

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Prepared to Make a Defense
Traditional 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 HYMN “*Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice*” #556 vs 1-4, 10

1 Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice, With exultation springing, And with united heart and voice And holy rapture singing, Proclaim the wonders God has done, How His right arm the vict'ry won,
What price our ransom cost Him!

2 Fast bound in Satan's chains I lay; Death brooded darkly o'er me.
Sin was my torment night and day; In sin my mother bore me. But daily deeper still I fell; My life became a living hell, So firmly sin possessed me.

3 My own good works all came to naught, No grace or merit gaining;
Free will against God's judgment fought, Dead to all good remaining.
My fears increased till sheer despair Left only death to be my share;
The pangs of hell I suffered.

4 **But God had seen my wretched state Before the world's foundation,
And mindful of His mercies great, He planned for my salvation.
He turned to me a father's heart; He did not choose the easy part
But gave His dearest treasure.**

10 **"What I on earth have done and taught Guide all your life and
teaching; So shall the kingdom's work be wrought And honored in your
preaching. But watch lest foes with base alloy The heav'nly treasure should
destroy; This final word I leave you."**

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
People: **(sing) 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.

☩ **WORD** ☩

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

¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰ For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.” ²¹ Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new. ²² So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. ²³ 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. ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man,^[a] ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. ²⁶ 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, ²⁷ 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, ²⁸ for “‘In him we live and move and have our being’;^[b] as even some of your own poets have said, “‘For we are indeed his offspring.’^[c] ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ 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

¹³ Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵ 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, ¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. ¹⁸ For Christ also suffered^[a] 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, ¹⁹ in which^[b] he went and proclaimed^[c] to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ because^[d] 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. ²¹ 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, ²² 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.**

¹⁵ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper,^[a] to be with you forever, ¹⁷ 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^[b] in you. ¹⁸ “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹ 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.**

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Built on the Rock”

#645

1 Built on the Rock the Church shall stand Even when steeples are falling. Crumbled have spires in ev'ry land; Bells still are chiming and calling, Calling the young and old to rest, But above all the soul distressed, Longing for rest everlasting.

2 Surely in temples made with hands God, the Most High, is not dwelling; High above earth His temple stands, All earthly temples excelling. Yet He who dwells in heav'n above Chooses to live with us in love, Making our bodies His temple.

3 We are God's house of living stones, Built for His own habitation. He through baptismal grace us owns Heirs of His wondrous salvation. Were we but two His name to tell, Yet He would deign with us to dwell With all His grace and His favor.

4 Here stands the font before our eyes, Telling how God has received us. Th'altar recalls Christ's sacrifice And what His Supper here gives us. Here sound the Scriptures that proclaim Christ yesterday, today, the same, And evermore, our Redeemer.

5 Grant, then, O God, Your will be done, That, when the church bells are ringing, Many in saving faith may come Where Christ His message is bringing: "I know MY own; My own know Me. You, not the world, My face shall see. My peace I leave with you. Amen."

SERMON

*"Averting Distractions"
Vicar Justin Brockman*

Acts 17:16-31

OFFERTORY

"Create in Me" #956

*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free spirit.
Amen.*

THE OFFERING *(baskets will be passed)*

PRESENTATION OF THE OFFERING HYMN

“Come, My Soul, with Every Care”

#779

**Come, my soul, with ev'ry care, Jesus loves to answer prayer;
He Himself has bid thee pray, Therefore will not turn away.
Thou art coming to a King, Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and pow'r are such None can ever ask too much.**

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

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

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

PREFACE

Pastor: The Lord be with you.
People: **(sing) And with thy spirit.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.
People: **(sing) We lift them up unto the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People: **(sing) It is meet and right so to do.**

PROPER PREFACE

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. By His Word, He has caused us to receive saving faith, and by His death and resurrection, He has given us the sure hope that because He lives, we will also for eternity. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

#195

(sing) Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth; heav'n and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He, blessed is He, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, we worship You as the One who has created this world and everything in it and still takes care of it. In Your great love for humanity, You sent Your Son, Jesus, to suffer once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to You, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which He went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison and who has gone into heaven and is at Your right hand, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to Him. As we come together at Jesus' Table, we prepare to celebrate the gift He gives us, the full forgiveness of our sins as we eat and drink His body and blood that come to us in bread and wine. Through this Meal, empower us by Your Spirit to love You by keeping Your commands; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord and Savior.

People: (sing) Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER *(found inside back cover of the 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." In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

PAX DOMINI

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.
People: (sing) Amen.

AGNUS DEI

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of world, grant us Thy peace. Amen.

DISTRIBUTION *“I Come, O Savior, to Thy Table”* #618

1 I come, O Savior, to Thy table, For weak and weary is my soul; Thou, Bread of Life, alone art able To satisfy and make me whole: Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood Be for my soul the highest good!

2 Thy heart is filled with fervent yearning That sinners may salvation see Who, Lord, to Thee in faith are turning; So I, a sinner, come to Thee. Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood Be for my soul the highest good!

3 Unworthy though I am, O Savior, Because I have a sinful heart, Yet Thou Thy lamb wilt banish never, For Thou my faithful shepherd art: Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood Be for my soul the highest good!

4 Weary am I and heavy laden; With sin my soul is sore oppressed; Receive me graciously and gladden My heart, for I am now Thy guest. Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood Be for my soul the highest good!

5 What higher gift can we inherit? It is fatih’s bond and solid base; It is the strength of heart and spirit, The covenant of hope and grace. Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood Be for my soul the highest good!

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray.
We thank You, our Maker, for creating us and for re-creating us through the cleansing waters of Baptism. We specifically thank You this day for serving us the body and blood of Jesus, in bread and wine, for the forgiveness of our sins. Empower us to join You

in the work You are doing in our world; through Jesus Christ,
Your Son, our Lord, who lives and rules with You and the Holy
Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: (sing) 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: (sing) Amen, Amen, Amen.

CLOSING HYMN *“Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word”* #655

1 Lord, keep us steadfast in Your Word; Curb those who by deceit or
sword Would wrest the kingdom from Your Son And bring to naught
all He has done.

2 Lord Jesus Christ, Your pow'r make known, For You are Lord of
lords alone; Defend Your holy Church that we May sing your praise
eternally.

3 O Comforter of priceless worth, Send peace and unity on earth;
Support us in our final strife And lead us out of death to life.

SILENT PRAYER