

Home worship service during time of isolation and social distancing.

## The Seventh Sunday of Easter

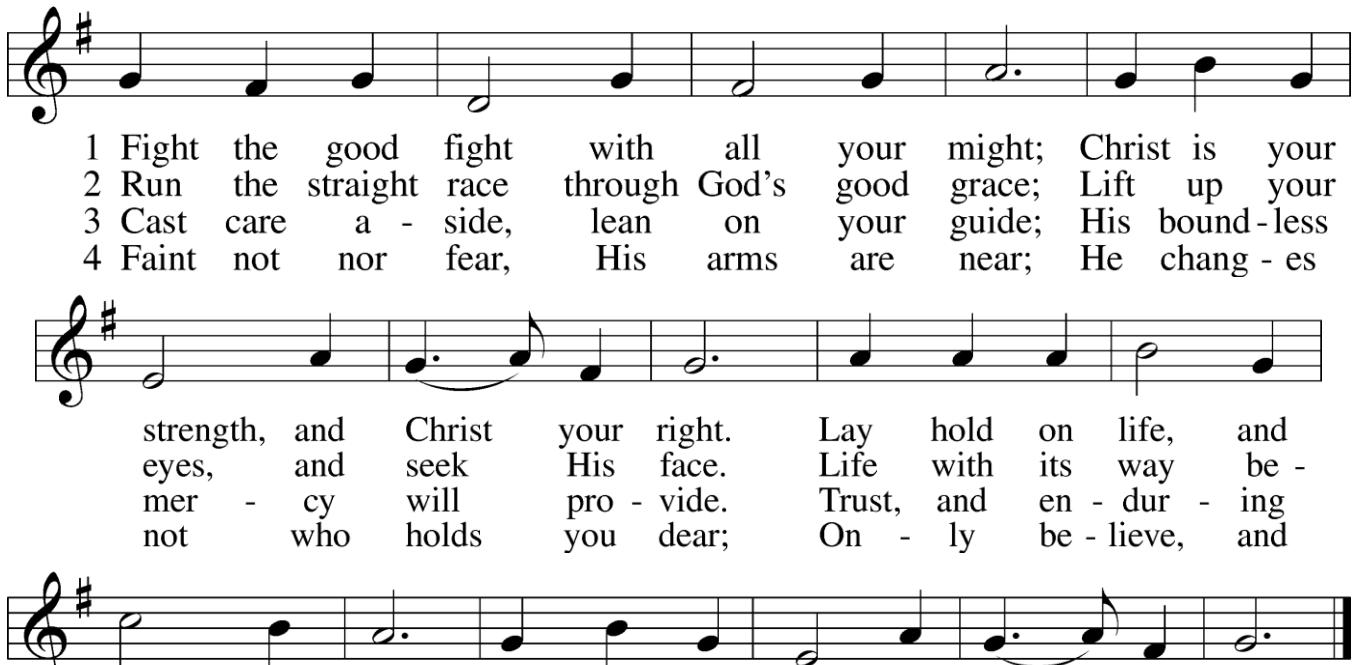
### May 24, 2020

Today is the last Sunday of the Easter season. It's the in-between-Sunday. It's the Sunday between Jesus' Ascension and the giving of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost

#### An Easter Salutation      *adapted from 2 Timothy 1:10 & Psalm 118*

- L** Christ is risen! Alleluia!
- C** Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!
- L** Christ has destroyed death. Alleluia!
- C** And has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Alleluia!
- L** The Lord is my strength and my song. Alleluia!
- C** He has become my salvation. Alleluia!
- L** I will not die, but live. Alleluia!
- C** I will proclaim what the Lord has done. Alleluia!
- L** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
**C** as it was in the beginning is now and will be forever. Amen.

#### Fight the Good Fight Lutheran Service Book 664, Lutheran Worship 299, The Lutheran Hymnal 447



1 Fight the good fight with all your might; Christ is your  
2 Run the straight race through God's good grace; Lift up your  
3 Cast care a - side, lean on your guide; His bound - less  
4 Faint not nor fear, His arms are near; He chang - es

strength, and Christ your right. Lay hold on life, and  
eyes, and seek His face. Life with its way be -  
mer - cy will pro - vide. Trust, and en - dur - ing  
not who holds you dear; On - ly be - lieve, and

it shall be Your joy and crown e - ter - nal - ly.  
fore us lies; Christ is the path, and Christ the prize.  
faith shall prove Christ is your life and Christ your love.  
you will see That Christ is all e - ter - nal - ly.

**L** In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

**L** O Lord, open my lips,

**C** and my mouth will declare your praise.

**L** Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

**C** make haste to help me, O Lord.

**Introit** Psalm 100:1–5; antiphon: Psalm 101:1

**L** I will sing of steadfast love and justice;  
to you, O Lord, I will make music.

**C** Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!

Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!

**L** Know that the Lord, he is God!

It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

**C** Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise!

Give thanks to him; bless his name!

**L** For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever,  
and his faithfulness to all generations.

**C** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

**L** I will sing of steadfast love and justice;  
to you, O Lord, I will make music.

**Kyrie**

**C** Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

**Collect of the Day**

**L** Let us pray: O King of glory, Lord of hosts, uplifted in triumph far above all heavens, leave us not without consolation but send us the Spirit of truth whom You promised from the Father; for You live and reign with Him and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

**Acts 1:12–26**

<sup>12</sup>Then [the apostles] returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. <sup>13</sup>And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. <sup>14</sup>All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

<sup>15</sup>In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said,

<sup>16</sup>“Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. <sup>17</sup>For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” <sup>18</sup>(Now this man bought a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. <sup>19</sup>And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

<sup>20</sup>For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

“May his camp become desolate,  
and let there be no one to dwell in it”;

and

“Let another take his office.”

<sup>21</sup>So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,  
<sup>22</sup>beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” <sup>23</sup>And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup>And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup>to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” <sup>26</sup>And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

**L** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

**Gradual** adapt. from Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6

**L** Christ has risen from the dead.

**C** **God the Father has crowned him with glory and honor,**

**L** He has given him dominion over the works of his hands;

**C** **he has put all things under his feet.**

### Psalm 68:1-10

**L** <sup>1</sup>God shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered;  
and those who hate him shall flee before him!

**C** <sup>2</sup>As smoke is driven away, so you shall drive them away;  
as wax melts before fire, so the wicked shall perish before God!

**L** <sup>3</sup>But the righteous shall be glad;  
they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy!

**C** <sup>4</sup>Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts;  
his name is the LORD; exult before him!

**L** <sup>5</sup>Father of the fatherless and protector of widows  
is God in his holy habitation.

**C** <sup>6</sup>God settles the solitary in a home;  
he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.

**L** <sup>7</sup>O God, when you went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness,  
**C** <sup>8</sup>the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain, before God, the One of Sinai,  
before God, the God of Israel.

**L** <sup>9</sup>Rain in abundance, O God, you shed abroad; you restored your inheritance as it languished;  
**C** <sup>10</sup>your flock found a dwelling in it; in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy.

## **1 Peter 4:12–19; 5:6–11**

<sup>12</sup>Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup>But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. <sup>14</sup>If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. <sup>15</sup>But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. <sup>16</sup>Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. <sup>17</sup>For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup>And

“If the righteous is scarcely saved,  
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”

<sup>19</sup>Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

<sup>5:6</sup> Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, <sup>7</sup>casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. <sup>8</sup>Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup>Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. <sup>10</sup>And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. <sup>11</sup>To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

## **Verse of the Day** Romans 6:9; John 14:18

- L** Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Alleluia.

## **John 17:1–11**

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the seventeenth chapter.
- C** Glory to You, O Lord.

<sup>1</sup>When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, <sup>2</sup>since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. <sup>3</sup>And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. <sup>4</sup>I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup>And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

<sup>6</sup>“I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. <sup>7</sup>Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. <sup>8</sup>For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup>I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. <sup>10</sup>All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. <sup>11</sup>And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

- L** This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- C** Praise to You, O Christ.

**C** I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven

and sits at the right hand of God the Father  
Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living  
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Alleluia! Sing to Jesus** Lutheran Service Book 821, Lutheran Worship n/a, The Lutheran Hymnal n/a

The musical score consists of five staves of music in G major, common time, with a treble clef. The lyrics are integrated into the music, with each staff containing four lines of text corresponding to the melody. The lyrics describe the attributes and actions of Jesus Christ, such as being the bread of life, King of kings, and Victor over sin and death.

1 Al - le - lu - ia! Sing to Je - sus; His the  
2 Al - le - lu - ia! Not as or - phans Are we  
3 Al - le - lu - ia! Bread of heav - en, Here on  
4 Al - le - lu - ia! King e - ter - nal, Lord om -

scep - ter, His the throne; Al - le - lu - ia! His the  
left in sor - row now; Al - le - lu - ia! He is  
earth our food, our stay; Al - le - lu - ia! Here the  
nip - o - tent we own; Al - le - lu - ia! Born of

tri - umph, His the vic - to - ry a - lone.  
near us; Faith be - lies, nor ques - tions how.  
sin - ful Flee to You from day to day.  
Mar - y, Earth Your foot - stool, heav'n Your throne.

Hark! The songs of peace - ful Zi - on Thun - der  
Though the cloud from sight re - ceived Him When the  
In - ter - ces - sor, Friend of sin - ners, Earth's Re -  
As with - in the veil You en - tered, Robed in

like a might - y flood: "Je - sus out of  
for - ty days were o'er, Shall our hearts for -  
deem - er, hear our plea Where the songs of  
flesh, our great High Priest, Here on earth both

ev - 'ry na - tion Has re - deemed us by His blood."  
get His prom - ise: "I am with you ev - er - more"?  
all the sin - less Sweep a - cross the crys - tal sea.  
priest and vic - tim In the eu - cha - ris - tic feast.

5 Alleluia! Sing to Jesus;  
His the scepter, His the throne;  
Alleluia! His the triumph,  
    His the victory alone.  
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion  
    Thunder like a mighty flood:  
        “Jesus out of ev’ry nation  
Has redeemed us by His blood.”

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### **Devotional thoughts:**

The last time I saw Clara Kitzinger was at the party for her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in February of 2011. The Lord called her home on New Year’s Eve before her 101<sup>st</sup> birthday.

Clara was a very special person to all who knew her. She had an infectious laugh and a bubbly personality.

Until she moved to be near her daughter, Clara lived a block from our house. I was often there, fixing something or clearing snow from her driveway. But I remember her mainly from my Bible studies. She never missed one.

Most of all, I remember Clara for giving theologically precise and correct answers to all my questions. She was so eager to answer that sometimes I had to ask her to let others respond.

Whenever I would ask, “Does anyone know what Jesus’ words in John 17 are called?”, without a pause, she would exclaim, “Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer!” Of course she was right!

This entire chapter is His prayer. The prayer is divided into three parts. In the first part, Jesus prays to be glorified. In the second part, He prays for His disciples. In the third part, He prays for all believers. Our reading for today includes the first part and half of the second. You may wish to read the entire prayer.

Most of us learned in our confirmation classes that Jesus fills the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king. As a prophet, during His earthly ministry, Jesus constantly taught God’s word to the people. He continues to fulfill that office today through pastors, teachers, and the Christian people when they teach God’s word from the Bible.

In the very next chapter of John, we hear Jesus tell Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). At His ascension, Jesus was crowned “with many crowns, the lamb upon His throne.” Now He rules in a threefold kingdom. He upholds the universe by His word (Hebrews 1:3). He rules in the hearts of believers (Colossians 3:15). He rules in His heavenly kingdom (1 Timothy 4:18). If you remember that these three are known as Jesus’ kingdoms of power, grace, and glory, you have a bit of Clara Kitzinger in you!

Jesus begins His prayer recognizing that His hour has come! He will soon accomplish the work that was given to Him by the Father. He will be both the sacrifice and the priest who offers the sacrifice when He submissively allows himself to be crucified. He did this so that we may have eternal life (Hebrews 12:2).

We live in the time when Jesus’ mission is accomplished. Our sins have been paid for by His sacrificial death. Eternal life is certain because He rose from the dead. At His ascension into heaven, He was glorified returning to His Father’s presence with the glory that He had before the world existed.

However, we still live in the world. Life in this world is particularly difficult at this time with so much sickness, suffering, and death from the pandemic. To make matters worse, I recently read that an atheist professor blames Christians for aggravating the pandemic by their belief in eternal life!

Still we have comfort and peace. As our High Priest, Jesus has met all our needs of body and soul (Hebrews 7:26-27). Although Jesus is no longer in the world, He continues to pray for us. He continues to fulfill His priestly office of intercession (Hebrews 7:25). We are His, the sheep of His pasture. He guards and keeps us always.

One day, we, too, will be glorified when He will transform our lowly bodies to be like his glorious body (Philippians 3:21). One day we will join with Clara Kitzinger, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven glorifying Jesus’ holy name, evermore praising God and singing:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might:  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna. Hosanna.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.

Until that time, Jesus prays to the Father, “that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:26). God grant that to us all.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7).

God's richest blessings to you in Christ.

**L** Let us pray. Lord, You have promised not to abandon Your people but to be with us always. Grant us grace to hear Your Word with faith and repentant hearts, and to keep what we hear upon our lips in holy lives through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** Amen.

**L** Lord, You are the source of all wisdom and knowledge. Bless those who teach, those who learn and especially those who graduate this year. Be the hope of those whose plans have been disappointed, and grant that all graduates would find good employment. Guide them in the pursuit of Your Word and truth, to live honorable lives in worthy vocations, that in all things You may be glorified.

**C** Amen.

**L** Almighty God, give our leaders wisdom for the challenges of our times. Send Your holy angels to watch over all of our loved ones, especially those who live in distant places. Protect all who attend to our needs during this time of national emergency and pandemic for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

**C** I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

**C** 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.

**L** Let us bless the Lord.

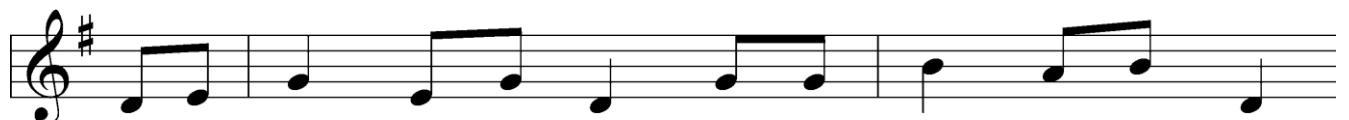
**C** Thanks be to God.

**L** The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

**C** Amen.

## How Firm a Foundation

Lutheran Service Book 728, Lutheran Worship 411, The Lutheran Hymnal 427



1 How firm a foun - da - tion, O saints of the Lord,  
2 "Fear not! I am with you, O be not dis - mayed,  
3 "The soul that on Je - sus has leaned for re - pose  
4 "When through fi - ery tri - als your path - way will lie,



Is laid for your faith in His ex - cel - lent Word!  
For I am your God and will still give you aid;  
I will not, I will not, de - sert to his foes;  
My grace, all - suf - fi - cient, will be your sup - ply.



What more can He say than to you He has said  
I'll strength - en you, help you, and cause you to stand,  
That soul, though all hell should en - deav - or to shake,  
The flames will not hurt you; I on - ly de - sign



Who un - to the Sav - ior for ref - uge have fled?  
Up - held by My righ - teous, om - nip - o - tent hand.  
I'll nev - er, no nev - er, no nev - er, for - sake!  
Your dross to con - sume and your gold to re - fine.

5 "Throughout all their lifetime My people will prove  
My sov'reign, eternal, unchangeable love;  
And then, when gray hairs will their temples adorn,  
Like lambs they will still in My bosom be borne."

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### Service Notes:

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons. Hymns may be sung or read. Use as much or little of this service as you would like.

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# **Enhancing Your Worship**

## **Meditating on God's Word and Works**

I will meditate on your wondrous works. Psalm 119:27

My eyes are awake through the night watches,  
That I may meditate on Your word. Psalm 119:148 NKJV

### **The Week of the Seventh Sunday of Easter**

#### **May 25 - May 30**

##### **Introduction**

Most modern forms of mediation turn a person inward. Biblical meditation turns a person outward toward what God has said and done especially what He has said and done through Jesus for our salvation.

Each Sunday has its own special theme directing us to meditate on God's word and actions. This theme is found in the Propers of the Day (the parts of the service that change week to week). From Advent through the Easter season these themes focus our attention on the life of Jesus from His birth to His death and resurrection. There is always much more in the propers than can be covered in any Sunday service. God willing, I will use the propers for Sunday to provide you with a devotion each day to help you mediate on what God has done for you.

Note: For the rogation days of Monday through Wednesday you may wish to use the Litany on page 288 of Lutheran Service Book.

#### **Monday – Memorial Day**

##### **Navy Hymn: Eternal Father, Strong to Save**

Verse 1: Eternal Father, strong to save,  
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,  
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep  
Its own appointed limits keep;  
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,  
For those in peril on the sea!

Verse 2: O Christ! Whose voice the waters heard  
And hushed their raging at Thy word,  
Who walked'st on the foaming deep,  
And calm amidst its rage didst sleep;  
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,  
For those in peril on the sea!

Verse 3: Most Holy Spirit! Who didst brood  
Upon the chaos dark and rude,  
And bid its angry tumult cease,  
And give, for wild confusion, peace;  
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,  
For those in peril on the sea!

Verse 4: O Trinity of love and power!  
Our brethren shield in danger's hour;  
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,  
Protect them wheresoe'er they go;  
Thus evermore shall rise to Thee  
Glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

**L** Christ is Risen!  
**C** **He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!**

**L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**C** **Amen.**

**L** Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.  
**C** **Alleluia. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Alleluia.**

*Romans 6:9; John 14:18*

Lord, guard and guide the men who fly  
Through the great spaces in the sky.  
Be with them always in the air,  
In darkening storms or sunlight fair;  
Oh, hear us when we lift our prayer,  
For those in peril in the air!  
*Mary C. D. Hamilton (1915)*

**Introit** Psalm 100:1–5; antiphon: Psalm 101:1

**L** I will sing of steadfast love and justice;  
to you, O Lord, I will make music.  
**C** **Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!**  
**Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!**  
**L** Know that the Lord, he is God!  
It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.  
**C** **Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise!**  
**Give thanks to him; bless his name!**  
**L** For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever,  
and his faithfulness to all generations.  
**C** **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;**  
**as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**  
**L** I will sing of steadfast love and justice;  
to you, O Lord, I will make music.

Eternal Father, grant, we pray,  
To all Marines, both night and day,  
The courage, honor, strength, and skill  
Their land to serve, thy law fulfill;  
Be thou the shield forevermore  
From every peril to the Corps.  
*J. E. Seim (1966)*

Psalm 101:1 is the antiphon for the introit this week. It speaks of God's steadfast love and justice. This is an appropriate verse to consider as we pause on Memorial Day to remember those who have given their lives in the cause of preserving justice through service in our armed forces.

Psalm 101 goes on to speak of integrity and blamelessness. How marvelous it would be to live in a world where everyone lives with integrity and blamelessness. But this is not the case. We are surrounded by arrogance and evil, wickedness and deceit. We must lock our doors at night and guard our borders because of sin.

God establishes government to protect us from evil. Sometimes this evil comes from within our nation's borders and we are protected by police and law enforcement. Sometimes this evil comes from outside our nation's borders and we are protected by the men and women of our armed forces.

War is a terrible thing. But it is more terrible to allow evil to run its course unchecked.

Psalm 101 ends with these verses:

<sup>6</sup> I will look with favor on the faithful in the land,  
    that they may dwell with me;  
he who walks in the way that is blameless  
    shall minister to me.  
<sup>7</sup> No one who practices deceit  
    shall dwell in my house;  
no one who utters lies  
    shall continue before my eyes.  
<sup>8</sup> Morning by morning I will destroy  
    all the wicked in the land,  
cutting off all the evildoers  
    from the city of the Lord.

We thank God today for the faithful in our land who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to God and country to protect us from evil.

On this day as we ponder self-sacrifice, it is impossible to not think of Jesus whose sacrifice on the cross was the ultimate defeat of evil. You may have seen national cemeteries with row upon row of crosses. How extremely appropriate this is. We know that because of Jesus' cross, we will join in eternity with those who have given their lives in service to their nation.

O God, protect the women who,  
In service, faith in thee renew;  
O guide devoted hands of skill  
And bless their work within thy will;  
Inspire their lives that they may be  
Examples fair on land and sea.

*Lines 1-4, Merle E. Strickland (1972) and  
adapted by James D. Shannon (1973)  
Lines 5-6, Beatrice M. Truitt (1948)*

### **Responsive Prayer for Memorial Day**

- L** Lord God, You have sustained our nation in the past and continue to bless us. We recall how so many have given their lives for the cause of freedom. Men and women continue to sacrifice and serve in the armed forces. Today, we pause to reflect and honor those who gave or who continue to sacrifice so much in the defense of our freedom to be faithful.
- C** **We remember the great courage and selfless service of so many throughout history who have answered the call to serve. We remember their honorable sacrifice for the freedom of others. Comfort the families who mourn the loss of loved ones. Comfort also those who suffer permanent injuries as a result of serving our nation in the military.**

- L** We remember with thankfulness the millions of Americans who give so generously of their life and labor in times of national conflict, particularly the family members of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen.
- C** **We are grateful for the devotion and sacrifices of military families. Grant us the resources and willing hearts to support them.**
- L** Lord, You prayed earnestly for Your disciples, that they would be kept in Your name, filled with joy and sanctified in Your Word of truth.
- C** **Keep our chaplains in Your name. Fill them with the joy that comes from knowing You have defeated sin and death. Sanctify their ministry in Your Word of truth.**
- L** Gracious Lord, we ask for Your strength for our chaplains who serve in the wounded-warrior wards and in our military hospitals as they provide pastoral care to hurting and wounded veterans and their families.
- C** **Lord, mend the wounds of all who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Grant their physicians knowledge and wisdom as they seek the best treatments for patients' suffering.**
- L** God of mercy, grant patience and insight to our chaplains who serve in all branches of our armed forces. Only through Your sustaining love can they move out daily with confidence and joy. These and all things we ask through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Defend those Lord who fight for right  
 And work to build our Nation's might.  
 The Army that goes rolling on  
 With righteous pride in all they've done,  
 Protect them by your forceful hand  
 From every peril on the land.

*Philip Quardokus (2020)*

## Tuesday

- L** Christ is Risen!
- C** **He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!**
- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.
- L** Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.
- C** **Alleluia. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Alleluia.**

*Romans 6:9; John 14:18*

- L** Let us pray. O King of glory, Lord of hosts, uplifted in triumph far above all heavens, leave us not without consolation but send us the Spirit of truth whom You promised from the Father; for You live and reign with Him and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen

The Easter season is one long celebration of triumph and victory over sin, death, and the devil. As the hymn writer declares:

Easter triumph, Easter joy!  
 This alone can sin destroy;  
 From sin's pow'r, Lord, set us free,  
 Newborn souls in You to be.  
 Alleluia!

*LSB 633, st. 7*

The final stanza to our celebration of Jesus' triumph is His ascension into heaven when He again takes up His crown at the right hand of God, the Father. Now that the celebration is over, what will happen? Jesus does abandon us but sends the Comforter, the Holy Spirit to be with us as we continue our journey through life.

Jesus continues His ministry upon the earth through His faithful people. It is our words and deeds that bring the reality of Christ into the lives of others. Without the Holy Spirit, we would never be able to do this work.

In a few short days, we will celebrate Pentecost, the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit. If you ever feel lonely and abandoned, allow the Holy Spirit to come to you through word and sacrament.

**Prayer:** Lord, You have pledged to us Your Spirit and promised to supply Your Church with pastors who will preach and teach Your Word. Give us ears to hear and hearts to believe Your Word. Raise up those who will serve Your Church in generations to come, that we may never be without the aid of those to serve us in Your name. Amen.

## Wednesday

- L** Christ is Risen!
- C** **He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!**
  
- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** **Amen.**
  
- L** Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.
- C** **Alleluia. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Alleluia.**

*Romans 6:9; John 14:18*

## Psalm 68:1-10

- L** <sup>1</sup>God shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered;  
and those who hate him shall flee before him!
- C** <sup>2</sup>**As smoke is driven away, so you shall drive them away;**  
**as wax melts before fire, so the wicked shall perish before God!**
- L** <sup>3</sup>But the righteous shall be glad;  
they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy!
- C** <sup>4</sup>**Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts;**  
**his name is the LORD; exult before him!**
- L** <sup>5</sup>Father of the fatherless and protector of widows  
is God in his holy habitation.
- C** **‘God settles the solitary in a home;**  
**he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.**
- L** <sup>7</sup>O God, when you went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness,
- C** <sup>8</sup>**the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain, before God, the One of Sinai,**  
**before God, the God of Israel.**
- L** <sup>9</sup>Rain in abundance, O God, you shed abroad; you restored your inheritance as it languished;
- C** <sup>10</sup>**your flock found a dwelling in it; in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy.**

You may have heard the expression, "The more things change, the more things stay the same." We are living in a most difficult time of change. Venues are closed. We are encouraged to stay home. We are isolated from family and friends. So is it true that "Things stay the same"?

I have to admit, compared to other people around the world and throughout history, my life is not so difficult right now. Is it the way I want it? No. But I have food and clothes. I have a bed to sleep in. I am

warm when it's cold outside and cool when it's hot outside.

Yes, although life is difficult, life today is pretty much the same as it has always been. There are still enemies to oppose. There are still dangers in the world. We still must lock our doors.

We still have God caring for us. We still have Jesus as our Savior. We are still strangers here. Heaven is still our home.

We still sing praises to God and lift up a song to Him. He is still the father of the fatherless and the protector of widows. He still cares for the lonely and gives rain to the farmers. He still provides for the needy.

Psalm 68 is still as true today as the day it was written. May we always remember we are in the flock cared for by the Good Shepherd.

Prayer: Lord, You have daily and richly supplied us with all things for this body and life. Give us grateful hearts, that we may receive Your gifts with thanksgiving and use these gifts to serve those in need. Amen.

## Thursday

**L** Christ is Risen!

**C** He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

**L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

**L** Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.

**C** Alleluia. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Alleluia.

*Romans 6:9; John 14:18*

## Acts 1:12–26

<sup>12</sup>Then [the apostles] returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. <sup>13</sup>And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. <sup>14</sup>All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

<sup>15</sup>In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, <sup>16</sup>"Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. <sup>17</sup>For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry." <sup>18</sup>(Now this man bought a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. <sup>19</sup>And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) <sup>20</sup>For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

“May his camp become desolate,  
and let there be no one to dwell in it”;

and

“Let another take his office.”

<sup>21</sup>So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, <sup>22</sup>beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must

become with us a witness to his resurrection.”<sup>23</sup> And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias.<sup>24</sup> And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen<sup>25</sup> to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.”<sup>26</sup> And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.



“KEEP CALM and CARRY ON” is a poster printed in 1939 by the British government in preparation for World War II. It was meant to raise the morale of the people. It has recently been reproduced and modified many times to meet a variety of circumstances.

It seems that this was the motto of the disciples following Jesus’ ascension into heaven. Luke records that when they returned from the Mount of Olives to the upper room, the apostles carried on with their business. The first item on their agenda was finding a replacement for Judas. There was one requirement. The disciple must have been with them the entire time of Jesus’ public ministry, from His baptism by John until His ascension.

Two were chosen as candidates. There may have been more available. This we do not know but it does seem likely. They then trusted God to make the selection through the casting of lots.

When we select pastors today, we follow a similar procedure. We put forth candidates that are qualified and then trust God to make the selection. Although we do not cast lots, we do trust God to make the selection through the process of voting.

Matthias was chosen and numbered with the eleven apostles. His job was to be exactly what Jesus had directed: Be a witness to the resurrection.

Although the apostles are not here with us today, their witness to the resurrection is. We call it the New Testament. We need no further revelation from God.

We, today in the face of our current pandemic and national emergency, are like the apostles. We must “Keep Calm and Carry On.” We do this by continuing our business of being Jesus’ witnesses. We tell others about Him and His work of salvation and the gift of eternal life.

Prayer: Almighty God, as Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, ascended into heaven, you left a task for His apostles to complete, to make disciples of all nations. Grant that we may keep calm and carry on with that task, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Friday

- L** Christ is Risen!
- C** **He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!**
- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** **Amen.**
- L** Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.
- C** **Alleluia. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Alleluia.**

*Romans 6:9; John 14:18*

### 1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:6-11

<sup>12</sup>Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup>But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. <sup>14</sup>If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. <sup>15</sup>But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. <sup>16</sup>Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. <sup>17</sup>For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup>And

“If the righteous is scarcely saved,  
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”

<sup>19</sup>Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

<sup>5,6</sup>Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, <sup>7</sup>casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. <sup>8</sup>Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup>Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. <sup>10</sup>And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. <sup>11</sup>To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Today we end our readings from the first epistle of Peter. Some have characterized this letter as the Epistle of Hope. Today's reading continues that theme.

Should we be surprised when life is difficult? No. Some Christians believe that having faith in Christ is the ticket to health and prosperity. Some TV evangelists preach a message that faith leads to freedom from all of life's troubles. This would seem bizarre to the Apostle Peter. He had heard Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His words recorded in Matthew 5:

<sup>10</sup>“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup>“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you (Matthew 5:10-12).

Peter warns us to not be surprised when trials come or think that it is strange! If Christ suffered, then why wouldn't His followers?

Yet at the proper time, the mighty hand of God will exalt you! Until then, cast all your cares on Him, for He cares for you! We may suffer for a little while but the God of all grace has called you to His eternal glory in Christ!

Prayer: Lord God, heavenly Father, grant us the strength to resist the devil, who prowls about like a roaring lion. Let us stand firm in our faith knowing that our present suffering is not worthy to be compared to the glory that awaits us in heaven. Until that time help us to cast all of our cares upon You, knowing that You care for us and will neither leave us or forsake us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Saturday

- L** Christ is Risen!
- C** **He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!**

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** **Amen.**

- L** Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. Alleluia.
- C** **Alleluia. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Alleluia.**

*Romans 6:9; John 14:18*

## Gradual

- L** Christ has risen from the dead.
- C** **God the Father has crowned him with glory and honor,**
- L** He has given him dominion over the works of his hands;
- C** **he has put all things under his feet.**

*(adapt. from Matt. 28:7; Heb. 2:7; Ps. 8:6)*

Today is the last day of the Easter season. It is the last time we will use this gradual, the Easter hymns, and readings.

Some have suggested that we celebrate Easter when we can again return to our houses of worship. Some have rejected that idea, believing that the Church Year is an unalterable regulation.

But wait! Easter is not over! The early Christians moved their day of worship from Saturday to Sunday, the first day of the week, so that they could celebrate Easter every week!

We don't know when our public worship gatherings will resume. There is great debate in the media about whether churches are considered essential services. Some believe that we ought to be gathering in worship already.

I'm not sure when that will be safe to happen. We rejoice that God has provided technologies for us to worship in our own homes.

Whenever we return we will celebrate Easter no matter what the Sunday is called in the Church Year. Every Sunday is now a little Easter! So if you find yourself singing an Easter hymn, you are not alone.

In fact, every day is an Easter celebration. Every day, we rejoice that Jesus has defeated sin, death, and the devil on the cross. Every day, we rejoice that the tomb is empty and Jesus has risen from the dead. Every day, rejoice that because He lives we shall live forever in Paradise with Him.

Prayer: O Lord God, our heavenly Father, let our gladness have no end, alleluia! Amen.

**Jesus Christ Is Risen Today** Lutheran Service Book 457, Lutheran Worship 127, The Lutheran Hymnal 199

1 Je - sus Christ is ris'n to - day, Al - le - lu - ia!  
2 Hymns of praise then let us sing, Al - le - lu - ia!  
3 But the pains which He en - dured, Al - le - lu - ia!  
4 Sing we to our God a - bove, Al - le - lu - ia!

Our tri - um -phant ho - ly day, Al - le - lu - ia!  
Un - to Christ, our heav'n -ly king, Al - le - lu - ia!  
Our sal - va - tion have pro-cured; Al - le - lu - ia!  
Praise e - ter - nal as His love; Al - le - lu - ia!

Who did once up - on the cross, Al - le - lu - ia!  
Who en-dured the cross and grave, Al - le - lu - ia!  
Now a - bove the sky He's king, Al - le - lu - ia!  
Praise Him, all ye heav'n -ly host, Al - le - lu - ia!

Suf - fer to re - deem our loss. Al - le - lu - ia!  
Sin - ners to re - deem and save. Al - le - lu - ia!  
Where the an - gels ev - er sing. Al - le - lu - ia!  
Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. Al - le - lu - ia!

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