

Sixth Sunday of Easter
May 17, 2020
Cross of Glory Lutheran Church
Brooklyn Center, MN

PRELUDE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

THANKSGIVING for BAPTISM

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. 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.

GATHERING HYMN #838 Beautiful Savior

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Beautiful Savior, King of creation, Son of God and Son of Man! Truly I'd love thee, truly I'd serve thee, light of my soul, my joy, my crown. | 2 Fair are the meadows, fair are the woodlands, robed in flow'rs of blooming spring; Jesus is fairer, Jesus is fairer, he makes our sorrowing spirit sing. |
| 3 Fair is the sunshine, fair is the moonlight, bright the sparkling stars on high; Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer than all the angels in the sky. | 4 Beautiful Savior, Lord of the nations, Son of God and Son of Man! Glory and honor, praise, adoration, now and forevermore be thine! |

GREETING

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.**

KYRIE Pages 98-99

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen, amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE **page 101**

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God. Power and riches, wisdom and strength, and honor and blessing and glory are his.

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation: Blessing and honor, glory and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

For the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign. Alleluia.

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

PSALM 66:8-20

⁸Bless our God, you peoples;

let the sound of praise be heard.

⁹**Our God has kept us among the living
and has not allowed our feet to slip.**

¹⁰For you, O God, have tested us;
you have tried us just as silver is tried.

¹¹**You brought us into the net;
you laid heavy burdens upon our backs.**

¹²You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water,
but you brought us out into a place of refreshment.

¹³**I will enter your house with burnt offerings
and will pay you my vows—**

¹⁴those that I promised with my lips
and spoke with my mouth when I was in trouble.

¹⁵**I will offer you burnt offerings of fatlings with the smoke of rams;
I will give you oxen and goats.**

¹⁶Come and listen, all you who believe,
and I will tell you what God has done for me.

¹⁷**I called out to God with my mouth,
and praised the Lord with my tongue.**

¹⁸If I had cherished evil in my heart,
the Lord would not have heard me;

¹⁹**but in truth God has heard me
and has attended to the sound of my prayer.**

²⁰Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer,
nor withheld unfailing love from me.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Keith Williams

GOSPEL**John 14:15-21**

The Holy Gospel according to St. 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.**SERMON****“COMING ALONGSIDE”
John 14:15-21**

People of God, grace and peace to you in the name of the risen Christ. Amen.

Once again today, Cross of Glory Lutheran Church gathers for worship. Some are reading this sermon.

Others of you are watching the service on the church’s web site. Several of you are gathering around your computer at 9:30 a.m. on Sundays as we worship together by means of Zoom conversation. I’m thankful that we can still gather each week around God’s Good News!

Because of all the other news that we are hearing these days, it is good that we can hear God’s news!

As we continue to journey with the Covid-19 virus, have you at times found yourself feeling as overwhelmed and exhausted by the news lately as I have been? I want to be informed but sometimes the gravity and uncertainty of this pandemic can get pretty heavy. What I have found uplifting however, are stories of people reaching out and helping each other during this coronavirus. Let me share some stories that have given me hope lately.

By day, Dr. Timothy Roach works in the M Health Fairview system screening patients for signs of the coronavirus. Because of his work with coronavirus patients, by night, he is in isolation listening for the sound of his children’s voices through the wall. His son two-year-old Thomas knows his father is in the house, behind closed doors. “He understands that I am doing this to make other people’s lives better,” Roach says, “I told him that other people would do the same.”

And then there is Andrea Pien, a 33-year-old high school counselor. She is working remotely now that schools are closed. As a salaried worker, she doesn’t expect to be missing paychecks. And so, she posted the following message on Nextdoor: “Hi neighbors, if you will be missing a paycheck, contract work, or if money is tight for food and supplies, message me and I will send you 20 dollars, no questions asked.” She also included a picture of her very large dog, Gus! So far, she has given away about \$400 to her neighbors and anticipates more to come. Pien is a member of Resource Generation, an organization of young people who are committed to the equitable distribution of wealth, land, and power.

And another story: In Ohio, someone recently went grocery shopping at an Aldi store. When they went to grab a shopping cart, surprise! Someone had put a quarter in every cart, twenty of them! And the kindness continued. Although shelves were quite empty, someone put the last loaf of bread in an elderly lady’s cart, and another person let a father with two kids go to the front of the checkout line, which extended to the very back of the store. As one woman was paying for her groceries, she was short on money. The person behind her asked, “What do you need?” Before the woman could answer, the person gave the cashier a fifty-dollar bill and inquired if this would be enough.

I’m not sharing these stories just because they’re the kind of feel-good news I think we also need to hear at this time. I’m sharing these stories because they are stories of people reflecting the kind of love God calls us to show one another. These are stories about people who practice compassion and love for others, even when it is hard and costly for them.

Today’s gospel lesson opens with Jesus telling his disciples all he expects of them is that they embody the same kind of love he has modeled for them throughout his ministry. The fourteenth chapter of John begins a four-chapter section of his Gospel that scholars call the “Farewell Discourse.” It

comes immediately after the Last Supper but before Jesus is arrested. It's a bit like the Last Lecture Series in some colleges, where professors are asked what they would say if they knew it was their last chance to speak. Here at the table, Jesus says the same thing over and over in different ways. The central word is LOVE.

"If you love me you will keep my commandments."

"A new commandment I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you."

"Whoever does not love me does not keep my words."

"I am giving you these commands so that you may have love for one another."

Jesus was calling his disciples, then and now, to live and love in ways that sometimes are not easy. Loving like Jesus, is certainly not something that we can do on our own. That's why Jesus says he will send the Spirit. The word John uses here for Spirit is *paracletos*- often translated "Advocate." It can have several meanings but overall, the most basic meaning of *paracletos* is to "come alongside another." Christ has promised to come along side us in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering us then to come alongside of others.

When you come along side someone:

-if they stumble your immediate response is to try to catch them

-if riding in a car and you brake suddenly, your immediate response is to put out your arm to hold them securely in the seat

-if you are walking along side someone and they begin to cry, you immediately ask what is wrong

These are immediate responses because of the new spirit within us which makes us aware of those beside us!

This reminds me of one my favorite hymns by Daniel Iverson (*Spirit of the Living God*):

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

This is our prayer. To be God's vessels of love, not only holding it within us, but pouring it out for others to receive as we receive. I recently came across another verse of this hymn that continues the prayer saying:

Spirit of the living God, move among us all;

make us one in heart and mind, make us one in love:

humble, caring, selfless, sharing.

Spirit of the living God, fill our lives with love.

This is a great reminder of how we are to carry ourselves in love.

During this time, we witness the heroic acts of people who put their lives at risk to respond to the needs of others. We call them first responders. Their actions to come along side others is nothing short of amazing. Thank God for firefighters, paramedics, police officers and correction officers. Their actions as they walk along side and on behalf of other people are nothing short of amazing. Yet, truthfully, aren't we all first responders? Aren't we all called to be first responders, armed with kindness, compassion, empathy and love for others? As Mr. Rogers once said, "We live in world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say, 'It's not my child, not my community, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes." Isn't that the truth? What we need in our world right now is not more division, fear, confusion, or self-centeredness. What we need are more and more people finding themselves in God's love and then reaching out in that love to others.

One last story: A six-year-old girl from Minnesota, Cameron Brundidge, has a brother, Brandon, who has crippling anxiety because of his autism diagnosis. Watching the news, Brandon would start to tense up with anxiety. What did Cameron do? She grabbed her brother's hands and started teaching him a Bible verse, 2 Timothy 1:7, to help him overcome his fear: "But God did not give me a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, love and a sound mind." Cameron was a "paraclete" to her brother - she came alongside of him.

Might we, function as "paracletes" to each other by coming alongside of each other not only during times of crisis but always? Might we, in this way, become communities of the Spirit? Might we, in fact, recognize that in coming alongside each other we are loving Jesus most fully by conforming our lives to his and keeping his commandment above all commandments: Love God and love others!

Let us pray: Come, Holy Spirit, come. Tie us to Jesus and to one another that we may love one another even as Jesus has loved us. Amen.

HYMN

Spirit of the Living God

1 Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me.

2 Spirit of the living God, move among us all;
make us one in heart and mind,
make us one in love:
humble, caring, selfless, sharing.
Spirit of the living God, fill our lives with love.

3 Repeat Verse 1

CONFESSION OF FAITH

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

OFFERING

His Mercy is More

What love could remember no wrongs we have done
Omniscient all knowing He counts not their sum
Thrown into a sea without bottom or shore
Our sins they are many His mercy is more

What riches of kindness He lavished on us
His blood was the payment His life was the cost
We stood 'neath a debt we could never afford
Our sins they are many His mercy is more

Worship Team

What patience would wait as we constantly roam
What Father so tender is calling us home
He welcomes the weakest the vilest the poor
Our sins they are many His mercy is more

Praise the Lord His mercy is more
Stronger than darkness new every morn
Our sins they are many His mercy is more

OFFERTORY RESPONSE

Shine on Us

Worship Team

Lord let Your light
Light of Your face shine on us
Lord let Your light
Light of Your face shine on us
That we may be saved
That we may have life
To find our way in the darkest night
Let Your light shine on us

Lord let Your grace
Grace from Your hand fall on us
Lord let Your grace
Grace from Your hand fall on us
That we may be saved
That we may have life
To find our way in the darkest night
Let Your grace fall on us

Lord let Your love
Love with no end come over us
Lord let Your love
Love with no end come over us
That we may be saved
That we may have life
To find our way in the darkest night
Let Your love come over us
Let Your light shine on us

OFFERING PRAYER

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.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE

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 loving. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Comforting God, you carry us tenderly. We pray for those who walk through dark valleys overshadowed by anxiety and overwhelmed with suffering...and those we now name in our hearts... Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Nurturing God, you desire justice for the hungry. Bless advocacy work, food pantries, and feeding ministries. Bless all who care for their neighbors in this time of pandemic: healthcare workers, pharmacists, first responders, truck drivers, and repair service personnel. Keep each of them, and each of us, safe in your care. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Everlasting God, you remain with us always and your kingdom has no end. We remember those who have gone on before us. We thank you for their lives of faithful witness. We rejoice in that day when we will be united 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**

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us always to prayer. **Our father who art....**

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.

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

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen

SENDING FORTH SONG

Hallelujah hallelujah

Hallelujah the Lord reigns

Hallelujah hallelujah

Hallelujah the Lord Almighty reigns

Worship Team

He has shown His awesome power

He has triumph'd mightily

He's the victor over darkness, And the grave

He has broken chains that bound us

He has set the pris'ner free

By His own great mercy we are saved

DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!