



Daily Prayer
+ Wednesday, May 20, 2020 +

Invocation

L: Christ is risen!

C: He is risen, indeed! Alleluia.

Psalmody

Psalm 108:1-6

L: My heart is steadfast, O God! I will sing and make melody with all my being!

C: Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn!

L: I will give thanks to you, O LORD, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations.

C: For your steadfast love is great above the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

L: Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!

C: That your beloved ones may be delivered, give salvation by your right hand and answer me!

C: Glory be to Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Hymn

#485, v. 1-3

[1] Long before the world is waking,
Morning mist on Galilee,
From the shore, as dawn is breaking,
Jesus calls across the sea;
Hails the boat of weary men,
Bids them cast their net again.

[2] So they cast, and all their heaving
Cannot haul their catch aboard;
John in wonder turns, perceiving,
Cries aloud, "It is the Lord!"
Peter waits for nothing more,
Plunges in to swim ashore.

[3] Charcoal embers brightly burning,
Bread and fish upon them laid:
Jesus stands at day's returning
In His risen life arrayed;
As of old His friends to greet,
"Here is breakfast; come and eat."

Reading

Acts 6:1-7

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.

L: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: Thanks be to God.

Devotional Message from Pastor Thompson

Our reading today from Acts 6 teaches on the importance of lay leadership in the church and the variety of roles which we each serve in the church.

In the early days, the church was not organized and had no traditions on how to carry out the mission that they had been given by Jesus. Because Jesus was not a Law-giver like Moses, he chose not to give the apostles detailed rules and regulations for how to carry out their work.

Instead, he gave them general principles. The mission was clear: *"Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation."* (Mark 16:15) And how they should go about it was clear as well: *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."* (John 13:34)

These, however, were not detailed rules and regulations. They were general principles. The details of ministry would need to be worked out over time.

One of those details is seen in our reading today from Acts 6. In the early days of the church the apostles were involved in collecting money and distributing those funds to those in need, especially the support of widows from among the congregation. This important mercy work began to overwhelm the apostles and their time became taxed by resolving conflicts and issues concerning the support of widows; to the point where they were neglecting their primary calling.

Because of this, the apostles made a decision to involve the lay members of the church in this work: *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."* (Acts 6:2-4)

This event has had immense practical effect on the life of the church down through the generations. It is the source and foundation for lay leadership in the church. The body of Christ consists of many people, with a variety of talents and gifts, and it is important that we all take a part, using our talents and gifts, for the work of the church together. The apostles would not alone build the church; but the early believers would all contribute and help.

As Paul writes, *"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is*

the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

May this ancient tradition of lay participation and leadership in the church continue and prosper in our day. Amen.

Apostles' Creed

C: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

C: 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.

Collect

L: Almighty and gracious God, in every age you have inspired men to labor, with hearts united, in your kingdom. Continue to grant to the members of your church faithfulness in serving you and upholding the truth of your holy Word; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing

L: Let us bless the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

L: The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C: Amen.

Hymn

#485, v. 4-5

[4] Christ is risen! Grief and sighing,
Sins and sorrows, fall behind;
Fear and failure, doubt, denying,
Full and free forgiveness find.
All the soul's dark night is past,
Morning breaks in joy at last.

[5] Morning breaks, and Jesus meets us,
Feeds and comforts, pardons still;
As His faithful friends He greets us,
Partners of His work and will.
All our days, on ev'ry shore,
Christ is ours forevermore!