

*Liturgy*  
The Fifth Sunday of Easter  
Year A

GATHERING

Alleluia! Christ is risen!  
**The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;  
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

*Let us come before Him with thanksgiving  
and extol Him with music and song.*

**The LORD is my rock and my salvation,  
my shield and fortress.**

**I will call upon the LORD,  
who alone is worthy to be praised.**

For who is God,  
but the LORD?

*And who is a rock,  
except our God?*

**The LORD lives, and blessed be my rock,  
and exalted be the God of my salvation!**

— from Psalms 18 and 95:1-2

*All To Us*

Precious cornerstone, sure foundation,  
You are faithful to the end.  
We are waiting on You, Jesus.  
We believe; You're all to us.  
(repeat)

*Chorus:*

Let the glory of Your name  
Be the passion of the Church.  
Let the righteousness of God  
Be a holy flame that burns.  
Let the saving love of Christ  
Be the measure of our lives.  
We believe; You're all to us.

Only Son of God, sent from heaven;  
Hope and mercy at the cross.  
You are everything, You're the promise;  
Jesus, You are all to us.

*Chorus*

*Bridge*

You're all to us; You're all to us;  
You're all to us, You are.

When this passing world is over, we will see You face to face.  
And forever we will worship; Jesus, You are all to us.  
Jesus, You are all to us.

*LECTIONARY for the fifth Sunday of  
Easter, Year A:*

*Acts 7:55-60*

*Psalms 31:1-5, 15-16*

*1 Peter 2:2-10*

*John 14:1-14*

*The fifth Sunday of Eastertide brings us to the midpoint of the fifty-day liturgical season that begins with Resurrection Sunday and culminates on the Day of Pentecost. This day in the Christian year is traditionally focused on the church's ministry—both the ministry of the Church externally, to the world, and our ministry within the Church, one to another. In the season of Eastertide, we study and reflect on the meaning and ongoing significance of Christ's Resurrection, both for individual members of His Body and for all of His creation. In Year A, the lectionary invites us into a guided journey in which we consider several amazing and remarkable encounters and interactions with Christ.*

*Today, our readings include two very well-known New Testament passages: the account of the stoning of Stephen, the first martyr of the Church; and the beginning of Christ's last set of teachings to His disciples just before His betrayal and trial. This passage, part of Jesus' "Farewell Discourse," includes these familiar and comforting words: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." This liturgy focuses on the encounter of Stephen with the risen Christ; but we can hear the resonance of Jesus' words in John 14 throughout, as we ponder the experience, and faith, of Stephen.*

*The Gathering reading weaves together two psalms that echo the lection from Psalm 31 (which we use just below, at Confession). The Gathering hymn also supports and elaborates that declaration of faith: "You are indeed my Rock and my Fortress!"*

*Notice the resonance of our Gathering song with today's gospel text. You'll find it threaded throughout the liturgy.*

## INVOCATION

Prayers of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving for God's presence

### *Easter Doxology*

Hymns of praise, then, let us sing,  
Alleluia!  
Unto Christ, our heav'nly King,  
Alleluia!  
Who endured the cross and grave,  
Alleluia!  
Sinners to redeem and save,  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Text: Latin hymn, 14th century; transl. in *Lyra Davidica*, 1708,  
Hymn tune: Robert Williams.  
Second verse of the hymn, *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today*.  
Setting: Ellen Koehler. Copyright ©2011 Ellen Koehler. All Rights Reserved.

### *Blessed Assurance*

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
O what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

#### *Refrain*

This is my story, this is my song:  
Praising my Savior, all the day long;  
This is my story, this is my song:  
Praising my Savior, all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;  
Angels descending bring from above  
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Public domain. Words, Fanny Crosby, 1873; Music, Phoebe P. Knapp

## PROFESSION OF FAITH

Coming to Him as to a living stone,  
rejected by men,  
but chosen and precious in the sight of God –

**We also, as living stones,  
are being built up as a spiritual house,  
a holy priesthood,  
to offer up spiritual sacrifices  
acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**

For in Scripture it says,

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a chief cornerstone,  
chosen and precious;  
and whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame.”

**To us then who believe, this stone is precious.**

*This is the second verse of the Easter hymn, Jesus Christ Is Risen Today. It medleys nicely with the wonderful 19th-century hymn, Blessed Assurance, another favorite by lyricist Fanny Crosby. Together, this gives an interesting picture for contemplation of the Acts 7 passage. Blessed Assurance is said to be Crosby's most popular hymn because it appears in such a large number of hymnals.*

*The profession of faith is taken from the epistle reading for today. It is set for one readers with the responses by the congregation in bold.*

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

In You, LORD, I have taken refuge;  
let me never be put to shame;  
deliver me in Your righteousness.  
*Incline Your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue;  
be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me.*  
**You are indeed my rock and my fortress;  
for Your name's sake lead me and guide me.**  
Take me out of the net that is hidden for me,  
for You are my refuge.  
*Into Your hand I commit my spirit;  
You have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.*  
**You are indeed my rock and my fortress;  
for Your name's sake lead me and guide me.**

– Psalm 31:1-5

*O Lord, Hear My Prayer*

O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer,  
When I call answer me.  
O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer,  
Come and listen to me.

[Silent Confessions]

(sung):  
The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise;  
All my hope comes from God.  
The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise;  
God, the well-spring of life.

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ASSURANCE OF PARDON

People of God,  
this is good news indeed of forgiveness and pardon:  
You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood,  
a holy nation, God's own possession,  
in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts  
of Him who called you out of darkness  
into His marvelous light.  
Once you were not a people,  
but now you are God's people;  
once you had not received mercy,  
but now you have received mercy.

**Thanks be to God!**

– based on 1 Peter 2:9-10

*Passing of the Peace*

*We prepare our hearts for a time of  
confession by praying together the  
lection from the psalms.*

*The assurance text completes today's  
epistle reading from 1 Peter 2. (We  
used the first section as the Profession  
of Faith, above.)*

## TIME OF OFFERING

Words and prayers of thanksgiving and praise

### *I See the Lord*

I see the Lord,  
Seated on the throne, exalted;  
And the train of His robe  
Fills the temple with glory.  
And the whole earth is filled,  
And the whole earth is filled,  
And the whole earth is filled  
With His glory.

Holy, holy, holy, holy,  
Holy is the Lord.  
Holy, holy, holy, holy,  
Holy is the Lord.

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## THE WORD

Acts 7:55-60

Psalm 31:1-5,15-16

1 Peter 2:2-10

John 14:1-14

## THE TABLE

Remembering the Body of Christ

The Lord be with you!

**And also with you!**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again!**

*Our Father in Heaven* (sung)

Our Father in heaven, Your name is holy,  
Your name is holy, our Father.  
Your kingdom come, and Your will be done  
Here on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us, we pray, our bread for today,  
Our debts forgive and in turn we will live,  
Forgiving of what others owe.  
Keep us from trials; save us from our ancient foe!

As we sing the kingdom, we sing the power,  
We sing the glory be Yours – Forever. Amen. Amen. Amen!

Chris Alford and Ellen Koehler.  
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*Music for this setting of the Lord's Prayer, Our Father in Heaven, is available in the sheet music catalog as a lead sheet, and as a solo/melody line with piano accompaniment on request.*

<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/our-father-heaven>

*Christ, Our Hope In Life and Death*

What is our hope in life and death?  
Christ alone, Christ alone.  
What is our only confidence?  
That our souls to Him belong.  
Who holds our days within His hand?  
What comes, apart from His command?  
And what will keep us to the end?  
The love of Christ, in which we stand.

*Chorus*

O, sing hallelujah!  
Our hope springs eternal.  
O, sing hallelujah! Now  
and ever we confess:  
Christ our hope in life and death.

What truth can calm the troubled soul?  
God is good, God is good.  
Where is His grace and goodness known?  
In our great Redeemer's blood.  
Who holds our faith when fears arise?  
Who stands above the stormy trial?  
Who sends the waves that bring us nigh  
Unto the shore, the rock of Christ?

*Chorus*

Unto the grave, what shall we sing?  
"Christ, He lives; Christ, He lives!"  
And what reward will heaven bring?  
Everlasting life with Him.  
There we will rise to meet the Lord;  
Then sin and death will be destroyed.  
And we will feast in endless joy.  
When Christ is ours forevermore.

*Chorus*

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SENDING FORTH

The Life of the Body

*All To Us (verse 3)*

When this passing world is over,  
We will see You face to face,  
And forever we will worship;  
Jesus, You are all to us.

Let the glory of Your name be the passion of the Church.  
Let the righteousness of God be a holy flame that burns.  
Let the saving love of Christ be the measure of our lives.  
We believe; You're all to us.

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Chris Tomlin/Jesse Reeves/Matt Maher/Matt Redman.

Benediction:

Beloved, the glorious Lord of life,  
by the mighty resurrection of Jesus Christ,  
overcame the old order of sin and death  
to make all things new in Him.

**Amen. Thanks be to God!**

Now, as He appeared to Stephen in His glory,  
the righteous Judge of all  
and the source of true hope and security,  
so may our encounter with the living Christ  
compel us to go forth into the world  
to love and serve the Lord,  
giving witness to what we have seen and believed,

**Amen. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

*A thought about worship from the ancient Fathers –*

“Whatever two people have agreed on and asked for on earth will be done for them. For Christ says, ‘Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.’ Imagine when an entire congregation is gathered in the name of the Lord . . . So then, make yourselves worthy so that Christ will be in your midst. For where peace is, there Christ is because Christ is Peace. And where righteousness is, Christ is there because Christ is Righteousness. Let Him be in the midst of you, so that you can see Him. Otherwise it will be said to you, ‘There standeth One in the midst of you, whom ye see not.’ The Jews didn’t see Him whom they didn’t believe in. We see Him by our devotion and notice Him by faith. Therefore, let Him stand in your midst. Then the heavens that declare God’s glory will be opened to you and you will be able to do His will and work His works. As the heavens opened to Stephen, they will open to those who see Jesus. For Stephen said, ‘Behold I see the heavens opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.’ Jesus was standing as his advocate. He was standing as though He was anxious to help His athlete Stephen in his battle. He was standing as though He was ready to crown His martyr.”

– Ambrose

*Lectionary for next week:* Acts 17:22-31  
Psalm 66:8-20  
1 Peter 3:13-22  
John 14:15-21

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