

## Order of Worship for May 29, 2022

### Prelude

P: Jesus Christ is risen.

**C: He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**

### Opening Hymn: “*Jesus Lives, the Victory’s Won*” - Hymn #490

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

### Entrance Psalm:

P: Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud;

**C: be gracious to me and answer me!**

P: The LORD is my light and my salvation;

**C: whom shall I fear?**

P: One thing have I asked of the LORD,

**C: that will I seek after:**

P: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD

**C: all the days of my life,**

P: to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD

**C: and to inquire in His temple.**

P: For He will hide me in His shelter

**C: in the day of trouble;**

P: He will conceal me under the cover of His tent;

**C: He will lift me high upon a rock.**

P: For my father and my mother have forsaken me,

**C: but the LORD will take me in.**

P: Wait for the LORD;

**C: be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!**

**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P: Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud;

**C: be gracious to me and answer me!**

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

### Prayer of the Day:

P: Almighty and eternal God, Your Son our Savior is with You in eternal glory. Give us faith to see that, true to His promise, He is among us still and will be with us to the end of time, who lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

### Epistle: Revelation 22:1-6

R: Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either

side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship Him. They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent His angel to show His servants what must soon take place.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn of Praise:** “*The Tree of Life*” - Hymn #561

**Holy Gospel:** John 17:20-26

P: The Holy Gospel according to Saint John, the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter.

C: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

P: Jesus said, “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. The glory that You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one even as We are one, I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them even as You loved Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know You, I know You, and these know that You have sent Me. I made known to them Your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

**Sermon Hymn:** “*The Night Will Soon Be Ending*” - Hymn #337 vs. 1,2,5

**Sermon:** “*The Tree of Life*”- **Revelation 22**

We finish our look at Revelation with the last chapter, chapter 22. This gives a wonderful promise of what awaits those who follow Jesus. John begins:

*Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city.*

Rivers were vital to people in the lands of the Bible. Most of the land was dry. It was the flooding of rivers like the Nile in Egypt and the Tigris and Euphrates in modern day Iraq that enabled civilizations to grow. The city of Antioch in modern day Syria is where the first focused on sharing the Gospel with Gentiles and where the name “Christian” was first used. This city prospered because the River Orantes flowed through it. Rivers are seen to represent how God’s blessing flows to us as in the words from the Psalmist:

There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn. (Psalm 46:5-6)

*On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.*

We already saw the tree of life mentioned early in Revelation. In the Garden of Eden there were two trees—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve ate from the latter as they were told not to do, so they and all sinners since have been barred from the tree of life.

*No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve Him. They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.*

We think of what St. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13 about being face-to-face with God:

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I am also known.

Jesus is the light of the world. In God's presence there will be no darkness. John in his Gospel uses darkness to illustrate evil. When Judas goes to betray Jesus, he writes, "It was dark." That is why John says:

*There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.*

As Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians:

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

*The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent His angel to show His servants the things that must soon take place."*

*"Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll."*

This is the sixth of seven "blessed" found in Revelation. Here are the other six:

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near. (1:7)

Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write this: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them." (14:13)

Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed. (16:15) "

Then the angel said to me, "Write this: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God." 19:9)

Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. (20:6)

The last “blessed” is later in chapter 22:

Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. (22:14)

Remember 7 is the number of God. How great are God’s blessings to us!

*I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!”*

*“Then he told me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, because the time is near. Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy.”*

*Look, I am coming soon!*

This statement can cause a lot of problems for people. If Jesus says He is coming soon, then where has He been? We hear what the Psalmist says about God’s perception of time:

A thousand years in God’s sight are just like yesterday past, like a watch in the **night**. (Psalm 90:4)

2 Peter 3 uses this to support this statement:

Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ He promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

*My reward is with Me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.*

*Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.*

*“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”*

*The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.*

*I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll.*

*He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."*

*Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

*"The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.*

**Hymn after Sermon: "Joy to the World" - Hymn #387**

**Prayer of the Church**

P: Lord in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

**Offering and Voluntary:**

**Reading of the Ascension Story: Acts 1:1–11**

(as the reading of the Ascension goes on the Christ candle light is transferred to the baptismal candle to show that Jesus now lives in us through baptism)

R: In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up, after He had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He had chosen. To them He presented Himself alive after His suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. And while staying with them He ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, He said, "you heard from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." So when they had come together, they asked Him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed 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 and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." And when He had said these things, as they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven."

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Children's Message:**

**Confession of Sins**

P: O Christ, who ascended to heaven:

**C: Hear us as we pray, and have mercy on us.**

P: Jesus, You are seated at the right hand of the Father.

**C: Forgive us, Lord, for the many times when we feel the need to be noticed in special places and seen as extremely important in certain circles of society.**

P: O Christ, to You all power has been given in heaven and on earth, Your Kingdom has no end.

**C: Forgive us, Lord, for those times when we see our kingdoms, our country, our wealth and security as the only real answer for our worries and our fears.**

P: Jesus, at Your Ascension the entire company of heaven burst into song at the mention of Your Holy Name.

**C: Forgive us, Lord, for the many other names that have a stronger influence on our lives than your name.**

P: Christ Jesus was put to death for our trespasses

**C: and raised for our justification.**

P: In the name of our Ascended Lord, You are forgiven.

**C: Amen.**

### **The Call to Holy Communion**

P: Jesus, who rose and ascended to sit at the Father's right hand, bids us to come to His table to receive His true body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine of His Holy Supper. Therefore, we partake of His Sacrament, confessing our faith in Him:

**All: I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from all eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sin; from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.**

### **The Words of Our Lord**

**Lord's Prayer**

**Distribution:**

**Hymns—“See, the Lord Ascends in Triumph” - Hymn #494**

*“Up Through Endless Ranks of Angels” - Hymn #491, vs. 1-3*

### **Closing Prayer:**

P: Almighty God, as Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, ascended into the heavens, so may we also ascend in heart and mind and continually dwell there with Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C: Amen.**

**Blessing (Pastor) C: Amen.**

**Closing Hymn: “A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing” - Hymn #493, vs. 1,2, 6**

**Postlude**