



Celebrate

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 18, 2025

Easter initiates a new day. It anticipates a new heaven and a new earth. The risen Christ is making all things new. In the mystery of holy baptism God has made new people of us. Today Jesus invites us to see everyone in a new light—through the lens of love.

Prayer of the Day

O Lord God, you teach us that without love, our actions gain nothing. Pour into our hearts your most excellent gift of love, that, made alive by your Spirit, we may know goodness and peace, through 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 11:1-18

In defense of his earlier baptism of non-Jewish believers, Peter demonstrates to the members of the Jerusalem church that God's intention to love Gentiles as well as Jews is revealed in Jesus' testimony. In this way the mission to the Gentiles is officially authorized.

Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. ²So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, ³saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?" ⁴Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, ⁵"I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. ⁶As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. ⁷I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.' ⁸But I replied, 'By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' ⁹But a second time the voice answered from heaven, 'What God has made clean, you must not call profane.' ¹⁰This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. ¹¹At that

very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. ¹²The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. ¹³He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; ¹⁴he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.' ¹⁵And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. ¹⁶And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" ¹⁸When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, "Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life."



The splen-dor of the LORD is o - ver earth and heav'n.

Hallelujah! Praise the LORD ¹ from the heavens;
praise God ¹ in the heights.

²**Praise the LORD, ¹ all you angels;**
sing praise, all you ¹ hosts of heaven.

³Praise the LORD, ¹ sun and moon;
sing praise, all you ¹ shining stars.

⁴**Praise the LORD, heav- ¹ en of heavens,**
and you waters a- ¹ bove the heavens.

⁵Let them praise the name ¹ of the LORD,
who commanded, and they ¹ were created,

⁶**who made them stand fast forev- ¹ er and ever,**
giving them a law that shall not ¹ pass away. R

⁷Praise the LORD ¹ from the earth,
you sea monsters ¹ and all deeps;

⁸**fire and hail, ¹ snow and fog,**
tempestuous wind, do- ¹ ing God's will;

⁹mountains ¹ and all hills,
fruit trees ¹ and all cedars;

¹⁰**wild beasts ¹ and all cattle,**
creeping things and ¹ flying birds;

¹¹sovereigns of the earth ¹ and all peoples,
princes and all rulers ¹ of the world;

¹²**young ¹ men and maidens,**
old and ¹ young together. R

¹³Let them praise the name ¹ of the LORD,
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over ¹ earth and heaven.

¹⁴**The LORD has raised up strength for the people**
and praise for all ¹ faithful servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD.
¹ Hallelujah! R

John's vision shows us that in the resurrection the new age has dawned; God dwells with us already. Yet we wait for the time when the tears that cloud our vision will be wiped away. Then we will see the new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them;

⁴he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away.”

⁵And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.”

Gospel

John 13:31-35

After washing the disciples' feet, predicting his betrayal, and then revealing his betrayer, Jesus speaks of his glorification on the cross. This deep complicated love of Jesus, even to death on the cross, will be the distinctive mark of Jesus' community.

When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³²If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and

as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’

³⁴I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Prayers of Intercession

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

God of resurrection and new life, we come before you in prayer for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Fill the church with the spirit of your redeeming love. Make us steadfast in our proclamation of your grace for all people without exceptions, especially those often overlooked in our communities. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Awaken joy in the beauty and abundance of your creation. Show us the wonder of your presence from the smallest flower to the tallest tree. Recommit us to preservation of wild places (*local or regional places may be named*). Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Instruct all world leaders to protect the most vulnerable among us. Guide those in power toward equitable and just economic policies, so that all might have sufficient resources to live safely and with dignity. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 133. **Tuesday** Acts 11:27-30. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Helena, mother of Constantine, c. 330) Leviticus 19:9-18. **Thursday** Psalm 67. **Friday** Proverbs 2:6-8. **Saturday** (commemoration of Nicolaus Copernicus, 1543; Leonhard Euler, 1783; scientists) Proverbs 2:9-15. **Sixth Sunday of Easter** Acts 16:9-15; Psalm 67; Revelation 21:10, 22—22:5; John 14:23-29 or John 5:1-9.

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Pour out your love on all in need of care: those mourning losses, enduring trauma, experiencing broken relationships, yearning for companionship, or facing illness (*especially*). Wipe away every tear. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Abide with all who are victims of racism, especially people who are doubly marginalized because of gender, sexuality, or ability. Destroy all forms of systemic oppression, and renew our commitment to healing the wounds of our collective body in this community and beyond. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give thanks for all the saints whose lives bear witness to your redeeming love (*especially Erik, King of Sweden*). Guide us by their example, until we join them in your eternal home. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

We commend these and all our prayers to you, O God, trusting that you are always with us; in the name of Jesus Christ, our risen Savior.
Amen.