

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER
APRIL 26, 2020

GATHERING

(Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ's broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine. We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God's astounding work.)

Thanksgiving for Baptism

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at 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.

The Prayer of the Day

P: Let us Pray,

C: Bend your ear to our prayers, Lord Christ, and come among us. By your gracious life and death for us, bring light into the darkness of our hearts, and anoint us with your Spirit, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

WORD

First Reading: Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Today's reading is the conclusion of Peter's sermon preached following the giving of the Holy Spirit to the apostles on the day of Pentecost. The center of his preaching is the bold declaration that God has made the crucified Jesus both Lord and Christ.

^{14a}Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed [the crowd], ³⁶"Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

³⁷Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" ³⁸Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

³⁹For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." ⁴⁰And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." ⁴¹So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19

¹I love the LORD, who has | heard my voice,
and listened to my | supplication,

**²for the LORD has given | ear to me
whenever I called.**

³The cords of death entangled me; the anguish of the grave | came upon me;
I came to | grief and sorrow.

**⁴Then I called upon the name | of the LORD:
"O LORD, I pray you, | save my life."**

¹²How shall I re- | pay the LORD
for all the good things God has | done for me?

**¹³I will lift the cup | of salvation
and call on the name | of the LORD.**

¹⁴I will fulfill my vows | to the LORD
in the presence of | all God's people.

**¹⁵Precious in your | sight, O LORD,
is the death | of your servants.**

¹⁶O LORD, truly I | am your servant;
I am your servant, the child of your handmaid; you have freed me | from my bonds.

**¹⁷I will offer you the sacrifice | of thanksgiving
and call upon the name | of the LORD.**

¹⁸I will fulfill my vows | to the LORD
in the presence of | all God's people,

**¹⁹in the courts of | the LORD's house,
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. | Hallelujah!**

Second Reading: 1 Peter 1:17-23

The imagery of exile is used to help the readers of this letter understand that they are strangers in a strange land. Christians no longer belong to this age. Through the death of Christ we belong to God, so that our focus, faith, and hope are no longer on such things as silver or gold.

¹⁷If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. ¹⁸You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. ²⁰He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. ²¹Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

²²Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. ²³You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

The colorful story of Jesus' appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus answers the question of how Jesus is to be recognized among us. Here, he is revealed through the scriptures and in the breaking of bread.

¹³Now on that same day [when Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene,] two [disciples] were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" ¹⁹He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²²Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." ²⁵Then he said to them, "Oh,

how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. ²⁸As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" ³³That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

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Sermon

Luke 24: 13-35

April 26, 2019

"Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening, and the day is almost over." Stranger, you have walked with us, opened our hearts and our minds to hear the word of Scripture afresh. Night is coming and the home fires are lit. Our stomachs are rumbling, and it is time to gather together, to eat, to rest, to prepare for the night. You, stranger, are welcome to stay with us, to eat with us, to be part of our family.

"Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening, and the day is almost over." We are weary from all that has happened this past week. We loved Jesus and thought that he was THE ONE, the one who would put all things to rights. We were in Jerusalem when it happened, when he was arrested, tried, convicted, tortured, and executed. We attended his funeral, and grieved with the others, his followers and his family. But this morning it was time to be home again. Grief and horror had worn us out, and we were so very tired. It would feel good to be home.

"Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening, and the day is almost over." We had lost all hope. We had put all our faith eggs in the basket marked "Jesus," and they all got smashed. We had hoped, oh yes, we had hoped. This morning we felt a glimmer of that hope again, when the women came back with news of angels and an empty tomb. But who can believe such a thing? Death is not conquered so easily. So, we live without hope, just like before.

"Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening, and the day is almost over." Sometimes the dark is so frightening, because it's not just the dark of the night, but the dark of our souls, of all the terrors that crowd in on us. All the "what ifs" come and dance around our heads – What if there's a drought and there's no food? What if I get sick and can't work? What if my child dies? What if things get worse? What if... The dark seems to bring all my fears and terrors to life. They huddle close to me, and make me afraid to live, afraid to die. There is so much to fear in the world. So, stranger, won't you stay with us, talk to us, and keep the night fears at bay? Won't you sit down and eat with us? Your presence seems to calm our fears and set our minds to ease.

"Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening, and the day is almost over." Who are you, stranger from the road? You speak to us more like a mother to her children. We don't want you to stop speaking, but to keep talking to us. So, won't you stay with us? Won't you come eat with us, and spend the night? Everything seems better when you are near.

And what about you and me, Beloved ones? Some of us are eager and ready to ask Jesus to stay with us, because it is evening, and the day is almost over. Others of us feel the day has barely begun, and the road is still a long one, with many hazards and many adventures. Some of us are frightened by the darkness that is coming, and others find it a challenge. Some are worried about the future, and others are intrigued. Some of us have walked many miles with Jesus already, and have listened to him open the Scriptures, while others are just beginning the journey. We come from different places, with different stories and different fears. Yet it is with each of us as individuals and all of us together as the Church that

Jesus walks. Unknown to us most of the time, yet revealed in the breaking of bread, Jesus is with us always. As we eat meals together today, physically distant yet with hearts joined, may we see a glimpse of him, just out of the corner of our eyes. Jesus walks with us, talks with us, eats with us. And so, with the disciples of all times we say –

"Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening, and the day is almost over."

AMEN

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.

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.

For those whose hearts are fervent with love for your gospel, that they are empowered to tell the story of your love in their lives and to show hospitality in response to this love. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For the diverse natural world: for jungles, prairies, forests, valleys, mountains, and for all the wild and endangered animals who call these spaces home, that they are nurtured and protected. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For broken systems we have inherited and that we continue to perpetuate, forgive us. Restrain the nations from fighting over limited resources. Redeem us from the cycles of scarcity and violence. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For all who call upon your healing name, give rest. Stay with us, and walk with all those who are hungry, friendless, despairing, and desiring healing in body and spirit (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For the faith forming ministries of this church. For those preparing for baptism, first communion, confirmation, and membership (*especially*). For those who participate in Sunday school and adult education; guide and inspire learners of every age and ability. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Create in our hearts a yearning to rest in your promise of eternal and resurrected life. Give us thankful hearts for those who have died, even as we look forward to the hope of new life with you. 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.

Offering

Please remember to mail in your offerings so that Grace can continue to serve you.

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.**

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world

to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

Amen.

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

May the One who brought forth Jesus from the dead raise you to new life, fill you with hope, and turn your mourning into dancing. Almighty God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Please keep in your prayers this week: Kevin Johnson, Barbara Metzger, Rob Johnson and Steve Lindberg (Streeter Family Friend's & Kin), Noah Klenken (Fred Fixsen's Nephew), Ellsa Sorenson, Cal Curtis & Patty Thompson (Carole Holten's Son-in-Law & Sister), Kendra Rohde, Bill Warner, David Warner.