

**The Sixth Sunday of Easter
May 17, 2020**

Worship service prepared by Pastor Michael Poellet and King of Glory Lutheran Church

Liturgy & Homily: Pastor Michael Poellet

Worship Assistant: Pamela Giles

Readings & Prayers: Brian Hogan

Musician (Prelude & Postlude): Bonnie Semenoff

GREETING

Pastor: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

People: **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Pastor: The grace and peace of our risen Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

People: **And also with you**

Hymn of Praise “Now The Feast and Celebration”

**Now the feast and celebration, all of creation sings for joy
to the God of life and love and freedom: praise and glory for evermore!**

1. Now is the feast of the Lamb once slain, whose blood has freed and united us to be one great people of God.

**Now the feast and celebration, all of creation sings for joy
to the God of life and love and freedom: praise and glory for evermore!**

2. Power and riches, wisdom and might, all honor and glory to Christ for ever.

**Now the feast and celebration, all of creation sings for joy
to the God of life and love and freedom: praise and glory for evermore!**

3. For God has come to dwell with us, to make us people of God; to make all things new.

**Now the feast and celebration, all of creation sings for joy
to the God of life and love and freedom: praise and glory for evermore!**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

Acts 17:22-31

22 Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious

you are in every way.

23 For 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.

24 The 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,

25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things.

26 From 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,

27 so 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.

28 For '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.'

29 Since 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.

30 While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent,

31 because 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."

Psalm 66:8-20

8 Bless our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard,

9 who has kept us among the living, and has not let our feet slip.

10 For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried.

11 You brought us into the net; you laid burdens on our backs;

12 you let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; yet you have brought us out to a spacious place.

13 I will come into your house with burnt offerings; I will pay you my vows,

14 those that my lips uttered and my mouth promised when I was in trouble.

15 I will offer to you burnt offerings of fatlings, with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams; I will make an offering of bulls and goats. Selah

16 Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for me.

17 I cried aloud to him, and he was extolled with my tongue.

18 If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

19 But truly God has listened; he has given heed to the words of my prayer.

20 Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me.

1 Peter 3:13-22

13 Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good?

14 But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated,

15 but 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;

16 yet 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.

17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil.

18 For 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,

19 in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison,

20 who 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.

21 And 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,

22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Gospel: John 14: 15-21

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

‘If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This 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.

‘I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They 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

SERMON by Pastor Michael Poellet

Michael to the seven ELCIC churches that are in Saskatoon: “Grace to you and peace from the one who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (Revelation 1:4-6)

Ever since that first meeting of members from the ELCIC congregations on June 10, 2018 I have thought it serendipitous that we are seven, the number of churches addressed in the book of Revelation. But much more importantly I have always understood our coming together as the work of the Spirit, the Advocate, dwelling in us just as Jesus promised in our Gospel reading: “God will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever [who] abides with you, and who will be in you forever.” So my greeting borrowed from Revelation is not meant to be brazen or audacious, but to recognize Christ's promise that the Spirit is dwelling in the church at Good Shepherd and in the church at Redeemer and in the church at Augustana and in the church

at Zion and in the church at Trinity and in the church at Resurrection and in the church at King of Glory. I want to stress this point because the Spirit is first of all a communal promise, then a promise to those individuals in the community. Every explicit reference to the Spirit in John chapters 14 to 17 refers to the gift of the Spirit given to the community; the pronoun “you” in our Gospel reading is plural, not singular.

Given this recognition we can ask with Peter in our second reading, “Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good?” Well, duh, Peter, how about a COVID-19 pandemic. Openness to a new and different future seems to be one of despair more than promise. It is not a future that seems to be filled with what is good, but a future that promises continued challenges and intensifies our own fears, insecurities, and confusion. The gradual re-opening of our future to a new normal sounds more ominous than optimistic. We are like those orphan oil wells that dot the prairies. The life and love and hope and vitality have been pumped out of us; we are drained, empty. All that is left is a little escaping methane, we are farting our lives away.

Into this situation comes a powerful promise made to disciples who were afraid, confused, insecure, challenged, and uncertain about their future. Into our situation comes a powerful promise made to us and our churches who are afraid, confused, insecure, challenged, and uncertain about our future as we gradually re-open our homes, our communities, our lives. Jesus' word of invitation to us is to open up that promise for us, to re-open our lives and the faith community to the Spirit.

Jesus uses a very specific word to name the Spirit – Paraclete. Paraclete literally means “the one who is alongside you.” It is a courtroom term; its Latin translation is “advocatus,” advocate. The advocate is the one, who when you go to trial, stands alongside you to provide helpful and encouraging testimony and support. Thus, more generally, the advocate is the one who stands up for you, intercedes for you, the one who is there especially in critical situations to help. The advocate is the one whose got our back.

The Spirit is our Advocate. But be careful. Here we often make a wrong turn in interpreting the work of our Advocate. All too often we mistakenly think the Spirit intercedes for us before God. Somehow the Spirit advocates for us, stands up for us, to persuade God to love us, to care about us, to forgive us, to be with us. If we think this, we've got it all backwards. Jesus' death and resurrection is the sure and certain witness that God does love us, care about us, forgive us. The Spirit intercedes on Christ's behalf before us and before the world that God is with us and for us. The Advocate works to persuade us that God loves us, has not abandoned us, has not left us for orphans.

“I will give you another Advocate to be with you forever.” This is Christ's way of practicing home sheltering. Jesus' physical distancing, his ascension, is not a distancing from his love, his life. The Spirit is the one abiding, dwelling, in us, aiding us, helping us, encouraging us, comforting us that we are God's beloved ones, we are the sheep for whom Christ is our good shepherd. The Spirit is the one who testifies that Christ is the centre of our lives and advocates that it is no longer you who live, but Christ who lives in you.

Why do we need this Advocate? Because that identity of God's beloved ones is so hard to hold onto, so difficult to maintain, so incredulous to believe it is really ours, really true, really certain

when we are stressed, anxious, challenged, confused, frustrated, impatient, and unsure about our future. A future where the new normal doesn't sound normal at all, but as fragile as egg shells, egg shells that already have cracks in them.

But the Spirit not only witnesses of God's love for us and enables us, encourages us, empowers us to face all the challenges that lie in the present and in the future. There is even more. The Spirit, the Advocate, creates the possibility that we can carry to others the same kind of loving advocacy God through Christ has shown to us. We, too, because of the Spirit living in us are a cohort of advocates, a legion of disciples helping, comforting, encouraging, consoling, praying, lifting up others.

We are not to forget that Jesus is doing two things for his disciples on this Thursday evening before his death, a time when death is palpable. He is exhorting his disciples to keep his commandments. Let's get grammatical. The Greek word "ean" with a subjunctive verb signifies an enabling action. It is not a conditional clause. Jesus is not saying "If you really love me, then I'll know it because you did what I told you to do." No, no, no. Jesus is saying, "When you love me you will be observing my commands." Jesus is not questioning his disciples' love for him, he is assuming it. The Spirit advocates two things: first, let yourselves be loved by God, and second let that love which we already have within us be directed outward toward loving others.

No one can hope to love God or to love others apart from the advocacy, help, comfort, and encouragement of the Spirit. You see, God tried the command thing before. God tried to keep it simple – just the basics. In fact, God mused, "Let's give people as many commandments as they have fingers – that will be easy to keep track of. So, keep these ten commandments." Seems simple enough. But, alas, on our own, faced with our fears, insecurities, uncertainties, and a threatened sense of self and our future, we fall far short of keeping even one of them, let alone ten. "Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good?" Everyone and everything. Doing good comes in a far distant second, because no one has got my back, no one is my Advocate. I am abandoned, orphaned; I am alone.

But we are not alone. We are not abandoned, languishing in law. We have the Spirit, the Advocate, who abides in us so that we can live in love – God's love for us and now that love shown by us and directed through us for others.

We are living during an anxiety-producing, stressful, frustrating time. A time of loss for many – loss of income, loss of work, loss of connection with others, loss of health, loss of life. But it is not a time of loss of love. Out of this abiding resource of being loved by God, out of this deep well of faith-gifted belovedness, comes immediately and almost spontaneously the love for one another and for the world. The receiving of Christ's love for us as dramatized in the washing of the disciples' feet and unforgettably confirmed by his death on a cross, now enables the living giving of a fruitful love for others. Our love for one another comes out of Christ's love for us. Loving others is not the condition we must meet in order to receive God's love, or God's Spirit. The Spirit is a promise, a promise kept, not a condition to be met.

God sends the Spirit, the Advocate of love, to engage us in words and works of love. Words of consolation and encouragement, prayer, promise and hope. Works of generosity, compassion,

self-sacrifice and service. To keep Christ's encouragement to love can be exhilarating and (let's be honest) most times exhausting, exhausting physically, mentally, spiritually. However, we undertake none of these words and works of love alone. We have nothing less than the very Spirit of God, the Spirit of the resurrected and living Christ, the Advocate, who makes alive Christ's promises and presence, who evidences the transforming love of God always, already happening in the lives of people around us and in our lives, who transforms our desperate questioning into deep-seated love. The Spirit is the one who advocates, who testifies, that because Christ lives, we also will live.

“...and I heard behind me a loud voice saying, 'Write in a [sermon] what you see and send it to the seven churches'...” (Revelation 1:11)

Amen.

Hymn of the Day “Love divine, all loves excelling”

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 every trembling heart.
2. Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit;
Let us find that second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.
3. Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Nevermore Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.
4. Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation

Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in Heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

TODAY IN OUR PRAYERS

Caron Parke, a member of Augustana, has died. Prayers for children Melissa and Mark and grandchildren.

For CHEP whose staff and volunteers are working hard to provide food security for those who are most vulnerable in our city: children, seniors, and those with lower incomes.

We remember the missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada, the people of Syria, Iraq, Iran, Ukraine, Sudan, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Turkey, Yemen, Venezuela, Somalia, Libya, Hong Kong, the Palestinians and Israelis, the Rohingya Muslim refugees, all at the Mexico/United States border seeking refuge, the people of Haiti suffering from natural and political disasters, the people of the Bahamas suffering from hurricanes, the victims, families, and communities grieving the tragic shootings in Nova Scotia, those in Fort McMurray and the Peace River region recovering from flooding and the people of Kenya devastated by flooding, the victims and families of the Armed Forces helicopter crash, and those throughout the world, in Canada, in our province, and in our community threatened by the coronavirus.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE OF FAITH

[The congregational response after each petition is: "COMPLETE YOUR NEW CREATION."]

Petitioner: As we celebrate the joy of the resurrection, let us pray for God's continuing work of new creation in the life of the Church, for the peace and well-being of the world, and wherever brokenness and death oppose God's abundant life, saying, "Hear us, O God of life," and responding, "Complete your new creation."

Petitioner: God of life, through the resurrection of Jesus you make all things new. We pray for all who hunger for the fruit of the Spirit, for all who feel spiritually empty, for all estranged from you. Send your Spirit to work among us creatively and redemptively to lead us into a richer, deeper meaning of living life in Christ and providing us with a love that overcomes all worry and fear. Hear us, O God of life...

Petitioner: God of all creation, you have given us in baptism the waters of healing and of life. In creation you have provided water to sustain all life. We pray for this fragile earth, for all creatures that creep or run, swim or fly, that land, water, and air will be preserved and restored to nourish all life. Hear us, O God of life...

Petitioner: God of promise, through your Word and font and table you call us into a love that exceeds our understanding or desire. We pray that through your renewing way of forgiveness, you would make your people into a church which abides in Christ's love and embodies Christ's perfect love in an imperfect world. Hear us, O God of life...

Petitioner: God of healing, we pray for those who wait for relief from their burdens, anxieties, and griefs, and for those who long for their health to be restored. We remember especially before you the family of Caron Parke, her children, Melissa and Mark, and her grandchildren. Comfort them in their mourning and hold before them Christ's promise that because I live you also will live. May all find comfort in the abiding presence of Jesus. Hear us, O God of life...

Petitioner: God of peace, you abide with the nations. Reveal your truth, so that nations and peoples govern in peace and advocate for justice and safety. While we abide securely within your love, hear the cries for justice and compassion of our sisters and brothers throughout the world who are broken and helpless, and who suffer in the face of oppression, persecution, and violence. Hear us, O God of life...

Petitioner: God of hope, give us times of refreshment and peace in the course of this busy life. Protect and keep safe all who travel this long weekend and in the coming summer months. Help us to use our leisure to rebuild our bodies and renew our minds that we may be opened to the goodness of your creation and well rested for our continuing service to you. Hear us, O God of life...

Petitioner: *Generous God*, fill us with compassion and concern for others, young and old, that we may look after one another in these challenging days. Bring healing to those who are sick with the virus and be with their families. Comfort the family and friends of those who have died. Strengthen and protect all medical professionals caring for the sick and all who work in our medical and health care facilities. Provide perseverance and vitality to those at CHEP whose staff and volunteers are working hard to provide food security for those who are most vulnerable in our city: children, seniors, and those with lower incomes. Give wisdom to leaders in healthcare and governance that they may make the right decisions for the well-being of people. We pray in gratitude for all those in our country who will continue to work in the days ahead in so many fields of life for the sake of us all. Bless them and keep them safe. *O God of creation and life*, we place ourselves in your protection. May the mantle of your peace enfold us this day and tomorrow. Hear us, O God of life ...

Petitioner: God of mission, you have redeemed and anointed your people through baptism and united us in the death and resurrection of Jesus for a life-giving mission. Your resurrection creates new ways to live and in your Spirit vision abounds. Peter and Paul had a vision of what to do. John had a vision of what will be. Give us vision of imagination and understanding to witness to life in you, to love, and to serve our community. Hear us, O God of life...

Petitioner: Sustaining God, as you bring life even out of death, hear our call for your abundant life, make our prayers part of your new creation, and guide us with the hope of joy in your presence for the sake of the crucified and risen one, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Let us pray with confidence in the words our Saviour gave us:

**People: Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The God of life, who has called you to eternal life in Christ,
lift you up and restore you to wholeness.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Jesus Christ, the Living Word,
bless you and send you to be his witnesses.

People: Amen.

Pastor: God the Holy Spirit, who renews the whole earth,
refresh, restore, support, and strengthen you this day and always.

People: Amen.

Closing Hymn “Go, My Children, With My Blessing”

Go, my children, with my blessing, Never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you; You are my own.
In my love’s baptismal river
I have made you mine forever.
Go, my children, with my blessing – You are my own.

Go, my children, sins forgiven, At peace and pure.
Here you learned how much I love you, What I can cure.
Here you heard my dear Son’s story;
Here you touched him, saw his glory.
Go, my children, sins forgiven, At peace and pure.

Go, my children, fed and nourished, Closer to me;

Grow in love and love by serving, Joyful and free.
Here my Spirit's power filled you;
Here his tender comfort stilled you.
Go, my children, fed and nourished, Joyful and free.

I the Lord will bless and keep you And give you peace;
I the Lord will smile upon you And give you peace;
I the Lord will be your Father,
Savior, Comforter, and Brother.
Go, my children; I will keep you And give you peace.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSAL

Worship Assistant: Alleluia! Go and tell the news that Christ is risen.

People: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The draft website for all seven ELCIC congregations in Saskatoon is now up and the address is <https://saskatoonelcic.com/> It will be used now mainly for sharing information during the pandemic.

Secretary/Treasurer position

Resurrection Lutheran Church, Saskatoon, SK 310 Lenore Drive, Saskatoon, SK S7K 6Y1

Job Purpose

As Secretary, this person ensures the efficient day-to-day operation of the church office, supports and is responsible to the Pastor and the church council.

As Treasurer, this person manages the church's financial records and payment procedures and is responsible to the Church Council.

We are looking for someone who is:

- Highly organized, with excellent planning and time management skills
- An excellent communicator both verbally and written
- Proficiency in the use of software programs such as: Microsoft Office and QuickBooks
- Independent and team worker
- Punctual and maintains confidentiality

Education and Experience:

- Minimum High School Diploma
- Post secondary education or 2 years experience in business, computers and office management is an asset

Job Type:

- Part-time, 9AM to 3 PM Monday to Thursday, Friday: 9AM to noon.
- Pension and benefits.

Anticipated start time: June 15, 2020

Applications are due by June 1, 2020 to Judy Prociuk, email: judyp1@sasktel.net

Music & credit: Marty Haugen, Michael Kevane, Chapel of the Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church