

**Lower Susquehanna Synod
of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

**Worship
Seventh Sunday of Easter**

Sunday, May 24, 2020



GATHERING

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the fountain of living water,
the rock who gave us birth,
our light and our salvation.

Amen.

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,
we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness.
Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.
We give you thanks, O God,
for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters
and by your Word you created the world,
calling forth life in which you took delight.
Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family.
Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom.
At the river, your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit.

By water and your Word, you claim us as daughters and sons,
making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.
We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life,
and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ.
Shower us with your Spirit,
and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.
To you be given honor and praise
through Jesus Christ our Lord
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG *In Christ There Is No East or West* (ELW 650)

In Christ There Is No East or West

The musical score is presented in two systems. Each system consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a bass line (bass clef). The first system contains four verses of lyrics. The second system contains the concluding lines of the song. The music is written in a simple, hymn-like style with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature.

1 In Christ there is no east or west, in him no south or north,
2 In Christ shall true hearts ev-'ry-where their high com - mu - nion find;
3 Join hands, dis - ci - ples of the faith, what-e'er your race may be.
4 In Christ now meet both east and west, in him meet south and north;

but one com - mu - ni - ty of love through-out the whole wide earth.
his ser - vice is the gold - en cord close bind - ing hu - man - kind.
All chil - dren of the liv - ing God are sure - ly kin to me.
all Christ - ly souls are one in him through-out the whole wide earth.

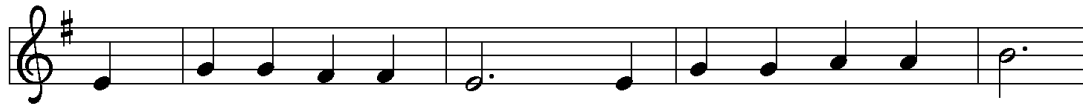
Text: John Oxenham, 1852–1941, alt.

Music: MCKEE, African American spiritual; adapt. Harry T. Burleigh, 1866–1949

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 (ELW p. 203)



- 1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.
- 2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.
- 3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.
Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (ELW p. 204)



- 1 Glo-ry be to God in heav-en; peace, good-will to all the earth.
- 2 Glo-ry be to Christ for - ev - er, Lamb of God and Lord of love.
- 3 Ho - ly One we now ac-claim you; Lord a - lone, to you we call;



Might-y God of all cre - a - tion, Fa - ther of sur - pass - ing worth:
Son of God and gra - cious Sav - ior, you have come from heav'n a - bove;
Ho - ly One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:



we ex - alt you, we a - dore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.
on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.
Je - sus Christ, with God the Spir - it, in the Fa - ther's splen - dor bright.



Saints and an - gels bow be - fore you; here on earth our songs we raise.
Hear our prayer; re - store, for - give us; in your prom - ise firm we stand.
For the peace that we in - her - it, glo - ry be to God on high!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

WORD

FIRST 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.”

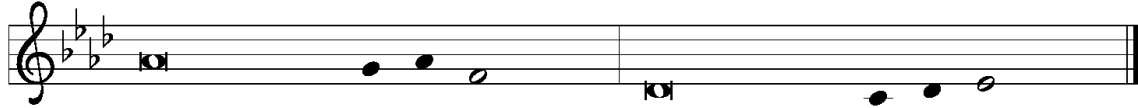
⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who 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.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35



Sing to God, who rides upon the clouds. (*Ps.* 68:4)

¹Let God arise, and let God's ene- | mies be scattered;
let those who | hate God flee.

²**As smoke is driven away, so you should drive | them away;**
as the wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the
pres- | ence of God.

³But let the righteous be glad and rejoice | before God;
let them also be mer- | ry and joyful.

⁴**Sing to God, sing praises to God's name; exalt the one who | rides**
the clouds;
I AM is that name, rejoice | before God!

⁵In your holy habita- | tion, O God,
you are a father to orphans, defend- | er of widows;

⁶**you give the solitary a home and bring forth prisoners | into**
freedom;
but the rebels shall live in | desert places.

⁷O God, when you went forth be- | fore your people,
when you marched | through the wilderness,

⁸**the earth quaked, and the skies poured down rain, at the**
presence of God, the | God of Sinai,
at the presence of God, the | God of Israel.

⁹You sent a bountiful | rain, O God;
you restored your inheritance | when it languished.

¹⁰**Your people found their | home in it;**
in your goodness, O God, you have made provision | for the
poor.

³²Sing to God, O kingdoms | of the earth;
sing praises | to the Lord.

³³**You ride in the heavens, O God, in the | ancient heavens;**
you send forth your voice, your | mighty voice.

³⁴Ascribe pow- | er to God,

whose majesty is over Israel; whose strength is | in the skies.

³⁵**How wonderful you are in your holy places, O | God of Israel,
giving strength and power to your people! | Blessed be God! R**

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

^{5:6}Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.

⁸Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. ¹⁰And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 205)



Al - le-lu - ia! Lord and Sav - ior: o - pen now your sav - ing word.



Let it burn like fire with - in us; speak un - til our hearts are stirred.



Al - le - lu - ia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

GOSPEL: John 17:1-11

The holy gospel according to 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

Sermon by Bishop James S. Dunlop

Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 24, 2020

In a little while we will confess our faith as the people of God. We will say these words, *He (Jesus) suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures.* That is the core of our faith. Jesus died and was raised from the dead. Everything we believe as Christians hangs on that. Period.

The entire Easter season, which comes to an end this week, is about that – death and resurrection. As the Apostle Paul said to the Corinthians, *“For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.”* (1 Cor. 15:16-19 NRSV)

So, I have been pondering a couple of questions. Do we believe it? Not just say it in the creed but deep down in our bones believe that Jesus was raised from the dead. If we do believe it, what does it mean for us in this moment?

I think that is what the Apostle Peter is trying to address in these writings, which we have had for the last five weeks. The people in the church in Asia Minor, in what we now call Turkey, were having a rough time being Christian. It was in the first century. There were not many Christians around and the culture was decidedly anti-Christian. In a culture that was filled with gods of every shape and kind, these Christians believed in one God, the creator of heaven and earth. Roman gods were powerful, mighty and many in number, and yet the Son of God for Christians, the followers of Christ, believed that God revealed God’s love by giving his son, the only son, to be crucified, the most humiliating death imaginable. In a society where power, control, wealth, and prestige were desired, Christ was revealed in humility and perceived as weak.

The Roman society had rigid class distinctions and it was good to be the elite class. Everyone aspired to that, but you had to be born in. Christians were to be humble servants, sharing what they had with each other, with the poor, with the stranger, the alien. These Christians were derided as fools. They were out of touch with the normal ways and they suffered for it. They were ostracized.

In First Peter, this writing was addressed to them today. In this time of ridicule and suffering, a time of persecution, the letter is encouraging them and giving them some advice for living in a hostile culture. Speaking about how to live knowing that God can raise the dead, that death is not the end but the beginning of new life in resurrection. They are suffering. The letter encourages them in suffering. It warns them of the presence of the temptations to take the easy way, to lose their way, to wander from the light of Christ. The author tells them to put their trust in the Lord, to put their worries on the Lord for they will be tested but they are to remain faithful. God will give them strength and the promise of everlasting glory.

Sometimes when we read these lessons, we hear them with new ears in a different situation.

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.” (1 Peter 4:12 NRSV). This letter was not talking about COVID-19 but that is what we hear. We are in this incredibility difficult time in which not just

the followers of Jesus but everyone on the planet is being tested by a fiery ordeal. There are 4.2 million cases of COVID-19 and 290,000 deaths as I write this, and many more when you hear it. We have been sheltering in place for months. Millions of people have lost their jobs. Millions are at risk of hunger. Our congregations have been reaching out into communities with food and support. This will be with us for perhaps a year or two.

We have many questions. What will happen to schools and our children? What will happen to businesses that so many of us depend on? What will happen to our churches? What will happen to us and the ones we love?

And on the third day Jesus was raised from the dead. Do we believe it? If God can raise the dead, do we not believe that God will care for us?

In the letter of First Peter we hear, *“cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.”* (1 Peter 5:7 NRSV) *“And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you.”* (1 Peter 5:10 NRSV) To believe in the resurrection is to believe that God can turn the darkest of moments into new life. Do we believe it? Faith and fidelity to God are gifts to us from God, through the work of the Spirit. It might be a temptation to think God’s got this covered, so we can sit back and wait in a self-piety for God to act or just wait for God to come and take us home. What this letter reminds us is that if we have faith in the risen Christ then we will live a life that reflects God’s glory in us. That Christ is the light of our lives and way in which we orient our lives. That we live our lives in ways that reflect Christ and the path that Christ chose, a path of humility, a path of service, a path of patience, waiting for what God has in store in the new life of resurrection.

What do those traits look like for us in this time of COVID-19?

A path of humility. I have heard so many people say, I do not have to isolate; I feel fine; I’m not worried about me; I’m not in a high-risk category; I do not want to wear a face mask; I’ll look ridiculous. What if in humility you assume you are an asymptomatic carrier? Would you wear a mask to save the people around you that you love; to save the person next to you in the grocery store that you do not know has a serious heart condition? Humility means caring deeply for the other at the inconvenience of ourselves. Wearing a mask is an act of humble service. Inconvenience and embarrassment for the sake of others, is this not the acts that we would do following the one who went to cross for us?

A path of service. We need to find ways to care for those around us who are suffering both within our congregations and in our neighborhoods. I have been heartened by the stories of our congregations that have stepped up in this crisis with feeding ministries and helping the homeless, those struggling to keep a roof over their heads, and those who anxious and lonely. This is a time when we all need to find ways to serve. Whether it is picking up the phone and talking to the lonely, helping with a feeding ministry, sewing masks for people who cannot obtain them, sharing from our bounty with those who do not have enough, Christ calls us to service. As Luther said, “God does not need our good works, but our neighbors do.” 2

A path of patience. This may be our most challenging path that we are called to in our resurrected life. We are not a patient people. We want it now; we want it delivered the next day. What do you mean you have no toilet paper? What do you mean there are no pork chops? Why can't we get back to church now? I want to be back. I want to sing hymns. I want church to be back the way it was. I want... God, who is the God of new life and resurrection, is guiding us to a path of patience.

Will God act? *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time.* (1 Peter 5:6 NRSV) My absolute faith in the resurrection gives me hope that when this passes there will be a church of Jesus Christ. And it will be a new creation, for the old is passing away and all things will be made new. Now is a time for patience, for God will work in God's time. God who has raised Jesus from the dead will raise the church to new life.

Jesus died and was raised to new life. Do you believe it? Will the church, the body of Christ, be the same as back in January? I doubt it. How many stories have we heard in the Easter season in which the followers of Jesus do not recognize the resurrected Jesus? We have been working on renewing and revitalizing congregations for years. Now it will become an imperative. What does it mean that our congregations have been gathering without our buildings? Perhaps they are not as important as we have believed in being the church. Perhaps it is time to discern what is necessary for us to be the church. What will a resurrected church need to be? We need to be patient, to wait and see what God is up to in due time.

Peter's letter, written in a time of suffering, calls the faithful to trust in God's unfailing love seen chiefly in the death and resurrection of Jesus. It calls us to find the joy of following the path that our Lord set before us, a life of service, humility, and patience. Peter warns us that the devil prowls tempting us to turn inward on ourselves demanding that our wants and needs be satisfied now. Now is the time for us to re-center ourselves in our faith, in a God who, as Peter says, cares for you. Have patience, care for your neighbor, and know that a God who brought Jesus from the dead will be with us and bring us to new life. Amen. 3

HYMN OF THE DAY *You Are Mine* (ELW 581)

You Are Mine



1 "I will come to you in the si - lence,
2 "I am hope for all who are hope - less,
3 "I am strength for all the de - spair - ing,
(4) am the Word that leads all to free - dom, I



I will lift you from all your fear.
I am eyes for all who long to see. (2) In the
heal - ing for the ones who dwell in shame.
am the peace the world can - not give.



You will hear my voice, I claim you as my choice. Be
shad - ows of the night, I will be your light.
All the blind will see, the lame will all run free, and
I will call your name, em - brac - ing all your pain. Stand



still and know I am here. *To stanza 2*
Come and rest in me. *To refrain*
all will know my name. *To refrain*
up, now walk and live! *To refrain*



Do not be a - fraid, I am with you. I have called you each by



name. Come and fol - low me, I will bring you home; I



love you and you are mine." *To stanzas 3 and 4*

4 "I

Text: David Haas, b. 1957

Music: YOU ARE MINE, David Haas

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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 and the Son,
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

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.

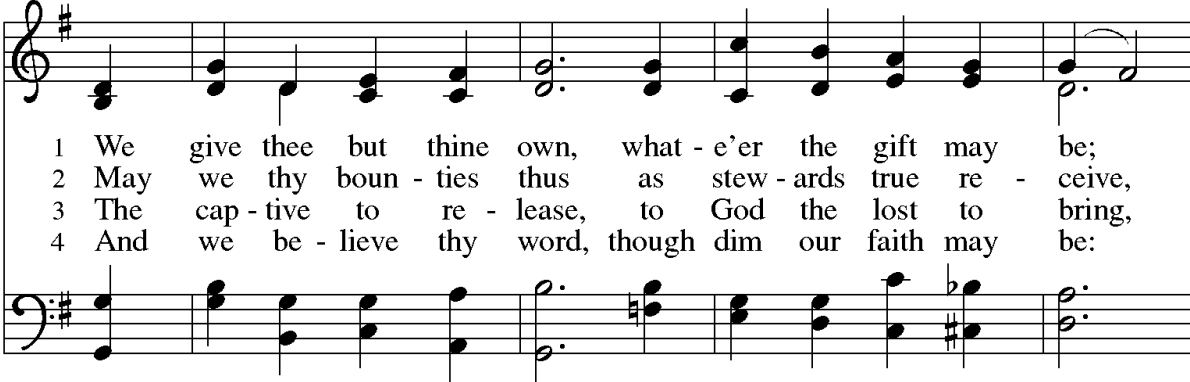
Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

We Give Thee but Thine Own



1 We give thee but thine own, what - e'er the gift may be;
2 May we thy boun - ties thus as stew - ards true re - ceive,
3 The cap - tive to re - lease, to God the lost to bring,
4 And we be - lieve thy word, though dim our faith may be:



all that we have is thine a - lone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.
and glad - ly, as thou bless - est us, to thee our first - fruits give.
to teach the way of life and peace—it is a Christ - like thing.
what - e'er we do for thine, O Lord, we do it un - to thee.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

The God of steadfastness and encouragement
grant you to live in harmony with one another,
in accordance with Christ Jesus.
Amen.

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

The God of all grace † bless you now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING SONG *Blest Be the Tie That Binds* (ELW 656)

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

The musical score is presented in two systems. Each system consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The first system contains four verses of lyrics. The second system contains the concluding lines of the hymn.

1 Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Chris - tian love;
2 Be - fore our Fa - ther's throne we pour our ar - dent prayers;
3 We share our mu - tual woes, our mu - tual bur - dens bear,
4 From sor - row, toil, and pain, and sin we shall be free;

the u - ni - ty of heart and mind is like to that a - bove.
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our com - forts and our cares.
and of - ten for each oth - er flows the sym - pa - thiz - ing tear.
and per - fect love and friend - ship reign through all e - ter - ni - ty.

Text: John Fawcett, 1740–1817, alt.
Music: DENNIS, Johann G. Nägeli, 1773–1836, adapt.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you.
Thanks be to God.

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