



Sunday Devotion for Martin Luther Church

6th Sunday of Easter, May 17, 2020

A warm welcome to watch this devotion and related videos at
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIjEQnirqCMM-NgxcT_5wQU1MTY-_fbo

A. GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Words of Welcome

As we begin our time together here on the Sixth Sunday of Easter our readings will remind us, that much is expected, much was given, and much IS given. The readings take you on a journey, they are our story and yet they can feel far away. They prepare us for the journey to Pentecost which is in two weeks. Listen closely today, or if you are visual read along as well. It is a rollercoaster ride in First Peter we hear; Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? Not very reassuring is it? Then we hear Jesus' words in The Gospel of our Lord according to Saint John; I will love them and reveal myself to them, I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you, and I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. Peter sets the great challenges, Jesus promises to be near, and in the time of waiting, the solitude, the isolation we are emboldened by the advocate, the Spirit. We will celebrate the gifting of the Holy Spirit another day, but we know today, every day, the Spirit is our advocate. If like me you read this as a rollercoaster and you are not a fan of those, let's remember, fear, like death and sin, was vanquished on that cross. Our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer lives!



Prayer of the Day

Let us pray:

Almighty and ever-living God, you hold together all things in heaven and on earth. In your great mercy receive the prayers of all your children, and give to all the world the Spirit of your truth and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

B. WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

Psalm 66: 8-20, read by Larissa

8 Lobet, ihr Völker, unsern Gott,
lasst seinen Ruhm weit erschallen,
9 der unsre Seelen am Leben erhält
und lässt unsere Füße nicht gleiten.

10 Denn, Gott, du hast uns geprüft und geläutert,
wie das Silber geläutert wird;
11 du hast uns in den Turm werfen lassen,
du hast auf unsern Rücken eine Last gelegt,
12 du hast Menschen über unser Haupt fahren lassen, / wir sind in Feuer und Wasser
gekommen.
Aber du hast uns herausgeführt und erquickt.
13 Darum will ich in dein Haus gehen mit Brandopfern
und dir meine Gelübde erfüllen,
14 wie ich meine Lippen aufgetan habe
und mein Mund geredet hat in meiner Not.
15 Ich will dir Brandopfer bringen von fetten Schafen / mit dem Opferrauch von Widdern;
ich will opfern Rinder mit Böcken. *SELA*.
16 Kommt her, höret zu alle, die ihr Gott fürchtet;
ich will erzählen, was er an mir getan hat.
17 Zu ihm rief ich mit meinem Munde
und pries ihn mit meiner Zunge.
18 Wenn ich Unrechtes vorgehabt hätte in meinem Herzen,
so würde der Herr nicht hören.
19 Aber Gott hat mich erhört
und gemerkt auf mein Flehen.
20 Gelobt sei Gott, der mein Gebet nicht verwirft
noch seine Güte von mir wendet.

8 Bless our God, you peoples;
let the sound of praise be heard.
9 Our God has kept us among the living
and has not allowed our feet to slip.
10 For you, O God, have tested us;
you have tried us just as silver is tried.
11 You brought us into the net;
you laid heavy burdens upon our backs.
12 You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water,
but you brought us out into a place of refreshment.
13 I will enter your house with burnt offerings
and will pay you my vows—
14 those that I promised with my lips
and spoke with my mouth when I was in trouble.
15 I will offer you burnt offerings of fatlings with the smoke of rams;
I will give you oxen and goats.
16 Come and listen, all you who believe,
and I will tell you what God has done for me.
17 I called out to God with my mouth,
and praised the Lord with my tongue.
18 If I had cherished evil in my heart,
the Lord would not have heard me;
19 but in truth God has heard me
and has attended to the sound of my prayer.
20 Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer,
nor withheld unfailing love from me.

Gospel Reading: John 14:15-20, read by Marlen

15 Liebt ihr mich, so werdet ihr meine Gebote halten. 16 Und ich will den Vater bitten und er wird euch einen andern Tröster geben, dass er bei euch sei in Ewigkeit: 17 den Geist der Wahrheit, den die Welt nicht empfangen kann, denn sie sieht ihn nicht und kennt ihn nicht. Ihr kennt ihn, denn er bleibt bei euch und wird in euch sein. 18 Ich will euch nicht als Waisen zurücklassen; ich komme zu euch. 19 Es ist noch eine kleine Zeit, dann sieht die Welt mich nicht mehr. Ihr aber seht mich, denn **ich lebe, und ihr sollt auch leben.** 20 An jenem Tage werdet ihr erkennen, dass ich in meinem Vater bin und ihr in mir und ich in euch.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. 17 This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

18 "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. 19 In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

Sermon by ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson

Introduction by Vicar Adam McComb

Today we are going to hear a sermon offered by Bishop Susan, the National Bishop of the ELCIC. She has served as the National Bishop since 2007 and her consecration to the order of Bishops was actually done with both Lutheran and Anglican Bishops serving, she and The Anglican Primate of Canada Bishops Linda Nichols even offered an Easter Address together this year. During these new times it has been a real support to those of us in leadership here at MLC to be able to look to the wider church, wider churches for support. Today we can receive more from her as she offers a reflection on the word and these strange times.



Grace to you and peace in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

It's wonderful to be with you today in this way during this time of pandemic. Our national office is closed and I am working from home. It is easy to feel isolated and dislocated from the church that I am called to serve. And yet, I've joined in three different synod council meetings by Zoom, and I've joined congregations from each synod in worship. The synod bishops and I are meeting more frequently than ever. So are our national and synodical treasurers. In many ways I feel more connected to the church than ever before.



There is no doubt that the way we are being church is different in these times, and it may last for a lot longer than any of us had anticipated... But there is also no doubt that we still are a church, called to follow the way of Jesus and participate in God's mission to love and save the world. In today's gospel lesson Jesus reminds us that if we love him, we need to keep his commandments, to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and love our neighbours as ourselves.

If you are like me, then there are days when it seems pretty easy to follow this directive and there are days that it seems a lot harder. In this time of pandemic, it is easy to have days when I can get so anxious and worried that all I'm thinking of is myself. But there are other days where I am way more concerned with those who are working on the frontlines, for those who are mourning people who have died from COVID-19, for refugees living in camps with poor sanitary conditions, for homeless people in Canada, for those living on reserves with boil water advisories. And although I am not able to do very much directly to help, I increase my prayers and I increase my donations.

The wonderful thing is that Jesus does not just ask us to keep his commandments and then abandon us. Jesus promises not to leave us orphaned. In our Gospel lesson today, Jesus promises to send us an advocate, to help us and guide us in the ways of truth. This is, of course, the coming of the Holy Spirit that we will celebrate in two weeks on Pentecost.

Although today's Gospel lesson comes before Jesus' crucifixion and death, it is very similar to the messages of assurance that Jesus gives in his post-resurrection appearances. God is with us. Jesus is with us. The Spirit is with us. We are not alone. As Paul reminds us in the reading from Acts, in God we live and move and have our being.

In my lifetime, I have never experienced such a time as this. Prolonged isolation. Churches closed. The loss of many leisure activities. My work life totally restructured. For those who are working on the frontlines there is the real and present danger of getting sick or dying. For many people there have been loss of jobs, for many others great financial worries. We can keep in touch with loved ones by telephone or a number of electronic means, but it's not the same as being together, or giving and receiving hugs.

There are two natural kinds of responses we can experience in such disorienting times. To feel the absence of God: To ask where God is. To blame God for the pandemic. To ask why our prayers are not being answered. Or there is the opposite response: To feel more closely the presence of God.

If you are in the former camp, I totally understand it. But please hear me that God is with you. However, I'm firmly in the latter camp. I'm finding with fewer options of things to do and with a much more regular daily rhythm to my life that it is easier to have a regular and increased prayer and devotional life. I've been choosing a hymn each day and writing a prayer to go along with the hymn and encouraging you to join me. I sing the hymn most days and post it on social media. During my singing and my praying, I am so aware of God's presence. When I go out for my daily walk I have been so aware of God's presence in wind, and snow, and flooding, and the slow greening of a late prairie spring. I am so aware of God's presence with me when I get an unexpected call from a friend checking in on me. And in the smiles of grocery checkout clerks. In the kindness of people politely taking turns and keeping appropriate physical distancing measures.

My favourite prayer is "O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untraced, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

These are challenging times with unknown endings. But God is with us. Take courage in God's

presence and rest in God's love. We may be changed, but our beloved church will come through this as well.

Hymn: Now thank we all ELW 840 / Nun danket alle Gott EG 321

Now thank we all our God / with hearts and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done, / in whom this world rejoices;
who, from our mothers' arms, / has blest us on our way
with countless gifts of love, / and still is ours today.

Oh, may this bounteous God / through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts / and blessed peace to cheer us,
and keep us all in grace, / and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all harm / in this world and the next.

Der ewig reiche Gott / woll uns bei unserm Leben
ein immer fröhlich Herz / und edlen Frieden geben
und uns in seiner Gnad / erhalten fort und fort
und uns aus aller Not / erlösen hier und dort.

Lob, Ehr und Preis sei Gott / dem Vater und dem Sohne
und Gott dem Heiligen Geist / im höchsten Himmelsthronen,
ihm, dem dreieinigen Gott, / wie es im Anfang war
und ist und bleiben wird / so jetzt und immerdar.

Prayers of Intercession, read by Vicar Adam and Marlena

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.

Abiding God, you have revealed yourself to us in the form of your Son, Jesus Christ.
Embolden your church, as your followers, to reveal your love to everyone in our speaking and in our living,
Lord you are good,

**¹⁶Come and listen, all you who believe,
and I will tell you what God has done for me.**

You are the creator of heaven and earth, you entrust us with her care, you call us to be stewards, loving servants of yours, caring for creation, growing, sharing, rejoicing always in your love and presence, we ask you to enliven our servant hearts.
Lord, you are with us,

**²⁰Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer,
nor withheld unfailing love from me.**

The resurrection of our savior is ever on our minds in this easter season, brought to memory in the new life that springs forth each day around us. Each flower, bud, and bloom reminds us of the empty tomb.
Lord you are good,

**¹⁶Come and listen, all you who believe,
and I will tell you what God has done for me.**

You come near to us when we are lost, and you hear our distress. We pray for those who suffer in any way, those in long term care facilities, those serving at the front of a pandemic, the anxious, the afraid, the alone and lonely.

Lord, you are with us,

**²⁰Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer,
nor withheld unfailing love from me.**

Father we come before you in thanksgiving for this and each day, the smell of new life around us, and the joy of the sun on our face. We thank you for Tanya, Stephen, Ute, Astrid, Brian, Eileen, Keith- for the year they had and blessings for the year to come.

Lord you are good,

**¹⁶Come and listen, all you who believe,
and I will tell you what God has done for me.**

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

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer / Vaterunser, read by Vicar Jordan & Gisela
(Everyone in her and his mother tongue)

**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.**

**Vaterunser, der du bist im Himmel,
geheiligt werde dein Name,
dein Reich komme,
dein Wille geschehe,
wie im Himmel, also auch auf Erden.
Unser tägliches Brot gib uns heute
und vergib uns unsere Schuld,
wie auch wir vergeben
unsern Schuldigern.
Und führe uns nicht in Versuchung,
sondern erlöse uns von dem Bösen,
denn dein ist das Reich
und die Kraft und die Herrlichkeit
in Ewigkeit.
Amen.**

C. SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Blessing & Dismissal

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

Loving God, we thank you for hearing our prayers,
feeding us with your word, and encouraging us in our meeting together.
Take us and use us to love and serve you, and all people,
in the power of your Spirit and in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Announcements

In light of the current COVID-19 outbreak, **all meetings and worship services are taking place virtually.**

- Sunday [Video Devotions](#) are on our [YouTube Channel](#). Please subscribe and comment.
- German [Radio Devotions](#) on our website and Sundays at 9.30 am on CHLO Radio AM 530
- [Virtual Sunday Coffee Hour](#) at 11:00 am through Zoom (link sent by email)
- [Sunday School lessons](#) and [Fabulous Fridays](#) on our website
- [Virtual Coffee Shop Talk](#), Mondays 7:00-9:00 pm through Zoom led by Vicar Silke Fahl
- [Coffee or Lunch with Job](#): Bible Reading and Discussion about the Book of Job led by Vicar Jordan Smith starting Wednesday, May 20. Two opportunities: 8:30 am and 12:15 pm. Email vicarsmith@martinluther.ca to sign up.
- [Virtual Prayer Circle](#), Wednesdays 5:30-6:00 pm through Zoom led by Solveig Christina Voss; we also have a Prayer Request Wall in the Church Foyer
To request a prayer or join our prayer circle, email prayers@martinluther.ca.
- Ascension of our Lord / Christihimmelfahrt, May 21:
11:00 am German-language virtual reflection, prayer and conversation through Zoom led by Pastor Katharina Moeller (St. George's Church) and Pastor Ralph Carl (First Lutheran Church). Link sent by email.
5:30 pm Virtual Evening Prayer in English through Zoom hosted by First Lutheran Church
- [Give Peas a Chance](#)- A grow some, give some movement hosted by Martin Luther and Redeemer Lutheran with donated seeds. Register with Vicar Adam McComb at vicarmccomb@martinluther.ca by May 21 to participate.
- [Corona-Care Calls](#)- Volunteers are continuing to call you with more information and to understand your needs. Let us know if you'd like to join the call team!
- Please phone or email the church office:
 - ◇ if we can help you in any way
 - ◇ if you'd like to volunteer by doing Sunday readings, spring cleaning and growing seeds
 - ◇ with feedback on what we're offering
 - ◇ to support our church and [donate](#). Best ways are PAR or send cheque to church office

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*Member of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) &
Partnered with Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD)*