**+SAINT DAVID’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH+**

**and**

**+BROWN COUNTY HEALTH AND LIVING CENTER+**

**PRAY TOGETHER**

**SEPTEMBER 10, 2023**



**Opening Acclamation and Prayer**

Presider: Blessed be God: Creator, Redeemer, and Giver of Life.

***People: And blessed be God’s kingdom, now and forever. Amen.***

Let us pray together.

***God of grace, please open our hearts, minds and souls to worship you. Come be with us, inspire us and lead us in our time together. We rejoice that we join with all Christians across the world as we glorify your holy name. And we thank you because we can pray in the name of your Son, Jesus. Amen.***

**Hymn**

**Collect of the Day**

Presider: The Lord be with you.

***People: And also with you.***

Presider: Let us pray.

O Lord, let us be humble enough to trust in you with all our hearts. Don’t let our pride make us give up on trusting you. Don’t let us fool ourselves into believing we are strong enough on our own, and never need to ask for help. Help us to rely on your love and your mercy and your strength, because you offer these freely to us. ***Amen.***

### The First Lesson: Exodus 12:1-14

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: Tell all the Israelite slaves in Egypt that they are to take a lamb for each family. If a family is too small for a whole lamb, they shall share one with their closest neighbor. The lamb shall be divided for each of the people who eat it. It lamb shall be perfect, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall slaughter the lamb at twilight. Then you shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which you eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. You shall burn anything that remains until the morning.

You shall eat it hurriedly, dressed and wearing sandals. You will hold your walking staff, ready to move from your homes.

This is the Passover of the Lord. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals. I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout all generations you shall observe the Passover of the Lord.

### Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.

***People: Thanks be to God.***

**HYMN**

### The Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20

Jesus said, “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 gotten that member back. But 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. If 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 an outcast, like a Gentile or a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, 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. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

***People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.***

*Please be seated.*

**Homily The Rev. Kate Wilson**

(Sermon for St. David’s. Heavily abbreviated and revised for BCHL)

Good morning.

Has anyone been in trouble at work? Have you performed poorly, or mouthed off at your supervisor, or have come in late or not at all repeatedly? Or stolen the payroll? The accountant at a company I worked for did that. And then he disappeared.

Had he not disappeared, HR would have swept in on him and have had him arrested. For the more typical examples, you would have been given an oral warning during a conversation. Did it help? Your boss hopes so. But you continue to be the you only your mother could love, and you’re standing on her last nerve: the company steps up their intervention to a written warning. There was a meeting here, too. This time, it was with your boss AND someone else from HR. A witness.

Some folks believe that these actions happen because the boss is against them, just doesn’t like them, is a nasty person nobody gets along with. But what they are trying to do is to coach you, to save you, to keep you with them.

The average cost of training a new employee is about $1200.00. Then there is the time lost – or product or service delayed – while they search for a new employee. The more complicated the job, the bigger the loss to the company. Just looking at it in business terms, letting you go, breaking your relationship with them and with your co-workers, is more than just a hit on their overhead. It disrupts effectiveness, production, and social relationships in the team. You are worth saving.

Some employees are so bad it is better to break the relationship, despite the cost. But really, really, it is better to get them on the right path for themselves and for all concerned, financially, in productivity, and in social relationships. Healing is better than disruption.

This example is just a company of workers. I’ve worked for many companies where this process is used with problematic employees. I’ve been on both sides of the table. The goal is consistent: meet with them and try to resolve the situation; then meet with them again, with another person as a witness. Then take one of many actions. The boss may have already consulted the members of the department, to learn how deep your problem is.

Surprisingly, this is ALSO the process Jesus recommends in chapter 18 of Matthew’s Gospel.

A church community is not a company. Nor is it a gathering of random individuals with a particular goal in mind, like the Lions or Elks Clubs. A church community, a community of Jesus, is something sacred. Every member is sacred, valued, part of the body of Christ, with Christ at the head of it all. The Apostle Paul describes the body of Christ, with roles for all parts, reverently and lovingly. That is the body of Church.

In this chapter of Matthew, Jesus is unfolding his vision and call for the body of his beloveds. In verses 1-5, the prominent members are to be received with the humility of a child. There are no bigwigs in the church of Jesus. Members are to encourage one another, to support one another and not, as he explains in verses 6 and 7, to put a stumbling block before anyone. He goes on to say that we must care diligently for one another so that no one is lost from among us. We don’t have to like one another, but we do need to guard and protect and love one another fiercely, as Jesus loves them. We must confront problems without triangulating them: talk to the person, not behind their back. We must not eject someone without strenuously working to keep them in our body. This is not an HR dictum, this is the spirituality of a group of followers of Jesus.

Yet, if it is warranted, Jesus agrees that a time may come when forgiving someone seventy times seven times comes to an end. There comes a time when the body, led and surrounded by love, must take leave of what makes it sick and threatens the sacredness of others within.

When such decisions are made, when someone takes their spiritual cardboard box of their sweaters and their pictures from their space with us, it is a breaking heart.

Yesterday, we held the celebration of the life of Natalie Stant. Many of you were here. The tribute the family gave was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I can’t find the right word: heart-filled, beautiful?

And the love that came from all of St. David’s, all who attended and witnessed Natalie’s Christian life of love and service, shared within a dome of love and sacredness. And Jane Herr and Jan Benham and Phyllis Sindlinger and Ed McCabe and everyone who dealt with our front door lock over two days, worked as the sacred body of Christ who we are. The body enlarged, embracing those who came yesterday as Natalie’s beloved family and long-term friends. God was in this place because the Body of Christ was sharing, humbly and lovingly, in the peace and grace of Christ. That is Church. That is not just a training cost, that is priceless. Thanks be to God, that is THIS church, and one worth nurturing consciously, carefully, and faithfully to keep it so.

Amen.

**The Holy Communion**

If you have a faith or are seeking one, you are always welcome to receive Communion among these friends in the Lord.

**The Offertory Sentence**

Presider: Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving and make good
your vows to the Most High.   Psalm 50:14

**The Great Thanksgiving**

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Presider: The Lord be with you.

***People: And also with you.***

Presider: Lift up your hearts.

***People: We lift them to the Lord.***

Presider: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

***People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.***

Holy God,

our Maker, Redeemer, and Healer,

in the harmonious world of your creation,

the plants and animals,

the seas and stars

were whole and well in your praise.

When sin had scarred the world,

you sent your Son to heal our ills

and to form us again into one.

In the night in which he was betrayed,

our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;

broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,

and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore,

his acts of healing,

his body given up,

and his victory over death,

we await that day when all the peoples of the earth

will come to the river to enjoy the tree of life.

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

*Presider and People*

**We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;**

Send your Spirit upon us **✠** and **✠** this meal:

as grains scattered on the hillside become one bread,

so let your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth,

that all may be fed with the Bread of life, your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,

Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,

in your holy Church,

both now and forever.

**Amen.**

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Presider: And now, as our Savior has taught us, we are bold to say,

**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,**

**for ever and ever. Amen.**

**The Breaking of the Bread**

*The breaking of the Bread represents the death of Jesus on the cross.*

Presider: The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

**Spiritual Communion**

Presider: Let us pray in union with those joining us online today.

**Come Lord Jesus, and dwell in my heart in the fullness of your strength; be my wisdom and guide me in right pathways; conform my life and actions to the image of your holiness; and, in the power of your gracious might, rule over every hostile power that threatens or disturbs the growth of your kingdom, who with the Creator and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.**

**The Post Communion Prayer:**

Presider: Let us pray in thanksgiving for one another and this holy sacrament.

**Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**The Blessing**

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep
your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of
God Almighty, the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Giver of Life, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**