

LISBON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

July 11, 2021 Kingdomtide 7

“At Home Worship”

Call to Worship

God bids us to celebrate this new day, a day full of new possibilities.

The Holy Spirit breathes new life within us to renew our connection with God and with one another.

So, come people of God! Come and hear the teachings of God.

We come ready to worship the One whose love for us gives us wisdom, guidance, and truth.

Opening Prayer God of life, present and promised, you are the One to whom we call for you are the One who hears, and you are the One who acts. You bring us new life with your grace and love and power. Lead us in our time of worship, we pray, that we may be prepared to live the teachings of Jesus in the world you have created. Bless us, most holy God, we pray. Amen.

Scripture Reading *“So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD.”* Read 2 Samuel 6.1-5

Prayer of Confession Forgive us in your mercy, O God – when we see the world as we want it to be, rather than it really is, much less the way you seek it to be. Forgive us when we forsake a lively faith and ignore your call to be agents of change in the world. Renew us with your grace and ground us with your Spirit, that we might be empowered to live, in word and deed, as disciples of Jesus, our Savior. Amen.

Time of Silent Confession

Words of Assurance The God we serve is the God of life, the

God of hope, the God of new beginnings. We trust that God will forgive our sinfulness and lead us to service after the example of Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God.

Scripture Reading *“In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance.”* Read Ephesians 1.3-14

Remembering our Joys and Concerns in Prayer *Please spend a few moments remembering those who are on our prayer list and the joys and concerns you bring to God today.*

A Time of Prayer (insert)

The Lord’s Prayer

Scripture Reading *“Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man...”* Read Mark 6.14-29

Meditation As I’ve mentioned previously, we are reading stories from the Gospel of Mark this summer. It’s good to follow along with the stories of Jesus’ ministry and see how his influence begins to grow, attracting others to follow him and mature in their faith in God’s love. Thus far, we’ve heard stories of faith that grows like a mustard seed, of Jesus calming the wind and the waves, of healing the chronically-ill woman and twelve year-old daughter of Jairus. Most recently, we read of Jesus’ sending out the twelve disciples in pairs of two so that they could get used to the mission work to which God calls us all. Good stories, all of them.

Then, we read today’s story from Mark’s sixth chapter and we wonder, “Where did this come from?” It’s unusually placed as well as being an unusual story. So, let’s step back a bit. At the

beginning of each Lenten season, we read the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness at the hands of the devil. After he resists, we read, "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God." His ministry had begun, as the stories we're reading tell us.

But, five chapters later, the fate of John the Baptist is recounted in the middle of these stories. Scholars believe this to be a deliberate placement on Mark's part. Mark wants us to really hear the words that Jesus shares as he emphasizes the importance of faith and our ongoing relationship with God. In other words, Mark understands the importance of our not just dwelling on the miracles which Jesus performs. After all, life is not just comprised of miracles, not just about good feelings and rejoicing.

Mark is trying to center his readers in the reality of life, reminding us that life is about truth and consequences. We often think of faith like this: we believe that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life and, if we don't believe this, then there are consequences as we try to go it alone.

The fact is that it's really about truth *and* consequences. When we seek to follow Jesus' truth, then the consequence is that we grow into our faith and we become better persons as a result. In addition, when we seek to follow Jesus' truth, we may have to avoid some circumstances - and maybe even some people - which make us forget about Jesus' truth. There will be difficult choices and decisions but, in the end, we will truly be the people that God wants us to be - people of faith and truth and love.

So, while this story of John's passing seems out of place, perhaps it is not. Mark brings us up short when we read it but for the purpose of reminding us that life is not all roses; there is the harsh reality of faithfulness in Jesus' name. Despite that, God's love is always with us, God's grace helps us grow in our faith.

Words of Benediction As we conclude this time of worship, go forth with the confidence that the Lord will keep your going out and your coming in, from this time on and forevermore. Go now in peace with God's blessing.



Kingdomtide

Lisbon United Methodist Church
welcomes, nurtures, and serves
all people
with the love of Christ.