

New Scotland Presbyterian Church  
Worship for the Fourth Sunday After Pentecost  
(video link at <https://www.newscotlandpc.com/>)  
June 20, 2021  
The Rev. Holly S. Cameron

Prelude

Ryan Dwyer

“Allegro in B Flat Major” by Mozart

Introduction

*Welcome to worship at New Scotland Presbyterian Church. Today is Fathers Day, so we wish all the dads a very Happy Fathers Day!*

Call to Worship

from Isaiah 57:15

Thus says our God, the high and exalted one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in a high and holy place, but I also live with those who are broken and humble in spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, to restore the courage of the broken.

Hymn

Choir

“How Can I Keep from Singing”

Opening Prayer

**Holy God we confess that we have not always lived for your glory. We want to trust the gifts you have given us, but often we do not. When enemies attack us, we trust in our own defenses. When deadly storms surround us, we forget you are with us. We huddle up, convinced that the waves of life will topple us over. We forget to reach out to you. We do not seek the reassurance and comfort that you are so willing to give. Have mercy on us, loving God. Hear the longing in our hearts for healing and calm. Give us courage to step forward as your people, trusting that your power can work through us; and strengthen our voices to proclaim your praise. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Dear friends in Christ, hear the words of Jesus: “Peace! Be still!” In Christ, and through Christ, love has overcome every threat we will ever face. God’s Love is victorious; and offers us a new beginning. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Gospel Lesson Mark 4:35-41

<sup>35</sup> On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” <sup>36</sup> And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. <sup>37</sup> A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. <sup>38</sup> But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” <sup>39</sup> He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. <sup>40</sup> He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” <sup>41</sup> And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

## Kids' Time

*For those unable to see the video, the children's sermon is about Jesus stilling the storm. No one else has the power to stop the wind, so we know that Jesus has the power of God. Now it's time to see the photos of things that make us smile! {photos.}*

Prayer: Dear God sometimes it feels like everything is terrible and we are afraid of what might happen next. When we are scared, we ask you to wrap your arms around us and help us to know that you are always with us. When we see someone else who is scared, help us to reach out so they will know they are not alone. Help us to always be friends of Jesus. We pray in his name. Amen.

## Old Testament Lesson and Sermon

Today's Old Testament lesson is a long one, so I am using a format one of my ministers used to use: I'll read selected verses from the chapter, with a few comments along the way, then a short sermon message at the end. So, from 1 Samuel 17, beginning at the first verse and with selected verses through verse 51.<sup>1</sup>

*Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; they were gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah . . . .<sup>2</sup> Saul and the Israelites gathered and encamped in the valley of Elah, and formed ranks against the Philistines.<sup>3</sup> The Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them.*

The armies are at an impasse. Neither the Philistines who have invaded the Israelite territory nor the Israelite army under Saul, are moving from the two hills on which they are camped. Then, into the valley between . . .

*<sup>4</sup> . . . there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.<sup>5</sup> He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze.<sup>6</sup> He had greaves of bronze on his legs and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders.<sup>7</sup> The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; and his shield-bearer went before him.*

So, the question is: Will Goliath break this standoff? He is a huge man—over 9½ feet tall. His armor is described with great care: a coat of mail weighing 125 pounds, and a long spear with a tip weighing 15 pounds—just the tip. And this huge man . . .

*<sup>8</sup> He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me.<sup>9</sup> If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us."<sup>10</sup> And the Philistine said, "Today I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man,*

*that we may fight together.”*

So, Goliath stands and shouts and bullies and threatens. And how does the opposing army react?

*<sup>11</sup>When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.*

And this is not surprising—the purpose of making threats is to make others afraid, right? So, Saul and his army are afraid—the story says they are dismayed, and greatly afraid, paralyzed on their mountaintop. And then, a new person comes on the scene:

*<sup>12</sup>Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years. <sup>13</sup>The three eldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle, . . . Eliab . . . Abinadab, and . . . Shammah. <sup>14</sup>David was the youngest; the three eldest followed Saul, <sup>15</sup>but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father’s sheep at Bethlehem. <sup>16</sup>For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening.*

So, Goliath’s threats continue, but we have a hint that something is going to change. David is only a boy, but he is going back and forth between caring for the sheep at home, and coming to the army camp. In verses 17 through 22, Jesse sends David to his brothers with provisions, and David himself witnesses how Goliath, in verse 23 . . .

*. . . came up out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spoke the same words as before. And David heard him.*

David hears Goliath’s bluster and swagger and threat, and David sees the fear Goliath strikes into the hearts of his brothers and all the soldiers. Still, David wants to know, in verse 26:

*“What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?”*

This is a story, we know, about big versus little, but it is not just about the giant Goliath and the boy David, it is also about big brothers and little brothers who embarrass them, and it is about kings and commoners as well. Verse 28:

*<sup>28</sup>His eldest brother Eliab heard him talking to the men; and Eliab’s anger was kindled against David. He said, “Why have you come down? With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart; for you have come down just to see the battle.” <sup>29</sup>David said, “What have I done now? It was only a question.”*

And on to verse 31:

<sup>31</sup>When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul; and he sent for him. <sup>32</sup>David said to Saul, "Let no one's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."  
<sup>33</sup>Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are just a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth."  
<sup>34</sup>But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; and whenever a lion or a bear came, and took a lamb from the flock, <sup>35</sup>I went after it and struck it down, rescuing the lamb from its mouth; and if it turned against me, I would catch it by the jaw, strike it down, and kill it.  
<sup>36</sup>Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God." <sup>37</sup>David said, "The Lord, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine." So Saul said to David, "Go, and may the Lord be with you!"

And here we come to a crucial point in the story. Because Saul can only imagine that David will fight "fire with fire"—strength against strength, armor against armor. So,

<sup>38</sup>Saul clothed David with his armor; he put a bronze helmet on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail. <sup>39</sup>David strapped Saul's sword over the armor, and he tried in vain to walk, for he was not used to them. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot walk with these; for I am not used to them." So David removed them.

David will not rely on the armor of soldier, but he will rely on what he knows—the same power that saved him from lions and bears, the one he calls "the living God." Goliath will curse David, by his gods—he is always about threat, and swagger, and curse. But David will call on the Lord of hosts. Verse 40:

<sup>40</sup>Then he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the wadi, and put them in his shepherd's bag, in the pouch; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine. <sup>41</sup>The Philistine came on and drew near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. <sup>42</sup>When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was only a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. <sup>43</sup>The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. <sup>44</sup>The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the field."  
<sup>45</sup>But David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword and spear and javelin; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel . . . <sup>47</sup>that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not save by sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hand."

The great battle final begins, but it lasts only a matter of seconds. It takes several verses to describe Goliath and his armor and his numerous threats, but it takes only one short verse for David to end him.

*<sup>48</sup>When the Philistine drew nearer to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. <sup>49</sup>David put his hand in his bag, took out a stone, slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground. <sup>50</sup>So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, striking down the Philistine and killing him; there was no sword in David's hand. <sup>51</sup>Then David ran and stood over the Philistine; he grasped his sword, drew it out of its sheath, and killed him; then he cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.*

We always think of this story of David and Goliath as a story of big and of little—a story of brave boys in the land of giants. But it is also a story about armor and slingshots, about what can and cannot protect us. It is a story about threat and promise, and the One who keeps us safe and sets us free. It is a story about power – in whose power we trust, and how we use the power we have.

Goliath is big and strong, and there is nothing wrong with being big and strong: it is by the strength of the Lord of Hosts that David defeats Goliath. But, Goliath is not only big and strong. The Philistines invade the land of Israel; and Goliath invades the minds and hearts and spirits of the Israelites under King Saul.

Goliath is not just a Philistine. He is not just a giant. He is all swagger and bluster and bullying and intimidation and terror and threat. Goliath operates by using his power to create fear. He intends to make people afraid. And it works. He terrorizes the people, the army, even King Saul. No will fight him. They simply shake in their sandals.

Until David comes. David is God's chosen. And through David, God chooses to act. David does not shake in his sandals; he will not be bullied or intimidated or threatened or terrorized. Nor will he fight Goliath on Goliath's terms.

When Saul puts his armor on David, Saul is showing that he knows no other way to fight power than with more power: size with even bigger size, armor with more armor. David tries the armor on, but then he puts it off, choosing to rely on a different source of power. And he goes into battle—and not just with Goliath: David goes to battle with swagger and bluster and bullying and intimidation and threat and terror and curse. God delivers David to show that God's power is not about being even bigger, or stronger, or louder, or more obnoxious, or creating even more fear among even more people. God's power is about being delivered from the valley of the shadow of death. God's power is to create peace.

We see it in the gospel story, too. Jesus and the disciples are on a boat when a terrible storm comes up. It must have been a doozy, because it frightens even those experienced fishermen. They cry out to Jesus because they are afraid they are about to die. Jesus demonstrates God's power in controlling the wind and the sea, but not in a threatening way. He simply says, "Peace. Be still."

These stories are being played out in our time. There is swagger and threats and

bluster and bullying going on in our world today. These forces are as active today as they were in David's time.<sup>2</sup>

And as the disciples faced a mighty and life-threatening storm that could destroy them, so, too, are we living during a time when the forces of nature are riled and threatening.

What are we to do?

We, like David, arm ourselves and go into battle with a power that overthrows demonic forces that seek to destroy and oppress.

And we look to the One who created heaven and earth, and by whose power we are called to live, not in fear, but in faith.

We will not fight on Goliath's terms, but on God's terms.

We will not cringe in fear at the changes taking place with the earth, but rather we will trust in the power of One who calls us into service armed with the Word, which sustains us in all battles.

With the psalmist we say: The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name, O Lord, put their trust in You.<sup>3</sup>

Armed with Your Word and strengthened by the power of Your spirit, O Lord, we move forward, into the life and work into which You call us.

This is the Word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God. Amen.

### Song

Choir

"Like As a Father" by Cherubini

### Pastoral Prayer

We give you thanks and praise, God of grace and God of glory, for the beauty of the earth, and the wonder of the summer season. We give you thanks for the beauty of sisters and brothers everywhere, and pray that we may see in each human face another facet of you, the creator of us all.

O God, on this day of honoring fathers, we give thanks for all who have been like good fathers to us: those who have taught us, protected us, and been strong for us; those who sat with us when we were sick, comforted us in our heartbreak, encouraged us, and made us know we are beloved.

In this season of graduation, we give thanks for the celebrations of accomplishing goals. We pray for all graduates, that they will have a good and meaningful summer, that they may have all they need for a new beginning. We pray for parents and children that they may enjoy their time together before a new chapter begins.

O God, our Creator, we give you thanks and praise, for all our blessings, and we pray for all the things that lie heavy on our hearts.

We bring before you our concern for countries, and cities, and families where the cycle of violence goes on and on. We pray especially for those who are living in fear, who find the world to be threatening, and oppressive, and we pray that you will use us to bring light and hope to all dark places.

We lift up to you those who do not have enough to eat; those who are in the hospital and struggling with illness; those who lives are clouded by depression, or addiction, or imprisonment; those who have no friend to bring a word of cheer.

Inspire us, O God, and point us towards actions, however small they may seem, that lead to a more hopeful future for ourselves and your world.

As we seek to be your faithful people, we say the prayer that Jesus taught us:

### 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

### Hymn

Choir

"Give to the Winds Thy Fears" #286 in the Presbyterian Hymnal

### Offering

Friends in Christ, King David said to God, "But who am I and who are my people that we should be permitted to give anything to you? Everything we have has come from you, and we only give what is yours already!" (1 Chronicles 29:14).

*Churches depend on the generosity of members and friends to support their ministries. If you are able to mail in an offering, or give online at <https://www.newscotlandpc.com/>, we are grateful for that gift of financial support. If all you can offer is prayers, we love you for the gift of that spiritual support for our church, and for our ministry in this community and in the world. We are blessed to share our gifts and to love and support one another, to know that we are not alone, but are in this together. Thank you for your generous giving!*

### Song of Praise

Ryan Dwyer

*These are probably the most-sung lines in the last 300 years, so here are both the traditional words, and another variation:*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, you heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ the Word in flesh born low;  
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;  
One God, Triune, whom we adore.

### Benediction and Blessing

Go with the peace of God which passes all understanding, daring to care, daring to share, and daring to love. And may the grace of God, the love of Christ, and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit go with you, and all those whom you love, both this day and always. Amen.

### Choral Benediction

Choir

"May God's Blessing Surround You" by Barrows

### Postlude

Ryan Dwyer

"Bagatelle" by Diabelli

## Sermon Notes

<sup>1</sup> The scripture, comments, and beginning of sermon message are from the writing of the Rev. Dr. Richard S. Dietrich.

<sup>2</sup> The ending paragraphs are from the writing of the Rev. Larry Deys.

<sup>3</sup> The psalm appointed for today is Psalm 9:9-20

<sup>9</sup> The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed,  
a stronghold in times of trouble.

<sup>10</sup> And those who know your name put their trust in you,  
for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you.

<sup>11</sup> Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion.  
Declare his deeds among the peoples.

<sup>12</sup> For he who avenges blood is mindful of them;  
he does not forget the cry of the afflicted.

<sup>13</sup> Be gracious to me, O LORD.

See what I suffer from those who hate me;  
you are the one who lifts me up from the gates of death,  
<sup>14</sup> so that I may recount all your praises,  
and, in the gates of daughter Zion,  
rejoice in your deliverance.

<sup>15</sup> The nations have sunk in the pit that they made;  
in the net that they hid has their own foot been caught.

<sup>16</sup> The LORD has made himself known, he has executed judgment;  
the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands.

<sup>17</sup> The wicked shall depart to Sheol,  
all the nations that forget God.

<sup>18</sup> For the needy shall not always be forgotten,  
nor the hope of the poor perish forever.

<sup>19</sup> Rise up, O LORD! Do not let mortals prevail;  
let the nations be judged before you.

<sup>20</sup> Put them in fear, O LORD;  
let the nations know that they are only human.