

May 18 Worship
Greeters- Linda Mikkola, Judy Kierce
Readers- Ray Godin, Wally Johnson

Announcements/Joys-

Time Of Quiet Meditation- *"I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God."* Psalm 69:3

Opening Scripture- Acts 11:5-18(page 958)

Opening Chorus- 294- Spirit Of The Living God

Responsive Call To Worship-

Leader: Jesus has given us a new commandment:

People: We are commanded to love one another.

Leader: Just as Christ has loved us,

People: So we ought to have love for one another.

Leader: By this, everyone will know we are Christ's disciples:

People: By our love for one another.

Leader: Come, may we join our hearts in worship:

People: Worship God by loving one another.

Hymn- 50- Praise The Lord! Ye Heavens Adore Him

Unison Prayer- O Living God of past and future, we praise you for this present moment. Fill us with your joy and empower us with your Holy Spirit, that our strength may be renewed to sing a new song of your glory in a world which longs for your justice and peace. All this we ask in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray, saying...*Lord's Prayer...*

Gloria Patri- Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,

World without end. Amen, Amen.

Old Testament Scripture- Psalm 148(Page 546)

Special Music-

Gospel Scripture- John 13:31-35(page 938)

Children's Time/Echo Prayer/Passing of the Peace

Hymn- 61- All Creatures Of Our God And King

New Testament Scripture- Revelation 21:1-6(page 1085)

Message

“Hurry Up And Wait”

I am sure that we all have heard the phrase; “Hurry up and wait” sometime or another. This phrase came out of the US military during WW2. It referred to the way the military seemed to make everyone rush to get something done or to get somewhere and then wait and wait for results. After the war, the phrase was taken as the way life worked in the “modern world. Even today, we seem to do most things in this way; Hurry up and wait. It is our natural tendency to do this, as we all insist on immediate results. Patience is not easy.

This world we live in is geared to instant gratification and does not accept waiting. It was not that long ago when getting from one place to another took some time. Going from Ashby to Fitchburg in the days before automobiles took 3-4 hours by foot and perhaps 2-3 hours by horse. What takes moments today to communicate took much more time just 50 years ago. Looking up something in your Bible takes just moments on a computer instead of a printed Bible. Life moves at a much faster pace than it did when we were growing up. Think about our grandparents time and how we do things that they cannot comprehend. Instant news, instant answers, instant information, all in the last 50 or so years. Is it any wonder that we are always in a rush?

It isn't anything new. Even in the time of Jesus, people expected things to happen on their time schedule. Guess what? God does not operate on our expectations, He has His own time clock. The Bible tells us over and over about waiting on the Lord. Lamentations 3:25; “The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him.” Psalm 25:3 “Yea, let none that wait for thee be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.” Psalm 27:14 “Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yea, wait for the LORD!” Isaiah 30:18 “Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you; therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him.” Isaiah 40:31 “But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”

So, how many times does the word “wait” appear in the Bible? I typed this question into my search and the first answer I got was; “Read it and find out.” Just what I need, a computer that talks back. The numbers of time that wait is used varies from translation to translation, but the number is about 120 times. The Revised Standard Version that we use claims 106 in the Old Testament and 28 in the New Testament. The Old Testament is that period of time when the people were being told that a Messiah was coming to save them. From the very first book, Genesis, we hear about waiting. According to the Biblical timeline of creation, it was 6,000 years from creation to the fulfillment of the prophecies regarding Jesus. It has only been approximately 2,000 years since Jesus promised to return. Hurry up and wait.

What is it that we are waiting for, anyway? There are many different interpretations of what is going to occur in this world when the end times come. I am not going to stand here and tell you what I believe is coming because I am not absolutely sure. All that I know about it is what I read in the Bible and that is a mind-bending exercise. I do believe that Jesus is coming back someday and that God is going to straighten out this crazy world. The how and when and what will happen, I am still studying. What I do know is that God has spoken about it in many different passages and I trust God. Matthew 24:5-8 says this; “For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors

of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the birth-pangs.”

There are those who use every single catastrophic event as a sign or a reason to preach “The end is near.” They spend way too much time predicting the end and not near enough time getting ready. What do we need to do to prepare for the end? Just remember, we can do absolutely nothing to stop it, but we can get ready. The instruction manual for the end times is already in your possession; the Holy Bible. God has made available to each of us just what we need to get ready. Learning about how to get ready is a whole lot easier than reading about the how and when it will happen. Why should we spend any of our time reading about what God is going to do when we could be spending our time making sure we are prepared for how we can survive it? We can spend all of our time making sure we know how God is going to end it or we can spend our time in relationship with God making sure that we are in line with God's Word.

Jesus' second coming evolves around the hope of believers that God is in control of all things and is faithful to the promises and prophecies contained in His Word. Jesus' 1st coming was as a baby in a manger in Bethlehem. His life, death and resurrection were a fulfillment of many Biblical prophecies. The 2nd coming will be to fulfill the remaining prophecies. In His 1st coming, He came as a suffering servant. His 2nd coming will be as the conquering King. The prophets of the Old Testament did not make clear the distinction between the 2 comings of the Messiah. If we read the prophecies only from the perspective of the Old Testament, we can come to the conclusion that the scriptures are pointing to 2 separate individual Messiahs. We must go to the New Testament to read this; “And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:10-11) This event was during Jesus' ascension.

In our busy, hurry up lives, we need to prioritize our expectations. As we hurry up and wait for Jesus to return, let us stop worrying about what is going to happen and spend our waiting time in learning what we need to do to be ready when it does happen. Perhaps this world is going to go to Hell in a hand basket, so what. We don't have to be in the basket when it goes. If we take the dooms day prophets too seriously, we will be too afraid to let God keep us safe. Trust in God, listen to the Holy Spirit and love Jesus and all will end well, as promised. Jesus' return is not an excuse to simply sit back and wait, it is an invitation to a relationship with our heavenly Father. Just remember; “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.” (Matthew 24:36) Praise Be to God. Amen.

Prayers of People/Prayer- Living God, maker of heaven and earth, we come into your presence and we know ourselves to be recipients of great and wonderful gifts, the earth, the sky, the waters, given to us here in such abundance and beauty. We lead enormously privileged lives. Don't let our comfort blind us to the newness you are making in our midst, a newness that is taking us in directions we would not choose on our own; a newness that moves our safe horizons out beyond what we can control. This much does not change: You are our God; we are your people, bound to you by the love of Jesus Christ and by the call of your Holy Spirit. Faithful God, hold us deep in that truth even as you move us into your new creation. Creating

and re-creating God, take us in our uncertainties and make us new. We pray in the name of your Son, who has gone ahead of us into your new future and who beckons us follow. Amen.

Closing Hymn- 35- Glorious Things Of Thee Are Spoken

Benediction- Christ has given us a new commandment: that we love one another, as Christ has loved us. By this, everyone will know that we are Christ's disciples, if we share that love with the world. And through this love, all things will be made new. Go now, and do as Christ commands. Amen.