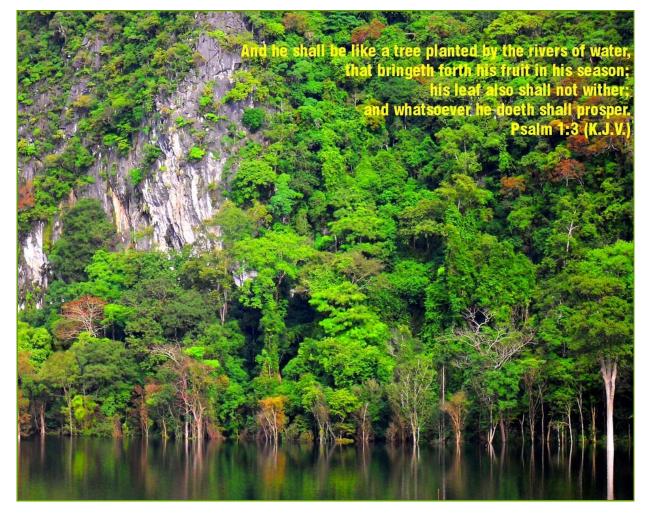
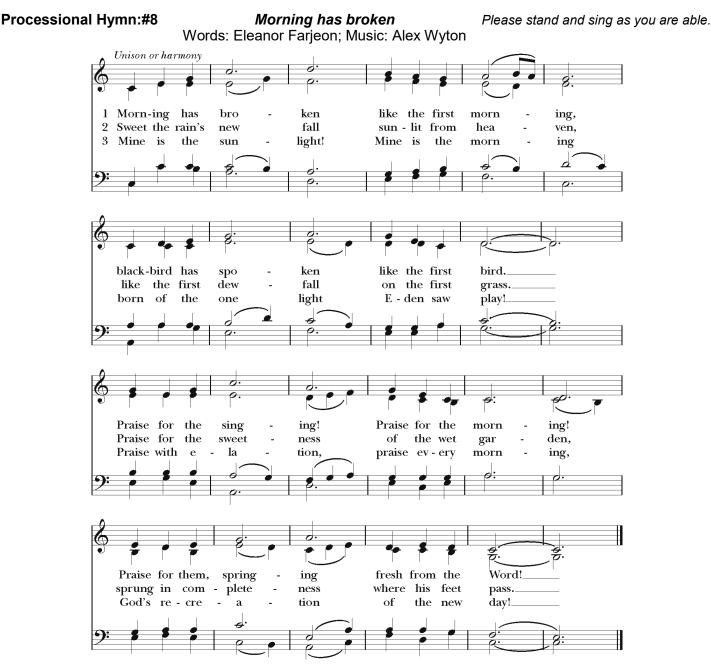
Seventh Sunday Of Easter



May 16, 2021 10:30AM

Introduction

Celebrant: Welcome to everyone with us in-person with us today and online. Welcome to Grace Episcopal Church in Muskogee Oklahoma—a community that has fun together learns together and grows together. This past week we celebrated the Ascension of Jesus on Thursday. Next Sunday we will celebrate the birth of the church on Pentecost. When you come to church next Sunday, please dress in liturgical colors and wear red. Help us celebrate the birth of the church.



Liturgy of the Word

Opening Acclamation

Celebrant:Alleluia! Christ is risen!People:The Lord is Risen indeed. Alleluia!

Collect for Purity

Celebrant: 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.**



Collect of the Day

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Celebrant: Let us pray. O God, the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: Do not leave us comfortless, but send us your Holy Spirit to strengthen us, and exalt us to that place where our Savior Christ has gone before; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

First Lesson: Acts 1:15-17, 21-26

Please be seated.

Reader: A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred twenty persons) and said, "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—for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry. So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 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." So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed

and said, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen 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.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 1

Reader: Happy are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked, * People: nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seats of the scornful! Their delight is in the law of the LORD, * Reader: and they meditate on his law day and night. People: Reader: They are like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither; * People: everything they do shall prosper. Reader: It is not so with the wicked; * they are like chaff which the wind blows away. People: Therefore the wicked shall not stand upright when judgment comes, * Reader: nor the sinner in the council of the righteous. People: Reader: For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, * People: but the way of the wicked is doomed.

Second Lesson: 1 John 5:1-6

Reader: A reading from the first Letter of John.

V

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. 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. And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

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.

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

Gradual Hymn: #479

Glory Be To Jesus

Please stand and sing as you are able.

Vords: Edward Caswell; Music: Friedrich	Filitz
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Gospel Reading: John 17:6-19

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Jesus prayed for his disciples, "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. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; 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. 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. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. 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. 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. 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. 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. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth."

Celebrant:The Gospel of the Lord.People:Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Sermon

Destiny

The Rev. Bob Wickizer

By now, some of you may have learned that I can have a mischievous streak. Years ago, when our daughters were in their teens, we vacationed at Grand Cayman Island. There is a wonderful tourist stop there you can only reach by boat in the middle of the bay called "Stingray City." It is a circular reef about 200 yards in diameter and waist deep water on a sandy bottom. The boats anchor in deeper water around the edge of the reef and the tourists wade out to feed and admire the stingrays.

These Caribbean stingrays can be as big as a kitchen table, but they only sting with their tail if you step on them. They don't really bite, but instead, they suction things out of your hands. Your tour boat gives each guest a paper cup of chopped up stinky shrimp to feed the stingrays. They come right up to you and suck that shrimp right off your hand. It tickles and is fun.

When we were visiting, Joan and our oldest daughter were standing side by side. I dove under water a couple of feet and smeared a bit of the shrimp on the back of Rebecca's leg. Within seconds there were several stingrays circling her legs all trying to get a free snack. Rebecca shriked and shot straight out of the water like a Polaris missile from a submarine launch. She landed in Joan's arms.

Of course, I did the same thing to Joan. She shrieked as she now had a school of stingrays going for her leg. Joan always told me she didn't know how to swim, or she couldn't swim, or she didn't want to swim, but let me tell you, in that sixty yards back to the boat, I saw her turn in an Olympic performance. Happy anniversary, dear.

The lesson from that story is that there are things in life you may not want to do, you may not think you are capable of doing, or you tell yourself that you don't have the skills to do, but in the right moment, the Holy Spirit will come into your life and give you the "*dunamis*," the spiritual power to accomplish whatever the Spirit wants you to do.

There is a lot of language in today's readings about destiny, about being lost, being found, and being filled. So, before we get started, I have a question for you. Raise your hand for your answer. Do you think you are in control of your destiny? A lot? Somewhat? A little? Not at all?

The text from the Book of Acts probably occurs within weeks of the crucifixion. The disciples are terrified that the Romans will find them and crucify them too. By this point in history, the Romans had been crucifying not just the leaders, but entire groups of insurrectionists, criminal gangs, Jewish rebellions, and others for three centuries. Military control of the provinces was iron-fisted. The slightest hint of revolt against the empire was brutally suppressed.

The bible doesn't really give us the sense of the Roman brutality or the fear the disciples and their families carried for following what they thought at the time was a failed messiah. They believed that their group reflected the twelve tribes of Israel, so they needed to replace Judas to make their number complete again. But how to do that?

Suppose you were a wine merchant in North Africa, and you wanted to rent one tenth of the cargo hold of a ship crossing the Mediterranean from Sicily to Tunis. Obviously, the seller cannot haul the ship up to you for you to purchase so many square cubits, so you purchase a share of the ship's lading. The share is just a token that represents the capacity you purchased. It is a legal contract that you could sell to someone else. The word for that share is the same word used for casting lots.

The ancients believed that the shares sold in this way contained some essence of the entity they represented whether it was a ship's cargo hold, a wheat field, a pottery shop, or even someone's life. In casting lots, they also believed that the Spirit will intervene and choose among the various lots. This was a common understanding from Persia to Greece to Israel and Egypt. The Spirit, whatever it is, will intercede and make the choice. There was absolutely no concept that casting lots was a random process where the outcome was purely chance.

Even Einstein remarked about Quantum Mechanics that he "did not believe that God played dice with the universe." That idea about God intervening in what seem to be random outcomes persists even to the modern era. But I digress.

The disciples were gathered in a secret place probably at night. They hid themselves in crowds on the street one by one as they converged toward their meeting spot after dark. They were terrified but they knew they needed a replacement for the one who was destined to be lost. Casting lots for the choice between two equally matched alternatives was not only fair but enabled the Spirit to determine the outcome. And the lot fell on Matthias.

While the Jewish Maccabean Revolt against Roman occupation of Palestine two centuries before had been successful, the elements of another Jewish revolt were forming during this time of the resurrection. The disciples of Jesus understood the tensions of all the different Jewish factions expecting a military Messiah who would overthrow the hated Romans. The seeds of the next major conflict with Rome were forming and were painfully apparent to the disciples of Jesus. Their terror of being rounded up by Rome and crucified as examples to all the messianic movements that were fermenting at the time was well justified.

The bible tells us that the lot which was divinely inspired, fell on Matthias. The Greek text says that the *"kleros"* fell on Matthias. *"Kleros"* is the word for lot and is the root of the word for the English word "clergy." The understanding here is that to be ordained a priest is your lot in life.

We celebrated Ascension Day this week on Thursday. Forty days after Easter, Jesus was taken up into heaven as the disciples watched. He left them the Holy Spirit, their advocate and defender to lead them in their difficult ministry. The disciples and the new one, Matthias, were witnesses to the resurrection and the ascension, and now they must spread that good news.

As Jesus said about Thomas, "Blessed is the one who has not seen, and yet believes." Do you believe in the resurrection? Do you believe that Jesus was the son of God? What is the best way for you to be a witness to the resurrection? Here is the really scary, good news.

ALL of us are called to witness to the resurrection of Jesus. You might be wondering, "How do I do that?"

- 1. Invite others to church.
- 2. Welcome them to a church where people learn and grow together.
- 3. Connect them to others and the wider community.

If you can do these things, they may not ordain you, but I guarantee that you will soon find yourselves doing things you never wanted to do or never thought you could do. And when you do, look around. The spirit will be right behind you.

Nicene Creed

All in unison; Please stand as you are able.

- 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: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

- 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. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He 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

Please sit, kneel or stand.

- *Reader:* Bound together in Christ in the communion of the Holy Spirit, let us pray with one heart and mind to God our Father.
- *Reader:* For peace from things that separate us from one another and for our salvation.
- People: Lord, have mercy.
- *Reader:* For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, especially...
- *People:* St. Philip's, Ardmore; Ardmore Village, Ardmore; Diocese of Maryland; The Anglican Church of Mexico.
- *Reader:* For this holy gathering and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and fear of God.
- People: Lord, have mercy.

Reader: For...

People: Michael, our Presiding Bishop; Poulson, our Bishop; Bob & Tom, our clergy; Tim & Pat, our wardens; vestry, delegates, all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God. Lord, have mercy.

Reader: For the world and its leaders, our nation and its people. We pray for our leaders, especially...
People: Joe, our President; Kamala, our Vice-president; Markwayne, our Congressman; James & Jim, our Senators; Kevin, our Governor; and Marlon, our Mayor. Lord, have mercy.

- *Reader:* For prisoners, the oppressed, all those in need or suffering, especially...
- People: Barbara & Family, Blackwell Family, Brad, Brewer Family, James & Shirley, Judy, Sherri, Bea, Eathen, Linda, John, Angie, Brian, Glen, Dante, Marilyn, Gary, Ann, Connie, Jan, Cliff, Esther, Ann, Ronald, Michael, Sheila, J.J., Marlee, Carl, Geneva, all those affected by the pandemic, all the front line workers involved with patient care, all first responders, postal workers, law enforcement, all fire and safety personnel, all United States Military serving at home and abroad, and those whose suffering is known only to God.
- *Reader:* We pray for those who have died, (*especially...*)
- People: Lord, have mercy.
- *Reader:* For ourselves, our families, and those we love. We pray for those in our parish, especially ... *People:* John, Marian, Ashley, Kaleb, Philip.
- *Reader:* Also those who are traveling, *(especially...)*
- People: Lord, have mercy.
- *Reader:* Remembering our most blessed Mary and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.
- People: To you, O Lord.
- *Reader:* Heavenly Father, you have promised to hear what we ask in the Name of your Son: Accept and fulfill our petitions, we pray, not as we ask in our ignorance, nor as we deserve in our sinfulness, but as you know and love us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Confession and Absolution

Celebrant: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbors.

Silence is observed.

Celebrant & 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.

Celebrant: 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

Please stand as you are able.

Celebrant:The peace of the Lord be always with you.People:And also with you.

Greet one another in the name of Christ.

Announcements, Birthdays & Anniversary Blessings

Please be seated.

Welcome to our guests today. If you are new to Grace for the first time or even if you have been here once or twice before, please fill out a visitor card and put it in the plate. We promise not to harass you, but we would like to include you on our weekly email broadcasts and other event notifications. Thank you for the blessing of your presence today.

Celebrant: Let us with gladness present the offerings and oblations of our life and labor to the Lord.

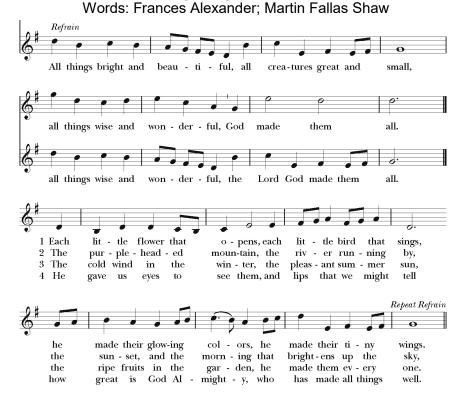
Offertory

During this time we make an offering to the church to help maintain it's mission in creation. Its also a time in which we fully offer ourselves to be Christ in the World around us.

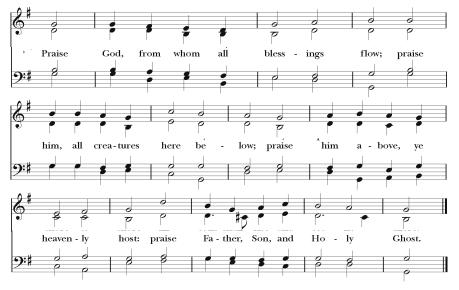
Offertory Hymn: #405

All Things Bright and Beautiful

Ken Yadon



Doxology



Great Thanksgiving

Sursum Corda

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

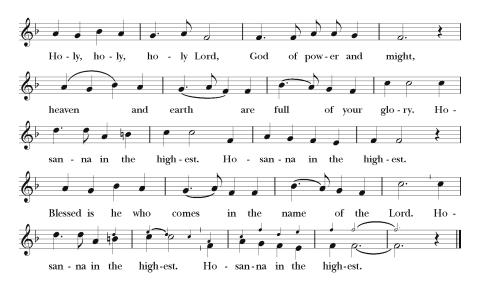
Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds

Celebrant: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

But chiefly are we bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; for he is the true Paschal Lamb, who was sacrificed for us, and has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he has destroyed death, and by his rising to life again he has won for us everlasting life.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Sanctus: #S-125



Celebrant: [†] Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself, and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all. He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or lay a hand upon it; and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated.

Celebrant: On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."^{†††} After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "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. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."[†]

Celebrant & People: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Celebrant: We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ: By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever **AMEN**.

Lord's Prayer

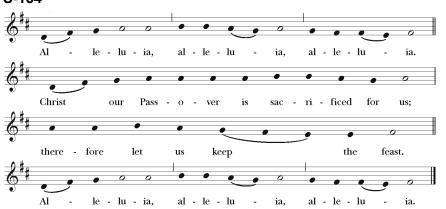
Celebrant: And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Celebrant & People: 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, for ever and ever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.

Fraction Anthem: # S-154



Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

At Grace Episcopal Church, "All baptized Christians from any church are welcome to receive Holy Communion."

Communion Hymn:

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Celebrant: Let us pray. Celebrant & People: E

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Easter Blessing

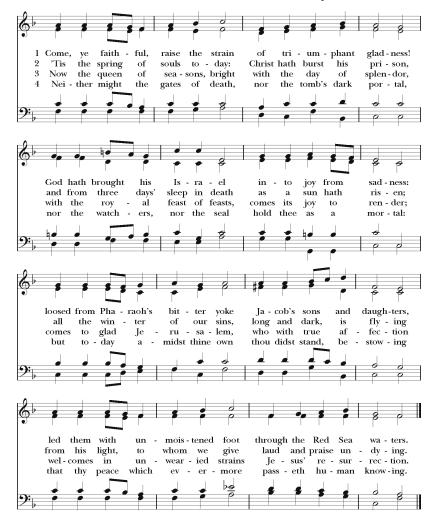
Celebrant: May Almighty God, who has redeemed us and made us his children through the resurrection of his Son our Lord, bestow upon you the riches of his blessing. **Amen.**

May God, who through the water of baptism has raised us from sin into newness of life, make you holy and worthy to be united with Christ for ever. **Amen.**

May God, who has brought us out of bondage to sin into true and lasting freedom in the Redeemer, bring you to your eternal inheritance. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

Recessional Hymn:#199 *Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain Please stand & sing as you are able.* Words: John Mason Neale; Music: Arthur Seymour Sullivan



Dismissal

Celebrant: Let us go forth in the name of Christ. People: Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

THANKS TO THOSE SERVING THIS WEEK:

Celebrant	The Rev. Bob Wickizer
1st Reader	Katherine Coburn
2nd Reader	Thomas Bentley
Altar Guild	Katherine Coburn &
	Diamond Franklin
Head Usher	David Edwards
lst Cross/Server	Thomas Bentley
2nd Cross	Terra Tomblinson



ON THE ALTAR:

Flowers on the altar today are given in loving memory of David Christopher Lee by Jennifer Sparks

Communion Wine for 2021 is given by Mike Alberty in loving memory of his parents.

Bread today is not sponsored. If you are interested in sponsoring the communion bread, please contact the front office.



CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF KATHRYN LYNCH BURKE July 28, 1930 - May 11, 2020

Wednesday, May 19, 2021 2:00 PM at Grace Episcopal Church

or virtually on Facebook at https://fb.me/e/1rt0LOREC



7 race is saving trees! In an effort to cut expenses, balance our annual

budget, and to increase our Earth-friendly practices, we are phasing out our printed service bulletins effective May 23rd. The virtual bulletin will continue to be on-screen during our services. A handout with readings, prayer list, etc. will still be available.



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