

THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 22, 2022

IN THE NAME OF JESUS, WELCOME TO ST. PAUL'S!

8:30 & 10:30 a.m.



THE ENTRANCE RITE

PRELUDE

There is a Balm in Gilead

Setting: John Leavitt

WELCOME

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

ENTRANCE HYMN #749

There is a Balm in Gilead

Refrain

There is a balm in Gilead
To make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead
To heal the sin-sick soul.

1 Sometimes I feel discouraged
And think my work's in vain,
But then the Holy Spirit
Revives my soul again. *Refrain*

2 If you cannot preach like Peter,
If you cannot pray like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus
And say He died for all. *Refrain*

3 Don't ever feel discouraged,
For Jesus is your friend;
And if you lack for knowledge,
He'll ne'er refuse to lend. *Refrain*

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

Amen.

If we say 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.

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. 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 justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE - "This is the Feast"

p. 155

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Power, riches, wisdom, and strength, and honor, blessing, and glory are His.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation:

Blessing, honor, glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

For the Lamb who was slain has begun His reign. Alleluia.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

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. Amen.



THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST LESSON (Be seated)

Acts 16:9-15

A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days. And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Jubilation Choir

We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight

Text: Henry Alford; Tune and Setting: Michael D. Costello

1 We walk by faith and not by sight;
With gracious words draw near,
O Christ, who spoke as none e'er spoke;
"My peace be with you here."

2 We may not touch your hands and side,
Nor follow where you trod;
But in your promise we rejoice,
And cry, "My Lord and God!"

3 Help then, O Lord, our unbelief,
And may our faith abound
To call on you when you are near,
And seek where you are found.

4 That, when our life of faith is done,
In realms of clearer light
We may behold you as you are,
With full and endless sight.

Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass.

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

(10:30) CHILDREN’S SERMON

ALLELUIA VERSE (Stand)

Alleluia.

Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia, alleluia.

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 5th chapter
Glory to You, O Lord.

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be healed?” The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me.” Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, O Christ

SERMON (Be seated)

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen. Dear friends in Christ:

Here we are in late May with the weather getting warmer and the school year ending soon. Summer – to our delight – is right around the corner.

For many people, summer is pool season. Kids take swimming lessons or join the swim team. Families hang out with friends, beating the heat. The pool is fun for all ages.

In today’s Gospel reading, we are reminded that pools have another use as well. People often go to pools for healing. There they do water therapy for aches, pains and recovery from injury. And make use of the pressure, the motion of the water or its minerals. Pools of water have always been sought for their potential to heal.

In our reading, Jesus visits the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem. This was a pool where people sought healing. The text tells us that by the pool lay a multitude of people with various illnesses or conditions, such as those who were blind, lame, or paralyzed.

There was also one man who had been there for 38 years. And Jesus healed him. Because that’s what he does – he heals. At this we rejoice – and especially when the healing is given to someone who had suffered for so long.

But as with all the healing stories of Jesus in the scriptures, there's more going on here than we will catch with just a quick glance. The details and circumstance suggest a number of messages that we are to glean.

In order to understand these, let's first review a little background.

Jerusalem at that time was a city with many pools. Some of these were for healing. But the most important use of pools was for collecting water for the daily needs of the people. With no river running through the city, water needed to be collected from rain or underground springs or be brought in through aqueducts. Water was always a concern in Jerusalem.

The main water source of the original City of David was the Gihon Springs located at the base of the eastern slope of the city. These springs provided water year-round by gushing forth several times a day. Over the years, the people built a series of reservoirs to collect the water, as well as an intricate system of shafts and tunnels to distribute it.

In the years just prior to Jesus, Herod and the Romans built wonderful new aqueducts to bring a greater supply of water to the city. Certain parts of those aqueducts are still in existence today.

The Greeks and Romans also brought with them their love of pools for recreation and healing. Some of the pools in the city even became dedicated to their gods of healing, including Asclepius and Fortuna.

When John tells us that Jesus met and healed a man at the Pool of Bethesda, this seems consistent with both Jesus' mission and Jerusalem's situation. However, this story was also questioned by many over the centuries. For two reasons.

First, no pool of Bethesda had ever been found. Which seemed odd, especially since John tells us exactly where it was – right by the Sheep Gate.

And second, the description of the pool as having five roofed colonnades didn't sound right. Colonnades are a series of columns that serve as an open wall and roof support. Four colonnades would make for a nice rectangular structure, like the Lincoln Memorial here in Washington, with its four sides of columns. But five seemed suspicious. Add that to the fact that many early Christian preachers, such as Augustine, interpreted these five colonnades as symbolically pointing to the five books of Moses, and you can see why many people thought this story by John was simply made up, perhaps as a polemic against the Roman and Greek gods of healing.

However, in the late nineteenth century, the Pool of Bethesda was discovered. Archaeologists found it buried under the rubble caused by the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and centuries of building on top of it. The pool was identified by both its location and its shape, for there were indeed five colonnades. The colonnades turned out to be arranged as a rectangular building with a wall – the fifth colonnade – bisecting the pool into two parts. The mystery of its existence and its construction had been solved.

As Christians, we are always glad to receive confirmation of the Biblical stories. Our faith, as we know, is ultimately based not on what we see but on what we're told in God's Word but it's still nice to be able to see certain things. Such confirmation should cause us to delve even more deeply into the stories to hear their full message.

The main message of this story is pretty straightforward: Jesus has the power to heal – and this power is greater than the healing powers of nature, of men, and of any other whose help we may seek. But again, the details of the story provide us even more benefit. Here we see just how great Jesus' healing power is. And here our vision of human need and the scope of God's healing are expanded.

The story's detail of a man with a physical ailment which had not been cured for 38 years is a reminder of how much physical hurt and pain there is in our world and how helpless we are to overcome it. Humanity, as we know, has made great strides in being able to heal the body—through surgeries, medications, therapies and other means. And yet, despite all these advances, the human body still breaks down and people still experience illness, injury and pain – some of which can affect them for years. Some of you here today know this all too well.

But the physical ailing in the story is only a part of what we are to see. Notice, too, that the man was alone. He had no family there with him. In fact, there was no one present to help him. And this detail should make us consider those who are alone today.

As with physical needs, our society has made great strides in providing care for those who are alone. We have options for assistance like social workers and home health care nurses who can provide great services to individuals who may not be able to care for themselves or whose families may not be able to assist them.

And yet, the fact of the matter is that many people today still feel very much alone. Health care workers are stretched thin. Appointments are short. Conversations are few. Everyone seems to be busy – workers, family and others.

And this problem is found not only among those who are ill, but also among many who are well. In fact, it's often those who are physically well who can feel the most alone, for no one is sympathizing with them. Loneliness, most all agree, is a big problem in our world today.

Jesus addresses these concerns of ours. He comes and offers his help, just like he did to the man at the Pool.

But before we move on to consider how, let's notice one more detail in the story. Not only was the suffering man alone, but he was also constantly being passed by. When those springs of Jerusalem sent forth their water, and the water in the pool was stirred, that's when the greatest healing was supposed to take place. But this man could not get into the pool quickly enough, because there were always others who were faster. The man was left behind.

Again, many of us can relate to this since it's a problem we face too. We also, quite often, feel like we're being left behind. It seems that there's always people willing to work harder or cheaper than we can, and that there are people with more talent, more friends, more personality and more education. In today's fast-paced world, we're often afraid that we can't keep up.

In our times of illness, loneliness and fear, we must remember that Jesus has walked into our world with actions and promises of healing. And that he will walk into our lives to deliver this healing as we invite him.

When Jesus walked into the Pool of Bethesda, he saw the man who had been both ill and forgotten for 38 years. And knowing of his long-time struggle, he approached the man to offer his help.

The first thing Jesus did was to ask him: "Do you want to be healed?" This may seem like a silly question. But in reality, it's not.

Sometimes people don't want to be healed. Sometimes they prefer to stay as they are. They may feel less pressure as a sick person. And they may fear the change their healing will bring.

And here we shouldn't think only about the healing of a physical illness, but also about the healing of sin. Sometimes we like our sin. Sometimes we can't imagine how we would live without it.

After 38 years of being sick, it seems that the man in the story had lost hope. For when Jesus asked him the question, the man did not say “yes, I’d love to be healed!” Rather, he goes into an explanation of why his healing couldn’t happen.

What about us? Do we exhibit a hope for the healing we need—the healing of our bodies, the healing of our loneliness, the healing of our fear, the healing of our sin? Or are we just resigned to live with our ills?

There is certainly a merit to being content with our condition. And yes, we are certainly to accept God’s will for our lives. Physical illnesses and injuries won’t always be healed in full – at least not this side of heaven.

And yet Jesus can heal us if he believes it to be best and if we are desirous of it.

Knowing this, we are always to be people of hope. We are always to have faith in God’s desire for our good and his ability to bring it forth.

Even when our faith is in short supply, Jesus can still heal us. That’s what happened at the Pool of Bethesda. Even though the man at the pool didn’t say “yes,” Jesus healed him anyway. Jesus extends his healing with great generosity and mercy. The name Bethesda, which means “house of mercy,” reminds us of this.

Jesus works with people and directs them to be people of hope—those who believe that life can and will be better. I would imagine that Jesus might even at times withhold certain acts of healing in order to first heal our hopefulness. For when we are filled with hope, we are more open to his care and better able to negotiate life’s challenges.

There is one aspect of healing, however, that Jesus never withholds. And that is the healing we need from the consequences of our sin. Our sin separates us from God and earns us nothing but trouble and death. But Jesus has overcome the penalty of sin through his death on the cross. And because of this we are healed. Our destiny is life – joy-filled and eternal.

When Jesus healed the man at the pool, he did so by saying: “Get up, take up your bed and walk.” If these words sound familiar it is because they were also used by Jesus when he healed the paralytic whose friends lowered him through the roof – a story recorded in the three other Gospels. There, Jesus first told the man that his sins were forgiven and then demonstrated the

power of his forgiveness by healing the man’s physical condition. He did this, as he said, “so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”

The healing of the man at the Pool of Bethesda should remind us of the great healing Christians receive. As well, it should remind us that this healing is given in the waters of Holy Baptism. There God washed away all our sins and claimed us as his own.

The healing should also remind us that God invites us to walk with him each day. “Take up your bed and walk,” said Jesus to the man. The man’s walking was very literal—and certainly a source of great joy for him. But we are to hear this as an invitation to walk with Jesus in the more figurative use of the word. In the Bible, “walking with God,” means an everyday following of his commands, speaking with him in prayer, and trusting that he is with us.

When we walk with God we will make our homes a Bethesda—a house of mercy for all who live or visit there. When we walk with God we will do so in step with other believers – walking together in a Christian congregation so as to better understand his Word. For this reason, “Bethesda” makes a great name for a church. The city of Bethesda Maryland is named after one—the Old Bethesda Meeting house built by the Presbyterians in 1850.

When we walk with God, we will also be compassionate toward those who need help and healing. For many of us in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, when we hear the name “Bethesda” we think of the group homes for those with disabilities that our denomination founded years ago. Based in Watertown, Wisconsin, the Bethesda organization is a beautiful witness to the compassion of God’s people and one of the jewels of our church.

When water is gathered in one place, we say that it “pools.” In the same way, when God’s people come together around Jesus our Savior, mercy pools among us. And these are the pools which bring the best kind of healing.

Jesus came so that in knowing him we might follow him, and that following him we all might walk with compassion – finding in this kind of walk the power to be healers in the world. May God bless our walking with Jesus. And may he always be for us the pool of mercy that we need. Amen.

- 1 **What a friend we have in Jesus,
 All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
 Ev'rything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit;
 Oh, what needless pain we bear—
All because we do not carry
 Ev'rything to God in prayer!**

- 2 **Have we trials and temptations?
 Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged—
 Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful
 Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness—
 Take it to the Lord in prayer.**

- 3 **Are we weak and heavy laden,
 Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge—
 Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
 Take it to the Lord in prayer.
In His arms He'll take and shield thee;
 Thou wilt find a solace there.**

NICENE CREED

Hymnal, back cover

**I believe in one God,
 the Father Almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth
 and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
 the only-begotten Son of God,**

**begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life ☩ of the world to come. Amen.**

OFFERING

Offerings support the church's mission work – both here and through our many partners. Offerings may be placed in the box at the sanctuary entrance or sent to the church through our website or the mail. Fellowship Cards help us welcome new people and track participation. Please fill one out and place it in the offering box following the service.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Lord our heavenly Father, Your love for your children is never-ending. In the name of our Lord Jesus, we ask You this day for the continued help and healing of our bodies and souls. Renew and strengthen our faith and bring us to pools of your mercy, that we may

be empowered to extend healing love and care to others. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, You have founded Your Church as a place of prayer beside the waters of Holy Baptism. Give Your holy people hearts to hear Your Gospel message, lips to offer their prayers in faith and readiness to give of themselves for Your sake. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, keep Your Holy Church undefiled from all that is detestable or false. Embolden pastors to both guard her gates and to welcome those who draw near in faith. Bring people into Your Church who will glorify you and live according to Your good and gracious will. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give peace, Lord, to our homes, and enliven them by Christ's resurrected life. Let the forgiveness of sins reign among husband and wives, parents and children, and brothers and sisters. Bring those who live alone into the family of your church, and assure all believers that they are your children, upheld by Your right hand. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, give wisdom to our leaders and government, that they may lead with integrity according to Your perfect will. Protect police officers, emergency personnel, disaster-relief workers, social workers and the members of our armed forces as they serve in our defense and for the well-being of all. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Compassionate Lord, as faithful Lydia served the mission of St. Paul, so also direct and enrich the efforts of the faithful women of Your Church today. Make them eager and wise in good works, that they may serve the ministry of the Church according to your leading. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, You hear our prayers for the sake of Your dear Son, Jesus. In His name, we cast our burdens upon You, especially praying for those on our prayer list and for those we name before you in our hearts at this time... Sustain them in the midst of trouble and trial and give to us all the healing and care that we need. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, work repentance and faith in all who receive our Lord's body and blood today, that in the unity of a true confession, they may receive it for the forgiveness of their sins. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**



SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

PREFACE

LSB 160

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

It is truly good right and salutary...evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

LSB 161

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of pow'r and might:

Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.

Hosanna. Hosanna.

Hosanna in the highest.

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

Hosanna in the highest.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

LSB 161

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

PAX DOMINI

LSB 163

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

THE COMMUNION (Be seated)

DISTRIBUTION MUSIC

What a Friend We have in Jesus
Setting: Chuck Marohnic

PRAYER (Stand)

BENEDICTION

SENDING HYMN #922

Go, My Children, with My Blessing

**1 Go, My children, with My blessing,
Never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you;
You are My own.
In My love's baptismal river
I have made you Mine forever.
Go, My children, with My blessing—
You are My own.**

**2 Go, My children, sins forgiven,
At peace and pure.
Here you learned how much I love you,
What I can cure.
Here you heard My dear Son's story;
Here you touched Him, saw His glory.
Go, My children, sins forgiven,
At peace and pure.**

**3 Go, My children, fed and nourished,
Closer to Me;
Grow in love and love by serving,
Joyful and free.
Here My Spirit's power filled you;
Here His tender comfort stilled you.
Go, My children, fed and nourished,
Joyful and free.**

**4 I the Lord will bless and keep you
And give you peace;
I the Lord will smile upon you
And give you peace:
I the Lord will be your Father,
Savior, Comforter, and Brother.
Go, My children; I will keep you
And give you peace.**

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Go, My Children, with My Blessing
Setting: John Leavitt

Those serving:

Sunday, May 22, 8:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Bob Juenger
Comm. assist: Judy Koucky
Reader: Norm Williams

10:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Jim Easterly
Comm. assist: Jill Hecht
Reader: Janice Sebring
Acolyte: William Dennis

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