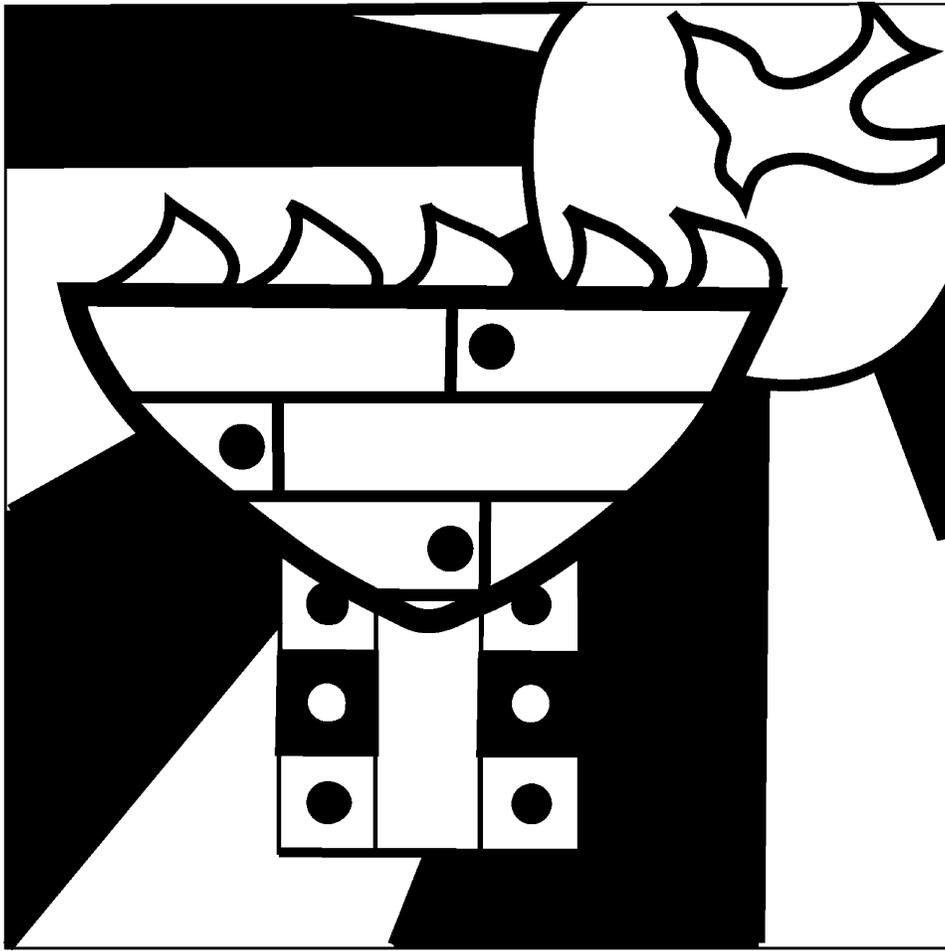


6th Sunday of Easter

May 17, 2020



1812 North Highland Avenue

Clearwater, Florida 33755

Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

727-446-5026

office@GraceCLW.com

Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! Jesus does not abandon his followers. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus comes to abide with his disciples of every generation. As Pentecost draws near, we are reminded that the risen Christ dwells in us as the Spirit of truth. We receive this Spirit in baptism and pray that in our gathering around the Lord's table the Spirit will transform us to be the body of the risen Christ in the world.

This is a special bulletin for Grace Lutheran Church. We have closed the Sanctuary to the general public amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, and so for Easter the service will be pre-recorded from the Sanctuary. This bulletin is designed to be used at home by anyone who is baptized serving as the Worship Leader. If you use this bulletin for worship, either by itself or alongside our service on YouTube, please fill out the Attendance Record Form on our website: GraceCLW.com

SERVICE OF THE WORD

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Worship Leader: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Congregation: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Worship Leader: 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.

Water may be poured into the font as the worship leader gives thanks.

Worship Leader: We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning 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. We praise you for your salvation through water, for the water in this font, 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.

Congregation: Amen.

GATHERING SONG

Baptized in Water



1 Bap - tized in wa - ter, sealed by the Spir - it, cleansed by the
2 Bap - tized in wa - ter, sealed by the Spir - it, dead in the
3 Bap - tized in wa - ter, sealed by the Spir - it, marked with the



blood of Christ our king: heirs of sal - va - tion, trust - ing his
tomb with Christ our king: one with his ris - ing, freed and for -
sign of Christ our king: born of the Spir - it, we are God's



prom - ise, faith - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.
giv - en, thank - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.
chil - dren; joy - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.

Text: Michael Saward, b. 1932

Music: BUNESSAN, Gaelic tune

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APOSTOLIC GREETING

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

Congregation: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Worship Leader: Let us pray together the Prayer of the Day.

Congregation: 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.

FIRST READING

Acts 17:22-31

Introduction to the Lesson: *In Athens, Paul faces the challenge of proclaiming the gospel to Greeks who know nothing of either Jewish or Christian tradition. He proclaims that the “unknown god” whom they worship is the true Lord of heaven and earth who will judge the world with justice through Jesus, whom God has raised from the dead.*

Reader: 22Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. 23For 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. 24The 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, 25nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. 26From 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, 27so 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. 28For ‘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.’

29Since 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. 30While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31because 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.”

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 66:8-20

The psalm for the day is read responsively.

Reader: ⁸Bless our God, you peoples;
let the sound of praise be heard.

**⁹Our God has kept us among the living
and has not allowed our feet to slip.**

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

¹¹**You brought us into the net;
you laid heavy burdens upon our backs.**

¹²You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water,
but you brought us out into a place of refreshment.

¹³**I will enter your house with burnt offerings
and will pay you my vows—**

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

¹⁵**I will offer you burnt offerings of fatlings with the smoke of rams;
I will give you oxen and goats.**

¹⁶Come and listen, all you who believe,
and I will tell you what God has done for me.

¹⁷**I called out to God with my mouth,
and praised the Lord with my tongue.**

¹⁸If I had cherished evil in my heart,
the Lord would not have heard me;

¹⁹**but in truth God has heard me
and has attended to the sound of my prayer.**

²⁰Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer,
nor withheld unfailing love from me.

SECOND READING

1 Peter 3:13-22

Introduction to the Lesson: *The author of 1 Peter encourages Christians to remain faithful even in the face of defamation and persecution. In baptism we are made clean to act in accordance with what is right.*

Reader: ¹³Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? ¹⁴But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, ¹⁵but 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; ¹⁶yet 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. ¹⁷For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. ¹⁸For 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

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

I'll Not Turn Away

It's all about the relationship of love. Love is the first and the greatest of commandments, according to Jesus. This is the gospel of the Lord!

The two men seemed dissimilar in almost every way: their color, their age, their education and careers, their families and sexuality, the worlds they knew and the lives they had lived. All of it registered as a natural, albeit unconsidered, divide. When circumstances they could never have anticipated brought them together, the two began to accompany one another through years of capsized lives. They walked side by side in body and spirit, carrying along one another's stories, fears, losses, regrets, and joys, each daring to let them slip into his heart. Amid the ebb and flow of seasons, the unlikely companions discovered in one another stories that were their own. Something of each of them was in the other.

Call this grace: the wretched demons of loneliness that had haunted both men stumbled, adrift in the wake of the companions' fellowship.

Still, they knew that parting was ahead. The days of walking, conversing, and trusting the companionship would soon come to an end. So they began to speak of their impending separation in this way: "This is my promise: I'll see you on the other side of this." It was repeated with other words, which always meant "I will not turn away from you." Call this the gospel story.

Grace is found in mystery, when strange circumstances confound expectations. Love is found in experience, when trust is discovered and nurtured. In a form we are not looking for, another—the Advocate, Comforter, Counselor, Spirit—will come to us.

"I will not leave you orphaned," says Jesus. "I am coming to you" (John 14:18). It's all about the relationship of love.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise



1 Im - mor - tal, in - vis - i - ble, God on - ly wise,
4 Thou reign - est in glo - ry; thou dwell - est in light;



in light in - ac - ces - si - ble hid from our eyes,
thine an - gels a - dore thee, all veil - ing their sight;

most bless - ed, most glo - rious, the An - cient of Days,
 all laud we would ren - der; oh, help us to see

al - might - y, vic - to - rious, thy great name we praise!
 'tis on - ly the splen - dor of light hid - eth thee!

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Prayer Leader: Abiding God, you have revealed yourself to us in the form of your Son, Jesus Christ. Embolden your church, as your followers, to reveal your love to everyone in our speaking and in our living. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: You are the creator of heaven and earth. Revitalize the health of oceans, rivers, lakes, springs, glaciers, and other bodies of water that give life to your creatures. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: You call all people of the world your children. Judge the nations justly, show mercy to the oppressed, and speak truth to power through your prophets. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: You come near to us when we are lost, and you hear our distress. We pray for those who suffer in any way (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Your commands are good and merciful. Give us courage to take hold of our baptismal promises to work for justice, advocate for the voiceless, and free the oppressed and imprisoned in body, mind, or spirit. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Prayer Leader: You remain with us always, O God, and your kingdom has no end. We remember the saints who have gone before us (*especially*). Unite us forever in your final victory over death. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

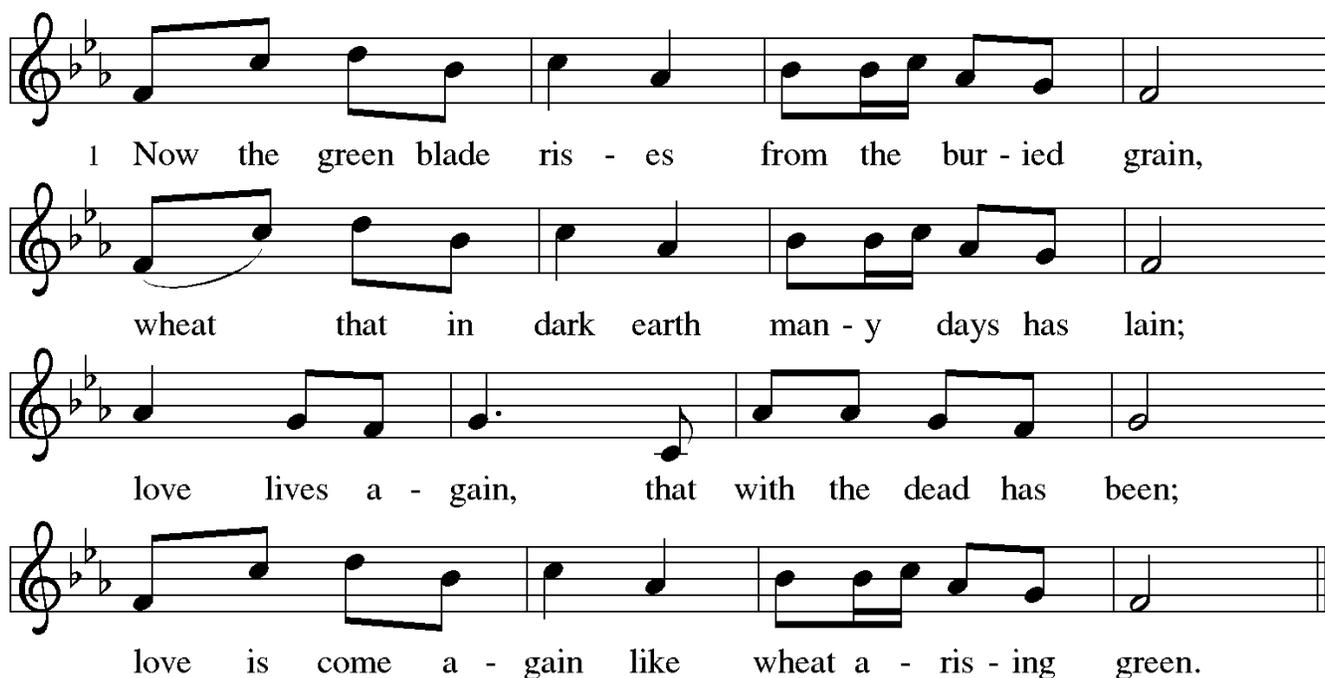
With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

OFFERING

*Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at GraceCLW.com (look for the “Donate” button), or by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times. **You can also fill out your attendance form on our website.***

OFFERTORY



1 Now the green blade ris - es from the bur - ied grain,
wheat that in dark earth man - y days has lain;
love lives a - gain, that with the dead has been;
love is come a - gain like wheat a - ris - ing green.

Text: John MacLeod Campbell Crum, 1872–1958

Music: NOËL NOUVELET, French carol

Text from *Oxford Book of Carols*, © Oxford University Press 1928. All rights reserved.

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OFFERING PRAYER

Prayer Leader: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Worship Leader: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

Congregation: 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.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Worship Leader: Let us pray. O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

Congregation: Amen.

BLESSING

Worship Leader: 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.

Congregation: Amen.

SENDING SONG

Let All Things Now Living



1 Let all things now liv - ing a song of thanks - giv - ing to
2 God rules all the forc - es: the stars in their cours - es and



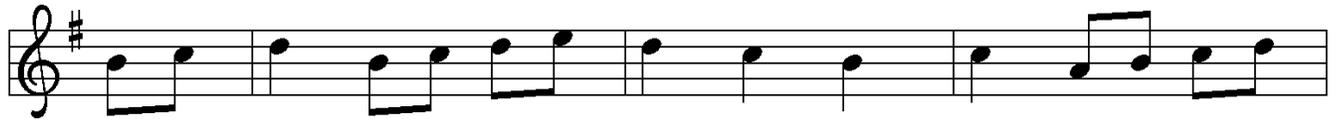
God the cre - a - tor tri - um - phant - ly raise,
sun in its or - bit o - be - dient - ly shine;



who fash - ioned and made us, pro - tect - ed and stayed us, who
the hills and the moun - tains, the riv - ers and foun - tains, the



still guides us on to the end of our days.
deeps of the ocean proclaim God di - vine.



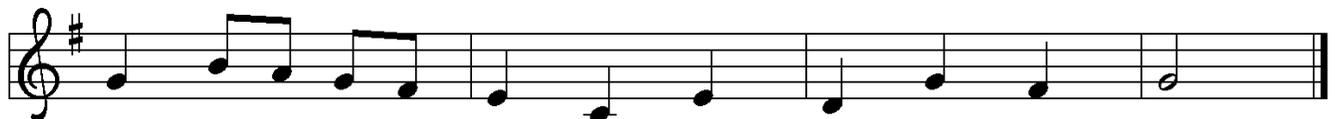
God's ban - ners are o'er us, God's light goes be -
We too should be voic - ing our love and re -



fore us, a pil - lar of fire shin - ing forth in the night,
joic - ing; with glad ad - o - ra - tion a song let us raise



till shad - ows have van - ished and dark - ness is ban - ished, as
till all things now liv - ing u - nite in thanks - giv - ing: "To



for - ward we trav - el from light in - to light.
God in the high - est, ho - san - na and praise!"

Text: Katherine K. Davis, 1892–1980, alt.
Music: THE ASH GROVE, Welsh folk tune
Text © 1939, 1966 E. C. Schirmer Music Company.

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DISMISSAL

Worship Leader: Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now our service of worship has ended, and our service to the world begins! Christ is risen, just as he said. Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Congregation: Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

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