



UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH OF ANOKA

Following Jesus, Providing Hope, Making Disciples

GHOST STORIES
Sunday, July 4, 2021

PRELUDE

Fantasia on America, The Beautiful by Rex Koury

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

Waiting and hoping; we gather together, seeking God's presence and singing God's praise.

Waiting and hoping; we come now to worship, praying and listening for the Spirit's guidance.

Waiting and hoping; we gather together, seeking God's presence and singing God's praise.

OPENING PRAYER

God we come to this time of worship to wrestle with who we are, and who you call us to be. Search our hearts and know us thoroughly. We long to meet you face to face, even if the encounter leaves us forever changed. With open ears and ready hearts, touch us with your words and transform us with your presence. Amen

COMMUNION HYMN

Be Present at Our Table, Lord (621)

Be present at our table, Lord; be here and everywhere adored.

These mercies bless and grant that we, may feast in fellowship with thee.

HOLY COMMUNION

We open our weekly worship here, at the table, together as one body in Christ. Jesus invites us all to this table - every one. Here, God's grace is freely shared. Come, share a meal together. Come, you who love Jesus, who are learning to love Jesus, who want to love Jesus. Come, confess and discover grace. Come, be at peace with God, with others, and within yourself.

The Lord be with you, **And also with you**

Lift up your hearts to the Lord, **We lift up our hearts with thanks and praise!**

We are yours, all yours, Holy God, all our lives, all our thanks, all our praise,
we give it all to you, with all our bodies, and minds, and voices.

We are your people, whom you have called covenant with you,
a covenant we have continually broken, and you have continuously sustained.

How can we but praise you, joining our voices with the song of angels and saints,

Jesus Christ who comes in our God's name, you are worthy! Lamb of God who died and rose again, you are worthy! Hosanna now we sing! Hosanna now we sing!

You are holy, O God! You are worthy, O Christ! Worthy when you preached the good news that God's kingdom has drawn near and as you have gathered disciples, then and now, to learn and show the world what life in God's reign means: healing for the sick, new life for the dead, cleansing for the lepers, freedom for the possessed, new birth, new hope, new creation breaking in for all.

Worthy too, the night we betrayed you, when you took the bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to your disciples. Worthy when you told them,
"This is my body broken for you. Remember me." **We remember.**

Worthy when you took the cup, praised God and shared it, and worthy when you said,
"This is the cup of salvation. Drink from it and remember me." **We remember.**

We remember, and we praise you with our lives and these gifts of bread and cup, proclaiming with one voice the mystery of faith: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Come upon us, Holy Spirit and upon these gifts. Make them Christ for us.
Make us one in Christ as we pray for the church and the world:

That we may proclaim the gospel boldly, **Hear us, O God.**

That we may offer your healing for all who are sick, or torn, or weary, **Hear us, O God.**

That our beloved dead may be raised, and death's power vanquished, **Hear us, O God.**

That all who are possessed, oppressed, and distressed may be set free, **Hear us, O God.**

Come and fill this feast, Holy Spirit, this day, and every day until that day when we eat together in your kingdom and our rejoicing shall know no end. All blessing, honor, glory and power be yours, Holy God, now and forever. **Amen!**

We eat together in grace and love. We drink together in mercy and salvation.

PRAYER FOLLOWING COMMUNION

Lord, you renew us at your table with the bread of life. May this meal and the grace we receive from you strengthen us in love. Send us to serve you as we serve others in the name of Jesus. Amen.

HYMN

How Firm a Foundation (#529)

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!
What more can he say than to you he hath said, to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

"Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed; for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee to stand, upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go, the rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
for I will be with thee, your troubles to bless, and sanctify to thee your deepest distress

FIRST READING

1 Samuel 15:10-16, 22-23 (CEB)

Then the Lord's word came to Samuel: "I regret making Saul king because he has turned away from following me and hasn't done what I said." Samuel was upset at this, and he prayed to the Lord all night long. Samuel got up early in the morning to meet Saul, and was told, "Saul went to Carmel, where he is setting up a monument for himself. Then he left and went down to Gilgal." When Samuel reached Saul, Saul greeted him, "The Lord bless you! I have done what the Lord said."

"Then what," Samuel asked, "is this bleating of sheep in my ears and mooing of cattle I hear?" "They were taken from the Amalekites," Saul said, "because the troops spared the best sheep and cattle in order to sacrifice them to the Lord your God. The rest was placed under the ban." Samuel then said to Saul, "Enough! Let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night." "Tell me," Saul replied.

Then Samuel replied, “Does the Lord want entirely burned offerings and sacrifices as much as obedience to the Lord? Listen to this: obeying is better than sacrificing, paying attention is better than fat from rams, because rebellion is as bad as the sin of divination; arrogance is like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected what the Lord said, he has rejected you as king.”

SPECIAL MUSIC

This is My Father's World
Joan Olson and Diane Gronewold

SECOND READING

1 Samuel 28:3-25 (CEB)

Now Samuel had died, and all Israel mourned him and buried him in Ramah, his hometown. And Saul had banned all mediums and diviners from the land. The Philistines gathered their forces and advanced to camp at Shunem. Saul gathered all Israel, and they camped at Gilboa. When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was so afraid that his heart beat wildly. When Saul questioned the Lord, the Lord didn't answer him—not by dreams, not by the Urim, and not by the prophets. So Saul said to his servants, “Find me a woman who communicates with ghosts! I'll then go to her and ask by using her techniques.”

“There is such a medium in En-dor,” his servants replied. So Saul disguised himself, dressing in different clothes. Then he and two men set out, going to the woman at nighttime. “Please call up a ghost for me! Bring me the one I specify,” Saul said. “Listen,” the woman said to him, “you know what Saul has done, how he has banned all mediums and diviners from the land. What are you doing? Trying to get me killed?” But Saul promised to her by the Lord, “As surely as the Lord lives, you won't get into trouble for this.” So the woman said, “Who do you want me to bring up for you?” “Bring up Samuel,” he said.

When the woman saw Samuel, she screamed at Saul, “Why have you tricked me? You are Saul!” “Don't be afraid!” the king said to her. “What do you see?” The woman said to Saul, “I see a god coming up from the ground.” “What does he look like?” Saul asked her. “An old man is coming up,” she said. “He's wrapped in a robe.” Then Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed low out of respect, nose to the ground. “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?” Samuel asked Saul. “I'm in deep trouble!” Saul replied. “The Philistines are at war with me, and God has turned away from me and no longer answers me by prophets or by dreams. So I have called on you to tell me what I should do.”

“Why do you ask me,” Samuel said, “since the Lord has turned away from you and has become your enemy? The Lord has done to you exactly what he spoke through me: The Lord has ripped the kingdom out of your hands and has given it to your friend David. The Lord has done this very thing to you today because you didn't listen to the Lord's voice and didn't carry out his fierce anger against the Amalekites. The Lord will now hand over both you and Israel to the Philistines. And come tomorrow, you and your sons will be with me! The Lord will hand Israel's army over to the Philistines.”

Saul immediately fell full length on the ground, utterly terrified at what Samuel had said. He was weak because he hadn't eaten anything all day or night. The woman approached Saul, and after seeing how scared he was, she said, “Listen, your servant has obeyed you. I risked my life and did what you told me to do. Now it's your turn to listen to me, your servant. Let me give you a bit of food. Eat it, then you'll have the strength to go on your way.”

But Saul refused. “I can't eat!” he said. But his servants and the woman urged him to do so, and so he did. He got up off the ground and sat on a couch. The woman had a fattened calf in the house, and she quickly butchered it. She took flour, kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread. She served this to Saul and his servants, and they ate. They got up and left that very night.

HYMN*Spirit of the Living God (x2) (#393)*

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me;
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

SERMON*The Witch of Endor*

Rev. Laura Hannah

HYMN*Stay with Us (#2199)*

Stay with us, till night has come; Our praise to you this day be sung.
Bless our bread, open our eyes: Jesus, be our great surprise.

Walk with us, our spirits sigh; Hear when our weary spirits cry,
feel again our loss, our pain: Jesus, take us to your side.

Walk with us, the road will bend: Make all our weeping, wailing end.
Wipe our tears, forgive our fears: Jesus, lift the heavy cross.

Talk with us, till we behold a joyful life you will unfold:
Heal our eyes to see the prize: Jesus, take us to the light.

Stay with us, till day is done: No tears nor dark shall dim the sun.
Cheer the heart, your grace impart: Jesus, bring eternal life.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Stephen Perry

THE 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 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 forever. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN*The Trees of the Field (#2279)*

You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace,
The mountains and the hills will break forth before you,
There'll be shouts of joy and all the trees of the field will clap, will clap their hands.
And all the trees of the field will clap their hands, the trees of the field will clap their hands,
The trees of the field will clap their hands while you go out with joy.

BENEDICTION**POSTLUDE***God Bless America*

Joan Olson and Diane Gronewold

Organist, Diane Gronewold
Worship Tech, Jake Berg