

**Service from West Kish Presbyterian Church
and St. John's Lutheran
Radio Broadcast. Big Lewie radio AM 670, FM 92.9
May 24, 2020**



**SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER
MAY 24, 2020**

PRELUDE - Memorial Day Music

CALL to WORSHIP - Sunday morning Belleville bells

WELCOME ~ Good morning. This is Rev. Ela Robertson, pastor at St. John's Lutheran and West Kish Presbyterian in Belleville, PA. We ring in our worship with the bells of St. Johns welcoming all listeners to this service on the 7th Sunday in the Easter Season and the first Sunday after the Ascension of the Lord also the Sunday before Memorial Day. This is the first day in-who-knows-how-long there has not been a Memorial Day parade in Belleville. So we have begun with one of the national celebration songs from our hymn books. We will try to send out, on email or facebook, a collection of these John has recorded for you to enjoy on Monday and have your own little parades.

Our worship team this morning includes: Lisa Griffith - cantor and singer; John Haubrick -organ; Will Cullingford -recording tech: Reader – Ed Bilich; and Joy Byler and Kelly Byler - providing our bulletins. The broadcast does not include everything in the bulletin.

As we continue in this series of recorded broadcasts we celebrate the opportunity to bring many voices together from their homes here in Big Valley, from other states and even across the ocean. Over the last few weeks I have asked people, through email and personally to reflect on what this time during stay-at- home orders and the shut-down of church buildings has meant to them theologically: What do you think God has been saying to you, to us, what have you learned? And I ask you to think about that during the music interludes. We will weave this sharing into our reflections on scripture, Ascension, song and prayer.

Through the Holy Spirit, let us invite Christ into our hearts through our worship today. We begin with thoughts from Gwen Hornberger. Though not verbatim she expressed: ‘We again see God is greater than anything we know, greater than everything that is going on, and that God is there always, always there with us.

Scripture sent from Lisa Griffith, Philippians 4:4-7, similarly proclaims:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Stanzas 1-3, *Lyra Davidica*, 1708
Stanza 4, Charles Wesley, 1740

Lyra Davidica, 1708
Adapted from *The Compleat Psalmist*, 1749
Desc. *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, 1955

Descant

1. Je - sus Christ is risen 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 heaven-ly King, Al - le - lu - ia!
Our sal - va - tion have pro - cured; Al - le - lu - ia!
Praise e - ter - nal as God's 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 our God, ye heaven-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!

Played on organ by John Haubrick, *Majesty* by Jay Haybrook expresses these thoughts in music and heralds in our Sunday after Ascension. It is followed by our first hymn 'Jesus Christ is Risen Today' commemorating the end of the Easter Season and our turn towards Pentecost next week.

SPECIAL MUSIC: *Majesty*

HYMN of PRAISE ~ *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today*

CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS

Loving God, we confess that we do not always bring honor and glory to your name. We are rebellious and weak; impatient and petulant; we flee before your goodness. Forgive, restore, and strengthen us by the grace and mercy of Christ, that we may rise up again in peace to love and serve your world. Amen.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS Sisters and brothers, the Spirit of God is resting on you, to restore, support, and strengthen you. Therefore, be at peace in the One who forgives and loves you; rise up and give God thanks.

THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always
Let us extend the peace, to the North, South, East and West, beyond the walls of our homes and into the world.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Spirit of Glory, Spirit of God, bless us with a word of life this day to restore, support, and strengthen us. Come Holy Spirit, open our minds to see the power of Scripture to give life; enlighten our hearts that we might see Christ in all whom we meet; in the name of the one, holy, and living God, to whom we give all glory. Amen.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE ~ (sung by Lisa Griffith) Gloria

LESSONS and PSALM (you are encouraged to read these in your celebrate, bulletin or Bible before the service.)

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

Gospel Reading: John 17:1-11

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION ~ (sung by Lisa Griffith)

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia, alleluia.

HOLY GOSPEL ~ John 17:1-11

REFLECTION on THE LESSONS Rev. Ela J. Robertson

Christ's prayer to God the Father at the end of this reading from John is a prayer for unity: *Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.*" The words 'glory' and 'glorified' repeated five times in ten verses are central to the text and it seems that the primary way Christ hopes we will glorify God is through being one, being in unity, being community. He knows we will need help, we will need God's protection to do so.

Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them (John 17:7-8)

A colleague, Tyler Downing, a former minister in our Presbytery, also ends a letter to us in the midst of Covid 19 with a call to unity and a call to profess the words, the faith that has been given us. I would like to share parts of his letter: *As people of faith, our voices must speak strongly and wisely with truth and vision. We must become true leaders within our communities, understanding both danger, wisdom, and pain. We must speak with hope in a God who still loves us. We must create new missions of caring even as we step-out into this shaken world. And, we should constantly speak with love, especially to those who are angry or who lack full understanding that this has affected them or that this is not going away simply when we say it should. We must speak and act with care and compassion to those operating in our food supply, public safety, and medical networks. We must not let ourselves become swept-up in the divisive arguments that diminish us.*

We must listen and pray, preach and lead, as well as care and unite in the Spirit of Christ.

Paul says to us through the words he sent to Ephesus: By grace we are saved thru faith and this is not of ourselves, it is the true gift of God.

These words are also reflected in a second reading Lisa Griffith sent me: 1st Corinthians 2:9-10

But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

This could very well describe the experience of Ascension. The truth of Christ in God and God in Christ - unimaginable vision, unimaginable revelation, unimaginable glory all because God loves us.

However, as I read these first lines "*What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived,*" I immediately thought of two things. One, with Memorial Day so close - how no human heart could have conceived of the devastation of WWI nor the plague that followed the troops home from Europe, which spread in victory celebrations and wiped out more than those lost on the battlefield. No human heart could have conceived of the human atrocities of WWII and other 20th century genocides and natural catastrophes. Yet God was with us throughout.

Second, no one has seen, except through a microscope, the corona virus - that spiky globe that to me looks so much like a sweet gum tree seed ball. We fear what we do not know, what we can not see. For me collecting those seed balls and making a crown for our Good Friday and Easter crosses at our two closed churches was a way to visualize, make real the deaths the virus has wrought, and the need for constant prayer it has brought. At the same time it provided a reminder that Christ wears the Crown over all.

At West Kish Presbyterian I have intentionally left that ribboned palm cross and sweet gum corona crown up on the light post in front of the church. A reminder of the power of the virus, a reminder of the greater power of our triune God, and reminder to, as Acts 1:14 tells us today, to pray!

After witnessing Christ's ascension into the heavens the disciples went to the room upstairs where they were staying. All these men and women devoted themselves to constant prayer.

Let us pray.

O God of glory, sovereign of all nations, the risen and ascended Christ calls us to carry your message of life to all people. Led by the power of your Holy Spirit, may we witness always to the hope to which we are called as we share Christ's love to the end of the earth. Amen.

Crown Him with Many Crowns

1 Crown him with man - y crowns, The Lamb up - on his throne; Hark,
 2 Crown him the vir - gin's Son, The God in - car - nate born, Whose
 3 Crown him the Lord of love— Be - hold his hands and side, Rich
 4 Crown him the Lord of life, Who tri - umphed o'er the grave And

how the heav'n - ly an - them drowns All mu - sic but its own. A -
 arm those crim - son tro - phies won Which now his brow a - dorn; Fruit
 wounds, yet vis - i - ble a - bove, In beau - ty glo - ri - fied. No
 rose vic - to - rious in the strife For those he came to save. His

wake, my soul, and sing Of him who died for thee, And
 of the mys - tic rose, Yet of that rose the stem, The
 an - gels in the sky Can ful - ly bear that sight, But
 glo - ries now we sing, Who died and rose on high, Who

hail him as thy match - less king Through all e - ter - ni - ty.
 root whence mer - cy ev - er flows, The babe of Beth - le - hem.
 down - ward bend their burn - ing eyes At mys - ter - ies so bright.
 died, e - ter - nal life to bring, And lives that death may die.

5 Crown him the Lord of peace,
 Whose pow'r a scepter sways
 From pole to pole, that wars may cease,
 Absorbed in prayer and praise.
 His reign shall know no end,
 And round his pierced feet
 Fair flow'rs of paradise extend
 Their fragrance ever sweet.

6 Crown him the Lord of years,
 The potentate of time,
 Creator of the rolling spheres,
 Ineffably sublime.
 All hail, Redeemer, hail!
 For thou hast died for me;
 Thy praise and glory shall not fail
 Throughout eternity.

HYMN ~ *Crown Him with Many Crowns* verses 1, 3, 5

OFFERTORY PRAYER: Glorious God, everything that is given to us rains forth out of the abundance of your love, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Bless these gifts and our lives together that all we are and all we offer give glory to you; in the name of Christ, who is the way, truth, and life. Amen.

APOSTLES CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into Hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

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

PRAYERS of the CHURCH ~ (please pray the prayers in the celebrate insert, on our prayer list and pray for all the concerns you hold in your heart.)

Redeeming God, you call us to devote ourselves constantly to prayer for the sake of Jesus Christ. Therefore, let us offer our prayers this day on behalf of your church and the world, saying, fill us with your Spirit's power, that we may be one with Christ, as Christ is one with you.

We pray with Thanksgiving today that though there continue to be increases in cases and deaths, in many places Covid 19 is on the down turn. We thank you for giving us the patience and endurance during this time to stem the tide of the virus in our community. We thank you that during this time, through the Holy Spirit, you have made each of our homes a temple. Give us discernment and wisdom as eagerly plan to return to worship at our church.

We pray for those most vulnerable, homeless on the streets, those lured into servitude from poverty and lack of resources, and for those who do not have the privilege of enough space to be able to social distance.

We pray for families who have not been able to be with elderly or ill loved ones and have been limited in ways they can honor and celebrate their passing, including especially this week the family and friends of Jane Cullen. Be with them and help them to know the power of the Holy Spirit and the love of God to transcend all boundaries.

We pray in thanksgiving, tender shepherd, for your tender touch when we cannot reach out to others. We continue in prayer to pray the prayer you taught us to pray.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 today our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses (debts) as we forgive those who trespass against us (debtors); 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 and CHARGE

God's Spirit is poured out upon us to make our hearts strong with love and bold with praise that we may proclaim God's love to the ends of the earth. May the glory of God fill you with praise, the beauty of Christ strengthen you in service, and the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with peace. Alleluia. AMEN.

POSTLUDE

Songs from the hymnal celebrating Memorial Day

Parts of our liturgy today are adapted from *Sundays and Seasons*, Augsburg Fortress and from Kimberly Bracken Long. *Feasting on the Word Worship Companion: Year A, Volume 1*, John Knox Press

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Please remember in prayer ~ Mary Byler, Audrey Michael and Donna Snook (sisters of Lucy Magda, Kim Aumiller, Ev Young, Samantha Smith, our members ~ Betty Harmon (Elmcroft), Carol Yoder, Diddy Cleck, Betty Smith, Memory Lane ~ Nancy Aumiller and sister, Sally Shingler.

Due to the cancellation of the VFW Memorial Day Parade, because of COVID-19, Belleville residents are invited to join in the "Vehicle Parade" tomorrow, May 25.

This parade of cars through Belleville is to celebrate Memorial Day, our Veterans still living and those who have died, and is also in honor of health-care and other essential workers who have and continue to put the needs of others before their own, during this pandemic.

Please meet at 8:45am at Boring's Garage (West Main St.) or at St. John's. A police cruiser, fire truck and ambulance will lead the way; just join in the line of cars. The route will cover Main Street, Shawnee Hills, Poe Street and Valley View Village.

Belleville residents, who would like to participate, are invited to decorate their cars in red, white and blue, with flags or however creative you wish to be. We hope you will join us either in the parade or by watching from your home.

St. John's daycare is scheduled to open on Monday, June 1 with precautionary measures in place. *Please pray* for the children and teachers as we navigate through this process, as best we can.

As most of you have heard, recently there was a tragic which displaced over 100 people who lived in the Blair House Apartment complex. At this time, monetary donations are greatly needed. If you would like to contribute to help the fire victims, you can either send it to the church (we will send a check for all donations received) and notate *Blair House Fire* or mail it to ~ the Huntingdon Presbyterian Church, 508 Mifflin Street, Huntingdon, PA 16652 and notate "Blair Building Fire Relief".

There is an ecumenical group initiating a food drive for workers at Geisinger Lewistown Hospital. Pastors will be going to pray together and take in food. They are not allowed to take home made items, so they must be purchased snacks. If you would like to donate either snacks or monetary donations toward the food, contact the church office.



Celebrate

Seventh Sunday of Easter
May 24, 2020

In these days between Ascension and Pentecost, we gather with the disciples in the upper room, waiting for the Spirit to transform the church around the world. In today's gospel Jesus prays for his followers and for their mission in his name. Amid religious, social, and economic divisions, we seek the unity that Jesus had with his Father. Made one in baptism, we go forth to live our faith in the world, eager for the unity that God intends for the whole human family.

Prayer of the Day

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.**

First Reading

Acts 1:6-14

Today's reading is part of the introduction to the narrative of the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost. These verses tell of the risen Lord's conversation with his disciples on the eve of his ascension, in which he promises that they will receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

When [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.

Psalms

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35; refrain, Ps. 68:4



Let God arise, and let God's ene-¹mies be scattered;
let those who ¹hate God flee.

²As smoke is driven away, so you should drive ¹them away;
as the wax melts before the fire,
so let the wicked perish at the pres-¹ence of God.

³But let the righteous be glad and rejoice ¹before God;
let them also be mer-¹ry and joyful.

⁴Sing to God, sing praises to God's name;
exalt the one who ¹rides the clouds;

I AM is that name, rejoice ¹before God! R

⁵In your holy habita-¹tion, O God,
you are a father to orphans, defend-¹er of widows;

⁶you give the solitary a home and bring forth prisoners ¹into freedom;
but the rebels shall live in ¹desert places.

⁷O God, when you went forth be-¹fore your people,
when you marched ¹through the wilderness,

⁸the earth quaked, and the skies poured down rain,
at the presence of God, the ¹God of Sinai,
at the presence of God, the ¹God of Israel.

⁹You sent a bountiful ¹rain, O God;
you restored your inheritance ¹when it languished.

¹⁰Your people found their ¹home in it;
in your goodness, O God,
you have made provision ¹for the poor. R

³²Sing to God, O kingdoms ¹of the earth;
sing praises ¹to the Lord.

³³You ride in the heavens, O God, in the ¹ancient heavens;
you send forth your voice, your ¹mighty voice.

³⁴Ascribe pow-¹er to God,
whose majesty is over Israel; whose strength is ¹in the skies.

³⁵How wonderful you are in your holy places, O ¹God of Israel,
giving strength and power to your people! ¹Blessed be God! R

Second Reading

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

Our faith in Christ does not make us immune from the scorn of others. Nevertheless, we are to resist the designs of evil when we experience disparagement from others because we trust God's grace will strengthen and guide us.

Beloved, 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.

⁵⁻⁶Humble 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.

Gospel

John 17:1-11

On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus prays to his heavenly Father, asking that those who continue his work in this world will live in unity.

After 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.

⁶"I 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."

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

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.

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, **hear our prayer.**

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, **hear our prayer.**

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, **hear our prayer.**

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 99. **Tuesday** 1 Peter 4:7-11. **Wednesday** (commemoration of John Calvin, renewer of the church, died 1564) 1 Kings 8:54-65. **Thursday** Psalm 33:12-22. **Friday** (commemoration of Jiří Trnovský, hymnwriter, died 1637) Romans 8:14-17. **Saturday** (Vigil of Pentecost) Romans 8:14-17, 22-27. **Day of Pentecost** Acts 2:1-21 *or* Numbers 11:24-30; Psalm 104:24-34, 35b; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 *or* Acts 2:1-21; John 20:19-23 *or* John 7:37-39.

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