

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Vision of Zion Lutheran Church and School is a Christ-centered, growing, spiritual home for ✦ Worshiping God ✦ Proclaiming the Gospel ✦ Nurturing faith ✦ Educating ✦ Loving and Caring for people



“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

John 14:3 (KJV)

King James Bible Online .org

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Mothers' Day

MAY 10, A.D. 2020

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Dallas, Texas 75214

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AS WE GATHER— The risen Lord Jesus alone is “the way, and the truth, and the life,” and we come “to the Father” only through Him (John 14:6). God is thus “glorified in the Son,” and those who believe in Him will do the works of Christ because He goes to the Father for us (John 14:12–14). Stephen, “a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 6:5) and “doing great wonders and signs among the people” (Acts 6:8), did the works of Christ. When he was falsely accused and put to death, he “gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55). Fixing his hope there, he commended his spirit to the Lord Jesus and prayed for his murderers. In the same way, all the baptized are called to follow the example of Christ Jesus by faith. Though He was “rejected by men” in the sight of God, He is “chosen and precious” (1 Peter 2:4). He is the chief cornerstone of the Father’s “spiritual house,” and we are built upon Him as “living stones” (1 Peter 2:5).

COLLECT OF THE DAY

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. Amen.

FIRST READING

Acts 6:1–9; 7:2a, 51–60

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 the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. . . .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 not your fathers 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.

PSALM

Psalm 146; antiphon: v. 2

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!

I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation. When his breath departs he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish.

Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them,*

who keeps faith forever;

who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.

The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.

The Lord watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.
The Lord will reign for ever, your God, O Zion, to all generations.
Praise the Lord!

EPISTLE

1 Peter 2:2–10

Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up
to 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.

HOLY GOSPEL

John 14:1–14

[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."

HOMILY

"Jesus is Prepared...for You."

Text: John 14:2
Pastor Preece

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and from Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

On the parsonage wall down the hall there hangs a document in French, signed in 1918 by Raymond Poincare, President of the French Republic, honouring one who gave his life in WWI for the Allies, including Great Britain and France and these United States against the Central Powers of Germany and Austria. The one honoured was my mother's favorite uncle. He died when she was but nine years old. When she had her fourth child, a boy child, in 1947, 29 years later, she named him after her dearly departed uncle: Robert W. ✠ Badgett. I bear his name, "Robert." He died in the so-called Spanish Flu epidemic 102 years ago while in Battery C, the 131st Field Artillery, in a U.S. Army camp in Ft. Worth. And his body is buried in Stockdale, Texas...Holy Ground. I have knelt at his grave, and making the sign of the cross ✠, I gave thanks for bearing and sharing his name.

His body was transported by train from Ft. Worth to San Antonio and then by horse drawn wagon to Stockdale, where the grave had been prepared. Some Wilson County Gravedigger had gone up on the watershed of Cibolo Creek out in the cold, the rain, and the mud to prepare a place for Robert's body...

...but Jesus, our risen Lord, succumbing not to the epidemic of death, unto which we will all succumb, the Risen One, had already gone up, ascending up, having put himself out in suffering and death, and He had prepared a place for Robert + too, and for his baptized and believing Baptist Christian soul. Yes, our Lord was prepared for him.

Our Lord is prepared for us.

Take it personally, your Lord is prepared for you. The text says that Jesus said so: "I got to prepare a place for you." John 14:2

It is Mother's Day, *el Dia de la Madre*. No doubt, my great uncle's mother was there at the Burial. She had prepared him for life, clothing and food, corn pone and red beans, fresh green onions on top, with custard pie a-followin'. Beds and quilts, and no doubt some toys, too, children.

She mothered him.

Doesn't your Mother mother you?

Didn't your Mother mother you?

As noted, it is Mother's Day this Easter V...

...Mothers rise and prepare for their children...

...Jesus rose and prepared for his followers.

Question: Are you ready to get up and prepare for those who have need of you and yours, especially now.

"O, give thanks unto the Lord", Psalm 136:1, for all your mother prepared and got ready for you. No, she wasn't perfect, and neither were you and no was I. But in families of Christian order, we learn to love and forgive, to hope and to pray, and to prepare and press on in faith together. Oh, give thanks for her multitude of preparations for you.

And give thanks for all your Risen Saviour has prepared for you; a place in the

Church here below, in which and from which we go, but to serve our neighbor; and a place in the Church above where he has prepared a space for us to be at peace. *Pax Domini*, there in the praise of the Father, who breathed into us the Holy Spirit, indeed, His very breath for eternal respiration and respite. In the face of sin, death, and hell, he prepared forgiveness, life, and salvation, for you and for me, now and forever. Thanks be to God. Thanks be!

Remember the text: Jesus said, John 14:2, "I go to prepare a place for you."

Since Christ is our brother and God is our Father, and the Spirit gives us life, may I suggest you salute and embrace the Church like a Mother...she has worldwide been preparing for all in need; hospitals, Christian docs and nurses, like Sara Phillips, for whom we prayed in the Ebola epidemic, and now she is working in a pop-up hospital in Central Park, New York City, with the Judeo-pre-Christian folk across the street from Mt. Sinai. Oh, Momma Church, keep on comforting and feeding us, clothing and encouraging us and with your liturgy and beauty and the saintly sounds of sacred music, stir and quieten and sustain our souls. You have the medicine we need, the Word, and surely soon the Sacrament of bread and wine, food divine. Like a nursing mother, putting her child to the breast, you'll feed us with those divine victuals yet...soon and very soon, pray we.

So who ya' gonna prepare for this week? Whatcha gonna do? Who will you pray for, call up, write a note to, if younger, go for to get things needed? Your Momma did! Mother Church does! Jesus has! Won't I? Won't you?

Let us pray: O God before whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit that we may perfectly love Thee and worthily magnify thy holy name,...preparing to love and serve others, and thereby but serving Thee, through thine only begotten Son, even Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

En el Nombre del Padre, y del ✠ Hijo, y del Espiritu Santo. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.