

Fifth Sunday of Easter May 14, 2017

LUTHERAN

LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms
of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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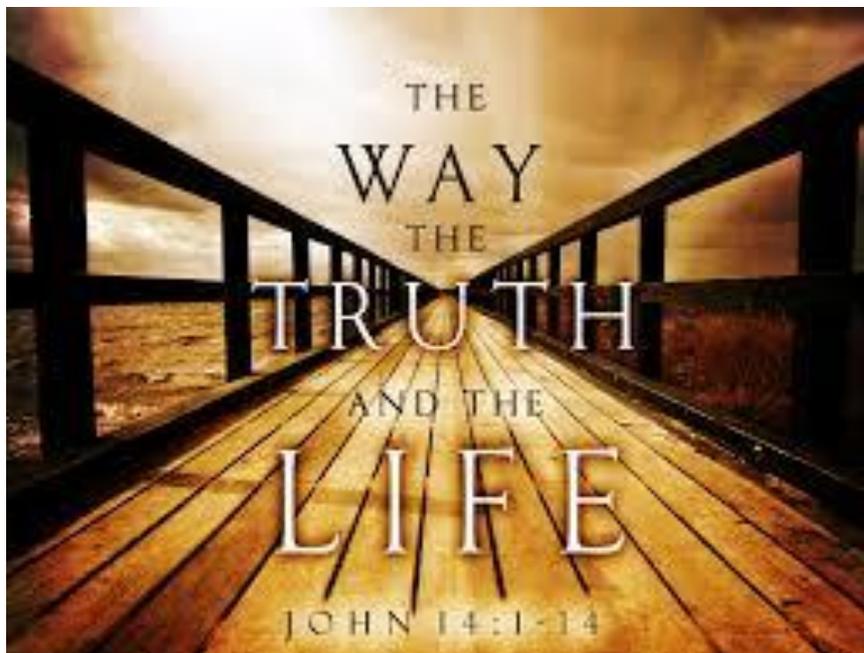
**through Facebook at either “Living the Lutheran Lectionary”,
“Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”**

May 4, 2017 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44130

*(Presented as a part of the bible study/worship weekday service (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) in a house church setting,
bi-weekly at an assisted living site and used by Lutherans in Africa.*

E-mail puritaspastor@hotmail.com for details.



<http://davidould.net/john-141-14-i-am-the-way-the-truth-and-the-life/>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 633 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) Not listed

“At the Lamb’s high feast we sing”

“...By R. Campbell, written in 1849 [C. MSS.], and first printed in his collection commonly known as the *St. Andrew's Hymnal*, 1850, in 4 stanzas of 8 lines. In the original manuscripts the first two lines are added as a refrain to each verse, but are omitted in the printed text...”
http://hymnary.org/text/at_the_lambs_high_feast_we_sing

“..Originally the tune to a 15th-century secular folk song ("Der reich Mann war geritten aus," or "The rich man had ridden out"), "Sonne der Gerechtigkeit" was adopted by the Bohemian Brethren for the 1566 hymnal, Kirchengeseng, where it was set to a text beginning "Sun of Righteousness." The adoption of a sacred text to secular music — contrafactum — was common in the medieval era and often the work of Catholic friars. (A similar 19th-century example of contrafactum is the setting of William Chatterton Dix's text "What Child is This?" to the English folk tune "Greensleeves.")

"Sonne der Gerchtigkeit" is commonly used to accompany the hymn, "At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing." The text refers to the ancient custom of administering to new Christians the sacraments of baptism and holy communion at the first Easter Sunday mass following their catechumenate. Vested in white robes, they were admitted for the first time to the "banquet of the Lamb" — the eucharistic feast. Robert Campbell (1814-1868), a Scotsman who converted to Roman Catholicism, translated the seventh-century Latin text to English...”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzmgUcvjOk> Unison voices, organ, brass quintet.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzBs0Y7ymzM> Ray Lenz 1 month ago

I absolutely LOVE the registration selections of the organ. Such a great hymn! As a church musician (trombonist) and singer, I love this hymn. It is SO nice to hear registration changes on a hymn of this length. Very appropriately done!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIZZBj49_ZQ Alternate tune, Salzburg

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CI0cGIE6i4M> Enjoy the comments following this organ presentation. Caution, they are all in German.

The Holy Bible, [English Standard Version \(ESV\)](#) Copyright © 2001 by
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Acts 6:1-9, 7:2a, 51-60; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Acts 7:55-60 (Next Week: Acts 6:17:16-31; RCL, Acts 17:22-31)

“The reading from Acts features two distinct episodes linked by Stephen, an otherwise unknown apostle.

A large part of the story is omitted from the lectionary reading. I would recommend including the verses left out (7:2b-43) because the omission affects how one understands Stephen’s speech. The reading is lengthy enough as it is.

An obvious choice for preachers and teachers is to focus on the figure of Stephen who provides some continuity in the narrative. I suggest here a connecting theme that has potential for preaching and contemporary reflections. In each episode we see a community divided. Each offers some insights with respect to navigating divisions among us...” (continued after 6:7)

Seven Chosen to Serve

6 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists^[a] arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. ² 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. ³ Therefore, brothers,^[b] pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵ 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. ⁶ These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

⁷ 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.

"...The conflict between the Hebrews and the Hellenists is a division over language and culture. The Hellenists were Greek-speaking Jews. They complain that the Aramaic-speaking Jews, likely natives, neglect the Hellenistic widows in the distribution of food. "Widows" may imply any who were disadvantaged in some way. The Hellenists were most likely immigrants and a minority in this new community of believers. The distribution of food suggests divisions over social and cultural habits and customs.

The community of disciples shifts the focus from neglect of the widows in the distribution of food to neglect of "the word of God" by waiting on tables (6:2). They resolve the conflict by creating a division of labor. The community selected seven men to wait tables, thus freeing the disciples for ministry of the word (verses 3-4). The men appointed for distribution of food are named in verses 5 and 6. Only Stephen and Philip appear again in Acts, each one in the role of furthering the word of God...

Curiously, none of the men selected for waiting tables is mentioned again in the appointed role.

The conflict between the Hellenists and the Hebrews concludes with the spread of the word of God and increasing numbers of disciples in Jerusalem. Despite the conflict and divisions within the community of believers, the numbers "obedient to the faith" continue to increase greatly (6:7)..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1672 [Marilyn Salmon](#) Professor of New Testament, United Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN

"...It's one of the lectionary's more bizarre selections, and that's no slight honor. The main problem is that the action described in these six verses (54-60)--the gruesome murder of Stephen at the hands of an angry mob--is entirely dislocated from the situation that triggers it. It's foolish to expect that everyone will know what you are talking about if you just casually refer to "Stephen's sermon" or "the story of the church's first martyr." For this passage to mean anything at all during a church service, you need to flesh out the wider story, explaining who this Stephen is, who his assailants are, and what he does to offend them so..." (continued after the reading)

Stephen Is Seized

⁸ And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹ 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.

- a. [Acts 6:1](#) That is, Greek-speaking Jews
- b. [Acts 6:3](#) Or *brothers and sisters*

² And Stephen said: “Brothers and fathers, hear me... (*verses 2b – 50 are Stephen’s full comments. Read a commentary on this section at*

<https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/Acts/Stephens-Speech>)

⁵¹ “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, ⁵³ you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.”

The Stoning of Stephen

⁵⁴ Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ 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. ⁵⁶ And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” ⁵⁷ But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together^[b] at him. ⁵⁸ 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. ⁵⁹ And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ 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.

- a. [Acts 7:46](#) Some manuscripts *for the house of Jacob*
- b. [Acts 7:57](#) Or *rushed with one mind*

“...The next challenge is to fill in that backstory without embarking into a detailed explanation of Stephen's speech (Acts 7:2-53), which is long and whose theological rhetoric is meandering at best. The basic point to establish, if you're trying to be mindful of the lectionary's overall perspective on the Easter season, is that the biblical traditions about Easter and its proclamation are not all about victory, wonder, and rejoicing. Stephen's story constructs a grim memorial to remind us that the stakes are high. Jesus may be Lord, but he will still be resisted. His resurrection does not stop the human race—including religious people—from spilling blood and resisting the prophetic remonstrations of God's spokespeople.

No one pages through the New Testament without repeatedly reading about violent resistance. The story of Stephen gives us much to consider, lest we forget the atrocities that are part of the Christian legacy--those inflicted upon people of faith, as well as those inflicted by them..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=885 [Matt Skinner](#) Professor of New Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.

Psalm 146; RCL, Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 (*Psalm 66:8-20; RCL, the same reading*)

"A Closing Quintet: Psalms 146-50 Psalms 138-145 make up the final collection of psalms marked "Of David" in the Psalter. The collection concludes with the promise, "My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD..." (145:21). Psalms 146-150 then express that praise, each psalm beginning and ending with "Praise the LORD!" (in Hebrew, "Hallelujah!"). This quintet closes the entire Book of Psalms..." (continued after reading)

Put Not Your Trust in Princes

146 Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD, O my soul!

² I will praise the LORD as long as I live;

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

³ Put not your trust in princes,

in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

⁴ When his breath departs, he returns to the earth;

on that very day his plans perish.

⁵ Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,

whose hope is in the LORD his God,

⁶ who made heaven and earth,

the sea, and all that is in them,

who keeps faith forever;

⁷ who executes justice for the oppressed,

who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free;

⁸ the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;

the LORD loves the righteous.

⁹ The LORD watches over the sojourners;

he upholds the widow and the fatherless,

but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

¹⁰ The LORD will reign forever,

your God, O Zion, to all generations.

Praise the LORD!

“...The circle of those invited to praise in this closing quintet is continually expanding. First, the individual calls himself or herself to praise ("O my soul") and resolves to do so (146:1-2). Then the call goes out to the people of Jerusalem (147:12) or Israel (149:2) to praise. Finally, the quintet closes with an invitation to "everything that breathes" to join in the praising (150:6).

The structure of Psalm 146 exhibits the usual two-part pattern of the hymn. Psalm 113 is a good example of that pattern, with a call to praise (1-4) followed by reasons for praising (5-9). Psalm 146 begins with a call to praise (1-2) and supplies a number of reasons for praising (5-9). Verses 3 and 4 insert some words of instruction (3-4). Verse 10 consists of a confession of faith and a final call to "Praise the LORD."..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1469 **James Limburg**
Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

1 Peter 2:2-10; RCL, the same reading (1 Peter 3:13-22; RCL, the same reading)

To quote again from the Lutheran Study Bible's introduction to 1 Peter:

"First Peter reflects the rapid expansion of the early church in Asia Minor. The writer explores issues of community, mission, and suffering -- issues these young faith communities may have been facing." (continued after reading)

² Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. (**Psalm 34:8**)

⁴ As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious,⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.” [Cited from Isa. 28:16](#)

⁷ 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,”^[a] [Cited from Ps. 118:22](#)

⁸ and

“A stone of stumbling,
and a rock of offense.” [Rom. 9:33; Cited from Isa. 8:14](#)

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's

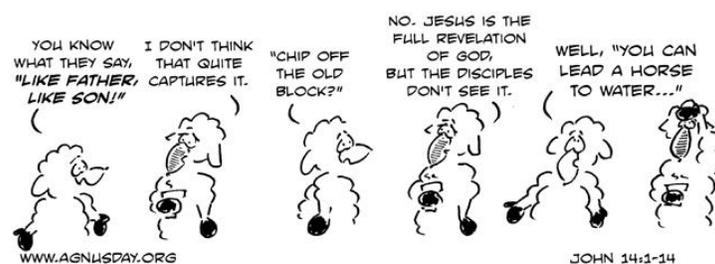
people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (verse 10 – Hosea 2:23)

a. [1 Peter 2:7](#) Greek *the head of the corner*

“...The four readings from 1 Peter, of which this reading is the culmination, contain the essential, creative, identity-forming language of faith. This language of faith is proclaimed, spoken by the author of 1 Peter, to establish, to shape, and to grow the early Christian community. For 1 Peter 2, this is the ultimate function and purpose of (dare one say) any and every Christian community -- to be known into being by Christ, and to be known for its proclamation of him. Built up by the word of Christ, the Christian (individual and community) bears the word of Christ.

The bulk of 1 Peter, and in particular the four readings we have had, may be summed up, in brief: As Christ is, so is the Christian. As the church this is our only calling, and our only hope.”

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2095 [Karl Jacobson](#)
Associate Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Minneapolis, Minn



“The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 14th Chapter”

“Glory to You, O Lord”

John 14:1-14; RCL, the same reading (*John 14:15-21; RCL, the same reading*)

“The section is part of the Last Supper discourse in the fourth gospel. These “farewell discourses” take up chapters 13-17, or about 20% of the book. In this section, Jesus is addressing his disciples on the night before his crucifixion. The section culminates in what is called the High Priestly Prayer (17: 1-26)...”

http://www.progressiveinvolvement.com/progressive_involvement/2014/05/lectionary-blogging-easter-5-john-14-1-14.html

I Am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life

14 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God;^[a] believe also in me. ²In 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?^[b] ³And 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. ⁴And you know the way to where I am going.”^[c] ⁵Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are

going. How can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.^[d] From now on you do know him and have seen him."

⁸ Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." ⁹ 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'? ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

¹² "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. ¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me^[e] anything in my name, I will do it.

- a. [John 14:1](#) Or *You believe in God*
- b. [John 14:2](#) Or *In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you*
- c. [John 14:4](#) Some manuscripts *Where I am going you know, and the way you know*
- d. [John 14:7](#) Or *If you know me, you will know my Father also, or If you have known me, you will know my Father also*
- e. [John 14:14](#) Some manuscripts omit *me*

"Oh, the honesty of Thomas and Philip.

Perhaps the best choice for us as we hear and wrestle with the complexities of this passage is to imitate that honesty. This passage from Jesus' farewell discourse, which began in John 13, is a series of dialogues that turn on honest questions. How we ought to cherish responses made with wrinkled brow and slight shakes of the head, responses that echo many of our own wonderings...

There is a promise in verse 14. All we can do is pray "our heart's desire" as one wise Christian once said to me..."

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=930 [Sarah Henrich](#)
Professor Emeritus of New Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN



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