

## Order of Worship for May 10, 2026

### Prelude

P: Jesus Christ is risen!

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

### Opening Hymn: “Alleluia! Sing to Jesus” – Hymn #821

#### Confession:

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

**C: Amen.**

P: Heavenly Father, on this Mother’s Day weekend we remember how You love us as an ever faithful parent.

**C: You invite us to pray to You as Father.**

P: But we run away from You like a spoiled child. That is why Jesus cried:

**C: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”**

**All: Forgive us, Father.** (pause for silence)

P: Our heavenly Father deals with us not according to our evil, but according to His mercy in His Son, Christ Jesus, who died and rose for us. He will not leave us as orphans, but has adopted us into His family. In His name and by His command, I forgive you all your sins.

**C: Amen.**

P: “For we did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear,

**C: but we have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”**

#### Entrance Psalm

P: Your word is a lamp to my feet

**C: and a light to my path.**

P: Forever, O LORD, Your word

**C: is firmly fixed in the heavens.**

P: Your faithfulness endures to all generations;

**C: You have established the earth, and it stands fast.**

P: By Your appointment they stand this day,

**C: for all things are Your servants.**

P: If Your law had not been my delight,

**C: I would have perished in my affliction.**

P: I will never forget Your precepts,

**C: for by them You have given me life.**

**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: Your word is a lamp to my feet

**C: and a light to my path.**

## **Prayer of the Day**

P: Let us pray... O God, the giver of all that is good, by Your holy inspiration grant that we may think those things that are right and by Your merciful guiding accomplish them; 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 17:16-31**

R: Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babbler wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.” Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him. Yet He is actually not far from each one of us, for “‘In Him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, “‘For we are indeed His offspring.’

Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead.”

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## **Epistle Lesson—1 Peter 3:13-22**

R: Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who

revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which He went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to Him.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Holy Gospel:–** John 14:15-21

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter.

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

P: Jesus said to His disciples, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

**Children’s Message:**

**Sermon Hymn:** “*O God of Mercy, God of Might*” - Hymn #852

**Sermon:** “*Fair or Loving?*” - 1 Peter 3

We are driving on the highway, and we notice someone filling the view of our rear-view mirror. “Why does he have to be so close on my tail?” He must be really important, since he’s in a rush. We breathe a sigh of relief when he passes us. “Why does he have to drive so fast? I hope a cop catches him!”

Later that same day we are in a rush to get home. Someone is driving on the road apparently looking for where to turn. We keep on seeing his brake lights go on. We get closer and closer to his tail as we hope that he makes a turn or pulls over so we can pass him. “Why does he have to go so slowly?”

So often that is the way it is in our lives. What is good or bad, what is right or wrong, what is fair or unfair depends on where we are in the whole scheme. It is good that people are forced to be honest by the IRS—until we find out that we are being audited. It is right that people should have both headlights working on their cars and that they should be fined for not making that so until the policeman hands us a ticket. It is only fair that everyone at home takes a turn doing the dishes or scrubbing the floor until it is my turn. For us, most of the time, justice revolves around me.

The New Testament view is totally the opposite. What Peter wrote to the early Christians in his letter was so radical. “But happy are you if you suffer for what is right.” The focus is not on what is fair for me, but doing what is right for others. Peter later says, “For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God.” Peter is saying that in Christ our lives have a new center—a new point around which we revolve. Justice centers on God, not me.

Yes, we know that. As Christians, we are to do God’s will. He determines what is right and wrong, just and unjust. For Christians in Peter’s time, it meant being thrown into a ring with the hungry lions or the powerful gladiators. But do we realize the radical change it means for us? If someone hits our car, what do we do—work it out with them or sue for damages? If mom accuses both of us for what Johnny did alone, what do we do—insist on not being blamed for what we didn’t do or be patient because mom had a rough day? If a professor belittles us for writing an essay on what we believe of the Bible rather than what he says it says, should we fight it or keep silent? I am not saying in any of these situations what we should or should not do. But how do we come to our decisions? Naturally, we want fair treatment, we want our fair deal. But Peter is saying that if that is the source of our decisions, then we are wrong. For the Christian the question is not what is just, but what is loving. Do I take the person to court to get my fair share, or do I do it to protect others from being hurt in the same way? Am I suffering for God’s will or my own?

That is radical—and it is completely contrary to the world. “Don’t get mad, get even,” is what the world says. “Trust yourself.” “Do what gets you a fair deal.” Peter’s counsel is, “Happy are you when you suffer for doing right.” How can happiness and suffering ever mix, unless I am being a masochist? It can sound as though God wants us to go around with a big smile on our faces, saying, “God loves me. Whatever happens to me, God will fix it.” Isn’t there enough hassle and suffering in this world that we have to add to it by not fighting back and getting our fair share?

I think of two images of people who have suffered. One is the popular image—that of the “Fast and Furious” movies where the “good guys” don’t negotiate or pamper the bad guys. They just crush them. But they are always more bad guys. And their violent ways may make for great car crash scenes, but so many are hurt, killed, and property damaged as a result of their work. They really become a part of the evil. Two wrongs don’t make a right. Throwing water on an oil fire only makes it worse.

The other image is that of a woman who has been raped and injured. She was interviewed afterwards. They asked her if she was bitter about her assailant. She replied, "No, he took one night of my life. I refuse to give him another one." Instead of letting the evil master her and control her, she put it behind her, living in the knowledge that she was now free from evil.

St. Paul put it this way in Romans 12, "Do not overcome evil with evil, but overcome evil with good." If justice centers on "me," it is what is fair for "me" in getting "my" due rights, then it will become anything but happy and blessed. When our lives center on ourselves, then that's what we will end up with—ourselves—all alone apart from God.

Peter points us to Jesus. "For Christ also died for our sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God." Jesus got absolutely no fair treatment at all. His arrest was illegal. His trial before the Jewish council in the middle of the night was strictly against Jewish law, and Pilate saw clearly that Jesus had broken no law. His disciples abandoned and denied Him. Yet, Jesus allowed this to happen. Why? So He could center His life on the Father. Jesus was never concerned with what was fair for Him, but what His Father's will was. It took Jesus into the depths of hell on the cross, but that evil never mastered Him. He conquered evil, not by returning evil, but by doing right—doing His Father's will.

Peter goes on to say, "Baptism now saves you as an appeal to God for a clear conscience through the resurrection of the dead." In Baptism we become a part of Christ, who died to bring us back to His Father. He has put God back at the center of our lives. He enables us to do the one thing we could never do—to really love—to want fairness and justice not according to "me," but according to God.

That professor continues to bother you as you hold to your faith in his class. He belittles you because of your belief in what he calls "fairy tales"—Adam and Eve, Noah's ark, or because you see Jesus as a Savior, not just a good, moral teacher. It's not fair, but you remember what Peter says, "Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to make an account for the hope that is in you, but do it with gentleness and reverence. You're not trying to prove you're right—to get what is fair for you. But with your life, instead, centered in Christ, you do it to share the love that God has poured out for you on the cross. The point is not to be right, but to share "the Right One," Jesus, with others.

In Sunday School children were asked to describe forgiveness. One child said, "It is like flowers." "How so?" the teacher asked. "Because the more you trample on them, the more you can smell their sweetness." St. Paul calls us the "aroma of God" sent by Him to show His love in this world. Another way to look at it is by looking at the cross. When a white cross can be seen best, when it is against white or black? When does our faith show best, when all is well or when because of it, we have to suffer or hold back or let ourselves be treated unfairly? That is a very radical way to think. But as Peter said, "Have no fear of them, not be troubled, but in your heart reverence Christ as Lord." Christ has made Himself the center of our lives as He centered His life on the Father. So, we are happy even in suffering, for we do it for God.

## **First Article of the Creed and Explanation: p 322**

### **Prayers:**

P: Lord, in Your mercy.

**C: Hear our prayer.**

### **Sharing Our Ministry:**

**Hymn of Praise:** *“Sing Praise to the God of Israel”* - **Hymn #936**

### **The Lord’s Prayer:**

#### **Closing Prayer:**

P: O God, from whom all good things come: Lead us by the inspiration of Your Spirit to think those things which are right, and by Your goodness help us to do them; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

#### **Blessing:** (Pastor)

**C: Amen.**

### **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:** *“Children of the Heavenly Father”* – **Hymn #725**

### **Postlude:**