

Holy Eucharist

The Sixth Sunday of Easter:
Rogation Day

Sunday, May 9, 2021

Prelude

Announcements

All then stand as they are able.

Opening Hymn

Hymnal 291

All good gifts

1 We plow the fields, and scat - ter the good seed on the land,
2 He on - ly is the Ma - ker of all things near and far;
3 We thank thee, then, O Fa - ther, for all things bright and good,

but it is fed and wa - tered by God's al - might - y hand;
he paints the way - side flow - er, he lights the eve - ning star;
the seed - time and the har - vest, our life, our health, our food:

he sends the snow in win - ter, the warmth to swell the grain,
the winds and waves o - bey him, by him the birds are fed;
the gifts we have to of - fer are what thy love im - parts,



the breez - es and the sun - shine, and soft re - fresh - ing rain.
 much more to us, his chil - dren, he gives our dai - ly bread.
 but chief - ly thou de - sir - est our hum - ble thank - ful hearts.

All remaining standing, the Presider says

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

People

The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: **Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Presider then begins

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
 we worship you, we give you thanks,
 we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
 have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
 receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect of the Day

Presider

The Lord be with you.

People

And also with you.

Presider

Let us pray.

O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

All sit.

First Reading

Acts 10:44-48

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

All stand as they are able.

A Litany of Praise for Rogation Sunday

The Presider says

Today is Rogation Sunday, when the church has traditionally offered prayer for God's blessing on the fruits of the earth for a bountiful harvest to come, and the labors of humankind. Christian honoring of Rogation Days has varied over the centuries: from observance on a fixed date of April 25, to great outdoor processions on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Day. Elizabeth I of England ordered the "perambulation around the boundaries of the parish" at Rogationtide, a custom still observed in many places.

This brings to mind an image of us processing through the streets of Chelsea, declaring everything within the boundaries of this parish, to be specially set apart and consecrated as holy, pronouncing-- to every soul we encounter-- the liberation offered through the love of Jesus Christ, and staking our claim for the working out of the plan of salvation, and the bringing of God's kingdom here on earth. Standing as you are able, let God's people join in happily, joyfully, praising the Creator of such abundance and blessing:

Presider: Let the whole creation bless the Lord!

People: **Praise and exalt our God for ever!**

Bless the Lord, you heavens,
Bless the Lord, you angels of the Lord,
Bless the Lord, sun, moon, and planets,

**Bless the Lord, comets, stars, and billowing clouds,
Praise and exalt our God for ever!**

Bless the Lord, atoms, quarks, and particles,

Bless the Lord, you mountains and valleys, hollows and hills,

Bless the Lord, you waters of the earth and sky,

Bless the Lord, storm, wind, snow, and rain,

Praise and exalt our God for ever!

Bless the Lord, whales and plankton, and all creatures of the seas,

Bless the Lord, hawk and robin, and all creatures of the air,

Bless the Lord, elephant and salamander, and all beasts of the earth,

Bless the Lord, mole and earthworm, and all burrowers underground,

Praise and exalt our God for ever!

Bless the Lord all you plants, mighty tree and tiny lichen,

Bless the Lord, all you peoples of the earth,

Bless the earth, infants and children, the frail and the strong,

Bless the Lord, both the ill and the well, the joyous and the mourners,

Praise and exalt our God for ever!

Bless the Lord, farmers and fishers, and all who feed humankind,

Bless the Lord, business folk, and all whose commerce sustains us,

Bless the Lord, healers and protectors, teachers and learners,

Bless the Lord, scientists and artists, engineers and musicians,

Praise and exalt our God for ever!

Bless the Lord, governors and builders-of-justice of every kind,

**Bless the Lord, Chelsea and Dexter, Stockbridge and Manchester, Grass Lake
and Ann Arbor, and all you people of Michigan,**

Bless the Lord, all you saints, you living among us

and you who have gone before,

Praise and exalt our God for ever!

All Creation resounds with praise; O bless the Lord, praise God for ever!

Praise and exalt our God for ever and ever!

The People are then seated.

Second Reading

1 John 5:1-6

A Reading from the First letter of John.

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

All stand as they are able.

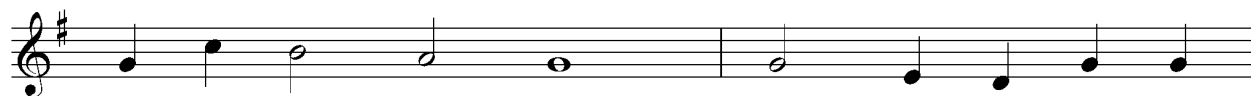
Sequence Hymn

Hymnal 413

New songs of celebration render: a paraphrase of Psalm 98



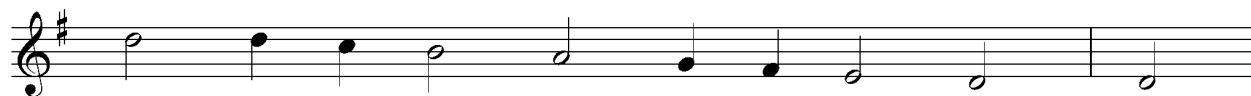
1 New songs of cel - e - bra - tion ren - der to him who
3 Riv - ers and seas and tor - rents roar - ing, hon - or the



has great won - ders done; awed by his love his
Lord with wild ac - claim; moun - tains and stones look



foes sur - ren - der and fall be - fore the Might - y One.
up a - dor - ing and find a voice to praise his Name.



He has made known his great sal - va - tion which
Right - eous, com - mand - ing, ev - er glo - rious, prais -



all his friends with joy con - fess; he has re - vealed to
es be his that nev - er cease; just is our God, whose



ev - ery na - tion his ev - er - last - ing right - eous - ness.
truth vic - tor - ious es - tab - lish - es the world in peace.

Holy Gospel

John 15:9-17

Priest The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.
People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Jesus said to his disciples, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another."

Priest The Gospel of the Lord.
People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

Sermon

All stand as they are able.

Presider Let us affirm the faith of the Church using the words of the Nicene Creed:

Nicene Creed

Presider and people say together

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of the People

All remain standing.

Presider Gracious and loving God, your Son Jesus has laid down his life and called us his friends, and you have promised to give whatever we ask you in Christ's name: Hear our prayers for the whole human family and for the world, as we say: Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

Intercessor Your Church is the community of those who believe that Jesus is the Christ, and you have taught us that we have been born of God. We pray today for our bishops Bonnie, Michael, Justin, Moses, Elizabeth, Donald and Craig, all ministers, priests, deacons, ministry teams, those in formation; and our sisters and brothers worshipping at St Augustine of Canterbury, Mason, St Stephen's, Hamburg; and Grace Church, Boca Chica, in the Dominican Republic. Help us to show our love for you, O God, by loving your children and thus fulfilling Christ's command to us. Sing to the Lord a new song; **for God has done marvelous things.**

You have shown your righteousness openly in the sight of the nations, O Mighty One, and with your right hand and your holy arm have you won for yourself the victory: Extend your dominion over all the earth and imbue all in authority with your Spirit of love and compassion, that they may serve the world in peace and justice. Sing to the Lord a new song; **for God has done marvelous things.**

All creation witnesses to God's goodness; the sea and the lands, the rivers and hills ring out with joy before the Lord: Bless and protect this world and its fragile environment, and grant to all your children their necessities for daily life and peaceful freedom from all that may threaten. Sing to the Lord a new song; **for God has done marvelous things.**

You have taught us to keep your commandments by abiding in your love, O God: Bless this community with such faithfulness that your joy may be in us and that our joy may be complete. Sing to the Lord a new song; **for God has done marvelous things.**

Hear our prayers for our friends and for all who suffer [especially _____]. Loving God, we also pray today for those who are confronted by the sadness, ambiguity and confusion of mental illness, and for those upon whom they depend for attention and compassionate care. Look with mercy on all whose afflictions bring them weakness, distress, confusion or isolation. Provide for them homes of dignity and peace; give to them understanding helpers and the willingness to accept help.

We give you thanks, our God, for all those who have nurtured us. We offer ourselves to nurture others, with your help. We humbly acknowledge the pain of those times when we have failed to nurture each other. We praise and glorify you for your steadfast love and the nurture of all your children. May the circle of your love close around those whose relationships are broken and in need of your healing. We thank you for the body of your Church, and we pray you will teach us how to console and cherish each other as followers of your beloved Son. Unite us with the scattered peoples of the earth that we may be one family of your beloved children. Accept our grateful thanksgivings as we lift up our voices, rejoice and sing [especially for _____].

We entrust to your never failing victory those who have died [especially _____]. Let our faith in you witness to the victory that conquers the world. Sing to the Lord a new song; **for God has done marvelous things.**

Presider Blessed One, you have indeed done marvelous things. You have loved us, chosen us, and appointed us to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last: Honor the faithful prayers of your people, that the earth may abide in your love and know the joy of your friendship, through Jesus Christ our Savior, who with you and Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Confession of Sin

The Presider says

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. *1 John 1:8, 9*

The Presider then says

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

A period of silence is observed.

Minister and People

Most merciful God,
**we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

A Priest then says

Almighty God have mercy on you, + forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.
Amen.

Peace

Presider The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People **And also with you.**

Then the Ministers and the People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Holy Communion

The Presider says

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. For everything in heaven and on earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom, and you are exalted as head over all. *1 Chronicles 29:11*

The People then are seated.

How the Holy Communion is prepared

The Presider, other Eucharistic Ministers, and any participating Acolytes must wash their hands, or use hand sanitizer, before celebrating and before distribution. Gloves will not be used.

The Presider alone will bring the bread and wine from the credence table to the Altar at the time of the offertory. All of the elements for Holy Communion will be placed on the Altar for the Eucharistic Prayer.

The Presider alone stands at the altar, with others 6 feet or more away.

The **priest's wafer and chalice** will be uncovered in front of the Presider during the Eucharistic Prayer. They **are for the Presider alone**. They are consumed entirely by the Presider, or appropriately disposed of after the service.

The priest's wafer and the people's wafers will be kept separate at all times. The **people's wafers will be a container** on the Altar, which will remain covered throughout the Eucharistic Prayer. During consecration, the Presider will touch the container, not the wafers.

The **distribution** of consecrated wine is not permitted at this time (as of June 19, 2020 Diocese of Michigan directive).

How the Holy Communion will be distributed

Everyone distributing communion will use hand sanitizer before they begin distribution. Gloves will not be used.

Communicants will be encouraged to use hand sanitizer before receiving. Hand sanitizer will be available in each pew

The bread will be distributed at the communion rail, while maintaining six feet of distance between households. The people will be directed forward to receive.

Masks must continue to be worn during the distribution of communion. Communicants should only lift their mask and consume the bread when they are back in their pews, or at least six feet **away from** the distribution point.

The Minister will place the bread in the hand. The distribution will happen without directly touching the hand of the person receiving. Hand-to-mouth distribution is not permitted. If hand-to-hand contact happens, the minister will re-sanitize.

If a blessing is preferred, the blessing will be given without touch.

The people stand as a minister brings forward the alms basin.

Offertory Hymn

Doxology

**Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

The people remain standing.

Great Thanksgiving

Presider The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Presider Lift up your hearts.
People **We lift them to the Lord.**
Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

The Presider proceeds

Wondrous and merciful God, we thank and praise you because we did not choose you but you chose us.

You destined us to become your friends from before the foundation of the world.

You showed steadfast love and faithfulness to your covenant people and remembered your promises in every generation.

Greater love has no one than you, because in Christ you laid down your life and turned us from servants into friends,
and by your Spirit you raise us up to be your beloved companions forever.

And so we gladly thank you, with angels and archangels,
and all who with your risen and ascended Son sit at your right hand on high,
proclaiming your unending praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The Presider continues

God of joy and surprises, your Son's apostles were astounded
that you sent your Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles,
and that all the earth was awakening to the praise of your name.

You invite us to join your company through baptism,
and sustain us in your fellowship through this meal of memory and hope.
Send your Holy Spirit upon your church
that it may bear the image of your crucified and resurrected Son.

By the power of that same Spirit, bless + this bread and this cup
that they may be for us the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ;

who, at supper with his disciples, took bread, gave you thanks,
broke the bread, and gave it to them, saying,
“Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.”

After supper, he took the cup.
Again he gave you thanks, and gave it to his disciples, saying,
“Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Great is the mystery of faith.
Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

The Presider continues

Overwhelming God, you give your children faith that celebrates your sovereignty.
Renew that faith among any who see your Son’s continuing crucifixion
more evidently than his glorious resurrection.

Restore and inspire all who, in the face of evil and suffering,
feel less like conquerors and more like the conquered.
Walk with those who find your commandments a burden
rather than a gift.

Hasten the day when all shall be drawn
into the banquet of your kingdom, and you fill heaven and earth
with the triumphs of your grace, ever one God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. **AMEN.**

The Presider then continues

As our Savior Christ
has taught us, we now pray,

People and Presider

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

The Presider breaks the consecrated Bread.

A period of silence is kept.

Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!

The Presider says

This is the table, not of the righteous, but of the poor in spirit.
It is made ready for those who love God and who want to love God more.
So come, you who have much faith and you who have little,
You who have been here often
and you who have not been for a long time or ever before,
you who have tried to follow and all of us who have failed.

These are the gifts of God for the People of God.
Christ invites everyone to be known and fed here.

The Presider then says

In union, O Lord, with your faithful people at every altar of your Church where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, we who are not physically present, desire to offer you praise and thanksgiving. We remember your death, Lord Christ; we proclaim your resurrection; we await your coming in glory. And since we cannot receive you today in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, we beseech you to come spiritually into our hearts. Cleanse and strengthen us with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let us never be separated from you. May we live in you, and you in us, in this life and in the life to come. **Amen.**

All baptized persons are welcome to receive Holy Communion.

After Communion, the Presider says

Let us pray.

Presider and People

**God of abundance,
you have fed us
with the bread of life and cup of salvation;**

**you have united us
with Christ and one another;
and you have made us one
with all your people in heaven and on earth.
Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit,
that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world
and continue for ever in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Blessing

A priest blesses the people, saying

Life is short, and we do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who journey the way with us. So be swift to love, and make haste to be kind.

And may the Wisdom of God, the Love of God, and the Grace of God + strengthen you to be Christ's hands and heart in this world, in the name of the Holy Trinity. **Amen**

Closing Hymn

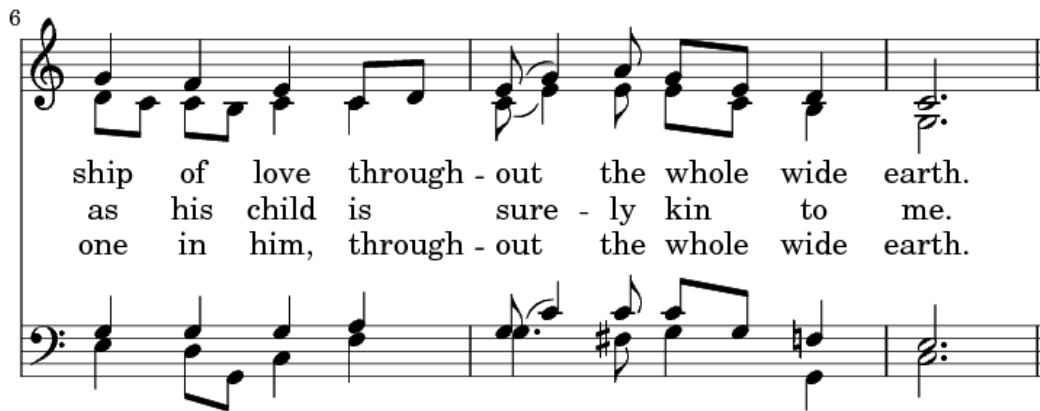
LEVAS 62

In Christ, there is no east or west

1 In Christ there is no East or West, in
2 Join hands, dis - ci - ples of the faith, what-
3 In Christ now meet both East and West, in

3
him no South or North, but one great fel - low -
e'er your race may be! Who serves my Fa - ther
him meet South and North, all Christ - ly souls are

6



ship of love through - out the whole wide earth.
 as his child is sure - ly kin to me.
 one in him, through - out the whole wide earth.

Dismissal

Minister
People

Let us go forth in the name of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia!
Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia!

Postlude



REGARDING OFFERINGS TO ST. BARNABAS CHURCH

To make an offering to St Barnabas, please mail your check to the church:
 20500 W Old US-12, Chelsea MI 48118-1309. Mail is being collected daily.

CONTINUING OUR DONATIONS OF FOOD AND FUNDS
TO FAITH IN ACTION

Faith in Action is continuing to provide leadership in collecting donations to support households in need in the Chelsea and Dexter areas. They will be in need of our continuing help in the weeks of winter still to come.

Needed right now: *boxed/shelf-stable milk, cooking oil, salt/pepper, spices, coffee, tea bags, sugar, flour, canned tuna, crackers, cake mix, canned frosting, dish soap, women's hygiene products.* You may bring your donations to FIA, or to Nancy who will see that they get there. **If you bring food directly to FIA**, please let Nancy know, so she can continue to keep our records of donation. If you write a check, please make it to *Faith In Action*. The **next Food Drive at the church** will be **May 16**. Please leave your donations at the church on that day.

Financial donations to help us combat the continuing effects of the pandemic can be made by PayPal at www.faithinaction1.org, by Facebook, or by mailing a check to *Faith in Action, 603 S. Main Street, Chelsea MI 48118*. **If you need help, please call FIA at (734) 475-3305**

Upcoming Commemorations

- May 9 Gregory of Nazianzus, Bishop and Theologian, 389
- 10 Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, Prophetic Witness, 1760
- 11 Johann Arndt and Jakob Boehme, Mystics, 1621 and 1624
- 13 Ascension Day
- 15 Junia and Andronicus

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MAY HAS BEEN DESIGNATED AS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

People with mental problems are our neighbors. They are members of our congregations, members of our families; they are everywhere in this country. If we ignore their cries for help, we will be continuing to participate in the anguish from which those cries for help come. A problem of this magnitude will not go away. Because it will not go away, and because of our spiritual commitments, we are compelled to take action. (*Rosalynn Carter*)

The magnitude of mental illness in this country is staggering. According to the Surgeon General, one in every five Americans experiences a mental disorder in any given year and half of all Americans have such disorders at some time in their lives. These illnesses of the brain affect all of us, regardless of age, gender, economic status or ethnicity. Mental illness affects the mind, body and the spirit. It is a real, common and treatable illness. Mental illnesses are far more common than cancer, diabetes, heart disease or arthritis. Our faith communities can be an important part of the recovery process through education, support and by helping individuals and families feel part of a caring community.

Look for community events to highlight mental health issues affecting children, adolescents, adults and older adults. This is an opportunity to educate your faith community about mental illness and help them become caring congregations for persons with a mental illness and their families. Visit these websites for resources:

- NAMI FaithNet www.nami.org/namifaithnet
- Mental Health Ministries www.MentalHealthMinistries.net

- Pathways to Promise www.Pathways2Promise.org
- International Bipolar Foundation www.internationalbipolarfoundation.org

Thanks to Patricia Bihn, Faith Community Nurse Liaison, St. Joseph Mercy Chelsea, for this information

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Easter 6B May 9, 2021

Acts 10:44-48

This lesson from Acts concludes the story of Peter and Cornelius. Cornelius, a devout centurion living in Caesarea, was bidden by God to find Peter in Joppa. He sends people to find Peter and return. Peter was residing with Simon the tanner. It was in this house that Peter had the dream challenging his views of what foods were clean. Directed by God to

go with Cornelius' people to Caesarea, Peter discovers that God has been acting in and through this surprising person, a Gentile centurion. Peter begins to preach about how he is learning that all people fearing and following God are acceptable to God, and testifies to the good news of Jesus, his life, death, and resurrection.

It is while he is speaking that the Holy Spirit shows up, as we hear today, poured out even on the Gentiles in the crowd. Peter realizes that baptism cannot be withheld from them, for the Holy Spirit had already been received. This is a story of two lives that cross unexpectedly by the guidance and call of God. It results in quite a surprising conclusion for all those involved.

- How is God challenging us to grow right now? What are we withholding that God invites us to extend?
- How has the Holy Spirit brought you a surprising lesson? What was the lesson?

Psalm 98

This is a psalm of praise. God is victorious! God reigns! Those of us who recognize and live in God's reign are invited into praise. All of us creatures, not just humans, are invited to sing a new song. The lands sing, the waves crash, the rivers clap their hands. It truly is a new song. It's a song of excitement and joy. God rules with righteousness, there is equity, there is mercy and faithfulness. These are things to celebrate.

- What might it mean to sing a new song to God? How is a new song different from an old song?
- How does the voice of creation singing in joy speak to us about God's reign?

1 John 5:1-6

There are a number of similar themes in the Gospel of John and 1 John. This section of 1 John echoes the image of being born again found in John 3. It also takes up themes that we hear in today's gospel: obeying God's commandments and loving God's children. Care needs to be taken in hearing the language of 1 John; the epistle is addressing a number of issues that have arisen in the Johannine community and they are feeling separated from others. It is not surprising that the focus is on loving those who are believers. The general message, though, is that our lives are different because of our faith.

Following Jesus makes a difference in who we are and how we live. It is a life born out of our faith in Christ Jesus. It brings us the assurance of the love of our God who has walked with us, who understands what it is like to suffer, who has shared with us in the very depths of the pain that living can bring. It transforms how we understand and engage all of life, joys, pains, and sorrows. The author

of 1 John describes this as conquering the world. Because of our faith, we are to live differently, we are to love our siblings. We show our love for God by keeping God's commandment to love others.

- How do you experience your faith affecting and changing how you live?
- What does keeping God's commandment of love look like concretely?

John 15:9-17

The meal is finished. Feet have been washed. Jesus' arrest is just over the horizon; Judas has left to find the authorities. These are precious, final moments. During them, Jesus speaks with these close followers of relationships and obligations. The one who has just washed their feet as a servant now calls them friends. It is a friendship with cost, the cost of love that may even call them to give up their lives for others. It is a deep, abiding relationship, not one casually entered and easily discarded. This is a relationship rooted in loving one another, love that extends itself for others. Love that bears lasting fruit.

And this relationship is for us! As Jesus speaks, we stand in the room with all the disciples. I call you friends, he says. This is my commandment that you love one another. Jesus gave some of his last moments with the disciples to share how it is that we who are believers are to be in relationship with him as abiding friends, and how we are to relate to each other, extending love to one another.

- What might change if we understand ourselves to be friends of God?
- How is our joy complete when we live abiding in Christ's love? What does it mean to have Christ's joy within us?

This study was written by Sr. Kathy Lawler, OEF

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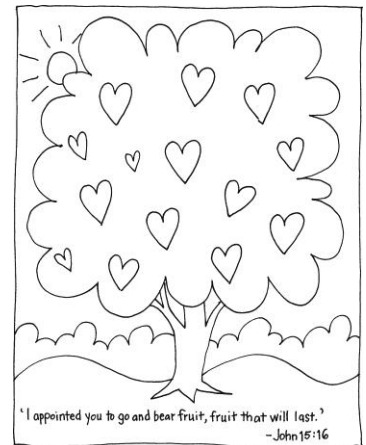
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Our Mission:

We seek to grow as diverse disciples of Jesus Christ, and to serve Jesus by serving others in the world, guided by the values of Ancient Rites, Open Minds, and Affirming Hearts.

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