

Welcome to “Virtual Grace”  
from Grace Episcopal Church  
Honesdale, Pennsylvania

The Seventh Sunday of Easter  
16 May 2021

**The Sunday in Ascensiontide**

PRELUDE                      *“King of glory, King of peace”*                      Hymnal #382

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hello and blessings from Grace Episcopal Church in Honesdale, PA  
as we continue our Easter celebrations on this seventh Sunday in Easter,  
and the Sunday in Ascension-tide,  
following Jesus ascent to Heaven.  
I’m Fr. Ed Erb, rector of our parish.

While we are not able to have gatherings in doors,  
for the summer months  
we will hold services on Saturday at 5:00  
and Sunday at 10:00 outside in the courtyard.  
And as the weather warms, 8:00 on Sundays as well.  
Through May, we will continue offering these “Virtual Grace” broadcasts,  
as Sue and I move on to a new cure.

If you are in any pastoral need,  
or know anyone who would benefit from a visit, even with a mask,  
please e-mail me or call my cell-phone.

Let us now praise our God and Savior as we continue to proclaim:  
**Alleluia! Christ is risen!**

Splendor and honor and kingly power \*  
are yours by right, O Lord our God,  
For you created everything that is, \*  
and by your will they were created and have their being;

And yours by right, O Lamb that was slain, \*  
for with your blood you have redeemed for God,  
From every family, language, people, and nation, \*  
a kingdom of priests to serve our God.

And so, to him who sits upon the throne, \*  
and to Christ the Lamb,  
Be worship and praise, dominion and splendor, \*  
for ever and for evermore.

Splendor and honor and kingly power \*  
are yours by right, O Lord our God,

### **The COLLECT of the DAY**

Let us pray.      *silence is kept.*

O God, the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: Do not leave us comfortless, but send us your Holy Spirit to strengthen us, and exalt us to that place where our Savior Christ has gone before; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

### **The LESSON**

*Acts 1:15-17, 21-26*

In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred twenty persons) and said, "Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus-- for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry."

So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us-- one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection." So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed and said, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

The Word of God.

## GRADUAL

## Psalm 1

- 1 Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked, \*  
nor lingered in the way of sinners,  
nor sat in the seats of the scornful!
- 2 Their delight is in the law of the Lord, \*  
and they meditate on his law day and night.
- 3 They are like trees planted by streams of water,  
bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither; \*  
everything they do shall prosper.
- 4 It is not so with the wicked; \*  
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment comes, \*  
nor the sinner in the council of the righteous.
- 6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, \*  
but the way of the wicked is doomed.

## EPISTLE

*1 John 5:9-13*

If we receive human testimony, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has testified to his Son. Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony in their hearts. Those who do not believe in God have made him a liar by

not believing in the testimony that God has given concerning his Son. And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

The Word of God.

The HOLY GOSPEL of our Savior Jesus Christ

*John 17:6-10, 14-19*

Jesus prayed for his disciples, saying, "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. 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, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I 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. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.

I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

The Gospel of Christ.

## MEDITATION

It's primary elections this Tuesday.

But did you hear?

Two likely candidates proposed,

are both equally suited and respected by the people.

And how would we choose the one for the job?

Flip a coin,

(or in Biblical times, casting urim and thummin - the sacred dice)

Pray for the Holy Spirit?

No, I'm not referring to Justus and Matthias in today's reading in Acts.

There was a story in the news

from a small bedroom community outside Lubbock, Texas,

where two were vying for a position on the City Council.

And they tied.

So how *do* you decide?

Usually run another election.

Both agreed to save the townspeople about \$10,000 in a runoff election,

and agreed to flipping a coin:

A 1974 Eisenhower silver dollar.

Here's the story:

WOLFFORTH, Texas, 18 May 2012

— City Council candidate Bruce MacNair watched the coin rise into the air Friday. His opponent, Bryan Studer, kept his gaze on the carpeted floor to see how it landed. Within seconds, the silver dollar settled heads up, giving the City Council seat to MacNair, a 56-year-old church administrator. He had hoped to win his first election, but he said, "It never struck me that it would happen like this." The two men agreed to settle the race for Wolfforth's City Council with a coin toss after each received 118 votes in last weekend's election. A run-off election would have cost the tiny

town \$10,000, a sum the men were eager to save.

Wolfforth city manager Darrell Newsom said the candidates' decision reflected their characters. "The term gentlemen comes to mind," Newsom said. "It's the gentlemanly thing to do, and they're acting in a gentlemanly fashion."

MacNair and Studer, a vice president at the Wolfforth branch of a regional bank, shook hands after the toss. "He'll do a good job for the city," said Studer, 37.

The "gentlemanly thing to do" - sounds like the Christian thing, to me.

I almost wish I lived in Wolfforth - though I couldn't handle the draw!

The gentlemanly thing, the Christian thing,

gives us some hope for humanity - and the populace of Wofforth.

One wonders whether "Joseph called Barsabbus, also known as Justus"

said the same kind words about Matthias: "He'll do a good job."

Fast-forward in reverse to the Apostles and let's review the precedence.

Setting the scene - This past Thursday, Jesus ascended into Heaven,

leaving the Apostles alone,

on the threshold of graduation,

when they don't know what career lies ahead.

We stood on the hillside of Bethany and watched him go up in the clouds.

What happens next?

What do we do?

We hold a congregation meeting.

St. Peter, the Sr. Warden, calls the congregation to order

and after rehearsing why they have been called together.

One position on the Board is open.

So, we must have an election to fill Judas' un-expired term.

Peter reminds the gathering that we need someone

who has gone with us on the journey with Christ,

and who will attest with us to the risen Savior.

Someone who can help us proclaim salvation to the broken world;

someone who will just do a good job.

And the model is set for the Christian response to any dilemma:

Pray;

Invoke the Holy Spirit;

Wait in silence for God;

Discern what God's will is.

Allow the Holy Spirit to make the choice for us.

That model will be important for you all at Grace Church

not only in these next months,

but for the rest of your future and the future of the Church.

First Peter opens up the Bible and quotes Scripture to the people.

In order to make any wise decision - no matter how large or small -

you must be immersed in Scripture.

Read, mark, and inwardly digest the Bible - study it together.

In prayer.

Wise decisions are built on the firm foundation of Scripture,

circled in a warm mantle of contemplative, meditative, silent prayer.

The prayer which is not spoken, but felt;

waiting in silence for the Spirit to make God's will known.

The motto of Wolfforth Texas stated on their city's welcome signs  
is that this is "The place to be."

So is Grace Church.

So join together as a parish family and once again commit yourselves  
to love God and our neighbors and demonstrate that grace  
showing the world that this is "The place to be."

Pray;

Invoke the Holy Spirit;

Wait in silence for God;

Discern what God's will is.

And allow the Holy Spirit to work in this place.

She already has begun!

AMEN.

#### APOSTLES' CREED

Let us proclaim our faith, using the words of the 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 to the dead.

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.

### CONFESSION of Sin

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbors.

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you  
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;  
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us;  
that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,  
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive all our sins through  
the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the  
power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. *Amen.*

### PRAYERS, Form II, adapted BCP, p.385

I ask your prayers for God's people throughout the world; for Justin, the  
Archbishop of Canterbury; Michael, our Presiding Bishop; Kevin, our Bishop;  
and for all ministers and faithful. Pray for our parish family, and the Church  
throughout the world.

I ask your prayers for peace; for Joe and Kamala, President and Vice President  
of our country; for Tom our Governor; Sarah, our mayor; for goodwill among  
nations; and for the well-being of all people. Pray for justice and peace in our  
country, in our homes and abroad.

I ask your prayers for the poor, the hungry, the oppressed, those in prison,  
those separated from loved ones, for the sick, the crippled, the disabled and  
those suffering from Covid-19 symptoms. Pray for those in any need or  
trouble, remembering Richelle, Fr. Graham.

I ask your prayers for the departed, those who have succumbed to the virus, and those killed by violent acts. Pray for those who have died.

I ask your thanksgiving for loved ones, and the creative ways they and we have found to share our love, especially in this Easter season of new life. Pray for our families wherever they may be.

To sum up all these petitions, let us pray the words which Christ has taught us:

Our Father...

#### SEASONAL BLESSING for EASTERTIDE

May Almighty God, who has redeemed us and made us his children through the resurrection of his Son our Lord, bestow upon us the riches of his blessing.

And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be upon us and remain with us for ever. Amen.

POSTLUDE

*“Postlude on ‘O Clap Your Hands’ ”*

E. K. Erb