Lessons
Acts 1:15-17, 21-26
Psalm 1
1st John 5:9-13
St. John 17:6-19

Prayer of the Day
Gracious and glorious God, you have chosen us as your own, and by the powerful name of Christ you protect us from evil. By your Spirit transform us and your beloved world, that we may find our joy in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Summary
This Sunday brings the Easter Season to a close. It has been a rich season for us, and one that bears God’s message of hope and joy to our hearts. Even those of us who are reasonably hopeful people have found it challenging, these past fourteen months, to stay hopeful. So the messages we’ve considered in these seven weeks have been a gift from God. Our hope is not built on our own strength and ability. It is built instead on God’s promise to bring new life out of death. God will strengthen us for the work we are called to do. May this promise be our guide as we love and serve one another, and as we continue to be the people of God — a sign in the world of God’s ability to make all things new.

Sermon
Grace to you and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.
I haven’t taken many opportunities to do this — at least not as many as I typically do during the Easter season. Let’s see how well your memories work. Speak your response out loud wherever you are, if you know it.
Christ is risen!
Christ is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

Seven weeks of Easter. At Saint Peter in 2021 this has meant one week of recalling St. Mark’s unfinished account of that first Easter morning, and how the story of resurrection continues in our lives today. Then three weeks of giving thanks for the community of faith God has raised up here at Saint Peter over the past forty years. A week to reflect on St. John’s first letter, and his encouragement for us to love one another

— especially anyone we are tempted to think of as “the other.” A week to remember that the truest joy comes when we abide in Christ’s love, and commit ourselves to serving others. And now this week’s return to the Maundy Thursday table, as Jesus shares a last meal with his followers and prays for them.

As I think back on this season, it gives me hope.

I tend to be a reasonably hopeful person by nature, and I know I’m not the only one. Julian of Norwich, an English mystic during the 14th Century, wrote, “All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.”2 John Lennon, of more recent fame, is supposed to have said, “Everything will be okay in the end. If it’s not okay, it’s not the end.” Two people looking at life from very different viewpoints, but arriving at very similar conclusions. A sort of hopefulness that allows, even in the midst of difficult times, to trust that it won’t last. That it will come out OK.

I tend to be a reasonably hopeful person, but it hasn’t been easy these past fourteen months. Some of you have shared with me how it hasn’t been easy for you either. We have found ourselves feeling frustrated and impatient. It has been discouraging when it seemed like things were getting better, only to see the course of this pandemic take a turn for the worse. We have struggled with how we might respond to those who have chosen different paths through this experience than we have. This has been a season of struggle; a difficult time to stay positive.

Which is why I love the season of Easter… especially this year! Easter is born out of a difficult time. During Holy Week we walked with the followers of Jesus as their high hopes for what he might accomplish are dashed. They too begin to feel frustrated and impatient. They too are devastated when something that seems to be going so well takes such a turn for the worse. They too struggle with how to respond to those who differ with them.

On Easter Sunday morning all this changes. As the women arrive at the tomb, broken-hearted and ready to pay their teacher a final farewell, they are greeted by a young man dressed in a white robe who announces to them: “He has been raised; he is not here… he is going ahead of you.”3 In a moment, they are invited into hope. And here’s the thing: it is a hope not grounded in their own ability to make it all better. It is a hope grounded in God’s promise to bring new life out of death. A hope grounded in God’s assurance that nothing in this world will have the final say. A hope grounded in God’s commitment to walk with them every single step of the way.

This is the Easter Sunday message: a message of hope. This is the Easter season message: a message of hope. If there is anything we are encouraged to take with us beyond Easter it is this: when we place our trust in God, “All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.” And “Everything will be okay in the end. If it’s not okay, it’s not the end.” It is our willingness to trust in God, that allows us to be

2 Julian of Norwich in Revelations of Divine Love, chapter 27.
hopeful:
• Hopeful about continuing to trust that God will deepen and strengthen the community we share here at Saint Peter.
• Hopeful about having the ability to love one another — even those whose we think of as “the other.”
• Hopeful about having the strength to give our lives in loving service to others.
• Hopeful, in large part, because in Christ we have come to know a God who loves us deeply, who cares for us profoundly, and who wants us to be well.

Jesus, in his High Priestly Prayer, says to God, “...now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that [my followers] may have my joy made complete in themselves.” This is the message of the Easter season. There is no promise that people of faith will be spared the struggles and difficulties of this life. Yet it is our faith in God’s promise of new life that fills us with hope, and allows us to live in joy.

I hope this season has drawn you even more deeply into this promise from God. “All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.” And “Everything will be okay in the end. If it’s not okay, it’s not the end.” May this promise be our guide as we love and serve one another, and as we continue to be the people of Saint Peter Lutheran Church — a sign in the world of God’s desire to make all things new.

Let’s take a couple minutes to talk about this.

I’m going to ask our production crew to display two discussion questions on your screens right now, and I’ll invite you to spend four minutes reflecting among yourselves on one or two of these questions.

1. How do I understand the way my faith in God gives me hope and joy?
2. What hope do I have for what God will accomplish among us in days to come?

David J. Risendal, Pastor

Gospel Lesson; English Text

17:6 [Jesus said,] “I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; 8 for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 9 I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. 10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. 11 And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. 14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 15 I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask

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5 A list of Bible lessons for the coming weeks is available at www.elca.org/Lectionary.
you to protect them from the evil one. 16 They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.”

Gospel Lesson; Greek Text:

17:6 Ἐφανέρωσα σοι τὸ ὄνομα τοίς ἀνθρώποις οὕς ἔδωκας μοι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου. σοὶ ἂςαν καμοὶ αὐτοὺς ἔδωκας καὶ τὸν λόγον σου τετήρηκαν. 7 νῦν ἔγνωκαν ὅτι πάντα ὅσα δέωκας μοι παρὰ σοῦ εἰσίν· 8 ὅτι τὰ ῥήματα ἀ ἔδωκας μοι δέωκας αὐτοῖς, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐλαβον καὶ ἔγνωσαν ἄλθος ὅτι παρὰ σοῦ ἔξηλθον, καὶ εἰπότεσαν ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας. 9 Ἐγὼ περὶ αὐτῶν ἐρωτῶ, οὐ περὶ τού κόσμου ἐρωτῶ ἀλλὰ περὶ ὧν δεδώκας μοι, ὅτι σοὶ εἰσίν, 10 καὶ τὰ ἐμά πάντα σά ἠστιν καὶ τὰ σά ἠμά, καὶ δεδέσασαι ἐν αὐτοῖς. 11 καὶ οὐκέτι εἰμί ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ εἰσίν, καθὼς πρὸς σε ἔρχομαι. πάτερ ἄγιε, τήρησον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὄνοματι σοφ ἔδωκας μοι, ἵνα ὡσιν ἐν καθὼς ἡμεῖς. 12 ὅτε ἤμην μετ᾿ αὐτῶν ἐγὼ ἔπηρον αὐτούς ἐν τῷ ὄνοματι σοφ ἔδωκας μοι, καὶ ἐφύλαξα, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐκ αὐτῶν ἄπωλετο εἰ μή ὁ υἱός τῆς ἄπωλειάς, ἵνα ἡ γραφὴ πληρωθῇ. 13 νῦν δὲ πρὸς σε ἔρχομαι καὶ ταύτα λαλῶ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἵνα ἔχωσιν τὴν χαρὰν τὴν ἐμῆν πεπληρωμένην ἐν εὐαὐτοῖς. 14 ἐγὼ δέδωκα αὐτοῖς τὸν λόγον σου καὶ ὁ κόσμος ἐμίσησεν αὐτοὺς, ὅτι οὐκ εἰσίν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου καθὼς ἐγὼ ὡς εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου. 15 οὐκ ἔρωτω ἵνα ἠρίς αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, ἀλλὰ ἵνα τηρήσησ αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ. 16 ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου οὐκ εἰσίν καθὼς ἐγὼ ὡς εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου. 17 ἀγίασον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ἁλθείᾳ· ὁ λόγος ὁ σὸς ἁλθείᾳ ἐστίν. 18 καθὼς ἔμε ἀπέστειλας εἰς τὸν κόσμον, καθὼ ἀπέστειλα αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν κόσμον. 19 καὶ οὐπέρ αὐτῶν ἐγὼ ἁγιάζω ἐμαυτόν, ἵνα ὡσιν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἡγιασμένοι ἐν ἁλθείᾳ. 7

First Lesson; English Text:

1:15 In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred twenty persons) and said, 16 “Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus— 17 for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.”

21 So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection.” 23 So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. 24 Then they prayed and said, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles. 8

First Lesson; Greek Text:

1:15 Καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις ἄναστας Πέτρος ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἀδελφῶν εἰπεν· ἦν τε ὁχλὸς ὀνομάτων ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό ὁ σε ἐκατόν εἰκοσι. 16ἀνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἐδει πληρωθῆναι τὴν γραφὴν ἦν προέπεν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἁγίον διὰ στόματος Δαυιδ περὶ Ἰουδᾶ τοῦ γενομένου ὄνημος τοὺς συλλαβοῦσιν Ἰσσοῦν, ὅτι κατηριβημένους ἦν ἐν ἡμῖν καὶ ἔλαχεν τὸν κλήρον τῆς διακονίας ταύτης.
Second Lesson; Greek Text:

21δει οὖν τῶν συνελθόντων ἣμῖν ἀνδρῶν ἐν παντὶ χρόνῳ ὃ εἰσήλθεν καὶ ἀξίζηλθεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς, 22ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τοῦ βαπτίσματος Ἰωάννου ἑως τῆς ἡμέρας ἡς ἀνελήμφθη ἢμῖν, μάρτυρα τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ σὺν ἡμῖν γενέσθαι ἕνα τοῦτον. 23Καὶ ἐστησαν δύο, Ἰωάννη τὸν καλοῦμενον Βαρσαββᾶν ὡς ἐπεκλήθη Ἰούστος, καὶ Μαθθίαν. 24καὶ προσευχόμενοι εἶπον· σὺ κύριε καρδιογνώστα πάντων, ἀνάδειξόν ὁν ἐξελέξω ἐκ τοῦτων τῶν δύο ἑνα 25λαβεῖν τὸν τόπον τῆς διακονίας ταύτης καὶ ἀποστολῆς ἢ τῆς παρέβη Ιουόδας πορευθῆναι εἰς τὸν τόπον τὸν ἰδίον. 26καὶ ἐδώκαν κλήρους αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐπέσεν ὁ κλήρος ἐπὶ Μαθθίαν καὶ συγκατεπιστρεψαν μετὰ τῶν ἐνδεκα ἀποστόλων. 9

Second Lesson; English Text:

5:9 If we receive human testimony, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has testified to his Son. 10 Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony in their hearts. Those who do not believe in God have made him a liar by not believing in the testimony that God has given concerning his Son. 11 And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. 10

Second Lesson; Greek Text:

5:9 εἰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαμβάνομεν, ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ θεοῦ μείζων ἐστὶν· ὅτι αὐτὴ ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι μεμαρτύρηκεν περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ. 10δό πιστεύων εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἔχει τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, ὃς πιστεύων τῷ θεῷ συνεύρηκεν αὐτὸν, ὅτι οὐ πεπιστευκεν εἰς τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἢν μεμαρτύρηκεν ὁ θεὸς περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ. 11Καὶ αὐτὴ ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία, ὅτι ἡ ζωὴ αἰώνιον ἐδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεός, καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ ζωὴ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν. 12δ ἔχων τὸν υἱὸν ἔχει τὴν ζωήν· ὃς ἔχων τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν ζωήν οὐκ ἔχει. 13Τάντα ἔγραψα ὡμία ἵνα εἰδήτε ὅτι ζωὴν ἔχετε αἰώνιον, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ. 11

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