

## Order of Worship for May 7, 2023

### Prelude

P: Jesus Christ is risen!

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

**Opening Hymn:** *“Awake My Heart with Gladness”* - Hymn #467

**Confession and Forgiveness:** pg.151

### Service of the Word

#### Entrance Psalm:

P: In a little while you will see Me no more,

**C: and then after a little while you will see Me.**

P: I will exalt You, my God the King;

**C: I will praise Your name forever and ever.**

P: Every day I will praise You

**C: and extol Your name forever and ever.**

P: The LORD is gracious and compassionate,

**C: slow to anger and rich in love.**

P: All You have made will praise You, O LORD;

**C: your saints will extol You.**

P: My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD.

**C: Let every creature praise His holy name forever and ever.**

**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: In a little while you will see Me no more,

**C: and then after a little while you will see Me.**

**Kyrie:** (*“Lord, Have Mercy”*) p. 152

**Hymn of Praise:** (*“This Is the Feast”*) p. 154

**Salutation:** p. 156

#### Prayer of the Day:

P: Let us pray... O God, You make the minds of Your faithful to be of one will.  
Grant that we may love what You have commanded and desire what you promise,  
that among the many changes of this world our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found;  
through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns  
with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

## **First Lesson – Acts 6:1-9; 7:2a, 51-60**

R: Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. ... And Stephen said, "Brothers and fathers, hear me... "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it." Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

R:: O Lord have mercy on us.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## **Epistle Lesson – 1 Peter 2:2-10**

R: Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation – if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to Him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame." So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Alleluia and Verse:** pg. 156

**Holy Gospel: John 14:1-14**

P; The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the fourteenth chapter.

**Glory to You, O Lord. (sung)**

P:[Jesus said,] "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going."

Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him." Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to Him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know Me, Philip? Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own authority, but the Father who dwells in Me does His works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in My name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. "

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

**C: Praise to You, O Christ. (sung)**

**Sermon Hymn:** *"Church of God, Elect and Glorious"* – **Hymn #646**

**Sermon:** *"Building on the Cornerstone"* – **1 Peter 2:2-10**

Now that the snow has hopefully gone for good, we've entered construction season. Roadwork on Stange, Grand, and Duff cause backups and slowdowns to get almost anywhere. The construction along US 30 on the way to Nevada will mess things up for a while in the short term, though it will hopefully make things better in the long term.

Roads aren't the only thing under construction. For the past year, the area around the church has been full of construction noise. The sorority house next door was torn down, and then they dug deep down to put rock and other foundation materials. After the hail storms in the past couple of months, neighborhoods are full of houses getting new roofs.

It may not be a foundation, but the same principle applies. If you don't get the first shingle right, it will affect how the rest of that row of shingles is, and how the finished roof works. If the first shingle is off, it affects everything else.

That's what a cornerstone does, too. It's not just something that supports a structure. It's what is used to make sure everything that is built off of it. That's why God wants to build up his Church on a foundation of prophets and apostles with Christ Jesus as the chief cornerstone, and to make us into living stones that he can use.

Throughout the Old Testament, God reminds His people that He is the builder, the one who laid the foundation. When Job questions why all that had happened to him had happened, God responds by asking, “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?” (Job 38:4). In Isaiah, God tells his people that “Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation” (Isaiah 28:16). In the New Testament, this is applied directly to Jesus by the apostle Paul, as he wrote “For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11) and “Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord” (Ephesians 3:21). And as Jesus concluded the Sermon on the Mount with the parable of the house built on the rock, He showed that He is our rock and firm foundation.

In the excerpt from his first letter this morning, Peter talks about being built into a spiritual house, with Christ as the cornerstone. Writing to a diverse group of first century Christians, containing people from different cultures, different classes, different ways of life, Peter reminds them that they are being built together into a spiritual house. Stones that the world would reject are called to be living stones to be built up into a spiritual house. Those who were not a people are now God's people. Those who had not received mercy have now received mercy. That was a strange idea in Peter's day, and not everyone was ready for it.

The book and film Moneyball describes the process of Oakland A's GM Billy Beane trying to find a new way to build a baseball team based on analytics and data and sabermetrics, looking for players other teams rejected to make a team that was greater than its whole. The A's were forced to do this because they only had a third of the payroll that the Yankees had, and so they had to look for new ways of doing things. Following the Moneyball principles helped them get into the playoffs in 2002 and 2003 over teams with much higher payrolls. Analytics have now taken over sports at all levels, and the transfer portal and the NFL draft have been full of teams trying to build a championship contender by hoping that the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts, and that they have one key piece, one cornerstone, to build around.

That's what Jesus does as he builds us into a spiritual house. He calls those who would be rejected by the world. He calls together a group of disciples that no one would ever think of using, but uses them to change the world. He takes fishermen and makes them fishers of men. He takes a tax collector and uses his education to make him write one of the Gospels. He takes a group of followers that couldn't stay with him in the face of persecution and uses them to build the church through the persecutions they'd later endure.

Throughout the letter, Peter reminds the people that he's writing to that they are a unique people because of their identity as Christians. “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God” (1 Peter 2:9). Or, as the King James Version translated it, “You are a peculiar people.” Peter emphasized their distinctiveness, their differences from the world, to remind them that they are set apart. And that fact, the fact that they are set apart for God, that they will do things that others think of as “weird” or strange. They will live out lives of Christian service, caring for those that society deemed unworthy of concern. That's how the spiritual house would be built – with those that the world rejects.

Foundations are important. Today we celebrate Confirmation Sunday, as six 8th graders are recognized for the time and effort they've spent building their faith on the foundation received in their baptisms. They even built the model of the temple that's out in the narthex. But Confirmation isn't the final stage, either. It's not completion. It's a step on a lifelong journey of learning and growing and building.

One of the last things the 8th graders did as part of their confirmation preparations was to paint the bricks in the youth room. It places them among the youth who have gone before them. It also reminds us of those who made these same promises. Some have kept them, some haven't, and some we don't know about. We pray that the foundation they received here will stay with them, and God will continue to use them wherever they go, and will bring them back whenever they wander.

It's also the last weekend that college students are with us. ISU goes into finals week, and the final exams build on everything that has been learned over the semester. It, too, isn't the end. Students will still have to use what they've learned as they go on internship and co-ops, or graduate and move into the "real world." They saw how the foundations that they built on from before college gave them the ways to thrive here. Now they'll see how the foundations they had here will give them something to build off of as they move on to the next stage of their lives.

As living stones, as the people of God, we build up not only ourselves, but also those around us. We build up those within our community, through prayer, through helping others. We are one in the house of God.

Jesus continues to build us into a spiritual house. He continues to build us up out of people that the world might reject, those who are peculiar or strange or weird. But out of a diverse group of people, with Christ as our cornerstone, we're built into a spiritual house where Jesus will live forever.

**Nicene Creed: (11 AM)**

**Confirmation Hymn::** *"Thine Forever, God of Love"* – **Hymn #687 (8:30)**

**Rite of Confirmation: (p 272) (8:30)**

**Prayer of the Church:**

P: Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

**Sharing Our Ministry**

**Offering/Voluntary:**

**Offertory:** *"What Shall I Render to the Lord?"* p. 159 (11:00 AM)

## Service of the Sacrament

### Preface:

**Sanctus:** (*Holy, Holy, Holy*) p. 161

### Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P:

C: Amen.

**Lord's Prayer and Words of our Lord** p. 162

**Peace of the Lord and Agnus Dei:** (*"Lamb of God"*) p. 163

### Distribution Hymns:

*"At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing"* – **Hymn #633**

*"All the Earth with Joy Is Sounding"* – **Hymn #462**

**Song After Communion:** *"Thank the Lord"* p. 164

### Prayer After Communion:

P: Christ Jesus You have promised to prepare a place for us. Send Your Holy Spirit to bless us now as we wonder in this world until that day when You come again to take us to our home with You in heaven. We pray this in Your name.

C: Amen.

**Blessing:** 166

### Recognition of Graduates

#### Affirmation of Vocation

P: People of God, both your work and your rest are now in God. In Holy Baptism, you died with Christ Jesus to the forces of evil and rose to new life as members of His body. As we close this academic year, will you endeavor to be faithful to our Lord Jesus through service, worship, and personal prayer? And will you strive to recognize the gifts that God has given you and discern how they may be used in the building of God's reign of peace and justice?

**C: I will, and I ask God to help me.**

P: Be at peace among yourselves. Encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

**Closing Hymn:** *"Thanks to Thee, O Christ Victorious"* – **Hymn #548**

**Postlude**