

**ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**Aitkin, Minnesota**  
**May 29, 2022**  
**Seventh Sunday of Easter**  
**ONLINE ORDER OF WORSHIP**

- 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.
- P 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.**
- P O almighty God, merciful Father,
- C **I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**
- P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C **Amen.**

## Introit

*Introit*

Hear my cry, | O God,\*  
listen | to my prayer;  
for you have been my | refuge,\*  
a strong tower against the | enemy.  
For you, O God, have | heard my vows;\*  
you have given me the heritage of those who | fear  
your name.

Prolong the life | of the king;\*  
may his years endure to all gener- | ations!  
May he be enthroned forever be- | fore God;\*  
appoint steadfast love and faithfulness to watch |  
over him!

So will I ever sing praises | to your name,\*  
as I perform my vows day | after day.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
and to the Holy | Spirit;  
as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

Hear my cry, | O God,\*  
listen | to my prayer.

## Collect of the Day

P Let us pray.

O King of glory, Lord of hosts, uplifted in triumph far above all heavens, leave us not without consolation but send us the Spirit of truth whom You promised from the Father; for You live and reign with Him and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

## First Reading

*Acts 1:12–26*

Then [the apostles] returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry." (Now this man bought a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) "For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

"May his camp become desolate,  
and let there be no one to dwell in it';

and

"Let another take his office.'

So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." And they put

forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

## Epistle

*Revelation 22:1–20*

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”

“And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you

and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.”

“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

## Holy Gospel

*John 17:20–26*

[Jesus said:] “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise be to Thee, O Christ.**

## Apostles' Creed

C **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  $\bar{\text{T}}$  everlasting. Amen.

### Sermon Text – John 17:20-26 Theme – Perfectly One

There is a special name for the portion of Scripture from which our text comes. That name is Christ's "High Priestly Prayer." Christ prays His "High Priestly Prayer" in the Upper Room on the night when He was betrayed. Jesus had been teaching His disciples that night, trying to prepare them for what would be happening in the next few days. He would be arrested, put on trial, found guilty, put to death, and on the third day would rise from the dead. Jesus concluded all this teaching with prayer.

Christ's High Priestly Prayer" has three parts. In the first part, which is not a part of our text, He prayed for Himself. He prayed, "**Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you**" (John 17:1). Jesus wanted to faithfully carry out the task His Father had given Him, the task of suffering and dying for the sins of the world.

After Jesus prayed for Himself, He prayed for the Twelve Disciples. For them He prayed: "**I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours ... Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me that they may be one, even as**

**we are one**" (John 17:9-11). Jesus wants the apostles to remain faithful. Jesus wants them to be united in the faith.

Then come the words of our text. In this third part Jesus is praying for you and me. He prays: **"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word"** (John 17:20). Jesus goes to pray that we will be united in the faith. He prays that we may all be one, just as the Father is in Jesus and Jesus is in the Father. That's the first time that Jesus asks the Father to make us one. He is going to ask two more times for us to be united in the faith. That's three times total. That's how important it is to Jesus for us be one. The thing we have to remember is that this oneness comes from hearing and believing God's Word. This oneness is not something we can manufacture. Jesus has to work it in us.

As I said, "we can't manufacture it!" Some people think that. They say things like: "Let's just agree to disagree" or "you have your truth and I have mine." That's not unity; that's just sweeping disagreements under the rug. That's just pretending to be something that you are not. The Bible has a word for pretending to be something you are not. That word is "hypocrisy."

Some even go so far as to say, "Moslems and Christians are worshipping the same God, just using a different name for Him." That statement shows a profound ignorance of the teaching of Islam and Christianity. The Moslem god asks his followers to sacrifice their sons and daughters to him. The God of Christians, that would be our God, sacrificed His Son for us and for all our sons and daughters. The difference between the two religions is profound.



Again, we cannot produce the unity for which Jesus prays. The unity for which Jesus prays comes when we are united to Christ through faith. Then we are a part of the body of Christ, His Church.

Jesus wants us to be united **“so that the world may know that [the Father] sent [the Son] and [that the Father] loved them even as [the Father] loved the Son”** (John 17:23).

Trouble is: There are times when we aren't very united. There are times when we let unimportant things divide us. There are also times when we ignore the important things that God says in His Word.

An unimportant thing would be whether it is better for a church to have round tables in its fellowship hall or if rectangular tables are better. A while back, I told you about a congregation which was divided by that issue. A little closer to home might be the question of whether or not people should be ushered out after the service is done.

Important things that God teaches in His Word, that some may choose to ignore, are things like the importance of baptizing babies or that in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper we receive the true body and blood of Jesus in with and under the bread and wine. Another important thing is whether or not the Bible is the Word of God and we can trust it when it comes to what it says about how the world was created, how God created human beings to male and female, and how God wants all people even those who may not look like us to be a part of the Church. It is sad to say, these things, too, sometimes divide us.

Again, we can't manufacture the unity for which Jesus prays. God has to work it in us through His Word.

Jesus wants us to be united in the things that matters for our salvation, our forgiveness, our peace, and our hope. He wants all nations to be baptized and receive the washing away for sin and “all nations” includes infants. He wants us to also make use of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper because as we receive the true body and blood of Jesus we also receive the forgiveness of sins, along with life and salvation. Jesus wants us to believe His Word in these matters and He wants us to believe that God is our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier.

Jesus died on the cross to be our Redeemer. He died and rose again. In Him we have the gift of salvation. We have that gift because He gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit, our Sanctifier. The Holy Spirit is the One who works faith in our hearts; the Holy Spirit is the One who strengthens our faith; the Holy Spirit is the One who keeps us in the faith; the Holy Spirit is the One who makes us one.

That is what Jesus is praying for in our text. That is my prayer, as well and I pray that it will be your prayer, too. We pray that we will be united in the faith, the faith that only God can work in our hearts through His Word.  
AMEN

P The peace of God, which passes all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

C **Amen.**

### **Prayer of the Church**

O righteous Father, Your Son obeyed Your holy will for the sake of our salvation. Through Your Spirit, give Your Church on earth unity of faith, that the world may know

that You sent Your Son to rescue us from sin, death and the power of the devil.

Heavenly Father, You have instituted Holy Baptism as a saving flood, a washing of rebirth and renewal. Grant that many would be washed in the river that flows from the heavenly city and be brought through her gates into the communion of Your Church.

Lord of the Church, You have sustained Your people through the ages by the apostles' witness to the death and resurrection of Your Son. Raise up from among us faithful pastors in every age. Keep our missionaries, pastors and overseers faithful to You in all things.

Lord God, You have placed us in communities and families where we are nurtured and grow in the knowledge of Your Word and love of You. May we be faithful teachers of that Word to our children and those not yet of the kingdom.

Gracious Lord, we thank You for the many blessings You have bestowed upon this nation. Grant us a long memory to recall those who gave the full measure of devotion to our country's peace and security. Bring to mind the sacrifices of those who served faithfully until death in the protection of our freedom and in the defense of our land.

Eternal Lord, You have seated Christ at Your right hand for our deliverance. Remember all who are afflicted with illness and injury [*including \_\_\_\_\_*]. Give them health and strength according to Your will. Sustain them in faith, knowing that, for Jesus' sake, You will raise them in glory on the Last Day

Merciful God, we praise You and remember the faithful who went before us and now rest from their

labors. Grant that we may follow in faith where they have led the way and at length be brought with them into Your everlasting light and life to see You face to face.

All these things and whatever else You know that we need, grant us, Father, for the sake of Him who died and rose again and now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever. **Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

**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.**

### **Benediction**

**P** The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

**C Amen**

### **Acknowledgments**

Divine Service, Setting Three from Lutheran Service Book

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