

Liturgy

The Sixth Sunday of Easter
Year B

GATHERING

Alleluia! Christ is risen! The grave is empty; He has conquered death!
Alleluia! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

O sing to the LORD a new song, for He has done marvelous things,
His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.

**The LORD has made known His salvation;
He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations.**

He has remembered His lovingkindness and His faithfulness
to the house of Israel;

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth;

Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises
before the LORD, the King.

**Let the sea roar, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell in it;
let the rivers clap their hands and the mountains sing together
before the LORD!**

For He is coming to judge the earth;
He will judge the world with righteousness
and the peoples with equity.

**I will sing to the LORD, for He has done excellent things;
His lovingkindness and His faithfulness are everlasting.**

—Psalm 98

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty,
The King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him,
For He is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear,
Now to His temple draw near;
Join me in glad adoration!

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things
So wondrously reigneth,
Shelters thee under His wings,
Yea, so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen
How all thy longings have been
Granted in what He ordaineth?

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper
Thy work and defend thee;
Surely His goodness and mercy
Here daily attend thee.
Ponder anew
What the Almighty can do,
If with His love He befriend thee.

Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
If with His love He befriend thee.

Setting: Ellen Koehler Copyright ©2013 Ellen Koehler. All Rights Reserved.
Words: Joachim Neander, 1680; transl. by Catherine Winkworth, 1863.
Hymn tune: LOBE DEN HERREN, 1665.

*LECTIONARY for the sixth Sunday of
Easter, Year B*

Acts 10:44-48

Psalm 98

1 John 5:1-6

John 15:9-17

On this sixth Sunday of Eastertide, as we continue our study and contemplation of the meaning and significance of the Resurrection of Christ for all of His creation, our attention is brought to an amazing and wonderful truth (literally, a truth filled with wonder): Jesus calls us friends. How can this be? What can this mean? And who may be included?

As John records in Jesus' "Farewell Discourse"—His last words to His disciples whose relationship with Him would soon change and develop radically—Jesus assures them that He has loved them, just as the Father has loved Him. He promises that His precious followers will abide in His love, if they keep His commandments, but then also assures them that these commandments are not burdensome. For we are not servants, who blindly obey because we do not know what the Master is doing. No, we are friends, who share a warm relationship of love, camaraderie and abiding fellowship—with Him and with one another. These are amazing words indeed! And words we only begin to understand as we walk further with Him in this life of faith.

Ellen's setting of Praise to the Lord, the Almighty is available in the music catalog (Hymn Settings) as a lead sheet and scored for keyboard (suitable for piano or organ, also). See the commentary on this hymn setting for reflections on the text, performance suggestions, and creative ideas for using the hymn verses throughout a worship service.

Here is the link:

<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/praise-lord-almighty>

INVOCATION

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

Come, Christians, Join to Sing

Come, Christians, join to sing:

Alleluia! Amen!

Loud praise to Christ our King:

Alleluia! Amen!

Let all, with heart and voice,

Before His throne rejoice;

Praise is His gracious choice.

Alleluia! Amen!

Come, lift your hearts on high:

Alleluia! Amen!

Let praises fill the sky:

Alleluia! Amen!

He is our Guide and Friend,

To us He'll condescend;

His love shall never end.

Alleluia! Amen!

Alleluia! Amen!

Setting: Ellen Koehler. Copyright ©2013 Ellen Koehler. All Rights Reserved.

Words, Christian H. Bateman (*Sacred Melodies for Children*, Edinburgh, Scotland, 1843).

Hymn tune: MADRID (EVANS), traditional Spanish melody.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ
has been born of God;

*And everyone who loves the Father
loves the child born of Him.*

By this we know that we love the children of God:

**When we love God,
and obey His commandments.**

For this is the love of God,
that we keep His commandments.

*And His commandments are not burdensome,
for whatever is born of God overcomes the world.*

And this is the victory that overcomes the world:

Our faith.

Who are they who overcome the world,
but those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God?

**This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ;
not with water only, but with the water and the blood.**

It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is truth.

– 1 John 5:1-6

There is a treasure trove of songs and hymns on the theme of friendship with Jesus. You'll find several of them throughout this liturgy. Other suggestions include:

- All Creatures of Our God and King

- Fanny Crosby's Draw Me Nearer

- 'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

- O, Worship the King

- What A Friend We Have in Jesus

- Redeemer, Saviour, Friend (*CCLI*

Song #2831523; Chris Springer,

Darrell Evans)

- As the Deer (*CCLI Song #1431;*

Martin Nystrom)

The profession of faith sets today's epistle reading antiphonally for two individuals or groups within the congregation, with everyone reading the bold font.

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

Jesus said to His disciples:

As the Father has loved Me, so I have loved you; abide in My love.
If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love,
just as I have kept my Father's commandments
and abide in His love.

I have said these things to you so that My joy may be in you,
and that your joy may be complete.

This is My commandment, that you love one another
as I have loved you.

No one has greater love than this,
than to lay down one's life for one's friends.

– John 15:12-13

[Silence]

Most holy and loving God,

We confess to You and to one another,

**that we have sinned by our own fault
in thought, word, and deed;**

by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved You with our whole heart, and mind,

and strength. We have not loved others as You have loved us.

We have not forgiven others,

as we have been forgiven.

[Silence]

Have mercy on us, Lord.

Accept our repentance, and accomplish in us the work of Your salvation,

that we may show forth Your glory in the world;

through Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and forever. Amen.

Jesus! What a Friend For Sinners (Our Great Savior)

Jesus! what a Friend for sinners!

Jesus, Lover of my soul;

Friends may fail me, foes assail me,

He, my Savior, makes me whole.

Chorus:

Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Hallelujah! What a Friend!

Saving, helping, keeping, loving,

He is with me to the end.

Jesus! What a Strength in weakness!

Let me hide myself in Him;

Tempted, tried, and sometimes failing,

He, my Strength, my vict'ry wins.

Jesus! I do now adore Him,

More than all in Him I find;

He hath granted me forgiveness,

I am His, and He is mine.

Text: J. Wilbur Chapman, 1910. Hymn Tune: HYFRYDOL, Rowland H. Prichard, 1830.

This simple prayer of repentance is a variation of the traditional confessional prayers found in The Book of Common Prayer (Morning Prayer, rite two; and Penitential Order 1) A useful and user-friendly resource is The (Online) Book of Common Prayer [www.bcponline.org]

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The words of Jesus, great blessings of pardon:

You are My friends if you do what I command you.

I do not call you servants any longer,
because the servant does not know what the master is doing;
but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you
everything that I have heard from my Father.

You did not choose me, but I chose you.

And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last,
so that the Father will give you whatever you ask Him in My name.

I have said these things to you so that My joy may be in you,
and that your joy may be complete.

– John 15:14-16

Thanks be to God!

TIME OF OFFERING

Gracious God, we are amazed that You think of us,
and shower us with Your love.

You have shown Your love this week in so many ways

Even more amazing, You call us Your friends.

We bow down in worship, thanksgiving, and surrender.

Friend of God

Who am I that You are mindful of me,
That You hear me when I call?
Is it true that You are thinking of me?
How You love me,
It's amazing!

Chorus 1

I am a friend of God (3x)
He calls me friend.

Chorus 2

I am a friend of God (3x)
You call me friend.

Bridge

God Almighty, Lord of glory,
You have called me friend.

CCLI Song #3991651 ©2003 Integrity's Praise! Music. Israel Houghton, Michael Gungor

THE WORD

Acts 10:44-48

Psalm 98

1 John 5:1-6

John 15:9-17

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.

The Lord's Prayer (sung)

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your Name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
On earth as in heav'n.
Give us today our daily bread;
Forgive us our sins
As we forgive those who sin against us;
Save us from the time of trial,
And deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
And the glory are Yours.
Now and forever, Amen.

Setting by Eric Wyse; ©2000 Wildgrove Music (BMI)

O Church Arise

O church arise and put your armour on;
Hear the call of Christ our Captain.
For now the weak can say that they are strong
In the strength that God has given.
With shield of faith and belt of truth,
We'll stand against the devil's lies;
An army bold whose battle cry is Love,
Reaching out to those in darkness.

Our call to war, to love the captive soul,
But to rage against the captor;
And with the sword that makes the wounded whole,
We will fight with faith and valour.
When faced with trials on every side,
We know the outcome is secure;
And Christ will have the prize for which He died:
An inheritance of nations.

Come see the cross where love and mercy meet,
As the Son of God is stricken;
Then see His foes lie crushed beneath His feet,
For the Conqueror has risen!
And as the stone is rolled away,
And Christ emerges from the grave,
This victory march continues till the day
Every eye and heart shall see Him.

Eric Wyse's setting of the Lord's Prayer, Our Father in Heaven, is available at Score Exchange (<http://www.scoreexchange.com/scores/19379.html>)

O Church Arise echoes John's words of power and strength: "Whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world: our faith. Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4-5, NRSV) Depending on the focus of the sermon or teaching, you may prefer to use one of the other songs or hymns more closely focused on the theme of the friends of God.

So Spirit come,
Put strength in every stride;
Give grace for every hurdle.
That we may run
With faith to win the prize
Of a servant good and faithful.
As saints of old
Still line the way,
Retelling triumphs of His grace,
We hear their calls
And hunger for the day
When with Christ we stand in glory.

CCLI Song # 4611992. © 2005 Thankyou Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing).
Keith Getty, Stuart Townend.

Holy

I will lift my voice,
And I will sing,
I will sing, "Holy, holy,"
To my Lord and Savior,
My God and King:
I will sing, "Holy, holy."

I will praise the Lamb of God
Who sits upon the throne.
I will worship Him,
And give the praise to Him alone.
He who was and is and is to come:
I will sing before His throne
Forever, forever.

All the angels sing,
And they bow down,
And they sing, "Holy, holy."
We, Your sons and daughters,
We praise You now:
And we cry, "Holy, holy."

I will praise the Lamb of God
Who sits upon the throne.
I will worship Him,
And give the praise to Him alone.
He who was and is and is to come:
I will song before His throne
Forever, forever.

Holy, holy
Holy, holy . . .

Donnie McClurkin. ©2003 Seven Summits Music and Don Mac Music.

This song of love and praise has particular resonance with Christ's admonition that we abide in His love.

Come, Christians, Join to Sing (verse 3)

Praise yet our Christ again:
Alleluia! Amen!
Life shall not end the strain:
Alleluia! Amen!
On heaven's blissful shore,
His goodness we'll adore,
Singing forevermore:
Alleluia! Amen!
Alleluia! Amen!

Setting: Ellen Koehler. Copyright ©2013 Ellen Koehler. All Rights Reserved.
Words, Christian H. Bateman (*Sacred Melodies for Children*, Edinburgh, Scotland, 1843).
Hymn tune: MADRID (EVANS), traditional Spanish melody.

Benediction:

Almighty God,
whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world:
Grant that Your people, illumined by Your word and Table,
may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory.

Amen.

Now, brothers and sisters, as we go forth into the world to love and serve the Lord, let us remember with thankful hearts that He has called us into the company of those who trust in Christ and seek to obey His will. He has called us His friends, and has given us the privilege and charge to love and serve others as He has loved us.

And as we walk out our baptisms in the world, may He guide us closer to Him and to one another, in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace, confirming us in His ways, for His glory alone, forever.

Amen! Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

A thought about worship from the Ancient Fathers –

“When the martyrs obeyed the great commandments, they acted by a great will—that is, with great love. The Lord speaks of this great love: ‘Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.’ . . . The Apostle Peter didn't possess this love when he fearfully denied the Lord three times. ‘There is no fear in love,’ says John the Evangelist in his first epistle, ‘but perfect love casteth out fear.’ Even though Peter's love was small and imperfect, it was still present when he said to the Lord, ‘I will lay down my life for Thy sake.’ Peter believed he could carry out what he felt he was willing to do by himself. . . . However, God works in us so that we can have the will to obey. Once we have this will, God works with us to perfect us. The apostle Paul says, ‘I am confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.’”

– Origen

Lectionaries for next week:

Liturgy of the Ascension of the Lord

Acts 1:1-11
Psalms 47 and 93
Ephesians 1:15-23
Luke 24:44-53

The Seventh Sunday of Easter

Acts 1:15-26
Psalm 1
1 John 5:9-13
John 17:6-19

Copyright ©2021, 2024 Ellen Koehler. All Rights Reserved.

URL: <https://www.clerestorynotes.com>

As with the previous few weeks, today's benediction is a variation of the collect for the second Sunday after the Epiphany, from the Book of Common Prayer. Again this week, we weave in references to the readings from John's gospel and first epistle, along with Paul's admonition to unity in Ephesians 4:3.