

Sunday, May 10, 2020 Fifth Sunday of Easter St Andrew's Lutheran Church, Speedway, Indiana

Dear Members and Friends of St Andrew's Lutheran Church,

Grace and peace in the name of Jesus!

Today's lessons are full of rocks and stones! We Christians are called "living stones" that form the community of those who follow Jesus. As I read and re-read that text this week, it occurred to me that I don't think of us as individual stones scattered across a field, even though these days that's what it might seem like we are. I continue to think of us a stones that are connected, touching each other and forming a structure that gives witness to the love and mercy that God gives us through Jesus and we pass on to others. One stone is just a stone. But many stones together build something of consequence. We are blessed to be together even when we are apart. Continue to reach out to one another through phone calls, emails, and the postal service. This is especially helpful to our members and friends in assisted living and care facilities, many of whom have been confined to their rooms during this quarantine.

A reminder to join Sunday Morning Coffee Hours via Zoom or phone at 10:00 am. And next Sunday, plan to join in a new Adult Class that will meet via Zoom from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm on Sundays beginning Sunday, May 17. Do you have ideas for other ways to connect? Please contact Kelli Steurer or me anytime!

We will continue to honor the Shelter At Home recommendation from our city, county, and state leaders who, along with Bishop Gafkjen, have asked those who have been worshipping at a distance to continue to do so. St Andrew's Church Council has been working on plans for us to regather for worship when it is safer for most of us to do so. We need to prepare to do that and it will take some time. We will NOT regather in the sanctuary on May 17 as we had at one time hoped. Please watch for more announcements and information about regathering sometime in the future.

May you all be careful and be safe!

Blessings to you all, Deacon Marilyn

Introduction

As we continue to celebrate the fifty days of Easter, today's gospel includes Jesus' promise that he goes to prepare a place for his followers in his Father's house. Our baptism commissions us to share Jesus' mission in the world. As 1 Peter reminds us, we are a holy people, called to proclaim the one who called us out of darkness into light. In words and deeds we bear witness to the risen Christ—our way, our truth, our life.

Prelude: My Hope is Built on Nothing Less

My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less



Invocation

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

We begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Thanksgiving for Baptism

You are invited to light a candle, have a small bowl of water ready to remember and give thanks for your baptism.

Alleluia! Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are raised with him to new life. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning you created us in your image and planted us in a well-watered garden. In the desert you promised pools of water for the parched, and you gave us water from the rock. When we did not know the way, you sent the Good Shepherd to lead us to still waters. At the cross, you watered us from Jesus' wounded side, and on this day, you shower us again with the water of life. We praise you for your salvation through water, for this water, and for all water everywhere. Bathe us in your forgiveness, grace, and love. Satisfy the thirsty, and give us the life only you can give. To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen**.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his commandments, and to share his risen life with all the world, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

The Word

First Reading: Acts 7:55-60

Stephen was one of the seven men chosen by the apostles to serve tables so that the apostles could be free to serve the word (Acts 6:1-6). Stephen does more than distribute food, however. For his preaching of God's word, he becomes the first martyr of the faith.

55 Filled with the Holy Spirit, [Stephen] gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56"Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" 57But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. 58Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.

Psalm: Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit. (Ps. 31:5)

- 1 In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness.
- 2 Incline your ear to me;

make haste to deliver me.

- 3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe, for you are my crag and my stronghold; for the sake of your name, lead me and guide me.
- 4 Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, for you are my tower of strength.
- 5 Into your hands I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me, O Lord, God of truth.
- 15 My times are in your hand;

rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who | persecute me.

16 Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love."

Second Reading: 1 Peter 2:2-10

Christ is the cornerstone of God's saving work and the foundation of our lives. We are God's chosen, holy people who continuously celebrate and declare the mercy of God we experience through Jesus Christ.

2Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation—3if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

4Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and 5like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6For it stands in scripture:

"See, I am laying in Zion a stone,

a cornerstone chosen and precious;

and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

7To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe,

"The stone that the builders rejected

has become the very head of the corner,"

8and

"A stone that makes them stumble,

and a rock that makes them fall."

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

9But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

10Once you were not a people,

but now you are God's people;

once you had not received mercy,

but now you have received mercy.

Gospel: John 14:1-14

On the night that he is to be arrested, Jesus shares final words with his disciples. As the one through whom God is known, he promises to go before them and act on their behalf.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 1"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. 2In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. 4And you know the way to the place where I am going." 5Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" 6Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

8Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." 9Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10Do 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; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. 12Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. 13I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

Meditation

Rocks and stones are everywhere in today's lessons.

The psalmist writes that God is like a rock of refuge. A place of protection.

Peter writes to some of the very first Christians and uses the image of stones to help them understand what it means to be in relationship with Jesus and with each other.

Peter first calls Jesus a "living stone," which is a little ironic when you remember that Jesus gave him his nickname, Peter, which means "rock." Has this become a running gag between the two of them? Maybe. After all, Peter is the one who sank like a stone when he wanted to walk on water to be like Jesus. Personally, I think that's the reason Jesus gave Simon the nickname of "Rock" so that he'd never forget his hubris and fallibility in that moment. And the joke is also on Peter for another reason. Despite his lack of faith during the storm, and his later denial that he even knew Jesus, Peter does indeed become a foundation of the new community of those who follow Jesus.

Peter must have gotten the joke. Because later he went on to quote Isaiah 28:16 "See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." So, Peter suggests, if all of us are "living stones" that form the foundation, then Jesus is like the cornerstone.

And here is God's joke: Jesus was a stone that was rejected by the world as not being the right kind of stone to build what the world was looking for. But God used that stone to become the cornerstone of the spiritual house where God and people would once again dwell together.

Peter's readers and listeners would have known a lot about stones and cornerstones. Nearly every building of any substance around them was built that way. Without them, nothing would last for

long. But at least portions of some of those buildings- the parts made of rock and stone - still exist. Peter's point is well taken: if you are going to build something, use the right materials.

But stones serve many purposes. The people Peter was writing to knew this. Peter knew this. Peter was probably in town or nearby when Stephen was executed for his witness to his belief that Jesus was given to the world to reconcile the relationship between God and the world; to show the world that God does, indeed, love the world. But that was a message that was dangerous and threatening to the power and authority of the religious leaders. So, Stephen was killed. With stones.

But Stephen knew that those stones would not be the last of him. Not anymore than the stone that was rolled across the entrance to the tomb where the body of Jesus had been placed was the last of Jesus. Like that stone, the stones that killed Stephen were the entrance to the dwelling that Jesus spoke about to his disciples on the night before his crucifixion. "I am going to prepare a place for you" Jesus told them.

Christians often read these verses from John's gospel at funerals. I've read them myself. And they are appropriate words for those times. But, we have to be careful with these words of Jesus. Like stones, words can be both used and misused.

The place that Jesus promises to prepare for us is sometimes thought of as a heavenly country club where only those who meet certain qualifications are eligible for entry. But, really, would Jesus die and rise again so that people could be excluded from the great gift of dwelling with God? Or, is Jesus the cornerstone of a reality that we can't begin to imagine?

It's a question that might bring us up short. Stones will do that. As Peter wrote, and as any of us who have taken a walk can attest, stones will trip you up. Rocks can make you fall. Ouch. Or.....is that just too literal? Was Jesus getting at something else that Peter wanted to make sure we understand?

We sometimes say, "I just stumbled across this......" and then we go on to relate the new and exciting piece of information, or place, or thing that we never expected to know or discover or find. But there it is! And because of it, our lives have become something that we never imagined was possible! We are entirely new beings because of what we "stumbled across."

Because of Jesus, we live our lives not worried whether or not we are qualified to enter the place that Jesus has prepared for us; but, confident that the way has been built with the stone that Jesus crushed on his way out of the tomb.

And we walk on that way doing the work that Jesus gave us to do: Loving God and loving our neighbors as ourselves. Peter, who knew a lot about nicknames and how they can shape your life, wasn't kidding when he called those who follow Jesus "living stones" because it's us that the Holy Spirit uses to make the way for others to follow Jesus. We aren't to throw stones to express what we imagine to be God's displeasure with the behavior of others. We are simply to be the stones that the Holy Spirit uses to trip people up with the love and mercy that God has for everyone.

Amen.

Nicene Creed

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. was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. 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 and the Son,* who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who 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 Intercession

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need. A brief silence.

Build us up, mothering God, as living stones united in your spiritual house. Continually strengthen your church as it is sent forth to proclaim your love. We pray especially for new congregations and those in redevelopment and for all congregations seeking to be faithful in finding new ways to worship, serve, and be in mission. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Humble us, creator God, as part of your creation. Fill us with respect and awe for the world you have made, including volcanoes, ocean currents, tropical rainstorms, glaciers, and other forces that both destroy and create. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Align our ways to your love, O God. We pray for countries, leaders, and other organizations as they prepare places for those seeking refuge and safety, Lutheran Disaster Relief, Family Promise of Indianapolis, and Wheeler Mission. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of healing and rest, help those whose hearts are heavy and weighed down by many troubles. Comfort their suffering, ease their distress, and carry their burdens especially Vicki Alleman, David, Christine Claprodt, Patrick Frepan, Jeannie Hermerding, Keith Johnson, Katie Hollman, John Racek, David Tryon, Janet Walsh, Tim Walter, Denise Hollman, Pat Tumey, Ron Wojtowicz, Fred and Darlene Fairchild, Kelsey and Justin Martin, Jerid Edwards, Ruth Tingle, Thelma Jones, Penny Kalk, Martha Larson, Norma Petraits, David Royer, David Schmalz, The Harrison, Bob White, Lynn Bigelow, Alton Dahl, Marlon Shupe, Angel Kaulfers, Sylvia McCollum, Michael Joseph, Jerry Shake, and those we name before you now...... Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Nurturing God, we pray for those who tend and teach young children, for the safe pregnancies of expectant parents, and for families who struggle with infertility and miscarriage. We give thanks for all who have shown mothering care, and we remember all for whom this day is difficult. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Generous God, you call into your brilliant light all who have died. Give us faith to take hold of the promise of your eternal life. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

The Lord's Prayer

Joined together by the Holy Spirit, let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught:

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.

Offering

We want to offer a word of gratitude and thanks to everyone who has supported the mission and ministry of St Andrew's by sending in via either the mail or online giving through Tithe.ly. You have shared your resources to keep the ministry and mission of St Andrew's continuing even though we are dispersed. It is our goal to continue being a presence not only in your lives but in the lives of others. Thank you for making that possible!

If you would like to explore the option of giving online or setting up an automatic bank withdrawal, please make contact with Kelli Steurer. She can help you through these steps. And I also want to extend an invitation to any of you who would like to use this time to share a story or some thoughts about how you have seen God at work in your life. If you would like to do that and record a video, please see either Kelli or Marilyn. Send us an email or give us a call, and we would be happy to help you work through that and share that with others in our faith community.

Offering Prayer

Merciful God, our ordinary gifts seem small for such a celebration, but you make of them an abundance, just as you do with our lives. Feed us for service in your name, in the strength of the risen Christ, **Amen**.

Blessing

May the One who brought forth Jesus from the dead raise you to new life, fill you with hope, and turn your mourning into dancing. Almighty God, Father, \oplus Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen**.

Postlude: Cornerstone by Hillsong Worship

My hope is built on nothing less

Than Jesus' blood and righteousness

Lord of all, Christ alone
Christ alone, Cornerstone

I dare not trust the sweetest frame Weak made strong in the Savior's love

But wholly trust is Jesus' name Through the storm

My hope is built on nothing less

Than Jesus' blood and righteousness

He is Lord

Lord of all

I dare not trust the sweetest frame Christ alone, Cornerstone

But wholly trust is Jesus' name

Weak made strong in the Savior's love

Christ alone, Cornerstone Through the storm

Weak made strong in the Savior's love He is Lord
Through the storm Lord of all

He is Lord When he shall come with trumpet sound

Lord of all

Oh, may I then in Him be found

When darkness seems to hide His face
I rest on His unchanging grace

Dressed in His righteousness alone
Faultless, stand before the throne

In every high and stormy gale Cornerstone

My anchor holds within the veil Oh, yeah, in the Savior's love

My anchor holds within the veil He is Lord Christ alone, Cornerstone Lord of all

Weak made strong in the Savior's love Christ alone, Cornerstone

Through the storm Weak made strong in the Savior's love

He is Lord Through the storm

Lord of all He is Lord He is Lord Lord of all

Source: LyricFind

Songwriters: Eric Liljero / Jonas Myrin / Reuben Morgan / Edward Mote / William Batchelder Bradbury

Cornerstone lyrics © Capitol Christian Music Group

Families on the Prayer List

Ms. Toni Meyer Ms. Bobbie Moore Mr. & Mrs. Christopher (Alexandra), Ezekiel and Samantha Mislan

Mr. Robert Moore

Additional Prayers for Recent, Current, or Upcoming Medical Care:

Vicki Alleman, daughter of Bonnie Parker

Christine Claprodt, daughter of Norma Sweeney

Fred and Darlene Fairchild, parents of Erin Browning's friend

Kelsey and Justin Martin, daughter of Jan Rick Joseph

Sylvia McCollum, cousin of Jeanette Burbrink

John Racek, brother-in-law of Jamie Shake

Janet Walsh, friend of Susan Hahn Johnson

Tim Walter, nephew of Bob & Thelma Holtman

Angel Kaulfers, the wife of Rose Jones' coworker

Ron Wojtowicz, friend of Deacon Marilyn

David, friend of Ed & Bev Bailey Patrick Frepan, friend of the Hills

Jeannie Hermerding

Marlon, brother of Ellen Shupe

David Tryon, son of Mary

Denise Hollman

Pat Tumey

Keith Johnson, husband of Susan

Those with Ongoing Special Need of Prayer:

Jerid Edwards, great nephew of MJ Lynch

Ruth Tingle

Remember to Pray for Nursing Home Residents and Shut-Ins:

Thelma Jones

Penny Kalk

Martha Larson

Norma Petraits

David Royer

David Schmalz

Bob White

The Harrison

Lynn Bigelow

Alton Dahl

Remember to Pray for those Serving in our Armed Forces:

Michael Joseph

Jerry Shake

Calendar Update

Good news! All of us are eager to get back in our lovely sanctuary. The Council is too! We met on Thursday evening, (via Zoom of course) and have agreed and voted to use **July 12th as our target date.** By waiting until after July 4th we will be able to see the effect of the re-opening process that our governor has laid out for us and it will allow us to develop a comprehensive plan to safely open the building. There are lots of resources out there for this process and our bishop has sent his guidelines as well (see attached). We know that when we re-convene in person there will be lots of changes. And we know that a few/several/many of us will not be able/comfortable gathering, and that is fine. We will continue to offer our service online for the foreseeable future. Until there is a vaccine available, life at St. Andrew's will look very different. But, that is true for any place we go in our current situation.

So mark your calendars, in pencil, and watch for updates as we move forward. Please do not hesitate to contact your Council representative with any questions. And please understand that this is our "target" date, if circumstances change for the worse, we will move that date later, in the interest of safety. The date will not be earlier.

Also, we want to let you know that we are working hard to continue the call process so that you will be able to meet our candidate virtually. Stay tuned for that!

Peace.

The Church Council

Calendar

- Monday, May 11 Zoom Staff Meeting
- Monday, May 11 Zoom Council Meeting
- Sunday, May 17 Zoom Coffee Hour
- Sunday, May 17 Zoom Adult Faith Formation

Announcements

CANDIDATE UPDATE

As we navigate what social distancing means for our congregation in the coming weeks and months, we are also navigating creative ways to present the candidate. We are not sure exactly what the logistics will be at this time. Together with Faith's council, we are looking at a variety of options. As always, you will be updated as we ourselves know more. Please continue to pray that we move forward as God sees fit.

TITHE.LY GIVING IS LIVE

Tithe.ly Giving is live! It is user friendly with a great support team! Please go ahead and test out this great resource! Simple follow this link:

https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/1254623. You can go ahead and start giving today! Watch your email for more details.

OFFERING

Though we are social distancing, our mission continues on. If you feel so moved and do not wish to use Tithe.ly, please mail your offering to the church. Please do not drop off your envelopes. Here is the church address:

6118 Crawfordsville Rd Speedway, IN 46224

WEBSITE UPDATE

Our new website is coming along! But YOUR help is needed!! Do you have something you'd LOVE to see on there? Let Kelli know! Do you have photos that show the congregation in action - doing our mission work or in worship? Send them to Kelli! These are all needed to personalize our website experience for YOU and for OUR VISITORS! Reach out to Kelli at sta.communicationsdirector@gmail.com.

AN UPDATE ON SAVING PLASTIC BAGS FROM JAN SMITH

Please continue to save your plastic grocery bags for the Mats for Homeless project. After several days they will be safe to use and when we are able to work with them again we will use the oldest ones first. Perhaps gather them in a paper bag to save for bringing to the church. Jan asks that you do not wade them up and if at all possible smooth out flat. To process the bags they must be flat and smooth for cutting into strips which is difficult if they have been waded into balls. If you're not able to flatten them just keep as flat as possible.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

Congratulations to Brad & Mary Lee Long on the birth of grandchild Fletcher Alan on April 24. Fletcher is the son of Matthew & Jenna Long.

"DRIVE TO FIGHT HUNGER" TO RESTOCK LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES

This unprecedented situation means more families need support from local food pantries as the supplies the pantries can purchase are being limited. The "Drive to Fight Hunger" will help restock the shelves at Storehouse Food Pantry and St. Chris Outreach Food Pantry that feed Speedway and surrounding area families. Beginning Saturday, May 2nd, drive-up donation drop-offs between 10am and 2pm will rotate between Speedway Christian Church and St. Christopher Catholic Church for Saturdays in May.

- May 9th: St. Christopher (5301 W. 16th St.)
- May 16th: Speedway Christian (5110 W. 14th St.)
- May 23rd: St. Christopher (5301 W. 16th St.)

Suggested donations include, but are not limited to: 15 ounce cans of fruit and vegetables, cereal, peanut butter, and other non-perishable food items. Many of the families they serve do not have access to supplies that could protect them from COVID-19, therefore they are accepting donations of masks, gloves and cleaning supplies. Also the Book Fairy Pantry Project of the Storehouse Food Pantry accepts new and gently used children's books and these can be donated at the Speedway Christian Church drop off site. Thank you for your support.

THANK YOU

The nurses have LOVED your cards and gifts of gratitude. It means more than you know to each and every one them. Thank you for taking the time to create and send so many beautiful illustrations of thanksgiving.

CREATING CONNECTION

As we all know, this is a trying time. We would like to encourage you to send cards to Roald Smith. As you may know, those in assisted living and nursing homes are not allowed to see anyone. In Roald's case, he is not even allowed to leave his room. These simple gestures mean so much and bring so many smiles! Roald's address has recently been updated. Here it is again:

Roald Smith 1251 W 96th St Apt. 20A Indianapolis, IN 46260

To help stagger our offerings of hope and joy, we are asking that we follow this plan based on the letter your last name begins with:

- Week of May 4: Letters A-E
- Week of May 11: Letters F-J
- Week of May 18: Letters K-O
- Week of May 25: Letters P-T
- Week of June 1: Letters U-Z

If you feel so included and are willing, we also encourage you to send cards to our shut-ins and those living in nursing homes. These members may also be under similar circumstances.

SPEEDWAY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH BLESSING BOX

The church is putting up a Blessing Box which can be accessed by the church sign on 16th Street. The idea is to serve the community by putting nonperishable food items in the box from donations. Anyone in the community can take what they need or leave donations. Please note start time and date is subject to change.