

# SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Prepared to Make a Defense

**PAX Worship Service**

May 14, 2023

## **AS WE GATHER**

We live in a world where we increasingly hear strange ideas. The people we work, play, and live near increasingly consider the truths that our God created this world and redeemed us to be strange. Jesus, Peter, and Paul lived in a world that had some striking similarities to our own. As we live out our Baptism, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to love Jesus and keep His commands. We are urged to always be “prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15). As we do so, it is easy to fall into the angry, divisive, argumentative patterns that we hear in the political realm. Yet, we are called to share our hope with gentleness and respect, so that we keep a clear conscience and suffer for doing good rather than evil.

## ✠ PREPARATION ✠

**OPENING SONG      *BECAUSE HE LIVES (AMEN)***

**Verse:            I believe in the Son; I believe in the Risen One;  
                      I believe I overcome by the power of His blood;**

*Chorus:            Amen, Amen, I'm alive, I'm alive because He lives;  
                      Amen, Amen, let my song join the one that never ends  
                      because He lives.*

**Verse: I was dead in the grave, I was covered in sin and shame.  
                      I heard mercy call my name, He rolled the stone away!**  
*(Chorus)*

**Bridge:            Because He lives, I can face tomorrow;  
                      Because He lives every fear is gone;**

**I know He holds my life, my future in His hands. (*Chorus X2*)**

**Because HE LIVES !**

**INVOCATION**

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
People: **Amen.**

**OPENING SENTENCES**

Pastor: Alleluia! Christ is risen!  
People: **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Pastor: Jesus said, “Because I live, you also will live.”  
People: **In Him we live and move and have our being.**

Pastor: Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?  
People: **We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.**

Pastor: Alleluia! Christ is risen!  
People: **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

**CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION**

Pastor: Let us confess our sins to God, our Father, seeking His forgiveness through our risen Savior, Jesus Christ.  
People: **Heavenly Father, creator of all that was, is, and will ever be, we confess to You that we fall short of the calling that we have received from You, as Your dearly loved children. We have struggled to share the reason for the hope we have in You. We have not always responded to others with gentleness and respect. We have failed to live and share the love we have first**

**received from You. Forgive our sins, for Jesus' sake, and lead us to live lives that reflect Your indwelling presence.**

Pastor: Our God hears our prayers and forgives our sins because of Jesus' perfect life, death, and resurrection. At the command of Christ and through the power of the cross and the empty tomb, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Go in peace!

**People: Alleluia! Amen.**

### **SALUTATION**

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Pastor: Let us pray.

O God, You are the Creator of all things in heaven and on earth, and You have claimed and cleansed us to be Your people through the waters of Baptism.

**People: By Your Spirit, give us hearts and minds to hear Your Word.**

Pastor: Give us eyes and ears to see and listen to our world as You view and hear it.

**People: Give us words and actions to share the hope we have in You;**

Pastor: through Jesus Christ, our risen Savior and Lord, who lives eternally with the Father and the Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

### **FIRST READING**

*Acts 17:16–31*

<sup>16</sup> Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. <sup>17</sup> So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. <sup>18</sup> Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, "What does this babblers wish to say?" Others

said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. <sup>19</sup> And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? <sup>20</sup> For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.” <sup>21</sup> Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new. <sup>22</sup> So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. <sup>23</sup> For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup> The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man,<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>25</sup> nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. <sup>26</sup> And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, <sup>27</sup> that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, <sup>28</sup> for “‘In him we live and move and have our being’;<sup>[b]</sup> as even some of your own poets have said, “‘For we are indeed his offspring.’<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>29</sup> Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. <sup>30</sup> The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

## **EPISTLE**

### *1 Peter 3:13–22*

<sup>13</sup> Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup> having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup> For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. <sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered<sup>[a]</sup> once for

sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup> in which<sup>[b]</sup> he went and proclaimed<sup>[c]</sup> to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup> because<sup>[d]</sup> they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. <sup>21</sup> Baptism, which corresponds to this, 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, <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

### **HOLY GOSPEL**

*John 14:15–21*

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the fourteenth chapter.

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>15</sup> “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper,<sup>[a]</sup> to be with you forever, <sup>17</sup> even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be<sup>[b]</sup> in you. <sup>18</sup> “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

**NICENE CREED** (found inside back cover of the hymnal)

### **CHILDREN’S MESSAGE**

#### **SONG OF THE DAY**

*Holy Spirit*

Verse 1      **There's nothing worth more That could ever come close  
No thing can compare, You're our living hope Your presence**

Lord

**Verse 2** I've tasted and seen of the sweetest of loves Where my heart becomes free And my shame is undone Your presence Lord

**Chorus** *Holy Spirit You are welcome here Come flood this place and fill the atmosphere Your glory God is what our hearts long for  
To be overcome by Your presence Lord Your presence Lord  
(repeat verse 1, 2, chorus)*

**Bridge** Let us become more aware of Your presence  
Let us experience the glory of Your goodness (bridge X4)

**End** Holy Spirit You are welcome here Come flood this place and fill the atmosphere Your glory God is what our hearts long for  
To be overcome by Your presence Lord

**SERMON**

*“Averting Distractions”  
Vicar Justin Brockman*

*Acts 17:16-31*

**THE OFFERING** *(baskets will be passed)*

**PRESENTATION OF THE OFFERING SONG** **GRACE**

I was lost when You found me here; You pulled me close and held me near. And I'm a fool, but still You love. I'll be a fool for the King of love.

You gave me wings so I could fly, and gave me a song to color the sky. And all I have is all from You, and all I want is all of You.

**Chorus** It's grace, Your grace; I'm nothing without You. Your grace, Your grace, shines on me.

There've been days when I've walked away, too much to carry, nothing left to say, Forgive me, Lord, when I'm weak and lost, for You traded heaven for a wooden cross.

And all these years You've carried me, You've been my eyes  
when I could not see. And beauty grows in the driving rain,  
Your oil of gladness in the times of Pain.

### **Chorus X2**

**Tag** Shines on me, shines on me, Your grace, it shines on me.  
Shines on me, shines on me, It's Your grace.  
Shines on me, shines on me, Your grace, it shines on me.  
Shines on me, shines on me, it's Your grace.

### **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**Pastor:** Petitions heard... *(ending with...)* Lord, in Your mercy,  
**People:** hear our prayer.

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

**LORD'S PRAYER** *(found inside back cover of hymnal)*

### **THE WORDS OF OUR LORD**

**Pastor:** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took  
bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the  
disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for  
you. This do in remembrance of Me."

had In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He  
this given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you;  
for the cup is the New Testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you  
remembrance forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in  
of Me."

### **THE PEACE OF THE LORD**

**Pastor:** The peace of the Lord be with you always.  
**People:** Amen.

## **DISTRIBUTION**

## **POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING**

**Pastor:** Let us pray.  
We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People:** Amen.

## **BENEDICTION**

**Pastor:** The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

**People:** Amen.

## **CLOSING SONG      *Raise A Hallelujah***

**Verse 1**      I raise a hallelujah in the presence of my enemies I raise a hallelujah, louder than the unbelief I raise a hallelujah, my weapon is a melody I raise a hallelujah, heaven comes to fight for me

**Chorus**      I'm gonna sing in the middle of the storm Louder and louder, you're gonna hear my praises roar Up from the ashes, hope will arise Death is defeated, the King is alive

**Verse 2**      I raise a hallelujah with everything inside of me I raise a hallelujah, I will watch the darkness flee I raise a hallelujah in the middle of the mystery I raise a hallelujah, fear you lost your hold on me (Chorus)



**Bridge 1** Sing a little louder... sing a little louder Sing a little louder...  
sing a little louder Sing a little louder... sing a little louder  
Sing a little louder... sing a little louder

**Bridge 2** Sing a little louder... in the presence of my enemies Sing a  
little louder... louder than the unbeliever Sing a little louder...  
my weapon is a melody Sing a little louder... heaven comes to  
fight for me (repeat Bridge 2)

**Sing a little louder... (Chorus 2X)**

**I raise a hallelujah, I raise a hallelujah  
I raise a hallelujah, I raise a hallelujah**

**SILENT PRAYER**