

Seventh Sunday of Easter – May 12, 2024

Introduction to the Day

The gospel for Easter's seventh Sunday is always taken from the long prayer Jesus prays for his followers in John's gospel on the night before his death, and always includes Jesus' desire that his followers will be one as he and the Father are one. This oneness is not mere doctrinal agreement or institutional unity, but mutual abiding, interpenetrating life, mutual love, and joy. This oneness is the work of the Spirit whom we have received but also await. Come, Holy Spirit!

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

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.

Welcome

Thanksgiving for Baptism

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the wellspring of grace,
our Easter and our joy.

Amen.

Look, here is water!

Here is our water of life! Alleluia!

Immersed in the promises of baptism,
let us give thanks for what God has done for us.

**We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning
your voice thundered over the deep
and water became the essence of life.**

Adam and Eve beheld Eden's verdant rivers.

**The ark carried your creation through the flood
into a new day.**

**Miriam led the dancing as your people passed
through the sea
into freedom's land.**

**In a desert pool the Ethiopian official
entered your boundless baptismal life.**

Look, here is water!

Here is our water of life! Alleluia!

At the river your beloved Son was baptized by John
and anointed with the Holy Spirit.

By the baptism of Jesus' death and resurrection
you opened the floodgates of your reconciling love,
freeing us to live as Easter people.

We rejoice with glad hearts,
giving all honor and praise to you,
through the risen Christ, our source of living water,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

Look, here is water!

Here is our water of life! Alleluia!

Gathering Hymn

“Alleluia! Sing to Jesus”

#392 vs. 1

Prayer of the Day

Gracious and glorious God, you have chosen us as your own, and by the powerful name of Christ you protect us from evil. By your Spirit transform us and your beloved world, that we may find our joy in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Reading – Acts 1:15-17, 21-26

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred twenty persons) and said, ¹⁶“Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus—¹⁷for he was numbered among us and was

allotted his share in this ministry.”²¹ So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection.”²³ So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴Then they prayed and said, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.”²⁶ And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Children’s Message

Holy Gospel – John 17:6-19

[Jesus prayed:]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. ¹²While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. ¹⁴I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.”

P: The Gospel of our Lord

C: Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN

This is really confusing. Yeah? Your head may be spinning a bit?

That’s okay. We are going to un-confuse it a bit. Some of it maybe not completely, but we are going to make this make a little more sense than it feels like right now.

First, it would do us a lot of good to again be reminded of where we are in the Jesus timeline, and our own timelines as an Easter people post resurrection.

For Jesus and the disciples, this is the summation of his final message to them before he is betrayed and arrested. His betrayal and arrest is literally the next thing that will happen. They will go from wherever they are to the garden, and it is there that he will be betrayed by Judas, who has already left the group.

For us, obviously yes, Jesus has already been resurrected, but to throw just one more wrench into our calendar understanding of how time happens, Jesus has ascended. The Ascension Day was Thursday. So, not only are we getting this pre-crucifixion text after the resurrection, it is also after he has ascended to heaven. So that is fun. But we find ourselves in a room, in this intimate moment with Jesus and the disciples. Imagine that. Just for a moment. So here we are. Putting ourselves in the disciples shoes, we have just heard essentially Jesus’ final

locker room speech before life gets real. He knows what is coming to himself and gives us, His closest followers and friends, the direction we need before he dies. We've heard that speech the last two weeks.

NOW, today, he wraps up that speech and without doing what he normally does, without going away to a quiet place, without waiting until we were all asleep and waking up early in the morning, without any of that, simply standing right there in our midst he looks up to heaven, and speaks to God.

He prays. For us. His disciples. With us sitting right there at his feet.

Now, quick pause. Have you ever experienced that? Have you ever had that moment where you've been visiting with someone, perhaps sharing the joys or struggles of life, and they pray for you? You know this feeling. It is powerful. That is what Jesus does for his disciples. He prays for them.

Unfortunately, because as good as he is a preacher, Jesus sometimes struggles to be clear. In his defense, what he is speaking of and praying for is something that millenia of scholars have struggled to make sense of, and that is the relationship of the Triune God. We aren't going to try to make sense of that today. We are going to be satisfied knowing that God is all three (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) but none of those three are the other. God is all of them, but none of them are each other.

While the relationship and connection is a confusing one to explain, and Jesus doesn't make it any easier in His prayer today, one thing is clear. Unity.

And, it is clear that THIS is what Jesus wants us to hear. Whenever we find ourselves confused by what it is that Jesus is saying, it would do us well to slow it down a bit. Listen for the things that DO make sense. Thankfully, Jesus usually leaves us some clues as to what it is he wants us to hear. He will often say something along the lines of, "I am saying this because..." or, in the case of our text for today, the very simple phrase, "SO THAT." Simply pulling out the SO THAT statements from this prayer we hear:

"Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, SO THAT they may be one, as we are one."

"Not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, SO THAT the scripture may be fulfilled."

"Now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world SO THAT they may have my joy made complete in themselves."

Jesus very clearly states His why. He states His hope. In all of S confusing language, we get this relatively clear statement. Going back to that first one. "Protect them in your name that you have given me, SO THAT they may be one, as we are one."

AND IT GOES ON!

"Sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth."

Make them holy in the truth, your word is truth.

Jesus is saying here, praying here, "Make them holy in your word."

And, people of God. What is his word? Going back to last week and the final locker room speech he gave to them?

Love.

Make them holy in your love.

It is Jesus' prayer to His Father in heaven that his followers would be one as God the Father and Jesus the Son are one. We don't need the relationship of three parts of the Trinity to make sense to know what Jesus is asking here.

And, guess what. If we take John 17 just a touch further to verses 20 and 21, we get his WHY, his SO THAT, one more time.

"I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, THAT they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, MAY THEY ALSO BE IN US, SO THAT the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, SO THAT they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be completely one, SO THAT the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

It is God's hope, Jesus' prayer, that the disciples would continue to share the Good News of God's Love for God's people SO THAT generations of people would come to know Christ and to make Christ known.

That is our call. That is Jesus' prayer not just for his disciples there and then, but for you and me here and now. Thanks be to God. AMEN

Hymn of the Day

"I Come with Joy"

#482

Apostle's Creed

Prayers

Rejoicing that Jesus is risen and love has triumphed over fear, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news.

A brief silence.

You sanctify us in your truth; your word is truth. Send your church out into the world to spread your love and joy. Embolden all bishops, pastors, and deacons (*especially*) to be faithful ministers of your word and sacraments. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Your creation groans under the strain of pollution. Preserve melting glaciers and dwindling forests. Bolster those who work for climate justice and help us all to be good and faithful stewards of your creation. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Your people seek wisdom, understanding, and peace. Guide all those who govern and inspire them to work on behalf of the most vulnerable in our midst. Keep safe first responders, those serving in the military, and those whose duty it is to protect others. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Your children need your loving care. Protect them from all harm. Comfort those in any affliction (*We pray especially for Matt, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Cherri, Peggy, John, Judy, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Tom and Kay, Sherm and Mary, Dan and Sharon, Roger and MaryLee.*). Support those who grieve and bring solace to those near death. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Your Spirit lives within us here. Inspire the work of this congregation and unite us as one. Bless all the mothers in our midst, console those for whom this day is difficult, and gather us all under the care of your loving wings. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Your saints dwell with you in light. Keep us ever thankful for those who have gone before us in faith (*especially*). Inspire us by their witness. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Into your hands, most merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abiding love; through Jesus Christ, our resurrected and living Lord.

Amen.

**Peace
Offering**

Offertory Prayer

Risen One,
you call us to believe and bear fruit.
May the gifts that we offer here
be signs of your abiding love.
Form us to be your witnesses in the world,
through Jesus Christ, our true vine.
Amen.

Sacrament of Holy Communion

#471 & #481

Lord's Prayer

The risen Christ is made known to us
in the breaking of the bread.
Come and eat at God's table.

Post Communion Prayer

Shepherding God,
you have prepared a table before us
and nourished us with your love.
Send us forth from this banquet
to proclaim your goodness
and share the abundant mercy of Jesus,
our redeemer and friend.

Amen.

Blessing

The God of resurrection power,
the Christ of unending joy,
and the Spirit of Easter hope
✠ bless you now and always.

Amen.

Sending Hymn

“Blessing, Honor and Glory”

#433

Sending

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

Go in peace. Rejoice and be glad.

Okay! We will! Thanks be to God.

And all of Good Shepherd said,

“AMEN”

Your Generosity in Action:



Did you know:

Nearly all of the money that Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd receives from a Ruby's Pantry share goes back into the community! This week, our Ruby's Team was able to give a \$1,200 donation towards the Roosevelt PTA to bring their Spaghetti Supper total to \$5,000. We are grateful for the efforts of our neighborhood school to create a new safe space for neighborhood kids to play!

THANK YOU!!

Monthly Financials to date:	Total Revenue	Total Expenses	Difference
	\$6,955	\$5,939	-\$1,016
	2023: \$27,688	2023: \$23,760	Checkbook Available thru April \$25,932



Did you know? May is Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd's birthday month! Come celebrate with us and some of our community partners with worship and a potluck on May 19!

Mark your calendars and spread the news. We are praying together "Peace and Unity for ALL PEOPLE" Wednesday, May 22, 6:30 PM
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd.

Feed My People is hosting our annual Empty Bowls event on Thursday, May 16 from 11am to 7pm. Tickets for the event are available online at give.fmpfoodbank.org/emptybowls. They also have volunteer opportunities throughout the day. More information may be found on their website.