



# Celebrate

Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 12, 2024

*The gospel for Easter's seventh Sunday is always taken from the long prayer Jesus prays for his followers in John's gospel on the night before his death, and always includes Jesus' desire that his followers will be one as he and the Father are one. This oneness is not mere doctrinal agreement or institutional unity, but mutual abiding, interpenetrating life, mutual love, and joy. This oneness is the work of the Spirit whom we have received but also await. Come, Holy Spirit!*

## Prayer of the Day

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Gracious and glorious God, you have chosen us as your own, and by the powerful name of Christ you protect us from evil. By your Spirit transform us and your beloved world, that we may find our joy in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## First Reading

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26

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*In the days between Jesus' ascension and Pentecost, Peter oversees the process whereby one of the members of the community of believers is chosen to be the twelfth apostle, in order to fill the vacancy created by Judas's treachery and death.*

In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred twenty persons) and said, <sup>16</sup>“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—<sup>17</sup>for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” <sup>21</sup>“So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, <sup>22</sup>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.” <sup>23</sup>So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. <sup>24</sup>Then they prayed and said, “Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup>to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” <sup>26</sup>And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.



The LORD knows the way of the righ-teous.

Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel <sup>1</sup> of the wicked,  
nor lingered in the way of sinners,  
nor sat in the seats <sup>1</sup> of the scornful!

**<sup>2</sup>Their delight is in the law <sup>1</sup> of the LORD,  
and they meditate on God's teaching <sup>1</sup> day and night. R**

**<sup>3</sup>They are like trees planted by streams of water,  
bearing fruit in due season,  
with leaves that <sup>1</sup> do not wither;  
everything they <sup>1</sup> do shall prosper.**

**<sup>4</sup>It is not so <sup>1</sup> with the wicked;  
they are like chaff which the wind <sup>1</sup> blows away.**

**<sup>5</sup>Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when <sup>1</sup> judgment comes,  
nor the sinner in the council <sup>1</sup> of the righteous.**

**<sup>6</sup>For the LORD knows the way <sup>1</sup> of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked shall <sup>1</sup> be destroyed. R**

*God has borne witness to the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ. Whoever believes in the Son of God believes in the witness of God and has the promise of eternal life.*

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. <sup>10</sup>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.

<sup>11</sup>And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

<sup>13</sup>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.

Gospel

John 17:6-19

*In this reading the church hears Jesus' words on the night before his death—his prayer for his disciples and for all who would believe in him through their words.*

[Jesus prayed:] “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. <sup>7</sup>Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. <sup>11</sup>And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. <sup>12</sup>While I was with them, I protected them in

your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. <sup>13</sup>But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. <sup>14</sup>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. <sup>15</sup>I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup>They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. <sup>17</sup>Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup>As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup>And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.”

## Prayers of Intercession

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The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Rejoicing that Jesus is risen and love has triumphed over fear, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news.

*A brief silence.*

You sanctify us in your truth; your word is truth. Send your church out into the world to spread your love and joy. Embolden all bishops, pastors, and deacons (*especially*) to be faithful ministers of your word and sacraments. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your creation groans under the strain of pollution. Preserve melting glaciers and dwindling forests. Bolster those who work for climate justice and help us all to be good and faithful stewards of your creation. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your people seek wisdom, understanding, and peace. Guide all those who govern and inspire them to work on behalf of the most vulnerable in our midst. Keep safe first responders, those serving in the military, and those whose duty it is to protect others. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your children need your loving care. Protect them from all harm. Comfort those in any affliction (*especially*). Support those who grieve and bring solace to those near death. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your Spirit lives within us here. Inspire the work of this congregation and unite us as one. Bless all the mothers in our midst, console those for whom this day is difficult, and gather us all under the care of your loving wings. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Your saints dwell with you in light. Keep us ever thankful for those who have gone before us in faith (*especially*). Inspire us by their witness. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, most merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abiding love; through Jesus Christ, our resurrected and living Lord. **Amen.**

## Preparing for Next Week

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**Monday** Psalm 115. **Tuesday** (Matthias, Apostle) Luke 6:12-16. **Wednesday** John 16:16-24. **Thursday** Psalm 33:12-22. **Friday** 1 Corinthians 15:50-57. **Saturday** (Vigil of Pentecost; commemoration of Erik, King of Sweden, martyr, 1160) Romans 8:14-17, 22-27. **Day of Pentecost** Acts 2:1-21 *or* Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 104:24-34, 35b; Romans 8:22-27 *or* Acts 2:1-21; John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15.

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