

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

A Service of the Word

*May 10, 2020**



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

85 E. Brandt Boulevard

Landisville, PA

*United in Christ,
we are called to love and serve.*

[*Service may be viewed on Zion's Restricted YouTube or
Zion's Website (zionhempfield.net)]

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(ELW refers to the red *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* Book)

(WOV refers to the *With One Voice* Hymnal)

INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S SERVICE

P: Alleluia, Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

In the name of Christ, welcome to worship on the Fifth Sunday of Easter. Today we hear Jesus talking with his disciples. Let his words instill hope and trust into your lives as we continue to live in a world that has been changed almost overnight, been disrupted, and now challenges us in ways we never expected. Let us, together as a united body, accept Jesus' words of hope and pray unceasingly as we gradually move forward to wholeness.

Today is also Mother's Day. So Happy Mother's Day to all you mothers out there. But I need to be honest with you. Mother's Day is a tough day to stand in front of a congregation (well, you know what I mean) and express all sorts of lovely, endearing words. And I say that because, in truth, there are those who have had less than positive relationships with their mothers, and Mother's Day triggers feelings of hurt and sadness.

So, considering that, let me share two Mother's Day greetings that should be neutral enough and not trigger feelings of sadness or hurt. Both are on 2020 Mother's Day gift mugs.

Greeting 1: *(From Child to Mother)* Dear Mom, Thanks for putting up with a bratty, spoiled, ungrateful, messy child like my sibling. Love, Your Favorite ♥

Greeting 2: *(From Mother to Child)* **When a Mom says, "What?"**
It's not because she didn't hear you. She's giving you a chance to change what you said to her!

And now, let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship as the Prelude is played.

PRELUDE

The Call

R. Vaughan Williams

† THE GATHERING †

*The Holy Spirit gathers us in unity on the first day of the week,
the day of Christ's resurrection.*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Almighty God, we confess that we are often swept up in the tide of our generation. We have failed to be your holy people, set apart for your divine purpose. We live more in apathy of fatalism than in the passion of hope. We are moved more by private ambition than by concern for social justice. We dream more of privilege and benefits than of service and sacrifice. We speak in your name without nourishing our souls and without relying on your grace. Help us to make room in our hearts and lives for you and all people. Amen.

Brief silence.

Gracious God, we hear the Good News! Jesus Christ carried our sins to the cross. By his wounds we are healed and have been reshaped into his image. In Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN

Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life

ELW 816

Come, my way, my truth, my life:

Such a way as give us breath;

Such a truth as end all strife;

Such a life as killeth death.

Come, my light, my feast, my strength:

Such a light as shows a feast,

Such a feast as mends in length;

Such a strength as makes his guest.

Come, my joy, my love, my heart:

Such a joy as none can move;

Such a love as none can part;

Such a heart as joys in love.

GREETING

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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his commandments, and to share his risen life with all the world, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

† **THE WORD** †

God speaks to us in Scriptures read, sung, and preached.

FIRST READING

Acts 7:55-60

A: A reading from Acts 7.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, [Stephen] gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died.

A: The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

1 Peter 2:2-10

A: A reading from 1 Peter.

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

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God’s sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture: “See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner,” and “A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall.” 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, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim

the mighty acts 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.

A: The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING

John 14:1-14

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 14th chapter.
Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. 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, so that where I am, there you may be also.

And you know the way to the place 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 know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? 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; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.

Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

P: So, let me ask you: Which of God's commandments, and I'm not just restricting that to the Ten commandments, would you say is the most difficult for you to obey? How about "*Do not lie*"? After all, when you're in a tight spot and you can twist the truth just a little, it seems harmless doesn't it? ... or how about "*Do not to covet*" since we live in such a materialistic society. If somebody you know gets richer or achieves a status you want, it's hard not to be jealous. Isn't that right? Or how about "*Do not give false testimony*" or "*Do not misuse the name of the Lord your God*"?

The fact is there are so many difficult commandments, and I think one of the hardest commandments to obey is the one we hear in today's Gospel story: "*Do not let your heart be troubled*" (or worried, or anxious, or fearful ... whichever word you want to use). The truth is, there's so much to be troubled about, particularly in today's world: COVID-19 with more than 3.6 million cases worldwide and the cause of more than 250,000 deaths, economic insecurity, falling stock markets, political corruption, crime, and violence. (If you weren't feeling troubled before I started this sermon, you may be by now.) On top of national and international troubles, there are many "what if?" scenarios. What if you get cancer; if you're in an accident; your spouse leaves you; one of your children dies; or you lose your job? All this and more can bring on heart trouble.

Your worry, fear, and anxiety may be intensely personal. You may be a single mother wondering how to be a good parent and provider. You may be a parent or a grandparent agonizing over the rebellious behavior of your children or grandchildren. Maybe you're barely making ends meet and feeling overwhelmed with your financial obligations. Or maybe you're dealing with chronic health problems and need to weigh various treatment options.

If your heart *is* troubled and you're feeling confused, concerned, and overwhelmed, you're in good company. You see, Jesus' disciples felt the same way. At the ripe young age of 33, their Lord was leaving them, and their hearts were heavy and deeply troubled. Fortunately, Jesus had some heart-to-heart words for them. He said to them and to us: "*Believing leads to seeing.*"

Right before Jesus went to the cross, he said to his disciples: "*Do not let your hearts be troubled.*" In other words, "Stop being troubled; stop worrying; don't let fear overwhelm you." Of course, if you're like me, you're expecting Jesus to provide

the cure for this heart trouble. And you know what? He does! He says: “*Believe in God, believe also in me.*” That’s it ... believe ... no more, no less ... that’s what we need to do! But Jesus knows that many who believe in him struggle to believe in him during day-to-day living. As a result, many of us suffer unnecessarily with a troubled heart. So Jesus says: You must believe I will never leave you; I will never stop praying for you; I have sympathy for you; believe in the comfort of the Holy Spirit that I give to each of you. When, not if, you have a troubled heart, all you need to do is believe that Jesus will sustain you. Believe that he has left us and has already prepared a dwelling place for each of us in heaven, and through his death, resurrection, and ascension the way to those dwelling places is quite clear ... even if we don’t understand it yet.

The reality of our heavenly home can help guard us from having a troubled heart. No matter how badly things may be going in your life, Jesus has promised us a glorious eternity. When we plan vacations, do we just drive off with no prior planning? Probably not! We get brochures, we talk to friends, we examine maps, and pack our bags. This week when you think about your upcoming weekend, or your future, think about your heavenly home. Discipline your minds to ponder the wonder of heaven. Although this is difficult to do, it will help you with that troubled heart.

The guarantee of heaven is confirmed by Jesus’ promise: *If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.* In our fallen world, we can gain relief for our troubled hearts from the fact that Jesus is going to take us to be with him. Remember that promise. It may just be what you need to carry you through this tough and scary time we are currently living in. You see, Jesus expects us to trust him when adversity comes into our lives. He’s made a promise to “be with us” no matter what, forever and ever.

What I love most about today’s gospel story is that in the midst of a discussion of heart trouble and anxiety is hearing John and Jesus saying: As difficult as your troubles and trials are right now, please know that the church is going to accomplish God’s purposes. If you’re feeling discouraged and overwhelmed, observe the kingdom work of the church. The church is touching lives not only in this county, but in our country and throughout the world. When everything that could go wrong seems to be going wrong and your heart is hurting, please know that the gates of hell will not prevail against the church and God’s kingdom will rise victorious. As difficult as your individual heart problems may be, they are momentary. God

assures you that as you take your eyes off your own troubles and focus on Christ's work in his church, you will be strengthened. Believing leads to seeing ... specifically seeing God work in and through you and his people.

What do you want God to accomplish in and through you and Zion for the sake of his kingdom? What are the "greater works" you want God to bring about? Do you have the vision to dream big dreams for him even during a crisis? Do you have faith to pursue God-sized goals? If so, God is yearning to answer your prayers because they are about his kingdom and his glory.

It's been said, "Confession is good for the soul, but bad for the reputation." True as that may be, I'm here to tell you that I understand to some degree what it's like to experience heart trouble. Let me just share with you on a very personal level what I often feel like when I'm not the pastor I want to be. There are times when I feel as though I don't love Christ like Christ loves me. This hurts me deeply ... my heart becomes troubled. As a pastor, there are times when I'm not the spiritual leader I feel I need to be for all of you ... that I'm losing opportunities to influence you in positive, God-like ways. There are times when the task of pastoring can be overwhelming. At times I feel like I'm failing in the goal of bringing people to Christ ... especially now when I physically can't be with you during sickness and times of stress and fear.

I share these things with you not to scare you, but for a special reason. I want you to know that I do understand some of the heart trouble many of you feel. What gets me through these difficult times, and I hope it's the same for you, is what God is doing in the world in and through his church even when we feel stuck in our homes because of a virus we don't understand.

May you and I take our heart troubles to the Savior of the world and pray that he will help us take our eyes off our concerns and focus on God's work and the work of his people.

Remember, believing in the promises Christ has proclaimed leads us to see more clearly and more deeply ... it strengthens us ... and fills our hearts with a sense of warmth and comfort ... making our hearts a home for Christ.

And to that I say, "Thanks be to God. Amen."

(Chorus)

Alleluia, Alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord,
Alleluia, Alleluia! Give praise to His name!

(Verse 1)

Jesus is Lord of all the earth.
He is the King of creation.

(Chorus)

Alleluia, Alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord,
Alleluia, Alleluia! Give praise to His name!

(Verse 2)

Spread the good news o'er all the earth;
Jesus had died and has risen.

(Chorus)

Alleluia, Alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord,
Alleluia, Alleluia! Give praise to His name!

(Verse 3)

We have been crucified with Christ.
Now we shall live forever.

(Chorus)

Alleluia, Alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord,
Alleluia, Alleluia! Give praise to His name!

(Verse 4)

God had proclaimed the just reward:
Life for all people, alleluia.

(Chorus)

Alleluia, Alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord,
Alleluia, Alleluia! Give praise to His name!

(Verse 5)

Come let us praise the living God,
Joyfully sing to our Savior.

(Chorus)

Alleluia, Alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord,
Alleluia, Alleluia! Give praise to His name!

NICENE CREED

P: We profess our faith together.

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; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. 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

A: Let us pray.

Brief silence.

We give you thanks, O Lord, that even though our hearts may be troubled or restless, you prepare a place for us and continue to be in relationship with us ... making our hearts your home.

As we celebrate Mother's Day, O Lord, we give thanks for mothers the world over. We give thanks for all those who have nurtured and cared for us, remembering especially, birth mothers, adoptive mothers, surrogate mothers, aunts, grandmothers, teachers, neighbors and all women who have shared their faith with us.

We pray for those mothers who have been hurt, disillusioned, or disappointed in their role as mothers. We pray for those who have been denied a longed-for chance at motherhood, and for those whose years of mothering have been cut short by the loss of a child.

We give you thanks, O Lord, that even today we can experience a foretaste of your eternal home by following your commands and by reaching out in love to others. Help us to remember in times of doubt and uncertainty, during good times and bad, that you are always with us.

We give you thanks, O Lord that you called us to walk with you. Guide us in ways that we may reveal your truth and lead others to the fullness of life in you. Lead us in the ways of peace during this difficult time of uncertainty, anxiety, and fear that has enveloped your world.

We pray for those who are making difficult decisions as the world continues to feel the effects of the coronavirus ... government leaders, health care leaders, and scientists who struggle to create medications to effectively combat the disease. Provide all these people with the wisdom to make sound decisions that bring hope and healing to a world in need.

We pray, O Lord, for all who need healing, hope, comfort, strength, protection, and renewed hearts. We especially pray for those who are suffering from the effects of COVID-19, those who place themselves at risk by caring for those in health care facilities, and for those who are grieving the loss of family and friends who have succumbed to the disease.

Lord, we remember, with saddened hearts, all who have died because of COVID-19. Lead them to the place that you have prepared for them and welcome them to the heavenly feast you set before all those who enter your heavenly kingdom.

O God, accept these prayers that we offer now in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior, who taught us to pray together saying ...

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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 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.

HYMN

I Love to Tell the Story

ELW 379

I love to tell the story of unseen things above,
of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love.
I love to tell the story, because I know it's true;
it satisfies my longings as nothing else would do.



Chorus

I love to tell the story; 'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

I love to tell the story; how pleasant to repeat
What seems, each time I tell it, more wonderfully sweet!

I love to tell the story, for some have never heard
The message of salvation from God's own holy word.

Chorus

I love to tell the story; 'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

I love to tell the story, for those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory, I sing the new, new song,
I'll sing the old, old story that I have loved so long.

Chorus

I love to tell the story; 'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love

† **THE SENDING** †

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

P: **A MEDITATION ON HOPE AND LOVE DURING A TIME OF STRUGGLE**
(Please join me in this special meditation.)

In a world so filled with brokenness and sorrow
It would be easy to lose ourselves in never ending grief,
To be choked by our outrage
To be paralyzed by the enormity of suffering,
To feel our hearts squeeze tight with hopelessness.

Instead, this morning, let us simply breathe together as we hold our hearts open.

Breathing in: as our hearts fill with compassion

Breathing out: as we pray for healing in our world & in our lives.

Breathing in: opening ourselves to the transforming power of love.

Breathing out: as we pray for peace in our world and in our lives.

Breathing in: as we hold hope in our hearts

Breathing out: as we pray for justice in our world and in our lives.

May we know our strength

May we be filled with courage

May our love flow from us into this world.

Breathing in: we are the prayer

Breathing out: we are the healing

Breathing in: we are the love

Breathing out: we are the peace

Breathing in: we are the hope

Breathing out: we are the justice

May we know our strength

May we be filled with courage

May our love flow from us into this world.

Amen. Let it be so!

BLESSING

P: The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make his face shine on you with grace and mercy;
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.
Amen.

P: And now, go ...
Live in peace while serving the Lord your God.
Alleluia! Amen!

POSTLUDE

Go in Peace and Serve the Lord

H. Hanson
arr. by H. Wiens

PRAYER LIST

FOR HEALING

Megan Landis

Joe Adams

Thelma Pearson

Judie Ingersoll

Lucy Davis

Bill Grove

Mary Grzybowski

Kay Crawford

Holly Hoover

Betty Stoner

Don Heartter

Janet & Harry Musselman

Ron Sahd (Friend of Dave Wise)

Wilson Pipkin (Father of Wilson Pipkin)

Jessica Graham (Granddaughter of Janet & Harry Musselman)

Loma Slike (Mother of Sue Wise)

Mike LaFatta (Son-in-law of Bill & Julia Grove)

FOR COMFORT, PEACE, STRENGTH, & SAFETY

Residents and Staff of the Phoenixville Care & Rehabilitation Center

Charlotte & George Potts

Marlin Zimmerman

Arlene Miller

Deb McCartney

Bette Geibel

Jennifer Thompson

Ted Symonds & Family

Arlene Wise (Sister-in-law of Dave Wise)

Vaun Hile (Father of Lynda Sherwood)

Jennifer Kready (Daughter of Dave & Donna Dumeyer)

FOR PROTECTION FOR MILITARY & FIRST RESPONDERS

Christopher Wright

Jonathan Hoover

Thom Whitesel

Ryan Stitzel

Doug Kautter

Justin Gorlaski

Chris Andrew

Corey Landis (Nephew of Jesse & Pat Landis)



Never doubt the power of prayer.