

Welcome

- P: Welcome to Trinity Lutheran Church of Pittsburg Ohio. I'm Pastor Mel Musser and I'm happy you joined us to Worship today. We are gathered via video on this seventh Sunday of Easter and we worship in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, amen.
- P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

- P: As we remember and give thanks for the gift of Baptism, let's also remember this is where we receive the promised gift of God's own Holy Spirit.
- P: We are 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 your Spirit moved over the waters and 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.
- P: We praise you for your salvation through water, for the waters that fill the oceans, the rivers, streams, and lakes, 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.

C: Amen.

Prayer of the Day

- P: Let's pray... O God of glory, your Son Jesus Christ suffered for us and ascended to your right hand. Unite us with Christ and each other in suffering and in joy, that all the world may be drawn into your bountiful presence, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Our Scripture readings for today are read for us by Kathy Kathman. Thank you
Kathy...

And now we hear the Word of God for this day...

First Reading: Acts 1:6-14

The First Reading is from the book of Acts, chapter 1, verses 6-14.

⁶When [the apostles] had come together, they asked [Jesus], “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away. ¹³When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

The Psalm for today is Psalm 68, verses 1-10, and 32-35

¹Let God arise, and let God’s enemies be scattered; let those who hate God flee.

²**As smoke is driven away, so you should drive them away; as the wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.**

³But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; let them also be merry and joyful.

⁴**Sing to God, sing praises to God’s name; exalt the one who rides the clouds; I AM is that name, rejoice before God!**

⁵In your holy habitation, O God, you are a father to orphans, defender of widows;

⁶**you give the solitary a home and bring forth prisoners into freedom; but the rebels shall live in desert places.**

⁷O God, when you went forth before your people, when you marched through the wilderness,

⁸**the earth quaked, and the skies poured down rain, at the presence of God, the God of Sinai, at the presence of God, the God of Israel.**

⁹You sent a bountiful rain, O God; you restored your inheritance when it languished.

¹⁰Your people found their home in it; in your goodness, O God, you have made provision for the poor.

³²Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth; sing praises to the Lord.

³³You ride in the heavens, O God, in the ancient heavens; you send forth your voice, your mighty voice.

³⁴Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel; whose strength is in the skies.

³⁵How wonderful you are in your holy places, O God of Israel, giving strength and power to your people! Blessed be God!

The Second Reading is from 1st Peter, chapter 4, verses 12-14, and Chapter 5, verses 6-11

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

^{5:6}Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. ⁸Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. ¹⁰And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

Here ends the readings.

The Holy Gospel according to Saint John, the 17th Chapter, verses 1-11.

Gospel: John 17:1-11

¹After Jesus had spoken these words [to his disciples], he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. ⁵So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

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.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Great I Am, Jesus Christ who has come and will come again, amen.

Two Thousand years ago Jesus asked his disciples: “Who do people say that I am? It was a good question then and answers are still coming in. Some see Jesus as a great ethical teacher. He preached with compassion for the sick, the poor, and the oppressed. He worked miracles, changing the lives of people he touched. Yet, powerful forces challenged His authority and claims to being the Old Testament God of Israel who was now visibly in their presence.

I love this verse (John 17:5) (⁵So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.) We all know that when we read our bible it is sometimes easy to miss the meaning of a particular verse. This verse sums up all of the “I Am” statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John. There are a total of 7 of them in the Gospel according to John

From the words spoken to the woman at the well, “I Am” the living water.” The those spoken to over 5000 hungry people along the shores of the sea of Galilee “I Am” the bread of life” -- to “I Am” the resurrection and the life.” Spoken at the tomb of Lazarus. “I AM” the Gate. “I Am” the Good Shepherd prophesized in Ezekiel 34, spoken to the Pharisees and religious leaders in Jerusalem.

Jesus declared that He was the “I Am” of the Exodus. He announced, "I am the Good Shepherd" (John 10:11), a title the Old Testament ascribed only to God (Psalm 23:1; Ez. 34). He called Himself the bridegroom (Matthew 25:1), a role God played with Israel (Isaiah 62:5). He forgave sins (Mark 2:5); only God can forgive sins. Of course, the Pharisees grasped the implication that Jesus was claiming to be God, and they looked for ways to kill Him for blasphemy. They knew what His words meant. God was in their midst, but they did not believe. (Mark 14:64-65).

They did not appreciate his miracles. They did not appreciate His teaching. They did not appreciate the fact He healed people on the Sabbath, breaking their precious rules. They were furious when Jesus said: “The Father and I are one.” They immediately picked up stones to stone Him because they knew Jesus was claiming equality with the Creator of the Universe, The God who rescued their ancestors from slavery in Egypt. (John 10)

So, here we are pondering Jesus’ words for us today. It’s after the Passover meal. After the washing of the disciples feet. After telling His disciples that one day soon, His Holy Spirit would be a gift to all believers. Jesus offers a prayer: It

begins: “Father the time has come.” Restore the glory I had with you in the beginning.

This past Thursday was the day the Church sets aside as Ascension Day. It’s the 40th day after Easter and the day Jesus returned to heaven in the clouds. I heard someone say Ascension day is the day Jesus started working from home... I believe he did an awful lot of working from home before he became incarnate as the baby Jesus... Getting back to my earlier question, who do we say Jesus is, I heard another story this week about when Jesus comes sometime in the near future. There’s a great controversy as to if he is the Messiah and so the world did what we humans do, we formed a committee. Half were Jews and half were Christians. They came up with one single question for this person claiming to be Jesus Christ. They asked this, Sir, have you been here before? ...

“Sir, have you ever been here before?” Christians answer one way. Jews answer another. There really is no middle ground. Either Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, or He wasn’t. Is He deity from eternity or did His life begin in a manger? Is Jesus the image of the invisible God? Or a holy Man that God chose to empower? Is Jesus co-eternal with the Father? Was He the One responsible for creation? These are serious and good questions. Week after week you have been watching the worship service on your computer, smart phone, or television, because as a nation we are “sheltering in”. We’re anxious. We’d like for this to be over. All of us are like children, sitting in the back seat of our family car on a long Road trip. The Road trip is becoming longer than our patience can handle. So, we ask: “Are we there yet?” “How much longer?” “We are tired of sheltering in... how much longer?”

When we read the prayer of Jesus, remember this prayer comes at the end of the Passover meal with His disciples. His emotions are wrung out. He knows what’s to come. He’s washed their feet. He predicted his betrayal by Judas who goes directly to the Pharisees to do the dirty deed. When Jesus begins His prayer I sense He has the same longing you and I have for end of a long road trip. How much longer? If you listen closely you can hear tiredness in his voice. You can feel the weight of rejection by so many who saw His miracles.

“Father, the time has come....” Do you feel it? I’m so tired of challenges, the denials. Their failure to believe in You and in Me. When will it end? “Father the time has come...” I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.” Stop! Don’t gloss over these few words without thinking. What was that work? What did God send Jesus to do? Do you remember the words of the angel to Joseph? “Do not be afraid, Joseph, you are to give the child of Mary the name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” He never

gave in to the temptations of Satan. His life was perfect. Never a mistake. Never a broken commandment. This was His work. He said: "I am the Good Shepherd". He healed people from disease. He raised the dead. And said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me shall have eternal life."

Listen again to the most dramatic claim of Jesus on the eve of His arrest. John heard. Do you hear it? "And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began." Let me speak those words again. "Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began." My friends that is eternity past. Jesus is saying: Yes, I was there to fling the stars and galaxies into an endless, expanding universe. Yes, I spoke. Out of nothing the sky was filled with life." The waters roared to life. The call of the whale, the dolphin, brought music to the seas. Then "He placed one scoop of clay upon another until a form lay lifeless on the ground. All of the Garden's inhabitants paused to witness the event. Hawks hovered. Giraffes stretched. Trees bowed. Butterflies paused on petals and watched." That's how Max Lucado described the creation of mankind in his book *The Choice*.

The Apostle Paul describes Jesus in these words? "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him, and He is before all things and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all things dwell."

Remember the question? "Sir, have you ever been here before?" He has been here before and He spared nothing, not even Himself, to bring about our salvation. The most beautiful of all is that he gave humanity a choice to love Him because He first loved us. For that reason, it's not a bad question and we're not bad people who ask it. We can ask it because God loved us enough to give us the choice.

So, who is Jesus Christ to you? May this question keep you up at night and may your final answer be He is my savior and my God. Amen.

NICENE CREED

P: We respond to God's Word by confessing our faith using the words of the Nicene Creed. Please pray these words along with me:

C: **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; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. 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. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He 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 INTERCESSION

On this seventh Sunday of Easter, we gather in our homes and yet together as one, praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need. Our response to each petition is, "Your mercy is great."

A brief silence.

In this time of troubling separation, we pray to you, triune God, for the unity of your churches. Bind us together in the truth of your gospel. Make us witnesses of your mysterious might. As you blessed the early disciples for their unfolding ministry, bless those who lead and serve our local congregation.

God of unity, hear us:
Your mercy is great.

Nurture the life of your creation. Support those who explore the mysteries of your universe. We praise you for Nicholas Copernicus, whom we commemorate today,

and for all the scientists who have enriched our understanding of creation. Help all online teachers to instruct our children in the ways of nature.

God of unity, hear us:
Your mercy is great.

As we prepare for Memorial Day, we pray for peace around the world. Protect all soldiers, and assure them of your never-failing strength. Shield the vulnerable who live in paths of violence. We pray especially for the people of Afghanistan and Syria.

God of unity, hear us:
Your mercy is great.

Come to the aid of all who suffer. We pray for those who are laden with grief, overwhelmed by anxiety, or struggling without medical care. Uphold all health-care workers who attend to coronavirus patients. Comfort all families and friends who cannot embrace their loved ones at the time of death. We give into your care all the sick, especially those we name here before you (*especially*).

God of unity, hear us:
Your mercy is great.

Again we pray: give the world a vaccine.

God of unity, hear us:
Your mercy is great.

Grant your oneness to humankind, so marked by isolation and division. Bring harmony to families, rival gangs, distraught citizens, racial groupings, and members of our legislatures. Give to each individual a wholeness that is birthed in you. Make us one, as you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are one.

God of unity, hear us:
Your mercy is great.

Make us steadfast in the faith, and graciously receive our personal petitions:

God of unity, hear us:
Your mercy is great.

To know you is to have eternal life. We praise you for the lives of all who have died in the faith and who now live in you (*especially*). At the end, bring us with all your saints into your presence.

God of unity, hear us:
Your mercy is great.

With bold confidence in your love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God of our past, our present, and our future, we place all for whom we pray into your circle of love, now and forever.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: During our time of social distancing, we share the peace with one another in a slightly different way. As I share the peace of Christ with you, I once again ask you to pick at least one person each day this week to personally share the peace of the Lord. Please remember to keep your socially acceptable distance... One person each day isn't a lot to ask, but it will keep us united while were apart. So, I'll start us off...

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: The living Lord Jesus Christ is our tie that binds us together, let us pray as He taught his disciples.....

C: 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.

DISMISSAL

P: In everything you do, go in Christ's Love.

C: Seeking, welcoming, and serving all. Amen!

