

May 24, 2020 - Easter 7

Parts of this service marked with an asterisk () may be led by one person.*

Invocation

* At the very end of Jesus' time with his disciples,
Jesus gave them the hardest command of all: Wait.
We have joined them in this waiting.
Yet even as we wait, we celebrate that Christ is risen!
Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Hymn (Read or sung together)

(Hymn lyrics printed under OneLicence # 11411292)

In Christ there is no east or west, in him no south or north,
but one community of love throughout the whole wide earth.

In Christ shall true hearts everywhere their high communion fond;
his service is the golden cord close binding humankind.

Join hands, disciples of the faith, whate'er your race may be.
All children of the living God are surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both east and west, in him meet south and north;
all Christly souls are one in him throughout the whole wide earth.

For those of you reading this on line, a slightly modified version of this hymn may be heard by clicking here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxG0EhEXA3k>

Prayer of the Day (Prayer used by permission of Augsburg Fortress)

* Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Let us pray.

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 Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the
Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Scripture Reading

* A reading from Acts

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But 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." When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They 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."

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying.... All [of them] were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

* I dial the phone.
I hear the ringing.
A mechanical Voice answers.
"Please hold."
And it begins.
Beep. Beep.
I wonder to myself,
How long this time?
Beep. Beep.
So I grab some paper.
And a pen.
Rats. It's not working.
Beep. Beep.
So, where's the pencil I used yesterday?
Oh yeah, I left it in the bedroom.
Beep. Beep.
Up the stairs.
Down the stairs.
And write a list of other things to do
when this is over.
Beep. Beep.
And it continues.
And I wait.
I wonder what's on TV?
Beep. Beep.
Hmm. The neighbour is doing some gardening.
I'm gonna have to mow one of these days....
Maybe I could play a computer game...
And then,
A click.
Oh good. It's over.
But The Voice is back.
"Your call is important to us.
Please stay on the line."

Another click.
And the waiting begins again.
Beep. Beep.
This Sunday is a lot like being On Hold.
Jesus is leaving the disciples.
He tells them to wait.
He makes a promise:

“You will receive Power!”

And then he’s gone.
And the waiting begins.
Beep. Beep.
I wonder if the disciples twiddled their thumbs.
Or made up endless “To Do” lists.
Or if their prayers were filled with impatience.
Or if they skipped the occasional prayer...

(since nothing seemed to be happening anyway).

Beep. Beep.
It’s hard, waiting like this.
When there’s no end in sight.
When there’s no light at the end of the tunnel.
When we don’t know how long
 to practice patience,
 or if it’s even worth while.

Beep. Beep.
Fortunately, being On Hold is not a new thing.
Being isolated is not a new phenomenon.
Granted, it’s still pretty new for us!
We are not at all used to it.
And the longer it drags on,
 the harder it gets.

Beep. Beep.
But think about the stories in the Bible.
God’s people have spent ***most of their time*** waiting.
Most of their time On Hold.
Most of their time praying,
 “How long, O Lord?”

Beep. Beep.
But, maybe, just maybe,
 God isn’t promising fulfilment.
Or the final destination.
Or ***any*** destination.
Maybe, just maybe,
 God is promising

presence on the journey.
Presence in our isolation.
Presence in our impatience.
Presence as we wait.
Beep. Beep.
Presence as we wait for the beeping to stop.
Presence as we wait for the waiting to end.
Presence as we wait for connection to be made.
Ultimately, presence to assure us,
no matter how long we have to wait...
that Christ is risen.
Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!
Amen.

Offerings

Please take a moment to support our parish with your financial gifts. Expenses continue, as you know, even in the middle of this pandemic shut-down. Your consistent support is crucial to maintaining the ministry of this parish.

You can do this several ways:

- *All of our churches will receive offerings via mail.*
- *You can make an on-line donation through the ELCIC website, secure.elcic.ca. Include the name of your congregation and its location in the "Personal Message" box.*
- *Zion in Lunenburg can receive on-line donations through www.canadahelps.org.*
- *Both Grace and Zion have installed a secure mail slot/box on the front of their buildings, in which your offering envelopes may be placed whenever convenient.*

Thank you for your on-going support in these challenging times.

Prayers of the People

* Celebrating the victory of love over death, we offer our prayers to God.

[Short pause]

God for whom we wait, it is hard to wait. We crave an end; we desire fulfilment. Breathe your patience into our hearts. God of Easter,

Hear our prayer.

God for whom we wait, you command us to wait, to pause, to let go and not be in charge.
Breathe faith into our hearts. God of Easter,

Hear our prayer.

God for whom we wait, your church is anxious about the future, and it is easy to give in to impatience. Breathe your love into our community. God of Easter,

Hear our prayer.

God for whom we wait, we pray for others who wait: the sick, waiting for treatment; the hungry waiting for food; refugees, waiting for safety; families, waiting for reconciliation; the poor, waiting for justice. Remind all the needy of your presence.

[Names of those who are of special concern may be offered.]

Breathe your healing into our world God of Easter,

Hear our prayer.

God for whom we wait, it is hard to wait. Remind us again that we are waiting for **you**. Breathe hope into all of creation. God of Easter,

Hear our prayer.

We pray this in the name of our risen and living Saviour, Jesus the Christ, who taught us to pray,

Our Father....

Lord's Prayer (*Prayer used by permission of Augsburg Fortress*)

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, for ever and ever. Amen.

OR

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and 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.

OR

To pray with the leaders of our local congregations, you may click here -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5D7r99aSnzg>

Hymn (*Read or sung together*)

(Hymn lyrics printed under OneLicence # 11411292)

Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one body,

Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people

Come now, O God of love, make us one body,

Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people

Come now and set us free, O God, our Saviour,

Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile all nations.

Come, Hope of unity, make us one body,

Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile all nations.

For those of you reading this on line, this hymn may be heard by clicking here -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8fE-OchXTU>

Benediction (*Read together*)

May almighty God,
The Father who created us to live in love,
The Son (†) who died and rose to bring us new life,
And the Spirit who empowers us, even to wait,
bless us all, now and forever. Amen.

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God!

For Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!