

Seventh Sunday of **EASTER**

May 24, 2020

For video viewing of music and service go to:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLEO_pAVddaeV1_dOvvUd5eITX0IJKxqmM

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray together:

C: *O God of glory, your Son Jesus Christ suffered for us and ascended to your right hand. Unite us with Christ and each other in suffering and in joy, that all the world may be drawn into your bountiful presence, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen*

***THE FIRST LESSON**

Acts 1:6-14

⁶When [the apostles] had come together, they asked [Jesus], "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." ¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. ¹³When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

***THE SECOND LESSON**

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

^{5:6}Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. ⁸Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. ¹⁰And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

***THE GOSPEL READING**

John 17:1-11

¹After Jesus had spoken these words [to his disciples], he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. ⁵So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. ⁶I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; ⁸for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one."

SERMON: PASTOR RICHARD CARBAUGH

“And they were constantly devoting themselves to prayer.” Following Easter, and before Pentecost, Jesus, as we say in our creed, ‘ascended into heaven’. After witnessing this event, the disciples turned their gaze from the skies back down to earth. They returned to Jerusalem, went to the room upstairs where they were staying, and were ‘constantly devoting themselves to prayer’. I invite you today to focus on this spiritual discipline we call prayer.

Have you ever had someone say to you, or perhaps you have said it yourself: “I’ll pray for you”? Do you ever wonder how many of those statements actually end up in prayers being offered? Hopefully, they all do. And do you ever wonder what the intention is when someone says those words? It could be heard as a promise of concern: “I’ll pray for you because you are hurting and need strength.” It could also be heard as a kind of judgement: “I’ll pray for you because clearly there is something wrong with you and you need to change.” One thing I know, being prayed for can be a powerful thing. When I was in seminary, I remember being in a group where each person was prayed for out loud by every other member of the group. I remember feeling extremely supported by that experience. Here at Messiah, we pray for each other - for those we know and for those we don’t know. I know I am remembering you in prayer each and every day - and I mean it, just as I know you are praying for others and know you mean it as well. We want to be sure that our saying ‘I’ll pray for you’ means something.

There was a kindergarten class that went to a fire station for a tour, which included some instruction on fire safety. The fireman was explaining what to do in case of a fire. He said: “First, go to the door and feel the door to see if it is hot. Next, fall to your knees. Does anyone know why you ought to fall to your knees?” One of the little ones said: “Sure, to start praying to ask God to get you out of there!” Most of us are pretty good at emergency praying. Emergency praying is when we, or someone we know, has a problem and we want God to help us get out of it. I suspect that far fewer of us are very good at constantly devoting ourselves to prayer. Constant praying, or ‘praying without ceasing’ as St. Paul says, requires that prayer be as natural and as necessary as eating and sleeping. It requires that it not be a last resort, but a first step. So, what is prayer and why do we pray? There are so many ways to talk about prayer. We pray to receive God’s presence in our lives. We pray to do what God has called us to do. We pray to be what God has called us to be. Prayer is taking the time to remember why you are and who you are before how you will.

In addition to the phrase ‘I’ll pray for you’, another phrase that is often said is: “Be careful what you pray for”. Usually that seems to mean that you might get what you asked for and it may not be what you thought it would be. But another

sense of 'being careful what you pray for' is that for every prayer, God looks for someone to help answer that prayer - and often, that someone is the person praying. Prayer is, in effect, engaging ourselves in the purpose of God. It is opening ourselves up to be an instrument of God's power.

Albert Schweitzer prayed for God to save the natives in Africa; and God said: "I want you to help me". Mother Teresa prayed for God to redeem the needy of India; and God said: "I want you to help me". We pray for the hungry and homeless, for the lonely and ill, for the peace of the whole world and for the care of creation - and God says: "I want you to help me". We pray for what is needed to care for the ministry of the church - and God says: "I want you to help me". Someone has said that 'one of the things prayer helps us realize is that God is after my soul. And if God gets my soul, God gets me. And if God gets me, God gets all I have and all I am'. Be careful what you pray for.

Mother Teresa was once crossing the border into Israel when a guard asked her if she was carrying any weapons. That seemed a pretty strange question for a nun wearing a habit, but she looked the guard in the eyes and said: "Yes, I have my prayer books with me." Prayer releases God's power in ourselves, in others, and in our world. Prayer gives us strength in times of need, gives us hope in times of despair, gives us courage in times of opportunity.

The thing that is so wonderful about our Gospel reading is that Jesus is praying for His disciples - for us. "I am asking, praying, on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. Holy Father, protect them in your name." Jesus says: "I'll pray for you". He says that because of the great love with which He loves us. After all, prayer is not about certain methods; it is not about the right techniques; it is not about saying the right words. Prayer is about an enduring, growing relationship of love. Samuel Coleridge said: "He prayeth well, who loveth well."

It is like that story of the father who was walking with his 2 year old son through a shopping mall. The child was in a particularly cantankerous mood - fussing and fuming. The frustrated father tried everything to calm his son, but nothing seemed to help. Finally, the father scooped his son up, held him close, and began singing an impromptu love song. None of the words rhymed. He sang off key. Still, the father was singing out of his heart. The words sent something like: I love you. I'm so glad you are my boy. You make me happy. I like the way you laugh." On they went, as the father continued to sing off key, making up words that did not rhyme. Amazingly, the child relaxed as he listened to this strange and wonderful song. When they got to their car, and as the father prepared to buckle his son into the car, the child lifted his head and said simply: "Sing it to me again, Daddy! Sing it to me again!"

I think prayer is a little like that. With humility and simplicity of heart, through prayer we let ourselves be gathered up into the arms of the Father and hear God sing a love song over us. Let us take time to be caught up in God's song of love, take time to talk to the One who loves us. Let us constantly devote ourselves to prayer, fully believing that when Jesus says 'I'll pray for you' - He means it! Amen.

***NICENE CREED**

**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**

A: Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need. *(A brief silence.)*

A: O God, call your people to be one, as you are one. Unite your church in the truth of your gospel, the love of our neighbor, and the call to proclaim your reign to all people. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Breathe life into your creation. Guide your people as we explore the mysteries of the universe. We pray for the work of scientists and mathematicians whose skill enriches our understanding (like Nicholas Copernicus and Leonard Euler, whom the church commemorates today). Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Make your justice known among the nations of the earth. Protect the vulnerable (especially in nations currently in crisis). Redirect those who use violence and greed as weapons. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Come to the aid of your children. We pray for those engulfed in grief, those without supportive families, and for all who are isolated, powerless, or afraid, that all may rest their anxieties in your care. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Give courage to all who embark on new ventures. We especially remember this day those who risked their lives to serve in our armed forces. Grant safety to those serving at home or abroad, and assure them of your never-failing strength. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: God, you are life. We pray for our world, our country, our community, our church as they face the challenges of coronavirus. We pray for those who grieve the loss of love ones, for the sick and their families, for those fearful of an unknown future. We pray for the millions of unemployed, for children and others at home - that they be safe from abuse. We pray for those who are alone and isolated during this time that they may feel your loving presence. We pray for all the hospital and health care workers, and all first responders, that they receive needed supplies and be kept protected in the work they do. We pray for those making decisions about how to live into the future and when that will happen. Keep us all in your care as we wait for a new day. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of families. For all our Messiah families and especially this week for the Cline, Collie and Combs families. For the talents and good things You have given each of them. Keep them united and faithful to You and each other. Guide them, protect them and equip them to do Your will. Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A: With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

***THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

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.

***BENEDICTION**

P: May the One who brought forth Jesus from the dead raise you to new life, fill you with hope, and turn your mourning into dancing. Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASTOR CARBAUGH'S OFFICE HOURS

For the time being Pastor Carbaugh will be working from home. If you need to reach him, his email address is: messiahmechpr@gmail.com. In the event of a pastoral emergency, he can be reached at 540-760-4089. Please be safe and take care during this challenging time for us.

WEEKLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

Beginning March 8th, we began providing a summary of the financial well-being of our congregation. Here is this week's information:

- Contributions to general fund averaged \$3138 through May 10th (up from \$3109 on May 10th).
- We are \$5300.41 behind the year-to-date budget needs (up from \$5601.41 behind the budget the week prior).

VIRTUAL TONGUES OF FIRE 5K

The Virginia Synod invites you to join them in your home or neighborhood for a **Virtual 5k on Sunday May 31!** For more information and to register for the 5K, visit <https://www.vasynod.org/virginia-synod-5k/>. The deadline to register for the 5K is Tuesday May 26th, so make sure to get you and your team's registration in ASAP!

PANDEMIC HOPE: A FAMILY DEVOTIONAL FOR LIFE DURING COVID-19

Built around "Faith 5", *Pandemic Hope* is a Devotional for families that focuses on the new realities we are all living in each day. It provides daily readings and activities for 8 weeks to work together with those who you are staying safe at home with. To read and download this devotional go to:

https://www.vasynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Pandemic_Faith_Devotional.pdf

EVENTS CANCELED

During this pandemic time, the Virginia Synod has canceled the following events for this year: Synod Assembly, Power in the Spirit, Kairos, Launch and the Junior-High event in July was just added this week. For more information, go to the Synod website: <https://www.vasynod.org/>.

JOAN BARNES SCHOLARSHIP

Church Council is pleased to announce that applications for the Joan Barnes Scholarship have been made available by our scholarship team. Hopefully all members have received an email with information concerning the changes in the scholarship process. Please note that all applications are due no later than June 22nd to the church office. All information along with the application has also been put on the church website. If you have specific questions about the scholarship or application process, please contact Sally Bennett at sallybennett3317@gmail.com and she will assist you.

LOAN RECEIVED

It is with great pleasure that Church Council can announce that our loan of \$15,000 from Thrivent has been approved. When received, it will be sent to A+ Roofing to continue payment for our roof replacement completion. Remainder of payment to A+ will occur in the near future! God is good!

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

To continue in your faithful giving, mail in your offering to the church office, 8154 Atlee Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111, or use on-line giving through Vanco which is available on the church website. See messiahmech.com for more details.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Those who would like to place announcements in our Sunday 'ebulletin' please send them to Donna Shaw at dmslaw70@gmail.com by Wednesday for inclusion.

Prayer List

WE PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

Kenneth Deere	"Doc" Kondaki
Adam Dworak, Sr.	Linda Krupa
JoAn Firebaugh	Mac McAllister
Bill Fulop	Roberta McMillen
Elisabeth Gardner	Pat Motley
Werner Gardner	Nathan, Ruth Schroeder & family
Steve Gilnett	Judy Schwerdtfeger
Geoffrey Honan	

WE PRAY FOR OUR EXTENDED FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS

Danny Allen, friend of the Whirleys
Boyd Allison, friend of Jean Wightman.
Family and Friends of Dennis Anderson, father of James Anderson.
Joe Griffin, friend of Anne Mason.
Pete Gunn, friend of the Schwerdtfeger's
Christina Nibali, sister of Anita Philip.
Dee Schroeder, sister-in-law of Roger.
Tim Schroeder, nephew of Roger.
Family and friends of Wanda Umlauf, Vicar Ginny Banister's mother
T.J., grandson of the Whirleys.

Pastor Carbaugh, as he walks with us in this interim time
Our veterans, their fellow soldiers & their waiting families
All law enforcement, firefighters & first responders
The people and pastor, Rev. Katherine, of All Souls Episcopal & our shared ministry

Hospitals, nursing homes, other health care facilities
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
The World Health Organization Medical researchers and scientists
Schools, workplaces, government institutions and municipal agencies
For all who travel