

**Service of Word for the Home and for ZOOM
Sixth Sunday of Easter
May 17, 2020
10:00 a.m.**

Want to join us online? Email pkjfelu@zoominternet.net

NOT ONLINE? JOIN US OVER THE PHONE (even a landline!)

Call +1 301 715 8592 US
Enter the Meeting ID: 956 305 5281 and Password: 408299

GATHERING

Wherever you are, make your worship space worshipful!

If you are not online and worshipping at home with more than one person, the parts may be divided up responsively or may be prayed in unison.

WELCOME

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed!

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of baptism:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We give you thanks, Eternal God,

For you nourish and sustain all living things with the gift of water.

In the beginning of time, your Spirit moved over the watery chaos,

Calling forth order and life.

In the time of Noah, you destroyed evil by the waters of the flood,

Giving righteousness a new beginning.

You led Israel out of slavery, through the waters of the sea,

Into the freedom of the promised land.

In the waters of the Jordan Jesus was baptized by John and anointed with your Spirit.

By the baptism of his own death and resurrection,

Christ set us free from sin and death, and opened the way to eternal life.

We thank you, O God, for the water of baptism.

In it we were buried with Christ in his death.

From it we were raised to share in his resurrection.

Through it we were reborn in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, in joyful obedience to your Son, we celebrate our fellowship with him in faith.

We pray that all who have passed through the water of baptism

may continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ our Savior,

through whom and with whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

be glory and honor, now and forever.

Amen.

HYMN *sing any song that praises God and makes your heart glad. In online worship we will sing:*

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus



1 Al - le - lu - ia! Sing to Je - sus; his the scep - ter,
 2 Al - le - lu - ia! Not as or - phans are we left in
 3 Al - le - lu - ia! Bread of heav - en, here on earth our
 4 Al - le - lu - ia! King e - ter - nal, Lord om - nip - o -
 5 Al - le - lu - ia! Sing to Je - sus; his the scep - ter,



his the throne; Al - le - lu - ia! his the tri - umph, his the
 sor - row now; Al - le - lu - ia! he is near us; faith be -
 food, our stay; Al - le - lu - ia! here the sin - ful flee to
 tent we own; Al - le - lu - ia! born of Mar - y, earth your
 his the throne; Al - le - lu - ia! his the tri - umph, his the



vic - to - ry a - lone. Hark! The songs of peace - ful
 lieves, nor ques - tions how. Though the cloud from sight re -
 you from day to day. In - ter - ces - sor, friend of
 foot - stool, heav'n your throne. As with - in the veil you
 vic - to - ry a - lone. Hark! The songs of peace - ful



Zi - on thun - der like a might - y flood: "Je - sus
 ceived him when the for - ty days were o'er, shall our
 sin - ners, earth's re - deem - er, hear our plea where the
 en - tered, robed in flesh, our great high priest, here on
 Zi - on thun - der like a might - y flood: "Je - sus



out of ev - 'ry na - tion has re - deemed us by his blood."
 hearts for - get his prom - ise: "I am with you ev - er - more?"
 songs of all the sin - less sweep a - cross the crys - tal sea.
 earth both priest and vic - tim in the eu - cha - ris - tic feast.
 out of ev - 'ry na - tion has re - deemed us by his blood."

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898, alt.

Music: HYFRYDOL, Rowland H. Prichard, 1811–1887

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray: Almighty and ever-living God, you hold together all things in heaven and on earth. In your great mercy receive the prayers of all your children, and give to all the world the Spirit of your truth and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

THE WORD

FIRST READING Acts 17:22-31

In Athens, Paul faces the challenge of proclaiming the gospel to Greeks who know nothing of either Jewish or Christian tradition. He proclaims that the “unknown god” whom they worship is the true Lord of heaven and earth who will judge the world with justice through Jesus, whom God has raised from the dead.

22Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. 23For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. 24The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, 25nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. 26From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, 27so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. 28For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said,

‘For we too are his offspring.’

29Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. 30While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 66:8-20

8Bless our God, you peoples;

let the sound of praise be heard.

**9Our God has kept us among the living
and has not allowed our feet to slip.**

10For you, O God, have tested us;

you have tried us just as silver is tried.

**11You brought us into the net;
you laid heavy burdens upon our backs.**

12You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water,
but you brought us out into a place of refreshment.

**13I will enter your house with burnt offerings
and will pay you my vows—**

14those that I promised with my lips

and spoke with my mouth when I was in trouble.

**15I will offer you burnt offerings of fatlings with the smoke of rams;
I will give you oxen and goats.**

16Come and listen, all you who believe,

and I will tell you what God has done for me.

**17I called out to God with my mouth,
and praised the Lord with my tongue.**

18If I had cherished evil in my heart,
the Lord would not have heard me;

**19but in truth God has heard me
and has attended to the sound of my prayer.**

20Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer,
nor withheld unfailing love from me.

SECOND READING 1 Peter 3:13-22

The author of 1 Peter encourages Christians to remain faithful even in the face of defamation and persecution. In baptism we are made clean to act in accordance with what is right.

¹³Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? ¹⁴But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, ¹⁵but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; ¹⁶yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. ¹⁸For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, ²⁰who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. ²¹And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

We welcome the gospel:

Alleluia! Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them,* and we will come to them and make our home with them! Alleluia!

GOSPEL John 14:15-21

The holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John, the fourteenth chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In final words to his disciples on the night of his arrest, Jesus encourages obedience to his commandments and speaks of the Spirit, who will be with them forever.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁵“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. ¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

¹⁸“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

HOMILY *online*

REFLECTION

Our God is a living God! In our first reading today, Paul has toured the city of Athens, looking at temples, statues, and altars dedicated to Greek gods, including to one dubbed “the unknown god.” But the true God is not contained in buildings nor be represented by statues. Rather, the true God has been revealed in Jesus Christ. God is alive, having raised Jesus Christ from the dead and comforting us in the power of the Spirit (whom our gospel reading calls, “the Advocate.”

This is both a challenge and a comfort to us in these times in which we are alive. It is a challenge, because the news that God is alive and not contained in “temples made by human hands” convicts us of the many ways that we rely on “things made by human hands”—even as we worship Jesus. Whenever forms of worship, places, or practices—whether sitting in a particular pew or a singing in a particular way or going to a particular building—become essential to our sense of worship, Paul’s words challenge us to see our idolatry. God is not contained by hymnals, buildings, pews, or practices. God is not contained by things made by human hands or frozen in time and place! God is alive, active, and at work in our world, constantly leading God’s people to be faithful in the moment.

But because God is alive, this very text comforts us in this time when so much of what we call “normal worship” has been stripped from us. Being together, sitting in a particular seat in a particular place, singing together, receiving the sacrament—all these things

are on hold. We are all worshipping in our homes! With many health issues to consider, even re-opening (when that happens) will not take us back to the kind of worship that we knew in January. And yet, Jesus Christ never was contained by what was familiar to us. He lives in our future and sends us the Holy Spirit to guide us.

NICENE 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 THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

As we welcome our God into the sanctuaries of our homes, let us pray for all the needs of the world, responding to each petition with words that echo today's psalm: "O God, hear us."

A brief silence.

Abiding God, come into all the homes around the globe from which your people offer their prayer. Bless Christian leaders as they guide the church through this pandemic. We remember especially fellow Lutheran congregations in New York that have buried many of their members, especially St. Peter's, Manhattan. Sustain your church in ministry through suffering. For this we pray:
O God, hear us!

Righteous God, instill in all the leaders of nations a desire for justice and the will to serve the oppressed. We pray especially for those nations in which dictatorship threatens the population. Guide our nation's governors in their difficult pathway between the threat of disease and the dangers of scarcity and isolation. Bring our legislators into agreement about how to assist those in need. Give us patience in facing our current predicament. For this we pray:
O God, hear us!

Compassionate God, visit all who are in great need, those who are sick, those living in loneliness and fear, those without jobs, and those who mourn their dead. Sustain those whose hoped-for futures have been taken away from them. Watch over those in prison. Visit those in care centers. For the countless persons who carry heavy burdens on their back, we pray, and we call out to you the

names of those most on our hearts.... For this we pray:

O God, hear us!

Benevolent God, give the world a vaccine. For this we pray:

O God, hear us!

Loving God, embrace all children whose parents have died or who lack people to care for them. Support the agencies that attend to orphans. Shield vulnerable children from trafficking, and protect them when they flee violence. Watch over the children in our own community whose parents are abusive or neglectful, and give them what they need through this time. For this we pray:

O God, hear us!

Loving God, once again each of us offers our thanksgiving and prayers. *(Name these aloud. For those of you joining by video online, you may share your prayer requests through the chat function).* For this we pray:

O God, hear us!

Eternal God, your kingdom is here now, and it has no end. We remember the saints who have gone before us, those who have died of Covid-19, and those who remember in our hearts. Unite us forever in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For this we pray:

O God, hear us!

With bold confidence in your love, merciful God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Finally, let us pray in the words that Jesus taught us:

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.**

THE SENDING

BLESSING

May God, who raised Jesus Christ from the dead, continually show us lovingkindness, grant us a share in the Son's victory over death, and renew our hearts in love. The blessing of Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit be upon us now and forever.

Amen.

Let us go in peace.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Are you or anyone you know suffering particular stress with the quarantine? There is a listening ear available. Please call Pr. Kimberly on her cell phone or at the church office (724-283-2378) to arrange an appointment.

As you are able, please continue to support First English's ministry financially during this time. Your gifts allow our ministry to continue. You can mail offerings into the church office (241 N. Main Street, Butler PA 16001) or give online at

<http://firstenglishbutler.org/giving/>.

Enjoy some Lutherlyn Baked Goods! Lutherlyn is currently taking carry-out orders for Mrs. Shaulis's "FAMOUS" Coffee Cake, Chocolate Chip Cookies, Raisin Puff Cookies, and Sugar Cookies. Visit www.lutherlyn.com/kitchen to order your baked goods by May 20th for contact-less pickup at Lutherlyn on May 27th or May 30th. This is a great way to support Lutherlyn and stock up on delicious fresh baked goods that can be frozen to enjoyed over the coming month.

PRAYERS

Asyiah, the family of Nancy, Jean Purvis, Joyce Hall, Bruni Bilowich, Karen Vavro, The family of Daniel Meggs, Doug Horner, the family of Anthony Rieder, Sandy, Randy, the family of Chris Matthews, the family of Marsha Codispot, the family of Barb Schneidmiller, Lisa, Wendy, the family of Gary Cooper, Rhonda, Judy M., the family of Jean Wiles, Mary Ellen, Claudia, Karen, Aryl Bashline, Kitty Walker, Hope & Bruce Keeler, the family of Dennis Steighner, Gina Ambrosio, Elizabeth, Jena Wright, Tad Sellers, the family of Sam Egan, Ralph D'Antonio.