

SEVENTH SUNDAY of EASTER WORSHIP

May 24, 2020

Cross of Glory Lutheran Church

Brooklyn Center, MN

WELCOME

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.

WORSHIP SONG

Promises Never Fail

You are with me what can separate us
You are for me what can stand against us
Your love it won't let go. I know it won't.
Darkness, shadows, have no power over me
Fear is empty shame has no authority
Your love it won't let go I know it won't.

I know your thoughts, Your plans for me are good.
I know You hold my future and my hope.
Your promises never fail.
Your promises never fail.

Jesus I will trust every word I hear You say.
I will see it come to pass In Your name,
In Your name.
I am standing on every promise that You make.
I will see it come to pass in Your name,
in Your name.

Worship Team

Healing and freedom
as You speak favor over me.
Faith is breaking all impossibility
Your name has overcome
Your name alone

I am standing on every
promise that You make.
I will see it come to pass in Your name,
in Your name.

I know your thoughts,
Your plans for me are good.
I know You hold
my future and my hope.
Your promises never fail.
Your promises never fail.

WORSHIP SONG

Thank You (Gracias)

Worship Team

Lord you took me into your arms.
You have shown me truest love.
You have given me such mercy
I'm not worthy of.

Lord your mercy everlasting
I could never understand
For all the love and grace you've shown

I just want to say That I Thank you,
thank you, dear Lord
Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

At the cross you gave your life for me
As a gift of your great love
It was the gift of everlasting life from above

I can boldly come before your throne
Through your love and suffering
I'm going to shout it to the heavens

I've been redeemed
Thank you, Thank you, dear Lord
Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Gracias Gracias Señor, Gracias mi Señor Jesus
Gracias Gracias Señor, Gracias mi Señor Jesus

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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

Let us pray . . . **O God of glory, your Son Jesus Christ suffered for us and ascended to your right hand. Unite us with Christ and each other in suffering and in joy, that all the world may be drawn into your bountiful presence, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

NEW TESTAMENT READING: Acts 1:6-14

⁶When [the apostles] had come together, they asked [Jesus], "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. ¹³When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: John 17:1-11

The holy gospel according to St. John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹After Jesus had spoken these words [to his disciples], he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. ⁵So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

⁶"I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; ⁸for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

“LEFT BEHIND, FOR GOOD!”

John 17:1-11 and Acts 1:6-14

Prayer: Come, Holy Spirit, come. Inspire our souls and fill our hearts with a passion for your light and love. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Do you remember what you were doing on May 21, 2011? You may not remember. But you might remember a guy by the name of Harold Camping. He predicted that the rapture was coming on May 21, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. He based his prediction on a passage of scripture that was not talking about this at all. Anyway, he claimed that on this date Jesus would return in glory and take the righteous with him and the rest of us... well, we would be left behind!

I did not pay much attention to his prediction until about a week before when someone asked me, “How are people in your congregation doing in preparation for May 21?” I answered, “I don't know but would guess they are about as prepared for that as they are for May 22, I don't know!” Then I saw a billboard along the highway which said, “Are you ready? You don't want to be left behind at 6:00 p.m.” That sort of woke me up to this thing and so I reached out to a pastor friend by phone. He wasn't available but on his voice message were these words, “The pastor of this church has been raptured - never to be heard from again. Have a good day!!” Well, Harold Camping's “left behind” predications were sheer nonsense. However, in our two readings for today we hear of another “left behind” incident and this story, unlike Camping's, is true, uplifting, and meaningful for our lives.

Both of our readings for today speak of the same event, the ascension of our Lord up to heaven. We know that forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven. Our reading from the book of Acts tells us that as Jesus was gathered with his disciples, “*as they were watching, he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight.*” In our gospel, Jesus shared with the disciples that he will soon be departing - returning to the Father. Why? So that we may know God (17:3) and - are you ready for this? – so that we may do God's work on earth. That is right! Jesus ascends. Jesus leaves - but we stay. Why? To continue the work God first entrusted to Jesus!

Jesus leaves, but we stay! This is the ultimate “left behind” story, but according to Jesus, this “left behind” is neither a sign of imperfect faith nor a chance to prove that you are worthy - as people like Harold Camping would say. Rather, being left behind is for us an honor, an invitation to participate in the glory of the Father, a commissioning, in fact, into the work of Christ. Here Jesus calls each one of us to do what Jesus does - caring, feeding, listening, sharing, loving, and making manifest the grace and mercy of the God whose greatest desire is to love and to bless everyone in God's world.

In the wonderful words of the 16th century Spanish Carmelite mystic, Saint Teresa of Avila:

*Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*

The Good News today is that you and I are the embodiment of Christ and the glory of God - radiating the love and the grace of Christ to others. Jesus ascended. Jesus leaves, but we stay! We are “left behind” for GOOD - to love God and to love others and to change the world. Why? Because LOVE wins!

If you are looking for a movie to watch during these days of physical distancing, I would recommend to you the movie, “42.” This movie recalls the story of the baseball player, Jackie Robinson. Now America during the 1940's was racially segregated, and baseball was America's game. There was the American League, the National League, and the Negro League - completely segregated

and seriously bigoted. And the epicenter of bigotry in America was baseball - because it was America's game.

The manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, Branch Rickie, decided that he was going to desegregate baseball. Because he loved the game, he was going to do for it what it did not want to do for itself. (You see love is not about your own good but the greater good.)

In order to help baseball for good, Branch Rickie decided to bring a player up from the Negro League. Now there were other players who were faster than Jackie Robinson but there were few others that had the type of integrity that Jackie Robinson had. He loved his wife, he was faithful to her, he went to church, and he believed that Jesus meant the stuff he said.

Branch Rickie was someone who was trying to follow in the footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth. That is why he believed segregation must end. He believed that segregation was anathema to the name of God who is Love. That is why he did what he did!

When Rickie brought Robinson up, the Philadelphia Phillies did not want to play the Dodgers if Robinson was on the field. Rickie called up the manager and said, "Do you believe that God loves baseball?" The manager responded, "Well, I guess so." "Well" replied Rickie, "What do you think God is going to say on judgment day when God asks you how come you didn't want to play the Dodgers and you tell God, 'Because Jackie Robinson was on the team.'" "I don't think that is going to be a sufficient answer!"

In an interview Branch Rickie said that he needed a player who was not going to fight back. He told Robinson, "They are going to come at you with everything they've got - threaten you, throw things at you, spit on you. I need someone who has the courage to not fight back - just like Jesus Christ. Then Rickie reached into a drawer and took out a devotional book about the life of Christ. It was based on the Sermon on the Mount. He read to Jackie from the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are the merciful and compassionate, blessed are the peacemakers, blessed are those who hunger and thirst that God's righteous justice might prevail, do unto others as you would have them do unto you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, pray for those who spite you." "In this way," Rickie told Robinson, "We can change baseball." Jackie Robinson was scared to death, but he agreed. And those two men changed baseball... changed America... and helped change the world! Doesn't this speak of the oneness that Jesus prays for in our gospel for today?

Truly the Ascension of our Lord is the greatest "left behind" story of all time! At his Ascension, Jesus reminded his disciples of who they were and that they will receive power and help to continue Jesus' mission here on earth. They will be his hands and feet to continue what Jesus has started.

Aren't you and I called to do the same? So, go forth, beloved people of God and shine! Go forth, believing that even in the ordinary tasks of life - work, play, family life, connecting with others, that all these ordinary things are also opportunities that honor God. Go forth and let the light and love of God radiate through you out into the world. May our focus once again this week be: **To Love God, To Love Others and To Change the World!** Why? Because in the end, **LOVE WINS!** Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY #660 Lift High the Cross

Refrain

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim,
till all the world adore his sacred name.

- 1 Come, Christians, follow where our captain trod,
our king victorious, Christ, the Son of God. ***Refrain***
- 2 All newborn servants of the Crucified,
bear on their brows the seal of him who died. ***Refrain***
- 3 O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,
as thou hast promised, draw us all to thee. ***Refrain***
- 4 So shall our song of triumph ever be:
praise to the Crucified for victory! ***Refrain***

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.

OFFERTORY RESPONSE #674

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ

1 Let us talents and tongues employ,
reaching out with a shout of joy:
bread is broken, the wine is poured,
Christ is spoken and seen and heard.

Refrain Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around: loaves abound!
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around: loaves abound!

2 Christ is able to make us one,
at the table he sets the tone,
teaching people to live to bless,
love in word and in deed express. **Refrain**

3 Jesus calls us in, sends us out
bearing fruit in a world of doubt,
gives us love to tell, bread to share:
God (Immanuel) ev'rywhere! **Refrain**

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)

Almighty God, by your Holy Spirit you have made us one with your saints in heaven and on earth. Help us to see your presence burning in the hearts of others; grant that we may be united in a fellowship of love and prayer, give us the courage to pick up our cross and respond to the needs of the world, give us the stamina to follow you, to be your hands and heart in the world today. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Gracious God, we give you thanks anew for your presence with us always. We prayerfully seek your grace and help amidst Covid-19. We pray for those in need of healing. We pray for your peace to surround and fill those who are anxious or grieving. We pray you will continue to strengthen and sustain all those who are serving in response. And we pray that we each might seek quickly what more we can do to help those who are most vulnerable. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Eternal God, you are our strength and our shield. On this Memorial Day weekend, we give you thanks for women and men of our armed forces, past and present, and especially for those who have died while serving. May their sacrifices serve the cause of peace, and may our nation be ever grateful for their service. With your wisdom and strength guide our leaders and give to all people a desire for justice and peace. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Faithful God, on this Memorial Day weekend we also give you thanks for all those who have gone on before us. Thank you for those close to us, that we now name in our hearts..... 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 Our Father, who art in heaven . . .

BENEDICTION

As people of faith, we have gathered for worship.

As people of faith, we now return to the world.

Go out to share the story of faith, the story of love, with the world around you.

We share the faith and God's love in word and in deed, in speech and in action.

As you go out to give a living witness, go knowing that God goes with you, sharing the laughter and the hope, the fears and the tears. Go in the name of God, the Creator, the Christ and the Spirit! **Thanks be to God! Amen.**

SENDING FORTH SONG # 547

Sent Forth by God's Blessing

- | | |
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| <p>1 Sent forth by God's blessing,
our true faith confessing,
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.
The supper is ended.
Oh, now be extended
the fruits of this service in all who believe.
The seed of Christ's teaching,
receptive souls reaching,
shall blossom in action for God and for all.
Your grace shall incite us,
your love shall unite us
to work for your kingdom and answer your call.</p> | <p>2 With praise and thanksgiving
to God ever-living,
the tasks of our ev'ryday life we will face—
our faith ever sharing,
in love ever caring,
embracing God's children, the whole human race.
With your feast you feed us,
with your light now lead us;
unite us as one in this life that we share.
Then may all the living
with praise and thanksgiving
give honor to Christ and his name that we bear.</p> |
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DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOLY COMMUNION ~ While We Are Distant, May 31, Pentecost Sunday

On **Pentecost Sunday** as we celebrate the movement of the Holy Spirit, we invite you to prepare your home for receiving Holy Communion. This is an exceptional time for faith communities. We cannot gather together, yet we profess that we are united in Christ Jesus. Holy Communion is important in the worship life of Cross of Glory and we recognize the desire of some to receive the sacrament, even while we are physically separated. Therefore, we will do as Christ commanded by blessing the elements and speaking Christ's promise. Before worship, please have ready a small piece of bread or cracker as well as a small portion of wine or grape juice. During the on-line service, as Pastor Lee lifts up the bread and the cup, you are invited to do so in your home. Then after we have prayed the Lord's Prayer you will be invited to share in Holy Communion with the elements you have at home. Please know that this is optional. During this pandemic we are in an unusual time. How we are practicing Holy Communion on Pentecost Day, is not meant to become a practice when this crisis is over.

TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY will resume on-line by means of Zoom communication.

On **Tuesday, May 26, 9:30 a.m.** we will resume the Bible Study. Each week will reflect on the readings for the upcoming Sunday. If you would like to be a part of this gathering, all you have to do is to send Pastor Lee your email address. (Pastor's email is: 19ldh53@gmail.com) You will be sent an invitation to the meeting. Just click on the link in the email a few minutes before 9:30 a.m. on Tuesdays.