the hearts of the people their desire to be generous, joyful, and willing servants; and to give the new leader wholehearted devotion to keep God’s ways.

**Managing a life of worship**

If God owns all, we will surrender the control of personal power, glory, and rule; and see ourselves as managers of our lives that already belong to him, and whatever we are building in our life is not for us but for him. And If we want to manage our lives well, we will recognize that God is in the center of everything good that is accomplished, be it at school, work, church, or with relationships -- it is because of him. And so we will seek to discover his will in all those area of our life, so that we can know how to use the time, the talent, the energy, the ability, and the material resources that he has given us to benefit his purposes.

As we build our lives for God, it is not to manipulate blessings out of God, but it is our unconditional love and grateful joy-filled worship of him in whom we live and move and have our being – for the opportunity he gives us to live and love and become who we are.

### **Communion Invitation**

And the practice of Communion reminds us that God has completely given himself to us in Christ first, he never asks of us what he has already done for us... and we have the joyful privilege of being in relationship with him and building our life on him... and all who desire this - to build our lives on Christ, are welcome to participate. Let's prepare our hearts by singing

### **Music of Preparation v1,v2,v4 (Refrain on last verse only) I Surrender All**

**Confession** Let's continue to prepare our hearts by a time of confession. O God, source of all that makes life possible, giver of all that makes life good: we gather to give you thanks, yet we confess that we have often failed to live our thankfulness. What we have we take for granted, and we grumble about what we lack. We have squandered your bounty, with little thought of those who will come after us. We are more troubled by the few that have more than the many who have less. Forgive us, O God, accept our thanksgiving; and teach us to make gratitude and sharing our way of life; through the grace of Jesus Christ.

**Assurance** May God Almighty, who causes light to shine out of darkness, shine in our hearts, cleansing us from all our sins, and restoring us to the light of the knowledge of God's kingdom, and power and glory in the face of Jesus Christ our Savior. Therefore, to all who accept him, by the name and work of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. And because we are forgiven, we can say:

**Thanksgiving** The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.** It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of all that is. You gave us life. We turned from you, but your love never fails, and began the mission of saving us and putting before us the way of life through your Son Jesus. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and 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.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ... It is through him that we are offered a new and eternal covenant that leads to an everlasting life, and receive the promises of his presence with us always through the power of your Word and Holy Spirit. And so, in remembrance of your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, proclaiming the mystery of faith. **Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and at home, and on these gifts of bread and cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood, and empowered to live so that All honor and glory is yours, almighty Father God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Mary Jo is going to sing for us the Lord's Prayer as we close out this series. As she does sing it for us, let's meditate about what it may mean for us to pray the prayer and realize God owns all, and how we might, in the days ahead, manage our lives according to the Lord's prayer, according to the wishes of the one who owns everything. What might we be doing differently as the prayer lead us?

### **Lord's Prayer Sung as Special**

#### **Receiving the bread and cup**

On the night the Lord gave himself up for us, he gathered his disciples into an upper room where he took the bread, lifted it up, gave thanks for it, and offered it to his disciples, saying "This is my body, broken for you, as often you eat it, eat it in remembrance of me." Take and eat. When the supper was over, he took the cup, lifted it up, and he gave thanks, and gave it to his disciples, saying "This is my blood, the blood of the new covenant which is poured out for the forgiveness of your sins and for the sins of many. As often as you drink it, drink it in remembrance of me. Take and drink.

**Prayer** Our Lord, I will sing of your love forever. Everyone yet to be born will hear me praise your faithfulness. I will tell them, "God's love can always be trusted, and his faith-fulness lasts as long as the heavens." You are Lord God All-Powerful! No one is as loving and faithful as you are. The heavens and the earth belong to you. And so does the world with all its people because you created them and everything else. You are strong and mighty! Your kingdom is ruled by justice and fairness with love and faithfulness leading the way. Our Lord, you bless those who join in the festival and walk in the brightness of your presence. ((Psalm 89:1-2, 8, 11-12a,13-15 (CEV)) Amen.

#### **Music (3x – not a round) Go Now in Peace**

**Blessing** Now go in the name of the God who does not withhold his love, but faithfully listens to the prayers of those who reverently worship him. Amen.