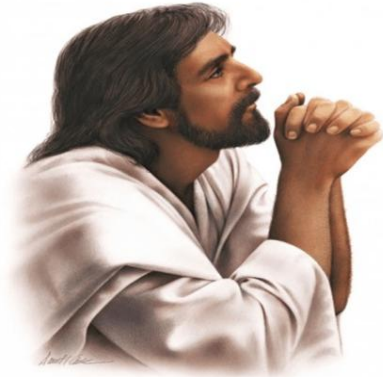


SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2026
SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER YEAR A
JOHN 17:1-11 "IN THE WORLD"



*I am praying for
them. I am not
praying for the
world but for
those whom you
have given me,
for they are yours.
John 17:9*

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Organist – Sharon Banjavcic
Liturgy - Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay
Ushers -

(NCH) New Century Hymnal - CCLI LICENSE #11164431

*Please stand if comfortably able.
Respond with words in bold print.

SUMMARY OF SCRIPTURE TEXTS
From "Preaching Through the Christian Year"
Fred Craddock

All the biblical texts for today, although quite different from one another in many ways, have in common two emphases: the world contains much evil and violence, some of it directed against the faithful; and those who trust in God recall the former deliverance by the Lord who rides upon the clouds and comes in the mysterious power of wind and fire.

Acts 1:6-14, Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35; and 1 Peter 4:12-14 employ such imagery to encourage the believers to be strong (1 Peter 5:6-11) and to be in prayer (Acts 1:6-14). **John 17:1-11** This is Christ who prays that his followers will remain true and faithful in an unfaithful world.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:

THE BELL IS RUNG:

PRELUDE: "Crown Him with Many Crowns"

Ellen Jane Lorenz

PENNIES FOR MISSION: Strengthen the Church

***CALL TO WORSHIP (INSPIRED BY PSALM 68)**

One: Let God rise up! Sing to God; lift up a song to the One who rides upon the clouds—the Holy One— be exultant before God.

Many: Let the righteous be joyful; let them exult before

God; let them be jubilant with joy!

One: Let God rise up! Ascribe power to God, full of majesty and power.

Many: Let the righteous be joyful; let them exult before God; let them be jubilant with joy!

One: Let God rise up! Awesome is God in the sanctuary, who gives power and strength to the people.

Many: Let the righteous be joyful; let them exult before God; let them be jubilant with joy! Blessed be God!

***INVOCATION**

Holy Love, our Companion and Source, shower us with your presence, shelter us in your sanctuary, shield us with your peace. Open our receptivity to your word, wisdom, and way. May our worship honor your name and draw us nearer to you and to our neighbors. Be glorified in our midst as we exalt your Many Names. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN: 493 "O Jesus, I Have Promised"**

***PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE**

Righteous God, you offer the newness of life and we cling to dry and desolate places. We withhold our trust and cling to the ways of the world while retreating from witnessing to your goodness in the world. We allow hopelessness to reign in our lives and direct our

attitudes and actions. Help us, O God, to believe that resurrection is not a one time event but a way of being we commit to living. Let the resurrected live in us transform our being, thinking, and doing in the world. Amen.

***WORDS OF GRACE**

New Creation in Christ, the resurrected life is yours. We place our hope in the assurance that, in Christ, all things are made new. Change is possible. The world we seek is ours to build, nurture, and sustain. God has given us grace and authority as well as a Companion to make a difference in the world. Receive these gifts freely as they are given.

***GLORIA:**

Glory to the Creator, and the Christ and the Spirit so near. As it was from the start so it shall be forever, One God always here. (repeat two more times.) (end) One God always here. One God always here.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Acts 1:6-14 ⁶As a result, those who had gathered together asked Jesus, "Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now?"⁷ Jesus replied, "It isn't for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has set by

his own authority. ⁸ Rather, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

⁹ After Jesus said these things, as they were watching, he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ While he was going away and as they were staring toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood next to them. ¹¹ They said, “Galileans, why are you standing here, looking toward heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you saw him go into heaven.”

Jesus’ followers in Jerusalem

¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem—a sabbath day’s journey away. ¹³ When they entered the city, they went to the upstairs room where they were staying. Peter, John, James, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James, Alphaeus’ son; Simon the zealot; and Judas, James’ son— ¹⁴ all were united in their devotion to prayer, along with some women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 Page 664

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11 Stand firm in the last times ¹² Dear friends, don’t be surprised about the fiery trials that have come among you to test you. These are not strange happenings. ¹³ Instead, rejoice as you share Christ’s suffering. You share his suffering now so that you may also have overwhelming joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are mocked because of Christ’s name, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory—indeed, the Spirit of God—rests on you.

⁶ Therefore, humble yourselves under God’s power so that he may raise you up in the last day. ⁷ Throw all your anxiety onto him, because he cares about you. ⁸ Be clearheaded. Keep alert. Your accuser, the devil, is on the prowl like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith. Do so in the knowledge that your fellow believers are enduring the same suffering throughout the world. ¹⁰ After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, the one who called you into his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will himself restore, empower, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be power forever and always. Amen.

***GOSPEL LESSON: John 17:1-11**

Jesus prays

¹⁷ When Jesus finished saying these things, he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, so that the Son can glorify you. ² You gave him

authority over everyone so that he could give eternal life to everyone you gave him. ³ This is eternal life: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent. ⁴ I have glorified you on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ Now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I shared with you before the world was created.

⁶ “I have revealed your name to the people you gave me from this world. They were yours and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸ This is because I gave them the words that you gave me, and they received them. They truly understood that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.

⁹ “I’m praying for them. I’m not praying for the world but for those you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰ Everything that is mine is yours and everything that is yours is mine; I have been glorified in them. ¹¹ I’m no longer in the world, but they are in the world, even as I’m coming to you. Holy Father, watch over them in your name, the name you gave me, that they will be one just as we are one.

MESSAGE: Prayer

There are thousands, if not millions, of books written about prayer, but this passage in the Gospel of John is in a class all its own. How the author of this Gospel knew

what Jesus said in these words to God about us, is anybody’s guess. I’m sure the Holy Spirit was involved. Please make it a habit to read it frequently. The words of Jesus to God his Father are sacred.

The first section of the prayer (verses 1-9) is a celebration and a request. The two are closely linked. Jesus is celebrating the fact that his work is done. He has completed the deeds and words which the Father gave him to do. Those who see Jess as simply a great teacher, or think that his task was to heal as may as possible, naturally find this as a puzzle. Jesus has laid before his chosen disciples all that the Father has given to him. That is the reason for the celebration, and it is the ground of the request he now makes.

Jesus’ request is that he may now be exalted, glorified, lifted up to that position alongside the Father which in Jewish tradition the king, the Messiah, the son of man, was supposed to attain. The Messiah, says the psalms , will rule a kingdom that stretches from sea to sea, from “the River” to the ends of the earth” (Psalm 72:8). In other words, he will have a universal dominion. “One like a son of man” will be exalted to share the throne of God Himself.

So far, the prayer may seem far too exalted for us to join in. But, as we shall see in the next two sections, the relationship between Jesus and the Father, though it

seems extraordinarily close and trusting, is not designed to be exclusive. We are invited to join in.

Verses 9-11 ⁹ “I’m praying for them. I’m not praying for the world but for those you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰ Everything that is mine is yours and everything that is yours is mine; I have been glorified in them. ¹¹ I’m no longer in the world, but they are in the world, even as I’m coming to you. Holy Father, watch over them in your name, the name you gave me, that they will be one just as we are one.”

This section begins with a description of who Jesus’ followers are. They are the ones the Father has given to Jesus; they already belong to him, and Jesus is handing them back into the safe keeping of the Father. They are distinct from “the world”. Insofar as they are the new, cleansed people they have become through Jesus’ call and teaching, they are not “from the world”.

However, what they need now is to be kept from being pulled back into “the world” with all its wickedness and rebellion. During the public ministry of Jesus he taught them and lead them, and looked after them like the shepherd with his sheep. Jesus does mention with sorrow the loss of one sheep, though with the recognition that there was an inevitability about it. Now because Jesus is coming to the Father, he is entrusting them to the father, who will continue the work of keeping them safe. In praying for them now,

Jesus is simply praying that what he has begun, the Father will gloriously complete.

There is much love, and compassion in this prayer from Jesus. At the end of verse 11, Jesus prays “that they all be one”, with God, with each other, and with us. This is the motto of the United Church of Christ. Let’s continue that prayer. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC: “Ain’t that Good News” Video

PASTORAL PRAYER: Talk to God in your own words.

OUR LORD’S PRAYER:

PRAYER RESPONSE: 769

**Hear our prayer, O God, hear our prayer, O God;
Incline your ear to us, and grant us your peace.**

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

Our commitments in the world are tangible and spiritual. Let us bring our whole selves to contribute to the kingdom of God, including material resources, as a faithful act of hope, trust, and companionship in this community and in the world.

OFFERTORY: “Cares Chorus” Kelly Willard

***DOXOLOGY:**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

**Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING**

Generous God, may these gifts we bring be used to bless, to build, and to beautify through generous and faithful care. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN: 595 “Some Glad Morning”**

BENEDICTION Receive the power of the Holy Spirit and witness to Holy Love in our church, our community, in our hearts, and to the ends of the earth.

The gospel calls your light forward, as you go, in the world.

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE: 571**

**O God of Love, O God of Peace
Make wars throughout the world to cease.
The wrath of human wrong restrain;
Give peace, O God, give peace again!**

THE BELL IS RUNG:

POSTLUDE: “Festal Postlude” Chester Nordman

PRAYER LIST: Ginny Ganschinetz, Patti French, Bruce Wagner, Becky Ballard, Roger Ballard, Mary Lou and Urban Baum, Ronald Bopp, Geralyn Gamon, Russ Hartmann, Lynne Knecht, Marilyn Paul, Pam and Syd Safriet, Yvonne Weber, Jackie Canterbury, our Beloved Country.

