



Queen Anne

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Called to Proclaim God's Love in Christ for Every Person

2400 Eighth Avenue West • Seattle, Washington 98119

Mailing: P.O. Box 17029 • Seattle, WA 98127

206.284.1960 • www.queenannelutheran.org

✠ *Staff* ✠

Pastor	The Rev. Dr. Dan Peterson
Cantor	Kyle Haugen
Children's Ministry Coordinator	Terry Anderson
Parish Administrator	Barbara Bash
Sexton	John Bryant

✠ *In Worship Today* ✠

Pastor	The Rev. Dr. Dan Peterson
Cantor	Kyle Haugen
Lector and Intercessor	Carol Ann Davis

This service of worship can also be listened to online on our website.

Go to queenannelutheran.org and click on "WORD OUT" to find audio, video, and print resources for worship at home, as well as resources to use with children.

Visit our YouTube channel for other worship services, educational forums, music and messages for children, and other organ music.

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 16, 2021

A "Word Out" audio transcript



Prelude

Chorale prelude on MCKEE
Richard Proulx (1937–2010)

Welcome

P: Welcome, this seventh Sunday of Easter, to Queen Anne Lutheran Church. Wherever you are listening, whatever challenges you might be facing, we invite you into this space: one where you can hear the good news through proclamation, spoken and sung; a time where you can be still, and know God is God.

The gospel reading for Easter's seventh Sunday is taken from the prayer Jesus offers for his followers in John's gospel on the night before his death. This prayer includes Jesus' desire that his followers will be one as he and the Father are one. In a context where division seems to have the upper hand, can Jesus' words of oneness have meaning and applicability for us today?


Greeting


P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

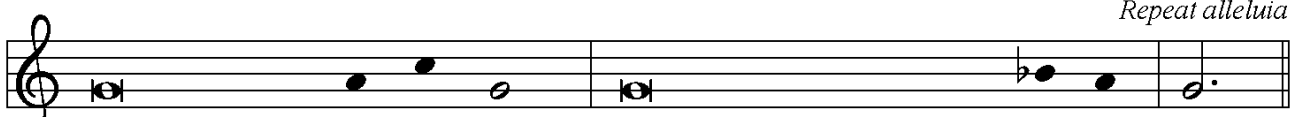
G: And also with you.

Gospel Acclamation


John 14:18


G: 
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.


Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

A: 
I will not leave you orphaned, says the Lord. I am coming to you.

Repeat alleluia

G: 
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.


Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The Holy Gospel:

John 17:6-19

A: The Holy Gospel according to John, the seventeenth chapter.

G: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

A: [Jesus prayed:] ⁶“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. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; ⁸for 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. ⁹I 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. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹And 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 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.”

☞: The Gospel of the Lord.

☞: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

A Sermon in Shambles
Pastor Dan Peterson

It started out great – or so I thought.

As the congregation’s “resident rabbi,” I felt this week’s reading would be a good opportunity to teach, which is what a rabbi does. My approach would be to ask 20 questions about the text, blast through these questions in just under 15 minutes, and end with a quiz just to make sure everyone listening (or reading) grasped the material.

Asking and answering twenty questions in 15 minutes might seem a little ambitious. That’s because it is! Worse yet, after offering an introduction to the sermon, the amount of time left would be closer to 13 minutes. And since I would supply a rationale for why this exercise would be helpful, the amount of time remaining would be about 11 minutes.

My idea was quickly becoming an impossible mission. About three hours into its execution, I realized I had before me a *sermon in shambles!*

All, however, was not lost. I was happy at least with the rationale I had constructed. “Now why would today’s sermon consist of twenty questions?” I asked. “Why not stick to my usual format of solving a single dilemma in the reading, or of telling a story, or of discussing how the good news one finds in the passage might apply to a contemporary issue or challenge we find ourselves facing?”

“Well,” I replied, “the answer is simple: today’s reading demands it! This is the last of three ‘farewell discourses’ Jesus gives in John to his followers after the Last Supper and before his arrest, trial, and execution. It contains many puzzling details. Why, for instance, would Jesus speak of having joy (v. 13) shortly before he dies?”

So, there it was: a blueprint, a plan, with a clear rationale. I even wrote out all the questions I had after consulting five or six commentaries on the Gospel reading. It was exciting, especially when I found solid, compelling answers to my questions, including the one just mentioned about the strange mood of joy Jesus expresses on the eve of his annihilation in contrast to the anguish he undergoes according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

There was, it turned out, a good answer for that.

Other questions began bubbling quickly to the surface. I discovered that remnants of the prayer Jesus taught to his disciples in Matthew and Luke – the Lord’s Prayer – was present but concealed in our reading. Jesus refers to God as Father multiple times, he prays for sanctification which can also be translated “being made holy” or “hallowed,” and he asks on behalf of the disciples for deliverance from “the evil one” (v. 15).

These literary echoes suggest that John *may* have been dependent on Matthew and Luke in ways I had not considered before. (The dominant theory is that John relied on *other sources* to tell his version of the story, not Matthew, Mark, or Luke.)

But there was still more! I learned, thanks to Adele Reinhartz in *The New Testament Fortress Commentary on the Bible*, that when Jesus says in v. 6 that the disciples “have kept [God’s] word,” he may have had *two* things in mind.

First, he may have been referring to the love they had for him and for one another. I talked about this last week. The love that comes to us through Jesus from God *comes first*. Even our response to such love is inspired by the Holy Spirit, which is another way of saying it comes from God. The only thing the disciples must do, the only commandment Jesus gives to them, is to *share* that love – “to love one another as [Jesus] first loved [them]” (15:12).

I think 1 John 4:11-12 restates Jesus’ teaching from our Gospel reading for today beautifully. “Beloved,” its author writes, “since God loved us so much, we ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; [yet] if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.”

Next to the equation of keeping God’s word by loving one another just as God the Father loves the Son and vice-versa, Reinhartz offers another meaning of v. 6 that astounded me. Listen closely: Jesus, in offering this prayer for the disciples “seeks God’s protection for them,” reassuring them “of the joyous end that will await them after their pain and persecution will end” (295).

At the same time, Jesus presents their “credentials” to God, including both that they knew Jesus was sent to them by God, as well as that they “kept God’s word (quite literally, perhaps: they have kept Jesus, the Logos, safe (17:6)” (295).

Now think about that for a moment. Why would Jesus need protection from his disciples? John presents Jesus’ crucifixion as a *victory*, which is why, in response to the question I asked a few minutes ago, Jesus expresses “joy” in the face of his death. He has power. The cross will mark his *triumph* over the powers of this world that are inimical to God. In contrast to Matthew and Mark, who tell us that Jesus cries out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” when he dies, Jesus declares in John, “It is finished” or “It is accomplished.” John also minimizes the suffering Jesus undergoes. He even gives Jesus a voice in his trial before Pontius Pilate, whereas in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus remains silent.

Yet in today’s reading we glimpse another side of Jesus, a rather human and vulnerable side, the kind that comes out, for instance, when Jesus weeps after learning his friend Lazarus has died according to John 11:35. Jesus credits the

disciples in v. 6 of our reading for keeping God's word. By keeping God's word, which has become flesh in the person of Jesus Christ (see John 1:14), the disciples have *protected Jesus*. They have kept him safe!

Now why would *Jesus* need protection from human beings? Was it because, as Paul says, that "though he was in the form of God . . . he emptied himself" in the process of becoming human (Philippians 2:6-7)? Was it, in other words, a consequence of becoming incarnate, one that – by making Himself susceptible to all the negativities of life – *God* in Christ had become vulnerable?

For years now I have been drawn to the language of vulnerability that God assumes by taking human form, of the weakness God displays in Christ on the cross according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:25. I want to understand, as the Lutheran theologian Robert Scharlemann puts it, the being of God when God is not being God. Does such vulnerability exist only briefly when God in Christ walked among us long ago in physical form, or does it still exist insofar as we harbor Christ's presence in and among us whenever we gather in his name (see Matthew 18:20)?

Few Christians speak this way, I admit. Those who do exist largely on the margins of our tradition. That is why I turn to Elly Hillesum of the Jewish faith. Hillesum died in a concentration camp during the Holocaust, but not without recording in her diary how she came to experience and protect the vulnerability of God. "[God] cannot help us," she wrote, "but we must help [God] and defend [God's] dwelling place inside us to the last" (Richard Kearney qtd. Hillesum, *Anaesthesia*, 58).

The two, it would seem, are interdependent. We rely on God to inspire us, to empower us, and to give us courage, say, in the fight for justice or in the face of loss. Simultaneously, God relies on us as bearers of His presence in this fragile and broken world. This God was the only alternative for Hillesum to the idol of power that had consumed so much of northern Europe. It gave her "the power to resist, to carry on, to dare to live in the face of death" (*ibid.*).

As you can see, my attempt to raise and answer twenty questions pertaining to John 17:6-19 has become an impossible mission, a sermon in shambles! In the

span of nearly 15 minutes, your “resident rabbi,” with a little help from the commentary, managed to answer merely three out of 20 questions. Each of them could stand alone as a sermon, but lining up all three as if they exhibited a linear progression of thought – well, that’s another story.

Let’s treat all three, therefore, on their own terms by reviewing each and then drawing to a close.

We learned first how Jesus could speak of feeling “joy” (v. 13) shortly before his death, how in John’s Gospel Jesus’ death on the cross constitutes a victory over the powers of this world, particularly the “evil one” (v. 15). The victory Christ achieves on the cross simultaneously “marks his return to the glory he enjoyed with God before the world existed” (17:5). The earlier Gospels present the crucifixion in strikingly different terms. It causes Jesus to experience anguish in its anticipation and then pain and humiliation in its (and his) execution.

We saw secondly how John 17:6-19 contains fragments of the Lord’s Prayer, even though John’s Jesus never formally or explicitly teaches it to his disciples. This suggests that John may have been reliant on Matthew and Luke, both of whom include the Lord’s Prayer *or* John may have relied on a separate source to which all three had access.

Third and finally, by pausing to make sense of what it could mean for the disciples to “keep [God’s] word,” we discovered a conventional as well as potentially radical claim. Conventionally, *keeping God’s word* in John’s Gospel would mean that we love one another as he loved us. This would ensure the unity that Jesus emphasizes in today’s reading, and it would provide a good reason for us to struggle against the walls of separation that divide us politically, socially, economically, and racially. We’d strive for unity in the name of love that appeared in Christ and then amongst his early followers.

Keeping God’s word, on the other hand, could also mean helping Christ and protecting him within and among us, just as Hillesum spoke of helping and protecting God. Our task would be to do so as the disciples did – to protect Christ – but how? Perhaps the best way to do that would be to seek his

presence especially within and among the vulnerable. This may occur on the sidelines of our culture, but it might also occur in the midst of our community or even our congregation. People in all walks of life find themselves vulnerable, particularly, say, after loss. Is not our task to be Christ to them and to protect Christ in them?

I wonder, but alas – my 15 minutes are up.

Amen.

Hymn of the Day

Stanzas 1, 3, & 4

In Christ There Is No East or West

ELW 650

1 In Christ there is no east or west, in him no south or north,
 2 In Christ shall true hearts ev-'ry-where their high com-mu-nion find;
 3 Join hands, dis-ci-ples of the faith, what-e'er your race may be.
 4 In Christ now meet both east and west, in him meet south and north;

but one com-mu-ni-ty of love through-out the whole wide earth.
 his ser-vice is the gold-en cord close bind-ing hu-man-kind.
 All chil-dren of the liv-ing God are sure-ly kin to me.
 all Christ-ly souls are one in him through-out the whole wide earth.

Text: John Oxenham, 1852–1941, alt.

Music: MCKEE, African American spiritual; adapt. Harry T. Burleigh, 1866–1949

Prayers of the Church

A: Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

A brief silence.

A: Holy God, in Christ Jesus the joy of the church is made complete. Root the church in your Word and unify us as Christ's body. Send us into the world as your loving people, ready to testify to your Spirit at work.

Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: Mighty God, the world is your handiwork, displaying your creative impulse. Seas teem with life, forests reach up to praise you, and the mystery of life lies deep in the soil. Guard and keep this world for the well-being of all your creatures. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: Gracious Sovereign, those who follow your ways are like trees planted near streams of water. Establish the leaders of nations and all in authority in your grace and truth. Strengthen them, so that the people they serve will have abundant life. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: Generous Savior, you befriend those who are sick, suffering, poor, lonely, outcast, rejected, or sick. Grant healing and love to all those in need, especially those whom we name in our hearts. Give them tangible signs of your steadfast love. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: Creator God, here in this community we share the gift of praying, learning, and supporting one another. Give us thankful hearts as we claim the gifts that are unique to us and keep us from being envious of others with different gifts. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: For whom or what else do the people of God pray?

A silence is given so that your prayers may be offered.

A: Lord, in your mercy,

C: **hear our prayer.**

A: Saving God, your wonderful promise is the gift of eternal life in Jesus.

Through the witness of those who have died in you, strengthen us now in this gift of life. We cherish the memory of your saints.

Lord, in your mercy,

C: **hear our prayer.**

A: In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

C: **Our Father in heaven,**

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread

and forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,

now and forever.

Amen.

Announcements

P: We thank you for joining us for this service. If you would like to hear other services or access the newest edition of *the Quill*, our newsletter, we invite you to go to our website at queenannelutheran.org.

Benediction

A: Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

P: Almighty God, the Father, † the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
bless and preserve you.

G: Amen.

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

G: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

At Easter-Tide

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924)

About today's music

Today's Hymn of the Day, "In Christ There Is No East or West," has a multicultural story behind it. The Irish composer of today's postlude, Charles Stanford (1852–1924) understood the tune (MCKEE) to have been adopted by African Americans from Irish immigrants to the United States; by 1876 the melody was in the repertoire of the Fisk Jubilee Singers as "I Know the Devil's Done Changed My Name." In 1939 Henry T. Burleigh, an African American soloist and composer, joined the melody to "In Christ There Is No East or West," a text by an English writer and publisher. Applying the standards of hymnology, Burleigh gave the melody its own unique name, opting to honor the Rev. Elmer M. McKee, the rector at St. George's Episcopal Church in New York City, where Burleigh had been serving as baritone soloist since 1894. Burleigh's pairing of text and tune was published a year later in *The Hymnal 1940* of the Episcopal Church.

—Cantor Kyle