

Transcription of Homily and Prayers from the 09/19/2020 Covenant Parking Lot Hymn Sing

Our scripture for this morning comes from the 16th Chapter of the Book of Exodus.

We've been in the book of Exodus for a while now, and it may feel like we've been in Exodus for a long time, but I promise you that we won't be in the book of Exodus for forty years; it just may feel that way.

Beginning with the second verse:

²The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. [Note: they did not complain about Miriam!] ³The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." ⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. ⁵On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days." ⁶So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, ⁷and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your complaining against the LORD. For what are we, that you complain against us?" ⁸And Moses said, "When the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the LORD has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your

complaining is not against us but” against the LORD. ⁹Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, ‘Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining.’” ¹⁰And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. ¹¹The LORD spoke to Moses and said, ¹²“I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’”

¹³In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.

This is the Word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

I had not planned on preaching a sermon this morning, relying on the Word of God Proclaimed in Song, but I want to share with you my experience on Friday night [09.18.2020]. Like many of you, I heard of the death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the U.S. Supreme Court Justice who served so faithfully for so many years.

Coincidentally, she died on the first day of the Jewish holiday, Rosh Hashanah, which is a sign of righteousness in the Jewish tradition. So because we are living in this remarkable age of technology and so many congregations have put their services online because of the pandemic, I was able to tune in to two Rosh Hashanah services, one in the Central Time Zone and one in the Pacific Time Zone. As I listened to their service, I realized that they were celebrating their

5,781st new year, and it was also a Friday night, so they were also celebrating the Jewish Sabbath, also called Shabbat, which comes from the Hebrew word for “rest.”

It was very moving to join with that community in the celebration of the life of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, as well as the celebration of life itself, in their coming new year, a celebration of 5,781 years of God’s faithfulness. Interestingly, it is the crossing of the Red Sea which is celebrated on Rosh Hashanah, and the crossing of the Red Sea, or Reed Sea, is considered the beginning of the identity of the Jewish People.

And so, I hope that we, too, can recall God’s faithfulness, as told in the stories of the Hebrew scriptures. I hope that we can acknowledge our sadness at the death of Justice Ginsburg, and at the same time, celebrate God’s faithfulness to us in giving her to us.

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 truly right to give you thanks and praise, good and gracious God for you continue to lead us through the wilderness of worship during the time of pandemic and we give you thanks for giving us the opportunity to gather together and sing old hymns that our hearts may be comforted and our spirits be made glad.

As we gather here together, we ask your blessing upon this place, Covenant Presbyterian Church. May our love and our compassion and our courage be a sign of hope to the world.

Gracious God you have taught us to pray not only for ourselves but for people everywhere. Hear us as we pray for people everywhere, as we seek your blessings upon your church universal. Look upon governments and leaders and nations that your rule may prevail so that the world may know your peace. We pray for our earth and we pray that we may recognize the danger we have inflicted upon it. Give us each a reverence for all you have made. Show us how to preserve the delicate balance of creation for coming generations. We pray this day for all who are in trouble...sorrow...sickness...grief...especially those know to us, whom we name before you in silence... We pray especially for Della Rocap as she suffers from the effects of the coronavirus and for those in Noe's family as they struggle with the loss of Noe's brother and his cousin and we ask your blessings upon the Quiroz Family. We pray for my mother-in-law, Karen Nuelle, as she faces major back surgery on Monday, and we pray for the Camp family. We pray for those who are unknown to us and we pray that you fill their hearts with a strange warmth.

We come before you now with silence and with our own individual concerns and petitions. Heal us all good and gracious God, in body, mind and circumstance, and work in the whole human family wonders beyond what we may dream or hope.

Bring to our awareness all those who, having served you on earth, now sing your praises eternally, including Justice Ginsburg. May their endurance give us courage, a living courage, and may their faithfulness give us hope. And let God's people say, Amen.

And now with the confidence of the children of God, let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught, saying, Our Father...

Go now into the world as you now know it, celebrating God's love, trusting in God's grace, knowing that nothing can separate you from the love of God, which passes all understanding, and may the grace of the Holy Spirit go with you now and forever more, Amen.