

May 17 2020 Sixth Sunday of Easter Lect A Gospel John14:15-21

Preparing for worship:

Good morning – welcome to worship,

I hope you are able to gather everyone in your household together this morning. If you are not alone - assign parts of this beforehand. If you don't have a Bible you can google the scripture readings and print them out too. Perhaps print out copies of this for everyone present. This Liturgy is from the Lutheran Book of Worship and the prayers are based on those from Sundays & Seasons. Shut off all the distractions in your home. Sit in the quiet for a bit – take some deep breaths. *A bowl of water may be placed in the midst of those who are gathered and a candle may be lighted and placed near the water.*

The Gathering

Those present may make the sign of the cross, using the water in the bowl, the sign marked at baptism.

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.**

We give you thanks, holy and gracious God,
for you created the waters of the earth:
wide oceans, rushing streams, clear lakes, mighty rivers.
You led your people through the sea and called them to life in covenant with you.
Your Son was baptized in the river Jordan to begin his mission among us.
You pour out your Holy Spirit to renew the face of the earth.
Through this water remind us of the gift of baptism.
Renew us in your promise so that we may serve this world in all its need;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Almighty God, who gives us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit and forgives us all our sins, strengthen us in all goodness and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Word

Acts 17:22-31 Psalm 66:8-20 1 Peter 3:13-22 John 14:15-21

We open the gospel reading today by taking a step backward in our Easter story. In his final words to his disciples on the occasion of his arrest, Jesus encourages obedience to his number one commandment and talks about the Spirit who will be with them forever. Love is the first and the greatest of commandments, according to Jesus.

Jesus continues to prepare his disciples for the time, coming soon, when he would no longer be with them. Like those early disciples, most of us have surely on occasion been anxious, and maybe even fearful. What Jesus had to say to them spoke to their anxieties and fears. His words also speak personally to us today.

When Jesus talks about “my word”, he isn’t talking about a sound that comes out of our mouths or something written on a piece of paper. He means his teachings, his commandments. And when he talks about people keeping his word, he means people trying to do what he would want them to do. All he asks of them is their embrace of the love he has lived among them as the goal for their lives. The one God will continue to accompany them through the Holy Spirit. The spirit helps us recognize that God’s love is what is most true. *The claim though is about the power and order that love brings to relationships.*

Christ acknowledged that choosing to see reality through the lens of love in the midst of a dominating force is difficult. Many of us know this challenge. Our health challenges today are being shaped by our own politics and those of our neighboring country to the south of us. Jesus ministry pointed to the truth - it is as important now as it was then. This understanding offers many of us comfort, especially when the world around us seems to be spinning out of control. Like the people of Jesus time we too are looking for hope and safety.

Through Jesus presence the contagion of genuine love takes hold. Gradually a community of hope is born. *What did Jesus do while he was living?*

Jesus was most certainly a force on the move His love was an action verb. Not a love of private feelings but of action. He had meals with others; was healing, teaching, preaching, and travelling. It is like watching a movie or a video of his life's movement. So when we view this we have a framework for recognizing the spirit of truth himself dwelling in us and through us.

What are we doing in the community?

I believe it is Ellen Degeneres who ends her TV show every day with these words. **Be kind to each other.** That is what we try to do as a faith community here in Arnprior and Renfrew. We are trying to reach out to others – to work together in partnerships within our own community.

Jesus was always present in the community moving and active with groups of people – real people who sometimes struggled just to get along and other times enjoying their successes, their hopes , and their questions. He was one serving as an active presence in a communal context.

We do indeed live within the boundaries of our mortality and the limits of our knowledge. We know that we will eventually die. Right now we certainly do not know enough about the future. But we are not left simply to grope for God. Rather, within those boundaries — and within the boundaries of social distancing — Christ comes to us, making us alive together with him. In him we know God and that God is not far from any one of us. Christ has died to bring us to God. In our baptism Christ has made us a family, even if we are distant from each other. The Spirit poured out from his resurrection abides with us, binding us together. We see the living Christ in the word, a place of refreshment for us. And that word bids us not to fear, but gently and reverently to tell our world and our neighbors about the hope that is in us.

Grace is found in mystery, when strange circumstances confound our expectations. Love is found in experience, when trust is discovered and nurtured. In a form we are not looking for, the Advocate, Comforter, Counselor, Spirit—will come to us.

Even as we say today “I’ll see you on the other side of all of this.” means “I will not turn away from you.” This is Jesus gospel call to all of us. This is what the Spirit of God is up to – we just have to catch up to that Spirit! 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 living. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You are the creator of heaven and earth. Revitalize the health of oceans, the Ottawa and Madawaska 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 those who are dealing with illness and we pray for others we name now Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Compassionate God, visit all who are in great need, those who suffer from the coronavirus, those living in loneliness and fear, those without jobs, and those who mourn their dead. Uphold those whose futures have been taken away from them. We pray for health care workers and for the residents in care homes, prisons, and refugee camps. For the countless persons who carry heavy burdens on their back, we pray, and we call out to you these names: 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. 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.**

The Lord's Prayer

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.

DISMISSAL

Jesus said, "I am with you always"

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!