



23B LENT 5 - ONLINE LITURGY

Welcoming God

Abstract

“Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!”
Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.”

John 12:28-29 (NIV)

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Welcoming God

Sunday, March 21, 2021 | Lent | Fifth Sunday in Lent | Year B

Old Testament Jeremiah 31:31–34
Psalm Psalm 51:1–12 or Psalm 119:9–16
New Testament Hebrews 5:5–10
Gospel John 12:20–33¹

Some Greeks who had travelled to Jerusalem speak to Philip, who speaks to Andrew and they both go and tell Jesus. Philip and Andrew have learned that no one is too much trouble for Jesus and are confident in bringing people to him, even people who might normally be seen as outsiders. Jesus speaks about his death and resurrection and finishes with an assurance that he will draw everyone to himself.

What do we need to give up so that others may feel welcome? Is welcome a matter of drawing them to us, or of us going to them?

This week we explore what we need to let go, in order to welcome others.

	Pre-Service
	Introit The steadfast love
	Greeting May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all and also with you
	We Gather We come into the presence of Jesus to worship him today. Let us make this a place where all are welcome and all are included. Acknowledgements

¹ [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

	<p><i>Let us pray</i> Lord of all, we thank you for giving your all to include us in your love. Help us to follow your example, and to take up our cross and follow you. As we ready ourselves to receive and welcome all who come to us, <i>we confess our complete dependence on the grace of God in Jesus Christ.</i></p>
	<p>We say Sorry <i>We say sorry.</i> Lord, forgive us for not welcoming others as you do, for looking with suspicion at the stranger in our midst. We confess that we are quick to note the differences between ourselves and others, but you treat all people the same. Forgive us for revelling in the presumed privilege of being your children. Help us to break down barriers to you; we cannot keep you to ourselves. Help us to welcome, unconditionally, all who seek you within these walls, and to take your welcome wherever we go to be church without walls. Amen.</p>
	<p>Words of Assurance God, thank you for welcoming us back no matter what we have done; for that initial embrace that welcomed us, though we were sinners; for the forgiveness that greets us every time we turn back to you. Help us to embody your forgiveness in our dealings with one another and with those outside the flock. May our welcome be the sign of the greater welcome that comes from you. Our sins are forgiven Thanks be to God Amen.</p>
	<p>Hymn/song 658 - Here I am Lord</p>
	<p>Welcome In our reading for today, some Greeks who had travelled to Jerusalem speak to Philip, who speaks to Andrew and they both go and tell Jesus.</p>

	<p>Philip and Andrew have learned that no one is too much trouble for Jesus and are confident in bringing people to him, even people who might normally be outsiders. Jesus speaks about his death and resurrection and finishes with an assurance that he will draw everyone to himself.</p> <p>What do we need to give up so that others may feel welcome? Is welcome a matter of drawing them to us, or of us going to them?</p> <p>This week we explore what we need to let go, to welcome others.</p> <p><i>Let us pray</i> O God, we come before you, knowing that we are welcome in your house. A warm feeling stirs within as we direct our footsteps here, knowing that our presence is wanted and anticipated, and that you have good things in store for your children.</p> <p>Help us to learn from you and to be like you in the welcome we extend to others; for all people are your children, and whether they join us here or we meet them in the places common to all, your welcome must show in our loving acceptance.</p> <p>Thank you for welcoming us as we should welcome others – unconditionally. Amen.</p>
	<p>Readings John 12:20–36</p> <p><i>respond</i> For the word of the Lord</p> <p>Thanks be to God</p>
	<p>Hymn/Song TIS #231 (AHB 170) – “At the name of Jesus” Amazing Love</p>

Response

When I was growing up Tattoo’s were a taboo subject
Certainly in my family if not generally.
I’m not sure what would have happened if I had had come home with one
But many of my friends do have them.

So, maybe I’m too old, maybe I’m too conservative, but I don’t have a tattoo.
I promise, you’ll just have to believe me.
Maybe, it’s just that I grew up in a time when tattoos weren’t in vogue like they are now.
How about you? Maybe some of you have a tattoos.

Even if you don't, Do you know someone who does?

What do think about them?

Do you love or hate them?

Can I suggest, it's hard to be indifferent, you usually do love them or hate them.

No middle ground.

I do have a lot of friends I know that do have tattoos.

They're usually very proud of them and very happy to tell you what they represent.
unless they are somewhere private of course.

Often, they will tell you they represent people they are deeply committed to.

Others will tell you about memberships of groups they are deeply committed to.

But a tattoo is virtually impossible to remove,

so the decision on what to have inked on your body is an important one.

No doubt a lot of planning and thought goes into a commitment like that.

There is also no doubting that the outcome is a tattoo
that can express deep emotion or devotion.

The covenant or agreement that God makes with us can in some ways resemble a tattoo.

God's covenant expresses his love for us, and is indelible,

And expresses both deep emotion and devotion,

because he writes it on our hearts.

God's love is present with us for ever.

Jesus' ministry was seen as mainly aimed at his Jewish Audience.

Although 'the Greeks' mentioned in today's reading were not Jewish by heritage,
these people believed in Yahweh.

They did not always abide by all Jewish practices,

but they followed enough to be allowed into one of the courts of the temple.ⁱ

These Greeks were probably God-fearers who attended Jewish synagogues and feasts.

Perhaps the Greeks approached Philip about seeing Jesus because he had a Greek name.

Or maybe he had some contact with Greeks.ⁱⁱ

So in our reading, the Greeks ask to see Jesus,

something about him makes them wish to be included.

Jesus responds by talking about his impending death on the cross

and even to us, this might seem strange at first.

The point Jesus is making in his responses

Is that God's love is indelible for humankind,

assuring us that we won't just see Jesus

but we will all be drawn to him and welcomed by him

at the end of our days.

Jesus wants God's covenant love,

his 'tattoo' on every heart,

to be extended to every human being

to be extended to all his creation,

even us 2000 years later.

What do we think about the situation

That women, family members, minority groups everywhere, in all walks of life
Feel so unsafe in public, in schools and in their workplaces.

Feel so unsafe, when the perception by many of us is that this world is safe for all,
should be safe for all.

We are all marked by God's covenant

God's tattoo,

to be a blessing to the whole world

regardless of gender, age, ability, cultural background or sexual orientation.

And we are all asked to show this mark, this tattoo to others

in order to include all in God's indelible, permanent love.

Yes, we are also asked to love each other as Jesus loved,

absolutely, indelibly, permanently and without limits.

How about you,

do you love as Jesus loved?

Amen

	<p>Hymn/song TIS # 658 — "I, the Lord of sea and sky" 658 - Here I am Lord</p>
	<p>Offering OFFERTORY SENTENCE The idea of a new life that calls us to die or lose our life in order to live, might struggle to find a ready audience in our world today. Yet as we face the major crisis of this generation around climate change, Corona virus, respect and violence it might be exactly what is needed.</p> <p>At the Uniting Church President's conference in Fiji in 2019, the past president of Methodist Church in Fiji, challenged the western church to address the greed of their culture.</p> <p>We need to die to our racism and lack of compassion for poorer nations. We need to die to our violence and lack of respect for others. We cannot build a new way of being without letting go of the old. There needs to be a death. Systems cannot be just "tweaked".</p> <p>OFFERTORY PRAYER Greed and self centeredness is part of the culture in which we live. Offering our money and resources to the church is a sign of dying to self for the sake of others and allowing the new way in.</p> <p>Receive these gifts, we pray and bless their use that they may be a blessing to others. In Christ's name, Amen.</p>

	Notices
	<p>Prayers for all people <i>Let us pray</i> As we remember all those who are adversely treated because of their place of origin, gender, their skin tone, or other prejudice, we pray for the time to come when all people will rejoice in the diversity of difference, different cultures, gender, beliefs and backgrounds.</p> <p>Your kingdom come on earth as in heaven.</p> <p>As we remember those who are vulnerable, frightened for fear of violence, we pray for the time to come when violence will be no more and all will live in security and safety.</p> <p>Your kingdom come on earth as in heaven.</p> <p>As we remember those who have suffered abuse at the hands of friend, family, peer or stranger, and who bear the scars physical, mental and emotional, we pray for the time when all women and all men will respect each other, and where children will not fear violence or abuse.</p> <p>Your kingdom come on earth as in heaven.</p> <p>As we remember those whose human rights are ignored, those used as political pawns in disputes, those who live in constant fear of threat, bomb or bullet, we especially remember for the people of Myanmar and Yemen, we pray for the time when peace will reign throughout the world.</p> <p>Your kingdom come on earth as in heaven.</p> <p>As we remember those who are alone and isolated, those who mourn, those who are ill and those who look after loved ones, and as we especially remember...</p> <p>we pray for the time when there will be no more pain or tears and when all will live in full community.</p> <p>Your kingdom come on earth as in heaven.</p>

	<p>Loving Lord, as we look upon each other may we see your tattoo inked on every heart a tattoo which we all share; may we love as we are loved, and may we welcome as we have been welcomed by you.</p> <p>In your name we pray. Amen.</p>
	<p>Lord's Prayer Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. AMEN. ⁱⁱⁱ</p>
	<p>Hymn/song TIS #717 – "Give thanks"</p>
	<p>We are sent out <i>Let us pray</i> Welcoming God, thank you for the welcome that Jesus offers out of his great love for all people. Help us to follow his example. Teach us to consider the needs of others even when this means we must lay something down. Bless us as we meet with others, day by day; give us a spirit of welcome and friendship. As you welcome us, help us to welcome those to whom you send us. Amen.</p> <p>May the Lord bless us and keep us May His face shine upon us and be gracious to us May he lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace Amen</p>
	<p>Benediction Shalom</p>
	<p>Thank you</p>

i BARRY, J. D., MANGUM, D., BROWN, D. R., HEISER, M. S., CUSTIS, M., RITZEMA, E., ... BOMAR, D. (2012, 2016). FAITHLIFE STUDY BIBLE (JN 12:20). BELLINGHAM, WA: LEXHAM PRESS
ii BLUM, E. A. (1985). JOHN. IN J. F. WALVOORD & R. B. ZUCK (EDS.), THE BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY: AN EXPOSITION OF THE SCRIPTURES (VOL. 2, P. 317). WHEATON, IL: VICTOR BOOKS.

iii English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988.