

May 10, 2020
Fifth Sunday of Easter
MOTHER'S DAY
WE CELEBRATE OUR MOTHERS AND ALL
WHO "MOTHERED" US IN OUR LIVES



ANNOUNCEMENTS: I pray you are all doing alright. As far as Judy Hartman can tell, no one has been hospitalized during this time of sheltering in place. Those who joined me in a Zoom Bible Study every Tuesday evening at 7 pm have enjoyed each other's company as we talked about being anxious during this time. We read what God has to say about it and we followed a study by Max Lucado. Next Tuesday we begin a new study, this time by Adam Hamilton. It's called "The Walk" and will guide us in ways to walk with Jesus. If you are interested in joining us, send me an email at gcaptain@charter.net or give me a call 660-8894. All you

need is a Bible and a notebook to jot down things. In the meantime, your Church Council will be meeting May 13 to discuss when we feel comfortable to worship in-person again; I project it will be in June sometime. Peace and blessings my brothers and sisters. Pastor Rosemary

SERVICE PRAYERS FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER:

Acts 7:55-60; Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16;

1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14.

Liturgy written by Rev. Thom Schuman

CALL TO WORSHIP:

We are God's household, crafted by the Architect of creation:

our hearts a shelter for the outcast;

our hands open to the stranger.

We are God's people, created in the divine image:

to tell others of God's love,

to offer mercy as freely as we have received it.

We are God's children, called to give of ourselves:

chosen to serve the lost and lonely,

gifted to minister to a hurting world.

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Our Way: you call us to celebrate your peace in a world which worships war; to celebrate your freedom in the face of oppression; to celebrate the seed of faith planted in the doubts of our hearts.

Our Life: you would have us celebrate the safe ground of hope emerging from the flood of our tears; celebrate those who love us in the midst of hurt and hatred; celebrate our salvation as we struggle with sin.

Our Truth: you teach us to celebrate our new life in the gift

by your grace and love through us and the lives we offer to the. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all, for continuing your offerings to the church. of the Risen Lord; to celebrate the grace of your heart which melts our fears; to celebrate that all our moments are cradled in your hands.

Our Way, our Truth, our Life,

we lift our prayers to you as we pray, saying,
(*The Lord's Prayer*)

SCRIPTURE: John 14:1-14 (CEB)

The way, the truth, and the life

14 “Don’t be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me. ² My Father’s house has room to spare. If that weren’t the case, would I have told you that I’m going to prepare a place for you? ³ When I go to prepare a place for you, I will return and take you to be with me so that where I am you will be too.

⁴ You know the way to the place I’m going.”

⁵ Thomas asked, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you have really known me, you will also know the Father. From now on you know him and have seen him.” ⁸ Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father; that will be enough for us.”

⁹ Jesus replied, “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been with you all this time? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?

¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I have spoken to you I don’t speak on my

own. The Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹ Trust me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or at least believe on account of the works themselves. ¹² I assure you that whoever believes in me will do the works that I do. They will do even greater works than these because I am going to the Father. ¹³ I will do whatever you ask for in my name, so that the Father can be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ When you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it.

MESSAGE: (I know this is a long lesson, but I include some thoughts from Rev. Fred Craddock, a renowned preacher of the past.)

This scripture text is part of Jesus’ last words to his disciples before they go to the garden where Jesus will be arrested. The themes developed in the farewell materials are not for the public but for the disciples, that is, for the church which includes us. The primary concern is not what events will soon befall Christ, but rather what will happen to his disciples after he is gone. The disciples will soon be experiencing a huge change in their lives. (I actually see parallels in **our** lives right now. When we return to our beloved church community, **we cannot** expect things to be the same as they were. Just as the disciples experienced a new life without the physical Jesus, we will discover a “**new normal**” also.

Yet, Jesus will not leave us alone and lost. In these Gospel passages we readers will find promises and commands. That may sound odd at first, however the words of Jesus gradually become clear that Jesus’ promises carry a commission and his commissions imply a promise.

“He who sends also goes with those he sends, and he who commands to love empowers to love. And the reverse is equally true; he who loves expects the loved to love others, and he who abides with his followers expects them to go just as the Father sent him.” (Fred Craddock page 273)

Because passages 14:1-14 come early in the farewell material, it is not surprising that the primary thrust of this unit is to soften with assurance the blow of Jesus’ announcement of his departure in the physical sense. Jesus is leaving behind a group of followers to continue faithfully in an indifferent and sometimes hostile world. The first church experienced that and **I believe, we do, too.** Jesus gives us three promises to help us.

First there is the promise of an abiding place with God. The word translated “dwelling places” in the NSRV, and REB, or “mansions” in the KJV, and in the CEB is translated as “rooms in my Father’s house”, all come from the Greek verb meaning “to abide”. (I like that.) This key term represents a relationship characterized by trusting and knowing, such as exists between Christ and God. Christ’s death and departure will not sever but will rather fulfill that relationship between disciples (us) and Christ.

The second promise is that of a sure and clear way to God (verses 5-7). For the writer of the Gospel of John the way to the God whom no one has ever seen is Jesus Christ, for “it is God the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who made him known”, as written in John 1:18. Although this is clear to the early church, it is not clear to us at this time whether “no one comes to the Father except through me” (verse 6) is argumentative, and if so, against whom. At the time of the first churches being formed,

there were many people who refused to believe that Jesus was an important part of their journey. For the writer of this Gospel, the whole purpose of his writing was to convince others that Jesus was God. That’s why the writer wrote verse 6. **For us today, we must not take this verse as a way to exclude anyone who is searching for the one true God. They will sooner or later discover Jesus on their journey. And if not, God will sort it out later.**

The third promise in 14:1-14 is that of a power not only to sustain the believing community in the world but also to enable us to do ever greater works than Jesus did (verse 12). Next Sunday the lesson will deal with the promise of the Holy Spirit in verses 15-21. However, here it is important to notice that the promise is to those who believe in Christ and pray in his name (verses 13-14). Two comments are in order; (1) the “you” in verses 13-14 is plural, implying a promise to the community and not a private one; and (2) praying in Jesus’ name is not simply a formula for closing a prayer. To use Jesus’ name as authorization for one’s petition to God implies that those who do so **know Christ, abide in Christ**, and make their requests from that relationship **rather than making selfish requests imported from another value system.** To pray in Christ’s name means, among other things, to be thoughtful about one’s prayers, and to pray about what to pray.

I invite you to reread today’s Gospel passage again and discover for yourself what God is revealing to your heart. Amen.

OFFERTORY PRAYER:

We offer our gifts so that others may not feel alone, eat alone, live alone, be alone, but that they may be surrounded

by your grace and love through us and the lives we offer to the. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all, for continuing your offerings to the church.

BENEDICTION:

May the blessings of the One who is the Way
be with you in the days to come.

May God guide our feet wherever we go.

May the blessings of Jesus who is our Life
be with you in the days to come.

**May he lead us by the hand to those who are our sisters
and brothers in need.**

May the blessings of the Spirit of Truth
be with you in the days to come.

**May we journey with the Spirit to that way which is
everlasting. Amen.**

HYMN: NCH 331 "Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life"

By George Herbert

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:
Such a way as gives us breath;
Such a truth as ends all strife;
Such a life as conquers 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 a 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.

ST. JOHN PRAYER LIST: Dave Seneczyn, Eric White, Lori Riess, Charles Chamberlin, Donna Isselhard, Mitch Nallie, Candy Pearce, Greg Talley, Carol Meyer, Leah Williams, Pat Holtgrave, Jane Riess, Rich Schmitt, Les Sattery, Cherie Klostermann, Shari Hamilton, Charlotte Watson, Becky Ballard, Hanna Mosco, Bill Underwood.

**TODAY WE CELEBRATE OUR MOTHERS OR WHOMEVER
"MOTHERED US" IN OUR LIVES.** Some thoughts from
church members.

"Even though my parents lived during the depression, and WW2, sometimes things were a little scarce. But there was always enough food, shelter, clothing (many times hand-me-downs) Mom always had plenty of love and support for us."

"I am so grateful for my mother's many talents. I am grateful that she was and is a teacher to many. Her talents include singing, sewing, and playing the piano, but I am most grateful for her unending love for God and her family."

"My mother was always respectful of others. She told us that "our actions spoke louder than our words" so remember to care for others, love others, and be sure our actions were what we wanted to convey. Mom would say "Don't say anything if you cannot say something kind". At times she was silent! Mom was a woman of great faith!"

"My mother was diagnosed with Alzheimers 13 years before she died, so I experienced my lose for all those 13 years. I truly miss her wisdom and love."

Not every one was given a loving parent, so that's why it is so important to realize we have God as both mother and father to us forever.

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Fairview Heights, IL 62208

618-397-6323

**We isolate now so that when we gather again,
no one will be missing.**

Peace and Blessings, Pastor Rosemary