

## Order of Worship for May 3, 2026

### Prelude

P: Jesus Christ is risen!

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

**Opening Hymn:** *“Christ Is Arisen, Alleluia”* - Hymn #466

**Sacrament of Holy Baptism:** Wes Henry Winter (11:00)

**Confession and Forgiveness:** pg. 203

### 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”*) pg. 204

**Gloria in Excelsis** (*“Glory to God in the Highest”*) pg. 204

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

#### 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. 205

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

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

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

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.**

**Sermon Hymn:** *"You Are the Way; Through You Alone"* – **Hymn #526**

**Sermon:** *"A Place Prepared"* – **John 14:1-14**

It's almost graduation season and the end of the school year approaches. One of the most popular graduation gifts is the Dr Seuss book *Oh, the Places You'll Go*. It's a book about setting off on a new adventure and seeing it with wonder and awe. I want to share a few lines:

Congratulations!

Today is your day.

You're off to Great Places!

You're off and away!

You have brains in your head.

You have feet in your shoes.

You can steer yourself

any direction you choose.

You're on your own. And you know what you know.

And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go.  
You'll look up and down streets. Look 'em over with care.  
About some you will say, "I don't choose to go there."  
With your head full of brains and your shoes full of feet,  
you're too smart to go down any not-so-good street.  
And you may not find any  
you'll want to go down.  
In that case, of course,  
you'll head straight out of town.  
It's opener there  
in the wide-open air.  
Out there things can happen  
and frequently do  
to people as brainy  
and footsy as you.  
And then things start to happen,  
don't worry. Don't stew.  
Just go right along.  
You'll start happening too.

It's a great message for graduations, because of all of the changes to come. Graduates may know at least initially what their plans are, but those plans may change, and lead to unexpected places.

It also has reminders that not all of the places we go are good, or the ones we want to be in. The book also warns of the Waiting Place.

You can get so confused  
that you'll start in to race  
down long wiggled roads at a break-necking pace  
and grind on for miles across weirdish wild space,  
headed, I fear, toward a most useless place.  
The Waiting Place...

...for people just waiting.  
Waiting for a train to go  
or a bus to come, or a plane to go  
or the mail to come, or the rain to go  
or the phone to ring, or the snow to snow  
or waiting around for a Yes or a No  
or waiting for their hair to grow.  
Everyone is just waiting.

In today's Gospel lesson, we hear Jesus telling his disciples of the places he will go, and the places they will go, waiting to see what will come next. Changes that are coming their way. As they gathered for the Last Supper, Jesus tells them many things. He predicts that he will be betrayed. He predicts that the rest of the disciples will abandon him. He predicts that he will die. And then he tells them that he is going to prepare a place for them.

When we hear this passage, we often think of a place in heaven. The King James Version of the Bible translated this promise of Jesus as "in my Father's house are many mansions." We add that to our view of heaven, and think that we get a fancy place in heaven. If the streets are paved with gold and the walls are covered with jewels, then obviously the place we have there will be equally extravagant. And while we may have trouble imagining how all of the mansions are connected and arranged, we think that that's what we've earned. That's our just desserts. Jesus died, rose, and ascended, and even now is fluffing the pillows, setting out the towels, and preparing a place for us.

But the place prepared for us is not just a nicely decorated guest room in heaven. The place prepared for us is not a part of some escapist fantasy, a place where we'd escape the troubles of the world. No, the place prepared for us is the place prepared for Jesus. John's gospel tells us of several places Jesus would go quite deliberately before he ever moved on up to the heavenly mansions. First, Jesus is meeting with his disciples in the upper room on Maundy Thursday, the place that had been prepared for them to celebrate the Passover, the feast of Unleavened Bread. It was a place that had been prepared for that special celebration of how God had saved His people before. Then, after supper, there would be the place that Judas knew, the Garden of Gethsemane, the place where Jesus would pray and prepare for what was to come, the place he would be betrayed and arrested.

Jesus would then go to the places prepared for him by our sin. He'd take his place before the pride-filled leaders, Pilate and the Pharisees. Next came the place called Golgotha, the place of the skull, where he would take his place on the cross, receiving the punishment our sins deserve. From there he will go to his place in the ground, his tomb, the tomb prepared for Joseph of Arimathea, but given to Jesus.

That place, the tomb, is where we expect things to end. The tomb is not the end for Jesus. As he said just a few chapters earlier in John, "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). Jesus' place in the tomb would bear much fruit, because of what it does for us, and for the world. His death defeated death for all who believe in him. His resurrection shows that we, too, will be raised. Jesus prepares a place for us.

Jesus goes ahead of us to prepare a place for us with him, on the cross. Because of that, because of the place prepared for us on the cross, we also have a place prepared for us in the empty tomb. Paul puts it this way when he writes to the Romans, "For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with

Christ, we believe that we will also live with him” (Romans 6:6-8). Jesus prepared a place for us, so that we can live with him forever.

One controversial painting shows us what this looks like. Salvador Dali painted Christ of St. John of the Cross, completed in 1951. In it, one sees Jesus, hanging on the cross, over the world. The controversy is that Dali had changed the traditional perspective people have on the crucifixion. Rather than standing below the cross, looking up into the face of Jesus, Dali asks the viewer, for a moment, to be situated above the cross, looking down upon Jesus, who himself is looking down upon the world. For one visitor who tried to damage the painting, this stance is sacrilegious. You place yourself above Jesus.

For others, however, this stance is divine. Some people see an artist inviting you, for a moment, to have God’s view of the world. Our heavenly Father looks down upon the fallen world and he sees it through the eyes of his Son Jesus, dying on the cross, for all people.

Jesus asks us to see the world through him. Jesus hangs there, below us, offering his life for the world. And he invites us to see the world, through the cross, living in God’s mission of love! Dali’s painting offers us a visual reminder of this work of God. There, in the heights of heaven, is the cross. Jesus, in love, offering his life for the world. There below him is the world. It extends outward, across a lake, into the distance. This love of God is a love that will reach to the ends of the earth.

Because of all that Jesus did, he prepared a place for us with him forever. And that gives us hope. The hope comes not just from the place prepared by Jesus. The hope comes that Jesus has prepared it for you. He isn’t just like a disinterested hotel clerk, preparing a room for whoever will come. He has prepared it for you, with the love of a new groom preparing to bring his bride home.

The hope also comes that it isn’t just a place prepared for you by Jesus. It’s a place prepared for you where you will be with Jesus. This passage is often read at funerals or the bedsides of the dying, when knowing God is there is very comforting. In other times, it’s a reminder that no matter how alone we are in this world, we have a place with Jesus. No matter what your family and friends think of you, no matter how much they hate you or dislike you because of your Christian faith, Jesus will always have a place for you.

Jesus is the one who goes to prepare a place for you in his Father’s house. And if he goes and prepares a place for you, he will come again and take you to himself, that where he is, there you may be also. Through all the moves and changes, crosses and betrayals of life, we have a place prepared for us. What a wonderful promise.

**Creed:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Article of Creed and Explanation (8:30)

**Prayer of the Church:**

P: Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

## **Sharing Our Ministry**

**Offering/Voluntary:** (11:00 Brass Group) *"If Ye Love Me"* - **Thomas Tallis**

## **Service of the Sacrament**

**Preface:** pg. 208

P: It is truly good, right, and proper that we should in all time and in all places give thanks to You, almighty God, heavenly Father, for You have sent Christ Jesus into this world to take away our sins and be the cornerstone on which we build our lives. Therefore with angels and all the army of heaven we praise and make great Your holy name, evermore praising You and singing . . .

**Sanctus:** (*Holy, Holy, Holy*) p. 208

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving:**

P: Blessed are You, O Lord God, King of the Universe, for You have made us to be Your people. Yet, we rebelled against that and became nothing. In Your great love You made Christ Jesus the sacrifice for our sins, so that we are now again Your people. Send Your Holy Spirit on us as we as Your people partake of the wonderful meal Christ offers to us of His true body and blood in Holy Communion. All this we pray as You taught us to pray . . .

### **Lord's Prayer (8:30) and Words of our Lord**

**Pax Domini:** (*"Peace of the Lord"*) pg. 209

**Agnus Dei:** (*"Lamb of God"*) p. 210

**Distribution Hymns:** (11:00 Brass Group) *"Canzon per sonare No. 1"* - **Giovanni Gabrieli**

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

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

**Nunc Dimittis:** (*"Song of Simeon"*) pg.211

### **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.**

**Benedicamus and Blessing:** pg. 212

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

**Postlude** (11:00 Brass Group) "*Galliard Battaglia*" - **Samuel Scheidt**