

A Liturgy of
AnteCommunion
online or at home

May 17, 2020
The Sixth Sunday of Easter



Trinity
Episcopal Church

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Prelude

Prelude in A Major, BWV 536
J. S. Bach

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Book of Common Prayer, page 355

Celebrant Alleluia! Christ is risen!

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

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Let us pray. *(BCP page 225)*

O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

All sing:

Hymn 1

Christe sanctorum

Virtual Congregation

Or say together:

BCP page 356

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Throughout the Easter season our worship begins with a shout of praise and declaration of resurrection: Our “Alleluia!” comes from the Hebrew for “Praise God!”

The Book of Common Prayer calls for a “song of praise” to begin our worship. This can be any song praising God, and today our online service uses a morning hymn from our hymnal here.

The traditional *Gloria* quotes the words the angels sang to announce the coming of Jesus, and then expands our praise of God and Jesus with the characteristics of majesty and salvation. The church has been singing some form of this hymn of praise for over sixteen centuries.

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles

17:22-31

Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. 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. 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, 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. 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, 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. 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.’ 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. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 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.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 66:7-18

Book of Common Prayer, page 673

- 7 Bless our God, you peoples; *
make the voice of his praise to be heard;
- 8 **Who holds our souls in life, ***
and will not allow our feet to slip.
- 9 For you, O God, have proved us; *
you have tried us just as silver is tried.
- 10 **You brought us into the snare; ***
you laid heavy burdens upon our backs.
- 11 You let enemies ride over our heads;
we went through fire and water; *
but you brought us out into a place of refreshment.

In the season of Easter, the Episcopal Church traditionally reads stories of the earliest days of the church from the Acts of the Apostles as the first reading.

This story – from the years when the first apostles took the story of Jesus around the Mediterranean – happens when Paul is separated from his mission companions, waiting in Athens and “distressed by the many idols” is asked to present his story to the Athenian philosophers. (He gets a mixed reaction.)

Psalm 66 is a song of praise to God for deliverance from great danger, using metaphors that refer to the time of trial as a “refining” process similar to how metal is purified and shaped.

We read the psalm **responsively**, which means that the leader reads one verse and the congregation *responds* with the next.

- 12 I will enter your house with burnt-offerings
and will pay you my vows, *
which I promised with my lips
and spoke with my mouth when I was in trouble.**
- 13 I will offer you sacrifices of fat beasts
with the smoke of rams; *
I will give you oxen and goats.
- 14 Come and listen, all you who fear God, *
and I will tell you what he has done for me.**
- 15 I called out to him with my mouth, *
and his praise was on my tongue.
- 16 If I had found evil in my heart, *
the Lord would not have heard me;**
- 17 But in truth God has heard me; *
he has attended to the voice of my prayer.
- 18 Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer, *
nor withheld his love from me.**

The first letter of Peter was written to comfort and strengthen a community of Christians facing persecution from those around them.

Here, the author gives guidance for the community on how to remain steadfast in faith and in goodwill to those around them even during persecution, in imitation of Jesus. Some elements of the first paragraph are paralleled in the Episcopal Church's baptismal covenant promises (see pages 304-305 in the Book of Common Prayer).

A reading from the First Letter of Peter

3:13-22

Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? 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, 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; 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. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil.

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

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

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sequence

Carol Choir, recorded January 12, 2020
Jaclyn Kim, pianist; Leah Park, violinist

Send Us Forth
Thomas Keesecker

Deacon The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

John 14:15-21

Jesus said, "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 forever. 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."

Deacon The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

The Sermon

The Rev. Leslie Mazzacano

Midway through the season of Easter, our gospel readings shift from the narration of the events of resurrection to an exploration of the eternal nature of Jesus and the life of the church after Jesus returns to heaven. Today we hear Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit to live with the Christian community as Advocate (or defender, counsellor), and about how the love Jesus shares with us is an active walking in the ways of his teaching.

The Nicene Creed

Book of Common Prayer, page 358

As part of our response to the Word of God in our lives, we stand to proclaim the core story of our Christian faith together in **The Nicene Creed**, created in the late 4th century by the councils (gatherings of church leaders) in Nicea.

No matter what story of Jesus we are hearing in scripture, we remember and proclaim the whole outline of his life, death, and resurrection, and anticipate his coming again.

**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.
With the Father and the Son
he is worshiped and glorified.
He 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 of the People

In joy and hope let us pray to God who has given us the victory through the risen Christ.

That our risen Savior may fill us, and all God's people, with the joy of his glorious and life-giving resurrection, we pray. Let the people say, **Amen.**

That the risen Christ may bring peace to the earth, and wisdom and concord to all who lead the nations; that war, famine, and epidemic may cease, we pray. Let the people say, **Amen.**

That those isolated, afflicted, persecuted or living in fear may find renewal and strength in the good news of Easter, we pray. Let the people say, **Amen.**

That God may provide daily bread and abundant life for those who lack food, work or shelter, we pray. Let the people say, **Amen.**

That broken hearts may be made whole, and our communities renewed, in the victory of life over death through the risen Christ, we pray. Let the people say, **Amen.**

That the light of the risen Christ may comfort and strengthen the ill, the injured, the dying, and all those who care for the sick and the vulnerable, we pray. Let the people say, **Amen.**

That, according to Christ's promises, all who have died in the faith of the resurrection may be raised with him on the last day, we pray. Let the people say, **Amen.**

That Christ may send the power of the Holy Spirit upon God's people, so that we may bear faithful witness to his resurrection day by day, we pray. Let the people say, **Amen.**

Almighty God, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son: grant that, as his death has recalled us to life, so his continual presence in us may raise us to eternal joy; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

In the Easter season, the Confession is omitted in celebration of our freedom from the bondage of sin brought about through Christ's resurrection.

In response to hearing and reflecting on scripture, we turn to prayer together, asking God's care for our world, the church, for others and for ourselves.

The prayers we are using today are adapted from seasonal prayers used in The Church of England, and follow the pattern outlined on page 383 of *The Book of Common Prayer*, with attention to the church throughout the world, the nation and the world and those in authority, the needs of our local community, those who suffer or experience any trouble, and those who have died

The exchange of peace is rooted in Jesus' call to reconcile with one another as we approach God's altar. In this time of separation, it may be a cue to restore our connections with those we haven't been as close with as we would like to be!

At every service in the Episcopal Church, we pray **the Lord's Prayer**, which we learn in the gospels (Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 11:1-4) The prayer takes its name from the request of Jesus' disciples, "Lord, teach us to pray."

Exchange of Peace

The Celebrant says to the people

The peace of Christ be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

The Ministers and People greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Today, in the spirit of Christ's peace, please reach out to greet someone you might normally see in worship by telephone, internet, or text message.

When gathered in person, we would receive a collection of money for the support of the church at this point in a Sunday service.

If you are able to fulfill your annual pledge, please mail your regular pledge check to the office, use your bank's online payment system, or visit www.trinitymoorestown.org/donate to make your weekly gift or regular pledge offering while we are unable to gather in person.

Anthem

Virtual Canterbury Choir

The Father's Love

Simon Lole

Instead of praying the Great Thanksgiving over bread and wine, in this time when we are physically separated, we join together in an act of spiritual communion, beginning with the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples as the basis of all prayer.

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

During this time of worshipping together but physically distant, we depend on the long established teaching of the Church that if a person is prevented from physically receiving the Sacrament for reasons of extreme illness or disability, the desire for Christ's presence alone is enough for all the benefits of the Sacrament to be received. This is often referred to as "spiritual communion."

A Prayer for Spiritual Communion

Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament and, since I cannot at this time receive communion, I pray you to come into my heart. I unite myself with you and embrace you with all my heart, my soul, and my mind. Let nothing separate me from you; let me serve you in this life, until by your grace, I come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace. Amen.

*(From Saint Augustine's Prayer Book, rev 2014.,
based on a prayer by St. Alphonsus de Liguori)*

Post communion prayer *Book of Common Prayer, page 365*

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you
with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

God, who through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us the victory, give you joy and peace in your faith; and the blessing of God Almighty, the holy and undivided Trinity, be upon you and remain with you for ever. Amen.

Because we cannot physically receive the bread and wine together today, we name our need for Christ's nourishing presence in our spirits in this prayer for spiritual communion.

We pray the usual **Post-Communion Prayer** thanking God for the blessings received in the spiritual food of this sacrament, even though we have not physically received the bread or wine, and asking that we be prepared by those spiritual riches to go into the world to share in God's ongoing work.

The priest offers God's blessing, in a form adapted for the Easter season.

Hymn 416
Virtual Congregation

Lucerna Laudoniae

The dismissal sends us to take our worship into the fullness of our daily lives, living in the name of Christ. Our enthusiastic “Alleluia” in response is the final word of worship throughout the Easter season.

The Dismissal

Deacon Let us go forth in the name of Christ,
Alleluia, alleluia!

People **Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia!**

Postlude

Allegro maestoso e vivace from *Sonata No. 2*
Felix Mendelssohn

+++++

Kisha Mann (with Mark Mann), *online Lector*

Bob Litsinger, *telephone Lector*

The Rev. Leslie G. Mazzacano, *Deacon and Preacher*

The Rev. Emily A. Mellott, *Celebrant*

Vernon Williams, *Organist and Cinematographer*