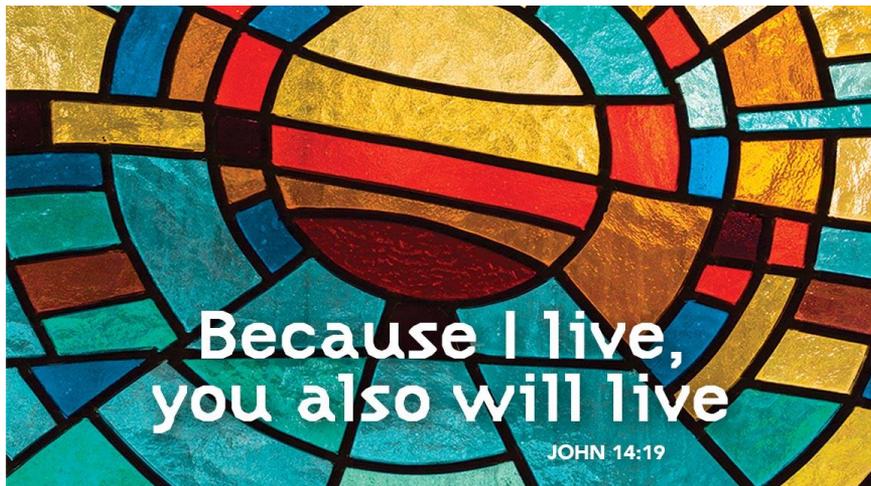


Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

945 W. Round Bunch Rd., Bridge City, TX 77611

(409) 735-4573



Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 17, 2020

WELCOME

PRELUDE Variations on *Hyfrydol* - Jacob B. Weber

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism,
as the presiding minister begins.*

Alleluia! Christ is risen. **Christ is risen indeed.** Alleluia!

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are raised with him to new life. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning you created us in your image and planted us in a well-watered garden. In the desert

you promised pools of water for the parched, and you gave us water from the rock. When we did not know the way, you sent the Good Shepherd to lead us to still waters. At the cross, you watered us from Jesus' wounded side, and on this day, you shower us again with the water of life.

We praise you for your salvation through water, for the water in this font, and for all water everywhere. Bathe us in your forgiveness, grace, and love. Satisfy the thirsty, and give us the life only you can give. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

ENTRANCE HYMN "Christ is Alive! Let Christians Sing!"
ELW 389



1 Christ is a - live! Let Chris - tians sing, The cross stands
 2 Christ is a - live! No long - er bound to dis - tant
 3 In ev - 'ry in - sult, rift, and war, where col - or,
 4 Wom - en and men, in age and youth, can feel the
 5 Christ is a - live, and comes to bring good news to



emp - ty to the sky. Let streets and homes with
 years in Pal - es - tine, but sav - ing, heal - ing,
 scorn, or wealth di - vide, Christ suf - fers still, yet
 Spir - it, hear the call, and find the way, the
 this and ev - 'ry age, till earth and sky and



prais - es ring. Love, drowned in death, shall nev - er die.
 here and now, and touch - ing ev - 'ry place and time.
 loves the more, and lives, where e - ven hope has died.
 life, the truth, re - vealed in Je - sus, freed for all.
 o - cean ring with joy, with jus - tice, love, and praise.

GREETING

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

HYMN OF PRAISE

ELW S149

Refrain
Assisting minister



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.

All



1 Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow-er and rich-es and wis-dom and



strength, and hon-or and bless-ing and glo-ry are his.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.



2 Sing with all the peo-ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre-a-tion: Bless-ing and hon-or and glo-ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A-men.

Final refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain
has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God, you hold together all things in heaven and on earth. **In your great mercy receive the prayers of all your children, and give to all the world the Spirit of your truth and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Please be seated.

FIRST LESSON

Acts 17:22-31

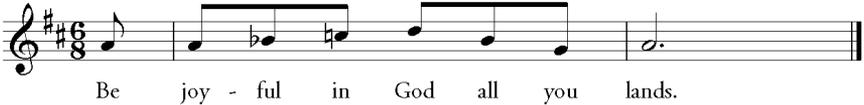
²²Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. ²³For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’

²⁹Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. ³⁰While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 66

Worshippers are invited to join the choir in singing the refrain as indicated below. The choir will sing the psalm text.



Be joy - ful in God all you lands.

*Bless our God you peoples; make the voice of his praise to be heard, who holds our souls in life, and will not allow our feet to slip. For you O God, have provided us; you have tried us just as silver is tried. You brought us into the snare; you laid heavy burdens upon our backs. You let enemies ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us out into a place of refreshment. **REFRAIN***

*I will enter your house with burnt offerings, and will pay you my vows, which I promised with my lips, and spoke with my mouth when I was in trouble. I will offer you sacrifices of fat beasts with the smoke of rams; I will give you oxen and goats. Come and listen all you who fear God, and I will tell you what he has done for me. I called out to him with my mouth, and his praise was on my tongue. **REFRAIN***

*I had found evil in my heart, the Lord would not have heard me; but in truth God has heard me; he had attended to the voice of my prayer. Best be God, who had not rejoiced in prayers, nor withheld his love from me. **REFRAIN***

SECOND LESSON

I Peter 3:13-22

¹³Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? ¹⁴But

even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated,¹⁵ but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you;¹⁶ yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame.¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God’s will, than to suffer for doing evil.¹⁸ For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit,¹⁹ in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison,²⁰ who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water.²¹ And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand if you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Worshipers are invited to join the choir in singing the refrain; the choir will chant the verse.

Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love, and we will come to them and make our home with them.

GOSPEL

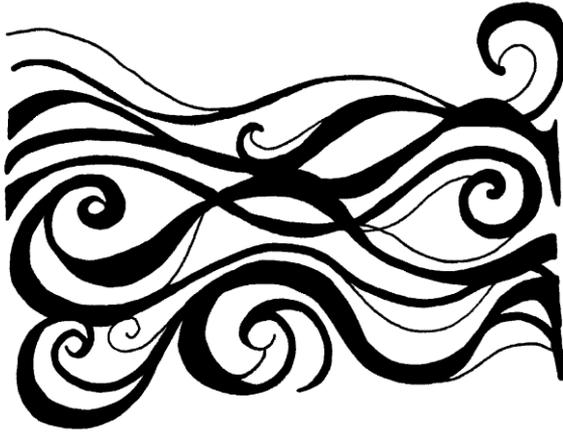
John 14:15-21

The holy gospel, according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁵“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. ¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

¹⁸“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**



Please be seated.

SERMON

Please stand if you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

ELW 631



1 Love di-vine, all loves ex-cel-ling, Joy of heav'n, to
 2 Breathe, oh, breathe thy lov-ing Spir-it in-to ev-'ry
 3 Come, Al-might-y, to de-liv-er; let us all thy
 4 Fin-ish then thy new cre-a-tion, pure and spot-less



earth come down! Fix in us thy hum-ble dwell-ing, all thy
 trou-bled breast; let us all in thee in-her-it; let us
 life re-ceive; sud-den-ly re-turn, and nev-er, nev-er-
 let us be; let us see thy great sal-va-tion per-fect-



faith-ful mer-cies crown. Je-sus, thou art all com-pas-sion,
 find thy prom-ised rest. Take a-way the love of sin-ning;
 more thy tem-ples leave. Thee we would be al-ways bless-ing,
 ly re-stored in thee! Changed from glo-ry in-to glo-ry,



pure, un-bound-ed love thou art; vis-it us with
 Al-pha and O-me-ga be; end of faith, as
 serve thee as thy hosts a-bove, pray, and praise thee
 till in heav'n we take our place, till we cast our



thy sal-va-tion, en-ter ev-'ry trem-bling heart.
 its be-gin-ning, set our hearts at lib-er-ty.
 with-out ceas-ing, glo-ry in thy per-fect love.
 crowns be-fore thee, lost in won-der, love, and praise!

THE NICENE CREED

Let us confess our faith using the words of the Nicene Creed.

**We believe in one God,
 the Father, the Almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth,
 of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
 the only Son of God,**

**eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Abiding God, you have revealed yourself to us in the form of your Son, Jesus Christ. Embolden your church, as your followers, to

reveal your love to everyone in our speaking and in our living. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You are the creator of heaven and earth. Revitalize the health of oceans, rivers, lakes, springs, glaciers, and other bodies of water that give life to your creatures. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You call all people of the world your children. Judge the nations justly, show mercy to the oppressed, and speak truth to power through your prophets. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You come near to us when we are lost, and you hear our distress. We pray for those who suffer in any way (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your commands are good and merciful. Give us courage to take hold of our baptismal promises to work for justice, advocate for the voiceless, and free the oppressed and imprisoned in body, mind, or spirit. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You remain with us always, O God, and your kingdom has no end. We remember the saints who have gone before us (*especially*). Unite us forever in your final victory over death. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Please be seated.

SHARING THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

RECEIVING THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY PRAYER *Please stand if you are able.*

Let us pray. Merciful God, our ordinary gifts seem small for such a celebration, but you make of them an abundance, just as you do with our lives. **Feed us again at this table for service in your name, in the strength of the risen Christ. Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

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

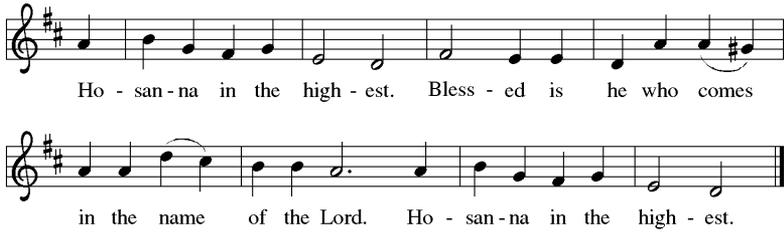
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin; who in dying has destroyed death, and in rising has brought us to eternal life. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS**ELW S153**

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
 heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.



Holy God, you alone are holy, you alone are God. The universe declares your praise: beyond the stars; beneath the sea; within each cell; with every breath. **We praise you, O God.**

Generations bless your faithfulness: through the water; by night and day; across the wilderness; out of exile; into the future. **We bless you, O God.**

We give you thanks for your dear Son: at the heart of human life; near to those who suffer; beside the sinner; among the poor; with us now. **We thank you, O God.**

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering his love for us on the way, at the table, and to the end, we proclaim the mystery of faith: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Please stand if you are able.

Let us pray. Life-giving God, you have fed us with your word, and our hearts burn within us. **Through this meal you have opened us to your presence. Now send us forth to share the gifts of Easter with all in need; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

“There in God’s Garden”

ELW 342

1 There in God's gar - den stands the Tree of Wis - dom,
 2 Its name is Je - sus, name that says, "Our Sav - ior!"
 3 Thorns not its own are tan - gled in its fo - liage;
 4 See how its branch - es reach to us in wel - come;

whose leaves hold forth the heal - ing of the na - tions:
 There on its branch - es see the scars of suf - f'ring;
 our greed has starved it, our de - spite has choked it.
 hear what the Voice says, "Come to me, ye wea - ry!"

Tree of all knowl - edge, Tree of all com -
 see there the ten - drils of our hu - man
 Yet, look! it lives! its grief has not de -
 Give me your sick - ness, give me all your

pas - sion, Tree of all beau - ty,
 self - hood feed on its life - blood.
 stroyed it nor fire con - sumed it.
 sor - row, I will give bless - ing."

5 This is my ending
this my resurrection;
into your hands, Lord,
I commit my spirit.
This have I searched for;
now I can possess it.
This ground is holy.

6 All heav'n is singing,
"Thanks to Christ whose passion
offers in mercy
healing, strength, and pardon.
Peoples and nations,
take it, take it freely!"
Amen! My Master!

DISMISSAL

Go in peace; serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

“Christus, der ist mein Leben”

- Johann G. Walther

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One Pastor's perspective on what we might learn from Luther about ministry in a pandemic...

Luther has a two-part answer to our pandemic fears. He urged faith, and he also counseled Christians to use reason and follow medical advice. There is a Facebook meme very much in this spirit that is circulating. It shows Jesus outside a locked door saying to a woman inside, “Lisa, you have to stop telling people your life is in my hands, you should social distance and wash your hands like everyone else.” This is a comical way of saying, use common sense and do not test the Lord. I suspect, given our understanding of the plague's spread, Luther would have approved of church closings. During all times Lutheran ethics asks us to discern how our station allows us to serve our neighbor. Luther, himself, did not urge people to foolishly tempt God by making light of the plague.

We face challenging decisions now and in the days ahead. Yesterday, our hospice admitted a patient dying of COVID-19. My social work colleague and I discussed what we would do. Can we

provide care without putting our health at risk? More than half the patients in the nursing home where the patient resides have tested positive for COVID-19. With N-95 masks in short supply allowing them to go to my nursing colleagues who care for patients' bodies at close range placing them at greater risk seems to be a use of reason and an expression of the love of neighbor. As an ordained pastor, I feel the same responsibility to provide spiritual care for the dying, as Luther did. Perhaps I go in faith to provide care, and in reason use the best personal protective equipment offered me. Perhaps I will provide support by phone. However, I decide, I commend myself to God's judgement and mercy.

With faith, we should hold the world in prayer. With reason we should follow the best guidance available about how our actions can prevent the pandemic's spread, socially isolating, and allowing vulnerable populations to shop at the early grocery stores hours, as an act of neighbor love. If our station, or our faith, calls us to care for COVID-19 patients, we should pray, wash our hands, and commend ourselves to God. We do not take up serpents to test God, but Luther noted we can handle them if we must, in order to serve our neighbor. Our faith calls us to serve, our reason calls us to serve carefully. If we must flee out of fear, or to protect others, we can do so freely. We can do no other, may God help us all.

Excerpt from an article written by the Rev. Aaron Klink, chaplain
for Pruitt Health Hospice, Rocky Mount, NC.

To read the entire article, please visit the ELCA website, Journal of
Lutheran Ethics at <https://www.elca.org/JLE/Articles>