

John 17:1-11

"Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to **the people of All Saints Lutheran Church**, all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. The **All Saints congregational council** were yours, and you gave them to me, and **the church and After School staff** has kept your word. Now the **Friday yard crew** knows that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to **the choir, the altar guild and worship assistants** and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and **all the volunteers here** have believed that you sent me. I am asking on behalf of **all the children who come here**; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of the those **all who are gathered here today** whom you gave me, because they are yours. **Those who are not here who are mine** are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect **all the people of All Saints** in your name that you have given me, so at they may be one, as we are one.

John 17:1-11, 2014

Our gospel lesson for today is the beginning of Jesus' High Priestly prayer which begins to close his farewell discourse, His final goodbyes to the disciples.

This prayer goes for 26 verses, the entirety of chapter 17, but we only hear the first 11 verses this year.

In the lectionary that specifies the bible passages we use each Sunday you may remember is shaped in a 3 year cycle; years A through C.

We are in year A now, and on this 7th Sunday of Easter over the next two years we will hear the remainder of the prayer; verses 6-19 in year B and 20-26 in year C.

In today's prayer Jesus prays first for himself.

"So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed."

He takes the disciples and us back to the creation story in Genesis, and to the opening verses of John's Gospel;

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All Things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people."

He then changes His focus to the disciples, and although there is still discussion about this among biblical scholars, I believe that He prays not only for those who are gathered their with

Jesus for their last Passover together but for all disciples throughout the ages.

He prays for you, and me, and all who come after us.

In His prayer for unity He prays for the church, the Holy Christian Church everywhere and for all times.

“...so that they may be one...”

I wanted to make sure you knew this prayer was prayed for you.

This is partly why I read the passage the way I did, with reference to All Saints, and all of you.

The other reason is that this prayer can become just words very easily,

and a bit of a brain teaser with all the you's and they's and I's and me's, mine's and your's.

A number of weeks ago as I looked forward to this Sunday, I could not help but reflect on the journey that has brought us to this last Sunday in Easter.

Technically one could make the case that the journey extends all the way back to Jesus' birth at Christmas, but I looked back only as far as Ash Wednesday,

what happened in our liturgy, what we heard in our readings, the way we moved through the season of Lent and Easter.

You recall that on Ash Wednesday we begin a period of self examination, repentance and confession.

Dust you are and to dust your shall return.

During that service we make a confession about our sinfulness, but don't hear the words of absolution for that confession until **Maundy Thursday.**

Through the season of Lent some of you may have given something up in observance of Jesus' suffering and death for you, in observance of God's sacrifice.

Then we got to Holy Week and we were drawn to the supper, the arrest, the trial, the beatings and finally to the cross to witness Jesus' death.

We reflected on the fear, uncertainty and doubt of the disciples brought on by these events.

We reflected on our own fear, uncertainty and doubt that Jesus is alive and available to us now, but we are brought to our knees in humility at the foot of the cross to believe that He would give His life for us.

Why, how could anyone suffer and die for me the way Jesus did?

We are suddenly relieved of our burdens of fear, doubt, and even our sin on the morning of that great resurrection celebration of Easter Sunday!

He is risen! He is alive!

This celebration goes on for 50 days.

During those 50 days we have heard from the Gospel of John what this means for us.

The resurrected Jesus comes to the disciples in that closed up room proving He is alive, bringing his peace,

sending them into the world to continue His work which is now their work.

He promises the abundant life that comes with faith, life with him forever in a place prepared ahead of time, i

He calls for surrender and commits Himself to a relationship with you, through the power of the Holy Spirit that comes from him and lives in you.

This is a relationship marked by forgiveness, love and grace.

What I discovered in my reflection is that the journey through Lent and Easter is much like our journey through life.

There is a pattern in our life that follows this seasonal time in the church.

Each of us has come to a time in our lives when we have been called to repentance; to change our lives to make them more like what Christ desired for us, to follow His calling, to come before His cross on our knees in humility and plead for the forgiveness of our sins.

And in that moment Jesus comes, shows us He is alive and showers us with His grace.

In that moment, then, we can celebrate the risen Christ, Jesus is alive, Christ is risen indeed!

There is then a calling and an effort to live the saved life we have been given.

We may go so far as to change not only how but where we live, who we hang out with, the entertainment we chose, what we do with our time, money, energy, skills.

We surrender to God.

We continue then to live in that relationship with Jesus through all the difficulties of this life being strengthened for whatever comes by His presence.

Perhaps there is a reason and purpose for our having these liturgical patterns in which to capture the essence, and the power of Jesus' presence in our lives.

A few weeks ago Terri and I began working on a piece of music together that picks up this pattern also.

It is actually two songs put together, both of which most of you are familiar with.

Amazing grace is one and the other might surprise you; House of the Rising Sun originally recorded by the Animals in 1964.

We have used the tune from the HotRS and verses from both to put this song together.

In the first verse you will hear the confession and in the second and third you will hear the gracious forgiveness of God.

In the fourth you will hear the call to repentance, to change your life, to live in another place and another way.

Then finally in the closing verses is the continued life in the presence of Jesus, in the love and grace of God, and claiming that for yourself.

I will warn you now, this is quite different from what we normally do here, but it has been fun to put together, and I hope you will have some fun with us as we sing Amazing Grace in a different way.

Amazing Grace/House of the Rising Sun

There is a house in New Orleans
 They call the Rising Sun
 it's been the ruin of many a poor boy
 And God, I know I'm one

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
 That saved a wretch like me!
 I once was lost, but now am found;
 Was blind, but now I see.

Break

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
 And grace my fears relieved;
 How precious did that grace appear
 The hour I first believed.

Oh, mother, tell your children
 Not to do what I have done
 Spend your lives in sin and misery
 In the house of the rising sun

Break

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
 I have already come;
 'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
 And grace will lead me home.

Amazing grace how sweet the sound;
 I once was lost but now am found,
 My new life has safely begun,
 in the house of the risen Son
 in the house of the risen Son