

May 9, 2021 Sixth Sunday of Easter
Service of Word and Prayer

We are using parts of the Service of the Word liturgy this morning, from your green hymn book, the Lutheran Book of Worship, page 126. The prayers are based on Sundays & Seasons. Shut off all the distractions in your home. Perhaps print out copies of this for all. Enjoy the quiet for a bit – take in some deep breaths. Light your candle. May your family be blessed in this time together.

The Gathering

Greeting: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Call to Worship: Creator of earth and sky, of endless space and burning stars, we come together in the belief that we are important to you. You created us; you sustain our lives; you fulfil us with hope. We give thanks for the miracle of spring and for the power of new life within us and our world; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn: ELW 836 / LBW 551 - Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

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

The Lord be with you ~ and also with you.

Prayer of the day: O God, you have prepared for those who love you joys beyond understanding. Pour into our hearts such love for you that, loving you above all things, we may obtain your promises, which exceed all we can desire; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Children' s Message by Maureen Rueckwald

The Word

The First Reading is from **Acts 10: 44-48**

Psalm 98, is found on page 262

The Second Reading is from **1 John 5: 1-6**

Please rise for the gospel lesson. ***Holy, Holy, Holy, our hearts adore you. Our hearts are glad to say the words: you are Holy God.***

Gospel: **John 15: 9-17**

On the night of his arrest, Jesus delivers a final testimony to his disciples to help them in the days ahead. Here, he shares with us the image of friendship, as he repeats the most important of his commands, that they love one another.

For our Children's message today Maureen has read the story **"Some of My Best Friends are Trees"** by Joanne Marxhausen (c1990 Concordia Publishers). It is a story of friendship. A friendship with God's creation that points to our best friend, Jesus, and his sacrificial love.

Sometimes the answer to a complex question is simpler than we realize. You have heard the saying, “It’s as plain as the nose on your face.” Sometimes the solution to a problem is plain to everyone else, but still very difficult for you to see it, because it’s too close to you.

The heart of our text today is something so simple that we make it complex. It is simply that we are called to serve others, as Jesus came to serve. We are called to love each other as Christ loved us, sacrificially. We try to do right by our friends and neighbors all of the time.

The word friendship or the image of friendship captures a different part of our imagination. It captures the love – the joy- the deep mutuality of the relationship into which Christ invites us to enter with him. The Greeks believed that true friends would be willing to die for one another. This friendship is the mutual love of Christian community commanded by Christ and enabled by the Holy Spirit.

We believe that God came down to love, save and set us free so that we can love and serve our neighbor. With God as our spiritual partner, we, people of faith need to be connected to what God is doing in the world.

The famous Lutheran Pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his book, **“The Cost of Discipleship”** asked this question, “How can we live the Christian life in the modern world?” He died in 1945 and I think in every generation since, we have been asking that same particular question. Faith communities need to be constantly rethinking about how they live out their faith.

I am reminded of a recent good news story on CTV Ottawa of a Greely resident, Jayda who dedicated celebrating her 8th birthday by having a fund raiser for The Ottawa Food Bank instead of a party and gifts. They asked family, friends and neighbors and she raised \$2700 and 15 boxes

of non-perishable food items. And a little child shall lead them. It's a small example of the kind of love Christ was talking about. A child gave up something so that people who are strangers to her could be assisted.

When we baptize babies or younger children we ask their parents to continue in the covenant God made with them. The Holy Spirit gathers with us daily and supports and encourages us. Our lives are lived out in relationships with each other.

This week throw a pebble into a pool of water and watch the ripple effect. In other words, show love and care to someone this week, and not necessarily towards someone you know well. Acts of kindness will enhance the joy in your own faith. Some of that will also splash onto the people we know well. It's as simple as the nose on our faces. Amen.

Hymn: ELW 708 / WOV 765 - Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love

Our Response

OFFERING PRAYER Gracious God, receive our gifts as you receive us. You walk beside us and you meet us in hunger with bread from heaven. Nourish us anew in your tender care, and empower us in faithful service to tend to others with this same love, through Jesus Christ our saving grace. **Amen.**

Prayers of the People by Cathy Zimmerling

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

A brief silence.

Loving God, you call us to be your fruit-bearing church. Strengthen the bonds among all Christian churches. Today we pray for the Moravian Church, giving thanks for the life and witness of Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, renewer of the church and hymn writer. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creating God, the earth praises you. The seas roar and the hills sing for joy. Fill the earth with your love so that by their song, all creatures of land and sea and sky, burrowing and soaring, may call us to join with them in praise. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Faithful Savior, you conquer the world not with weapons but with undying love. Plant your word in the hearts of the nations' leaders and give them your Spirit, so that the peoples of the world may live in peace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Caring Healer, you forget no one and accompany the lonely. Be present with those who are sick or suffering (*especially*). Provide for those needing homes or medical care and point us towards life-changing responses to these needs in our own communities. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Gracious God, as a mother comforts her child, you comfort us. Bless mothers and mothering people in our lives. Comfort those who miss their mothers, mothers who grieve, those who grieve because they cannot be mothers, and those who have never known a loving mother. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Gentle Redeemer, all who die in you abide in your presence forever. We remember with thanksgiving those who shared your love throughout their lives. Keep us united with them in your lasting love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The peace of Christ be with you always and also with you.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray **The 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.

Hymn: LBW 315 / ELW 631- Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Benediction

God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved fill you; and the Holy Spirit the comforter keep you in peace. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. and share the good news. **Thanks be to God.**