

May 9, 2021

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Introduction to the day

This Sunday's image of the life the risen Christ shares with us is the image of friendship. We are called to serve others as Jesus came to serve; but for John's gospel, the image of servanthood is too hierarchical, too distant, to capture the essence of life with Christ. Friendship captures the love, the joy, the deep mutuality of the relationship into which Christ invites us. The Greeks believed that true friends are willing to die for each other. This is the mutual love of Christian community commanded by Christ and enabled by the Spirit.



GATHERING

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ, let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We thank you, risen Christ, for these waters where you make us new, leading us from death to life, from tears to joy.

We bless you, risen Christ, that your Spirit comes to us in the grace-filled waters of rebirth, like rains to our thirsting earth, like streams that revive our souls, like cups of cool water shared with strangers.

Breathe your peace on your church when we hide in fear. Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness.

Send us companions on our journey as we share your life. Make us one, risen Christ. Cleanse our hearts. Shower us with life.

To you be given all praise, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God, now and forever.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG *Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love* (ELW #708)

Refrain	2. Neighbors are wealthy and	3. These are the ones we will
Jesu, Jesu,	poor,	serve,
fill us with your love,	varied in color and race,	these are the ones we will
show us how to serve	neighbors are near us and far	love;
the neighbors we have from	away. Refrain	all these are neighbors to us
you.		and you. Refrain

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... O God, you have prepared for those who love you joys beyond understanding. Pour into our hearts such love for you that, loving you above all things, we may obtain your promises, which exceed all we can desire; through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Acts 10:44-48

⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. ⁴⁵The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, ⁴⁶for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷“Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 98

¹Sing a new song to the LORD, who has done marvelous things, whose right hand and holy arm have won the victory.

²**O LORD, you have made known your victory, you have revealed your righteousness in the sight of the nations.**

³You remember your steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

⁴**Shout with joy to the LORD, all you lands; lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.**

⁵Sing to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the voice of song.

⁶**With trumpets and the sound of the horn shout with joy before the king, the LORD.**

⁷Let the sea roar, and all that fills it, the world and those who dwell therein.

⁸**Let the rivers clap their hands, and let the hills ring out with joy before the LORD, who comes to judge the earth.**

⁹The LORD will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity.

SECOND READING: 1 John 5:1-6

¹Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. ²By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. ³For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, ⁴for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. ⁵Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? ⁶This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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. (John 14:23)

GOSPEL: John 15:9-17

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] ⁹“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. ¹²“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the

master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another."

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* (ELW #631)

1. Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter ev'ry trembling heart.

2. Breathe, oh, breathe thy loving Spirit
into ev'ry troubled breast;
let us all in thee inherit;
let us find thy promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.

Blessing of Mothers

God of all creation, pour out your blessing on all mothers and those who provide motherly care. You have made them in your image and given them children to love and care for in your name. Bless them with a heart like your heart: loving and kind, comforting and strong, nurturing and grace-filled. As they participate in your ongoing creativity, give them discernment to help their children discover their unique gifts. As they teach their children, grant them wisdom to know what is truly valuable. As they strive to share your unconditional love, give them long-suffering patience and a lively sense of humor. As they model your mercy, help them extend the forgiveness they themselves freely receive from you. In all circumstances fortify their faith, that they may love you above all. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

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 INTERCESSION

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love, responding to each petition with the words “fill us with your love.” *A brief silence.*

O triune God, we praise you for your wondrous love, for the witness of Christians of other denominations, and for the steadfastness of believers throughout this pandemic. Whenever churches face hardship or challenge, strengthen us in affection and appreciation of the many ways we worship you.

Hear us, loving God: **fill us with your love.**

We praise you for the beauty of spring, and we stand in awe of new life you are calling forth. Wherever creation is beckoning us to lives of ecological stewardship, teach us how to care for the earthly home you have entrusted to us.

Hear us, creating God: **fill us with your love.**

We praise you for conquering the world not with weapons but with undying love. Plant your word in the hearts of people wherever violence prevails, wherever brutality silences protest, wherever prejudice reigns, wherever the rich oppress the poor. Lead us and all nations into the ways of justice.

Hear us, righteous God: **fill us with your love.**

We praise you for the gradual lessening of the pandemic and for your gift of vaccines. Wherever the virus still rages especially India, Turkey, and South America, wherever medical resources are depleted, wherever medical advice is rejected, extend the power of your healing hand. Be present with all who today will die, and visit all who are sick or suffering, especially

Hear us, healing God: **fill us with your love.**

We praise you for the loving support of mothers to their children. Bless mothers, stepmothers, foster mothers, godmothers, and all people who give mothering care. Protect mothers in societies where women have few rights. Comfort those who miss their mothers, mothers who grieve, those who grieve because they cannot be mothers, and children who have never known a loving mother.

Hear us, mothering God: **fill us with your love.**

We praise you for the witness of all who have died in the faith. We remember with thanksgiving those who shared your love throughout their lives. Keep us united with them in your lasting love.

Hear us, everlasting God: **fill us with your love.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE~ The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

MEAL

OFFERING *Jesus Loves Me!* (ELW #595)

1. Jesus loves me! this I know,
for the Bible tells me so;
little ones to him belong,
they are weak, but he is strong.

Refrain
Yes, Jesus loves me,
yes, Jesus loves me,
yes, Jesus loves me,
the Bible tells me so.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray...God of love, you call us beloved children and welcome us to your table. Receive our lives and the gifts we offer. Abide with us and send us in service to a suffering world; for the sake of your beloved Child, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin; who in dying has destroyed death, and in rising has brought us to eternal life. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God. You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory. You so loved the world that you gave your only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. We give you thanks for his coming into the world to fulfill for us your holy will and to accomplish all things for our salvation. In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Remembering, therefore, his salutary command, his life-giving passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension, and the promise of his coming again, we give thanks to you, O Lord God Almighty, not as we ought but as we are able; we ask you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving and with your Word and Holy Spirit to bless us, your servants, and these your own gifts of bread and wine, so that we and all who share in the body and blood of Christ may be filled with heavenly blessing and grace, and, receiving the forgiveness of sin, may be formed to live as your holy people and be given our inheritance with all your saints. To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever. **Amen, amen, amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The risen Christ invites us to this table. Come, eat and be satisfied.

COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you. Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray...Wellspring of joy, through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus. The God of life, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG *Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee* (ELW #836)

1. Joyful, joyful we adore thee,
God of glory, Lord of love!
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before thee,
praising thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the gloom of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.

3. Thou art giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean-depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our brother,
all who live in love are thine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine!

DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

- May 10th & 11th 9:00 AM Quilting
12:00 PM Kuambatana video
- May 12th 6:30 PM Confirmation for Grades 6 & 7
7:30 PM Bygland Council
- May 15th 2:00 PM Goodwin Moe Service at Bygland Lutheran
- May 11, 2021 is Poppy Day in Fisher!! The American Legion Auxiliary will be at Cenex in Fisher on Tuesday morning with poppies. Poppies will also be available at the American Legion and Fisher School. Each year, American Legion Auxiliary volunteers distribute more than 25 million red crepe paper poppies in exchange for contributions to assist disabled and hospitalized veterans. One hundred percent of the donations received by Auxiliary volunteers for poppies and contributions to the poppy fund are used exclusively to assist and support veterans and their families.

- May 16th 9:00 AM Worship at Fisher with Coffee Fellowship to follow
11:00 AM Worship at Bygland
- Meals on Wheels volunteer drivers needed in the City of Crookston, Monday through Friday. 10:30-11:30 AM. People interested in volunteering can contact our Regional Manager, Carole at Carole.demars@lssmn.org or by phone at 218-277-0524.
- The Easter Appeal for the NWMN Synod is underway! The money raised will be split evenly between our global companion the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church of India's work addressing homelessness and Lutheran World Relief's work toward flood recovery and resilience along the border between India and Nepal. Bygland and Fisher churches have each committed \$175 to the appeal. We invite members of the congregations to give gifts designated "Easter Appeal". Our gifts will be given at Synod Assembly, May 22. Let's celebrate Easter by serving those in need!
- **Those 16 years and older are eligible to get their COVID-19 shot.** Contact Polk County Health at [co.polk.us/191/Public Health](http://co.polk.us/191/Public%20Health), 218-281-3385, or your healthcare provider to schedule an appointment.

GOSPEL MESSAGE

May 9, 2021

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Eternal, Unconditional,
and Unchanging



To abide is to put down roots: to dwell in the same location and with the same

people for the long term. Unlike in Jesus' time, today few of us live in the same place in which we were born. Families are routinely scattered across the country and around the world. Yet Jesus invites us, "Abide in my love" (John 15:9). While so much else in our lives seems impermanent, Jesus' love is eternal, unconditional, and unchanging.

In today's gospel, Jesus is on his way to the cross. Pressed for time and filled with urgency, he can convey only the most important message. Of all the subjects he has explored during his ministry, he chooses to emphasize that which matters most: his own love. Jesus knows that love is eternal, that it transcends death and the grave. He knows that love is essential, that it must be at the core of our being. He knows that love is the embodiment of all his teachings, healings, and ministry.

Jesus knows that Judas has already betrayed him. He knows that shortly, Peter will deny him. In preaching love, he shows us that the sort of love he has for each of us is stronger than our own very human shortcomings—and that his love for us, and for his disciples, is forever. As followers of Jesus, we are charged with loving one another with the unconditional, eternal love that he has for us. In a world of change, such a responsibility is challenging, yet living out that challenge is what gives our lives purpose.

The secret to love is that it puts others first. Love is the only emotion that can defeat our instinctive self-centeredness. In charging us to love one another, Jesus issues an invitation to be awake and aware, to see others as beloved children of God, and to reflect divine love back onto everyone we encounter. In this way, Jesus lives in each of us.

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