

Have you ever felt out of place, like you didn't belong there? It's an awful feeling, isn't it? What comes to mind for you? I think of kindergarten year, grade school art fair; all the purple ribbon winners were called up on stage in front of everyone. I felt so out of place. If you've every seen me draw anything, you know I didn't belong there. Or in Vail. Coming back from a camping trip up in the back-country mountains of Colorado, I drove into Vail, once. My 1978 Mercury Zephyr chugging with its spark plugs fouled and its orange suede top stained, it felt more comfortable with the Beamers and Audis than I did with my muddy boots and greasy hair. Or in Venice wearing shorts (not today's shorts that go down mid-calf, but 1980s shorts as short as Larry Bird wore his shorts); I've learned guys don't do that in Venice. Or on the dance floor or the baseball diamond. Or when my wife takes me along to her workshops with therapists and psychologists talking Rogerian and Freudian; I think she takes me along as a form of Gestalt therapy.

Have you ever felt out of place, like you didn't belong? I'm sure most all of you can think of times and places that would make mine seem petty, terribly petty. This world can make us feel terribly out of place, even when we're in exactly the right place. And this world with Satan can lead us places where we don't belong, where we should feel terribly out of place, where God wants us to feel terribly out of place. You know the kind of places I'm talking about? Have you become too comfortable there?

Sometimes, after feeling out of place in this world, we might feel like we don't belong anywhere. Sometimes, after feeling comfortable where we shouldn't, we might feel like we don't belong,

couldn't ever belong with God. Have you ever felt that way - like you don't belong with God? or anywhere? It's a miserable feeling, isn't it? And if you've ever felt that way, you know how awful it can be for others who feel that way.

No matter where you've been without God, no matter how out of place you might feel with God, God has a place for you with him. Before all time, God made a place for you with him. And now, in time, in this time of grace he's giving us, he's inviting you by name; he's calling you, bringing you in to his place for you, to your place with him. I'll say it again - No matter where you've been without God, no matter how out of place you might feel with God, God has a place for you with him.

This invitation that God has for you - maybe it seems new to you, maybe you've been wondering what to do with it for weeks or for years, maybe you've been taking him up on his invitation for the last 80 years. This invitation that God has for you - it has your name on it, but it doesn't have just your name on it; it doesn't have just your name and some one else's name (like Kevin and Lisa), or your name "plus one;" it doesn't say "adults only, no children." No this invitation that God has for you - it says "Bring your family, your children, your friends, your neighbors; if they're in your life, bring them in; bring them along."

So whom do you know who looks out of place in this world, maybe rejected by this world? God has a place for them. Whom do you know who feels out of place with God? God has a place for them.

God has a place for them. God has a place for you. What kind of place am I talking about? I could talk about heaven, but that's only paradise forever. Paul has something more in mind than just a future

home, even if it is a forever home. God has a place for you in his family. A place in the family of the God who created and rules the universe. A place in the family of the God who created and owns the universe. And if you're thinking that you're not such a big fan of the way things are going in the universe today.... Maybe you're not a big fan of how God is ruling today. Maybe you're not a big fan of how God's family is acting today. I get it; but don't get stuck on today, and don't get stuck on what you think God and his people should be doing. Instead, consider this - the time is coming when the God who created and rules the universe will drop his hammer on evil; the time is coming when God will make life right, the way it's supposed to be - and that God has a place for you in his family enjoying that life made right.

What place? Not just servant, not just employee, but you have a place as a son in his family. You might wonder, "Why not son or daughter?" Because in this world there are places where being a daughter isn't as good as being a son, where daughters don't get the same rights or privileges as sons. Man or woman, boy or girl, Paul wants you to know that the place God has for you is first place. The same thing is true for race and class. Whatever your race or nationality, the place God has for you in his family is first place. Whatever your background, Beamer or Mercury Zephyr or shivering in the cold, wet rain at the bus stop, the place God has for you in his family is first place. I could go on - extrovert or introvert - the place God has for you in his family is first place. Super athlete or dangerously clumsy - the place God has for you in his family is first place. Super smart or super struggling - the place God has for you in his family is first place. Life-long walking with Jesus or late to the party - the place God has for you in his family is first place.

First place and first in line when you pray. First place and first in line when he sends his angels to watch out over you. First place and first in line when he blesses. First place and first in line when he smiles and says: “I will be your God and you will be my people; I’m yours and you’re mine.”

That can be hard to imagine. Feeling out of place in this world, feeling out of place with God, we might wonder: “How?” God doesn’t determine your place with him based on your performance. God doesn’t determine your place with him based on your potential. God doesn’t determine your place with him based on your popularity. This is how God determined your place with him. He put his Son Jesus in your place. He put Jesus in your place as sinner and in your place as cursed. He put Jesus in your place, and then on the cross he crossed out everything that is wrong about you, anything and everything he could have against you.

But he doesn’t leave you crossed out. Instead, he puts Jesus’ perfect life in place of your life with all its cross-outs. Jesus’ perfect love in place of your love with all its cross-outs. With Jesus, we don’t have to stand before God or go through life with a giant x on our foreheads - “I’m a cross out; I don’t belong.” No, we get to stand before God and go through life with Jesus, wearing Jesus. No matter how out of place we might feel before God, no matter how out of place we might feel in the world, we get to walk with God and face the world knowing we aren’t just “cross-outs,” but we have a place where we belong, with God, with Jesus.

How? In baptism. In baptism, the Spirit of God washes you clean for God, makes you alive with God, adopts you personally into the family of God. In baptism, you are connected with the life of Jesus. In baptism, you are covered with the life of Jesus. In baptism,

you have a place with Jesus in the family of God. What does that mean? No matter how out of place you might feel in the world, no matter how out of place you might feel with God, in baptism, in your baptism, God has a place for you with him.

And not just you. Do you know someone, anyone, who feels out of place in this world, perhaps rejected by this world? Who are they? What are their names? God has a place for them. Do you know anyone who feels out of place with God? Who are they? What are their names? God has a place for them.

Today we're talking about a legacy that has been given us - that we have a place in God's family. That legacy that God has given us is a legacy that we get to share with others. Jesus said: "Go and make disciples, baptizing and teaching." Peter said: "This promise [in baptism] is for you and your children and for all who are far off, for all whom the Lord our God will call." We don't have to go through life feeling like we don't belong. We don't have to leave other people feeling like they don't belong. We have a place where we do belong - in the family of God with Jesus. Amen.

Why might I feel out of place, like I don't belong?

There are times and places where God wants me to feel out of place, like I don't belong, because where I am going I don't belong. And there are times and places where God is content for me to feel out of place, like I don't belong, because God has a better power for me than my pride, a better sufficiency for me than self-sufficiency, a better identity for me than me, myself, and I, a better place for me than my own head. And when I hunger and thirst for something more than I can provide myself, when I hunger and thirst for what only God can provide - I am blessed!

September 24 & 25, 2022

SERVICE OF THE WORD

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... so many people (perhaps including ourselves) feel out of place, like we don't belong. For many, the cure they find (in themselves and in their world) puts them in a worse place where no one should want to belong.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we see - no matter how out of place we might feel in the world, no matter how out of place we might feel with God - God has a place for us where we belong - with Jesus.

OPENING HYMN

"I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say"

Hymn 703

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto me and rest;
lay down, O weary one, lay down your head upon my breast."
I came to Jesus as I was, so weary, worn, and sad;
I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Behold, I freely give
the living water, thirsty one; stoop down and drink and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "I am this dark world's light.
Look unto me; your morn shall rise and all your day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk till trav'ling days are done.

INVOCATION

M: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

+ CONFESSION OF SINS AND ABSOLUTION +

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: **Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: **Amen.**

+ PRAYER AND PRAISE +

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

HYMN

"O Taste and See"

Hymn 965

O taste and see that the Lord is good. Bless-ed are they who take
ref - uge in him. Your Word, O Lord, is e - ter - nal; it
stands firm in the heav - ens. Your faith - ful - ness con -

tin - ues for - ev - er. O taste and see that the
 Lord is good. Bless - ed are they who take ref - uge in him.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Loving Father, lead us to rejoice every day as we remember our baptism. When we sin against you and others, give us power to put down the sinful nature that was drowned in the water of baptism. When we doubt your love, cause us to remember the promises you made when we came to the font. When we feel weak, invigorate us with the hope of eternal life that awaits all who are baptized and believe in you.

Keep in your care all our brothers and sisters who feel out of place, who may be wandering away from your place, who may be wondering about their place with you. Bring them back to their baptism to remember the blessings you bestowed on them through the water and the Word. Keep all the baptized in your care and bring us at last to the river of the water of life in heaven.

Amen.

FIRST READING

Titus 3:3–8

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM OF THE DAY

100A

Refrain



En - ter his gates with thanks-giv - ing.

Tone



Shout for joy to the LORD, / all the earth.

Worship the LORD with / gladness;
come before him with / joyful songs.

Know that the / LORD is God.

It is he who made us, and / we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his / pasture. *Refrain*

Enter his gates with thanks- / giving
and his / courts with praise;
give thanks to him and / praise his name.

For the / LORD is good
and his love endures for- / ever;
his faithfulness continues through all gener- / ations.

**Glorify be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy / Spirit,
as it was in the be- / ginning,
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain***

SECOND READING*Galatians 3:26–29 (EHV)*

In fact, you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Indeed, as many of you as were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. There is not Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, for you are all one and the same in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants and heirs according to the promise.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

VERSE OF THE DAY

♪ **Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**These words are written that we may believe
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.**

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

GOSPEL*Matthew 28:18–20*

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

REMEMBRANCE OF BAPTISM

M: Holy Baptism is the precious means of grace by which our Father in heaven connects us with Christ in his life, death, and resurrection. The apostle Paul says: “Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

In Holy Baptism, God takes away our sins and gives new life in Christ our Lord. We solemnly renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways; we confess the gift of faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

RENUNCIATION AND CONFESSION OF FAITH

M: I ask you: Do you reject the devil along with all his lies and empty promises?

C: **Yes, and I ask God to help me.**

M: Do you believe in God, the Father almighty?

C: **Yes, I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

M: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son?

C: **Yes, I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

M: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

C: **Yes, I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

M: Do you intend to continue in this faith, to be diligent in the use of Word and sacrament and in faith and action remain true to God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—as long as you live?

C: **Yes, and I ask God to help me.**

M: Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given you the new birth of water and of the Spirit and has forgiven you all your sins, strengthen you with his grace to life everlasting.

C: **Amen.**

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Baptized into Your Name Most Holy”

Hymn 680

Baptized into your name most holy, O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
I claim a place, though weak and lowly,
among your saints, your chosen host.
Buried with Christ and dead to sin, your Spirit now shall live within.

My loving Father, there you took me to be henceforth your child and heir.
My faithful Savior, there you let me the fruit of all your sorrows share.
O Holy Spirit, comfort me when threat’ning clouds around I see.

My faithful God, you fail me never; your promise surely will endure.
O cast me not away forever if words and deeds become impure.
Have mercy when I come defiled; forgive, lift up, restore your child.

All that I am and love most dearly— receive it all, O Lord, from me.
Let me confess my faith sincerely; help me your faithful child to be!
Let nothing that I am or ownserve any will but yours alone.

SERMON

HYMN

“God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say It”

Hymn 679

God’s own child, I gladly say it: I am baptized into Christ!
He, because I could not pay it, gave my full redemption price.
Do I need earth’s treasures many? I have one worth more than any
that brought me salvation free, lasting to eternity!

Sin, disturb my soul no longer: I am baptized into Christ!
I have comfort even stronger: Jesus’ cleansing sacrifice.
Should a guilty conscience seize me since my baptism did release me
in a dear forgiving flood, sprinkling me with Jesus’ blood?

Satan, hear this proclamation: I am baptized into Christ!
Drop your ugly accusation, I am not so soon enticed.
Now that to the font I’ve traveled, all your might has come unraveled,
and, against your tyranny, God, my Lord, unites with me!

Death, you cannot end my gladness: I am baptized into Christ!
When I die, I leave all sadness to inherit paradise!
Though I lie in dust and ashes faith’s assurance brightly flashes:
Baptism has the strength divine to make life immortal mine.

There is nothing worth comparing to this lifelong comfort sure!
Open-eyed my grave is staring: even there I’ll sleep secure.
Though my flesh awaits its raising, still my soul continues praising:
I am baptized into Christ; I’m a child of paradise!

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Lord God, our maker and preserver, we praise and thank you for all that you give us day after day.

C: We are not worthy of all the mercies you show us.

M: You have given us your precious Word to nourish our souls and to protect us from the temptations of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature.

C: We thank you for those who teach and preach your saving truth at this place and everywhere. Grant them a rich measure of patience, wisdom, and love.

M: Heavenly Father, we pray that you shield us from every kind of danger: sudden catastrophe, terrors of crime, and the pain of disease. Watch over those who travel by land, sea, and air. Keep our loved ones from whatever perils may threaten them.

C: Heal those who are sick, cheer those who are sad, calm those who are distressed, and comfort all who are old and infirm.

M: Bless our land, our people, and those who hold offices of high trust. Keep our government and schools upright and strong for the advancement of good citizenship and useful vocations, that we may enjoy your gifts of peace, security, and well-being.

C: Grant your blessing to every nation on earth. Where there are wars, may there be peace. Where there is hatred, let it be healed. Where there is poverty, danger, or disaster, come with your almighty power to help and restore.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring to you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

- M: We bring these requests before you in the name of Jesus our Lord, and ask you to hear us. Take all that we have, our bodies and minds, our time and skills, our ministries and offerings, and use them to your glory.
- C: **We give ourselves to you that we may serve you in whatever way is pleasing in your sight. Amen.**

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 and ever. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

- M: O Lord God, our heavenly Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep us strong in your grace and truth, protect and comfort us in all temptation, and bestow on us your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESSING

- M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

"All Who Believe and Are Baptized"

Hymn 692

All who believe and are baptized shall see the Lord's salvation;
baptized into the death of Christ, they are a new creation;
through Christ's redemption they shall stand
among the glorious, heav'nly band of ev'ry tribe and nation.

With one accord, O God, we pray: grant us your Holy Spirit;
help us in our infirmity through Jesus' blood and merit;
grant us to grow in grace each day
that by this sacrament we may eternal life inherit.

OFFERING

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Lord's Supper Together Again!

Next weekend, we are returning to communing together by "table" rather than by family. Ushers will invite ~5 people from each side (seeking to keep families together) to go forward up the center aisle to the front pew. From there, another usher will indicate when to go forward to fill in behind the "table" being served. As the "table" being served is dismissed and returns to their seats, the next "table" steps forward.

As we are being served, we stretch out an open hand to receive the body of our Lord given to us in, with, and under the bread. If you prefer a gluten-free wafer, please indicate so to Pastor (he won't mind a reminding wave). When your "table" has all received the bread, we will eat together as Pastor invites: "Take, eat." Then, as Jesus shares his blood in, with, and under the wine, please take a cup nearest to you. When your "table" has all received the wine, we will drink together as Pastor invites: "Take, drink." Then the pastor will bless you and dismiss you. As you go out toward whatever side you were sitting, you will find a basket for your empty communion cup. Then we return to our seats with smiles enjoying peace with our Lord and his people!

If you are at that point in life where steps and balance are a questionable challenge, please let Pastor know, sit toward the front, or (if you prefer) at the end of the line come and stand before a front pew - and we will come to serve you.

If you have any concerns, please share with Pastor.