Greeting and Announcements

Opening Hymn

726 Evening and Morning https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8jiKcTfC8w

1 Evening and morning,  
    Sunset and dawning,  
        Wealth, peace, and gladness,  
        Comfort in sadness:  
    These are Thy works; all the glory be  
    Thine!  
    Times without number,  
    Awake or in slumber,  
        Thine eye observes us,  
        From danger preserves us,  
    Causing Thy mercy upon us to shine.

2 Father, O hear me,  
    Pardon and spare me;  
        Calm all my terrors,  
        Blot out my errors  
    That by Thine eyes they may no more  
    be scanned.  
    Order my goings,  
    Direct all my doings;  
        As it may please Thee,  
        Retain or release me;  
    All I commit to Thy fatherly hand.

3 Ills that still grieve me  
    Soon are to leave me;  
        Though billows tower,  
        And winds gain power,  
    After the storm the fair sun shows its  
    face.  
    Joys e’er increasing  
    And peace never ceasing:  
        These shall I treasure  
        And share in full measure  
    When in His mansions God grants me a  
    place.

4 To God in heaven  
    All praise be given!  
        Come, let us offer  
        And gladly proffer  
    To the Creator the gifts He doth prize.  
    He well receiveth  
        A heart that believeth;  
        Hymns that adore Him  
    Are precious before Him  
    And to His throne like sweet incense  
    arise.

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Stand

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father,  
    beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.  
    Our help is in the name of the Lord,
C who made heaven and earth.
P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,  
C and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Silence for reflection on God’s Word and for self-examination.

P Almighty God, our maker and redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto You that we are by nature  
    sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed. Wherefore we  
    flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace for the sake of our Lord  
    Jesus Christ.
C O most merciful God, who has given Your only-begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon  
    us and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us  
    true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by  
    Your grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

P Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son to die for us  
    and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To those who believe on His name He gives power to
become the children of God and has promised them His Holy Spirit. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.

Grant this, Lord, unto us all.

Amen.

**Stand**

**Service of the Word**

**Introit**

Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song,*

his praise in the assembly of the godly!

I will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up*

and have not let my foes rejoice over me.

O LORD my God, I cried to you for help,*

and you have healed me.

O LORD, you have brought up my soul from Sheol;*

you restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit.

Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints,*

and give thanks to his holy name.

For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime.*

Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son* and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song,*

his praise in the assembly of the godly!

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

**Kyrie & Gloria in Excelsis**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hguV0s_RWlU

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Glory be to God on high:

and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.

We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee,

we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory.

O Lord God, heav’nly King, God the Father Almighty.

O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ;

O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,

that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.

Thou that takest away the sin of the world, receive our prayer.

Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

For Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord.

Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost,

art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.
Salutation and Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.
C And with thy spirit.
P Let us pray.

O God, You make the minds of Your faithful to be of one will. Grant that we may love what You have commanded and desire what You promise, that among the many changes of this world our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Sit

First Reading

Acts 6:1–9; 7:2a, 51–60

1Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. 2And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. 3Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. 4But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” 5And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. 6These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

7And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

8And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. 9Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. . . .

2And Stephen said:

“Brothers and fathers, hear me. . . .

51You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. 52Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, 53you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.”

54Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. 55But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” 57But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. 58Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” 60And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

A This is the Word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

Epistle

1 Peter 2:2–10

2Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation— 3if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

4As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”
So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,”

and

“A stone of stumbling,
and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Stand

Alleluia


Holy Gospel

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the fourteenth chapter.

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.”

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Sit

633 At the Lamb’s High Feast We Sing
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mAB87R_z8ao

1 At the Lamb’s high feast we sing
Praise to our victorious King,
Who has washed us in the tide
Flowing from His pierced side.
   Alleluia!

2 Praise we Him, whose love divine
Gives His sacred blood for wine,
Gives His body for the feast—
   Christ the victim, Christ the priest.
   Alleluia!

3 Where the paschal blood is poured,
   Death’s dread angel sheaths the sword;
   Israel’s hosts triumphant go
   Through the wave that drowns the foe.
   Alleluia!

4 Praise we Christ, whose blood was shed,
   Paschal victim, paschal bread;
   With sincerity and love
   Eat we manna from above.
   Alleluia!

5 Mighty Victim from the sky,
   Hell’s fierce pow’rs beneath You lie;
   You have conquered in the fight,
   You have brought us life and light.
   Alleluia!

6 Now no more can death appall,
   Now no more the grave enthrall;
   You have opened paradise,
   And Your saints in You shall rise.
   Alleluia!

7 Easter triumph, Easter joy!
   This alone can sin destroy;
   From sin’s pow’r, Lord, set us free,
   Newborn souls in You to be.
   Alleluia!

8 Father, who the crown shall give,
   Savior, by whose death we live,
   Spirit, guide through all our days:
   Three in One, Your name we praise.
   Alleluia!

Text: Public domain

Sermon
Grace, Mercy and Peace to you from God our Father and Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

A lot has changed in the last two months. With the onset of the Corona Virus pandemic, we have been forced to change many things. Out of an abundance of caution, we stayed home, avoiding even the most routine activities like going to church, school or work, Doctor’s appointments, minor surgeries and haircuts, limiting the most fundamental activities such as grocery shopping. We learned to do social distancing and to wear masks in public. We are now beginning to worship together in person again. Family gatherings have changed. For many, today will be the first Mother’s Day that does not include going to church with Mom and then taking Mom out for a meal. For many, an in-person visit will not happen to protect Mom’s health from this horrible virus.

Here at church, we moved from the penitential season of Lent, through Holy Week, to Easter, celebrating again Jesus’s death and resurrection. For the first three Sundays of Easter, we read of the Resurrected Jesus’s encounters with His disciples. Last Sunday, we celebrated Good Shepherd Sunday, celebrating His leadership over His flock, the church. This Sunday, we begin to look forward to His Ascension into heaven where He reigns for all eternity having conquered sin, death and the devil. To shift our focus, our Gospel reading this morning come from John’s account of the Last Supper.

As we are experiencing changes because of Corona Virus that dramatically shook our world to its core, the Last Supper experiences of the disciples leading up to this reading shook the disciples to their core. Jesus has washed the feet of His disciples, teaching them to serve one another. And then the conversation takes a turn.
Jesus tells them that one of them will betray Him. After the disciples have followed Jesus for three years, Jesus tells them “Where I am going, you cannot go”. Of course, none of this makes any sense to Simon Peter. Peter argues his willingness to go wherever Jesus goes, even if it costs Peter his life. Jesus then foretells Peter’s denial.

Imagine what is going on inside of the disciples’ heads as this morning’s Gospel reading begins. The disciples were “all-in”. They left everything behind and followed Jesus for 3 years. The disciples went where Jesus has gone. They listened to Jesus teach. They watched the many miracles He has performed. They saw things they never thought they would see. They too had gone out to proclaim the Kingdom of God is at hand. In many ways, life had become routine, had become normal. Nothing bad really materialized. During the storm on the sea, Jesus woke up in time to calm the sea. And in the squabbles with the Pharisees and Sadducees, Jesus always came out on top. And here they are in Jerusalem, the holy city, David’s city. Jesus had been given a hero’s welcome on Palm Sunday. The disciples and the people were abuzz. Was he the descendent of David to sit again on David’s throne? With all this talk of glory, was this the time and place? Then, Jesus tells them that they cannot go where He is going.

The real story is not about Peter’s misguided self-confidence that he is willing to die for Jesus. Nor is it about Thomas’s devotion and courage, nor Philip’s confidence to bring people to Jesus as he had to Nathaniel and to the Greeks who sought Jesus during Holy Week. The real story is Jesus doing the Father’s will, the Father in Him and He in the Father, about Jesus glorifying the Father, being crucified and being raised from the dead to fully manifest that Jesus is true God and true man, sent to reveal the Father. As this morning’s Gospel tells us, Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. It is Jesus that does the Father’s will, shining forth God’s Plan to save sinners through Jesus’s innocent bitter suffering and death, the perfect for the imperfect.

Just like the disciples, we too want to make the story about us, about our ideas, our hopes, our strengths, our personalities, our courage, our confidence, our experience, about what we can do. But the real story is what God has done for us by sending Jesus to die for our sins. Isaiah 53 prophesies “Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.” Isaiah continues “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—everyone—to his own way” just as we hear Thomas and Philip go astray in this reading.

You and I have gone astray and sought our own way just like Thomas and Philip did. At some point, you let your heart be troubled. You worried when you should have prayed. You thought your way was the right way when it wasn’t. You became discouraged when your prayer wasn’t answered as you expected. At some point, you thought that your way was better than God’s way, trusting yourself and your way instead of trusting God’s way. You have missed opportunities to do the works that Jesus did and the works that Jesus would have you do in response to His free gift of salvation that Jesus earned on the cross for you. At some point, you took your eyes off Jesus. You replaced Jesus with someone or something else. You prayed for things that are outside of God’s will.

Jesus’s words “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God and believe in me” are for you. Jesus has indeed gone where you cannot go for your benefit. Jesus has done what you cannot do. Jesus has paid the price for your sins. Paul tells the Corinthians 
\[\text{For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.} \]
(1 Cor 15:3-4)

God has indeed had mercy on us and gives us His Holy Spirit to work faith in our hearts that we may believe both in God and in Jesus whom God sent to reveal himself to us. The Holy Spirit gives us eyes to see and ears to hear the Good News of our salvation to follow Jesus, the way, the truth and the life. The Holy Spirit shows us the Father through Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son, true God and true Man, born of the Virgin Mary. The Holy Spirit enables us to will and to do the work of the Father, to be about our Father’s business, shining the bright light of our salvation into this Corona Virus infested dark world, faithfully witnessing God’s work in our lives by serving God and our neighbor in loving response to our salvation. And as we go about His work, he promises to faithfully answer our prayers all to the praise and Glory of God the Father.

And so, as we go about our lives in these challenging post Christian times and this time of pandemic, we rejoice that Jesus has promised to be with us as we go about doing the works he has prepared for us. We look...
forward in the confident hope of our resurrection when God’s perfect creation will be restored. We joyfully anticipate the new heavens and the new earth when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. And while we wait through the trials and tribulations of this life, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1b-2). Amen. And now, may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer of the Church

Let us come before the Lord seeking His mercy with confidence that His grace is sufficient for all our needs.

Brief silence

 Almighty Father, everlasting God, Your Son has revealed You to us as a merciful Lord. Give to us Your Holy Spirit, that we may believe in Him whom You have sent and do the greater works He has told us we will do in His name. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord God, You have promised to build up Your Church to be a holy priesthood, that Your people might offer the spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving acceptable to You. Bless Your Church and bring all congregations back together again. Bless all pastors who proclaim Christ to us. Bless all church workers and those preparing for full-time church vocations, that Your Church may be supplied with faithful leaders and servants of Your Word. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Holy God, Your power brought all things into being and still You preserve what You have made. Bless our president, the Congress of these United States, our governor, and all elected and appointed civil servants so that they may honor You and Your purpose, establishing order and justice, encouraging virtue and protecting all life. Give wisdom and moderation to them in their leadership for the well-being of the nation. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

O merciful Father, You have compassion upon the sick and those in need and have promised not to ignore them in their afflictions. Turn back the pandemic across the globe, and give us relief. Bless the sick with healing, those who suffer with strength and patience, and the dying with peace. Hear us on behalf of those who have requested our prayers [especially __________]. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Gracious God, You have established the home and blessed those who show us Your love. Bless all mothers and the children in their care. Bless all families and make their homes places of blessing and love, where Your Word is spoken, forgiveness reigns and love is displayed. Give youth good examples to seek all that is good and pure. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, You have given us the wisdom of faith that through the Spirit we might know Your Son to be the way, the truth and the life. Bless all those who teach and all who learn, that the goal of our knowledge may be to know Christ and to make Him known. Do not let Your Word be bound, but let it have free course among us. Guard those isolated from idleness, and let their minds be renewed in Scripture and prayer. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Compassionate Father, You know the needs of this body and life, and You have called us to love our neighbor in need and give aid to the poor. Give us courage and faith, that we may not fear sharing the resources You have supplied with those who live in want, especially the widow, the orphan and the unemployed. Let love be perfected among us to drive out selfish fears. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Eternal Father of an eternal mercy, You have raised up witnesses in every age and blessed us with those who endured suffering and even death in faithfulness to Christ. Thank you for the faithful saints and martyrs, and we pray You to make us strong when we face the day of test, that we may be brought with them into the joy of Your presence and the glory of everlasting life. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We praise You, God, for Your goodness in hearing the prayers of Your people and granting us confidence to approach Your throne of mercy. Hear us now in the name of and for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, through whom, with whom and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is Yours, almighty Father, both now and forevermore. Amen.
Lord’s Prayer

P 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.

C For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

A Let us pray.
Merciful God, we humbly implore You to cast the bright beams of Your light upon Your Church
that we, being instructed by the doctrine of the blessed apostles, may walk in the light of Your truth
and finally attain to the light of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Benediction

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

C Amen, amen, amen.

861 Christ Be My Leader https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTBAtLXbjJ8

1 Christ be my Leader by night as by day;
   Safe through the darkness, for He is the way.
   Gladly I follow, my future His care,
   Darkness is daylight when Jesus is there.

2 Christ be my Teacher in age as in youth,
   Drifting or doubting, for He is the truth.
   Grant me to trust Him; though shifting
   as sand,
   Doubt cannot daunt me; in Jesus I stand.

3 Christ be my Savior in calm as in strife;
   Death cannot hold me, for He is the life.
   Nor darkness nor doubting nor sin and its stain
   Can touch my salvation: with Jesus I reign.


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