

## **Sixth Sunday of Easter Sunday, May 17, 2020**

**The Collect:** O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **First Lesson: Acts 17:22-31 read from the God's Word Bible**

22 Paul stood in the middle of the court and said, "Men of Athens, I see that you are very religious. 23 As I was going through your city and looking closely at the objects you worship, I noticed an altar with this written on it: 'To an unknown god.' I'm telling you about the unknown god you worship. 24 The God who made the universe and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth. He doesn't live in shrines made by humans, 25 and he isn't served by humans as if he needed anything. He gives everyone life, breath, and everything they have. 26 From one man he has made every nation of humanity to live all over the earth. He has given them the seasons of the year and the boundaries within which to live. 27 He has done this so that they would look for God, somehow reach for him, and find him. In fact, he is never far from any one of us. 28 Certainly, we live, move, and exist because of him. As some of your poets have said, 'We are God's children.' 29 So if we are God's children, we shouldn't think that the divine being is like an image made from gold, silver, or stone, an image that is the product of human imagination and skill.

30 "God overlooked the times when people didn't know any better. But now he commands everyone everywhere to turn to him and change the way they think and act. 31 He has set a day when he is going to judge the world with justice, and he will use a man he has appointed to do this. God has given proof to everyone that he will do this by bringing that man back to life."

### **The Word of the Lord**

**Psalm 66:7-18 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer**

7 Bless our God, you peoples; \*

make the voice of his praise to be heard;

8 Who holds our souls in life, \*

and will not allow our feet to slip.

9 For you, O God, have proved us; \*

you have tried us just as silver is tried.

10 You brought us into the snare; \*

you laid heavy burdens upon our backs.

11 You let enemies ride over our heads;

we went through fire and water; \*

but you brought us out into a place of refreshment.

12 I will enter your house with burnt-offerings

and will pay you my vows, \*

which I promised with my lips

and spoke with my mouth when I was in trouble.

13 I will offer you sacrifices of fat beasts

with the smoke of rams; \*

I will give you oxen and goats.

14 Come and listen, all you who fear God, \*

and I will tell you what he has done for me.

15 I called out to him with my mouth, \*

and his praise was on my tongue.

16 If I had found evil in my heart, \*

the Lord would not have heard me;

17 But in truth God has heard me; \*

he has attended to the voice of my prayer.

18 Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer, \*

nor withheld his love from me.

### **Epistle: 1 Peter 3:13-22 read from the Holman Christian Standard Bible**

13 And who will harm you if you are deeply committed to what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear or be disturbed, 15 but honor the Messiah as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. 16 However, do this with gentleness and respect, keeping your conscience clear, so that when you are accused, those who denounce your Christian life will be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

18 For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God, after being put to death in the fleshly realm but made alive in the spiritual realm.

19 In that state He also went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison 20 who in the past were disobedient, when God patiently waited in the days of Noah while an ark was being prepared. In it a few—that is, eight people—were saved through water. 21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. 22 Now that He has gone into heaven, He is at God's right hand with angels, authorities, and powers subject to Him.

### **The Word of the Lord**

### **Gospel: John 14:15-21 read from the International Children's Bible**

15 "If you love me, you will do the things I command. 16 I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper. He will give you this Helper to be with you forever. 17 The Helper is the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him because it does not see him or know him. But you know him. He lives with you and he will be in you.

18 "I will not leave you all alone like orphans. I will come back to you. 19 In a little while the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you will live, too. 20 On that day you will know that I am in my Father. You will know that you are in me and I am in

you. 21 He who knows my commands and obeys them is the one who loves me. And my Father will love him who loves me. I will love him and will show myself to him.”

## **The Gospel of the Lord**

**Closing Prayer: On May 23rd we celebrate the lives of Nicolaus Copernicus, and Johannes Kepler, Astronomers. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.**

Born in 1473, Nicolaus Copernicus first studied law and medicine before serving as a cleric under the direction of his uncle, the Bishop of Warmia (in northeastern Poland). Copernicus first set forth his heliocentric theory of astronomy in a small work called the *Commentariolus*, which was not published until 1543. His argument that the sun, rather than the earth, was the center of the universe around which the planets rotated was developed fully in his 1543 opus *De Revolutionibus Orbium Caelestium*.

The initial ecclesiastical reaction to his revolutionary theory was somewhat muted, but when his thought was further developed by Galileo, the religious debate was intensified, and *De revolutionibus* was placed on the index of banned books. Copernicus had originally dedicated his work to the Pope, and he saw no conflict between his theory and the authority of Scripture.

Among those chiefly responsible for the solidifying of Copernicus' theories was the German astronomer Johannes Kepler. Born nearly a century after Copernicus, Kepler was first educated at Tubingen, where he received instruction in Copernican theory. His first major work on Copernican astronomy was the *Mysterium Cosmographicum*, in which he believed he had demonstrated God's geometric plan for the universe. Kepler saw in the relation between the sun and the rotating planets the image of God himself, and like Copernicus, he saw no conflict between his astronomical views and the account of God in the Scriptures. Kepler is chiefly known for his discovery of the laws of planetary motion, set forth variously in his later works.

Though their works were each controversial in their own way, Copernicus and Kepler laid the groundwork for modern astronomy. Kepler's work was even influential on Isaac Newton's

theory of universal gravitation.

Both men, through their life's work, testified to the extraordinary presence of God in creation and maintained, in the face of both religious and scientific controversy, that science can lead us more deeply into an understanding of the workings of the Creator.

**Let us pray:** As the heavens declare your glory, O God, and the firmament shows your handiwork, we bless your Name for the gifts of knowledge and insight you bestowed upon Nicolaus Copernicus and Johannes Kepler; and we pray that you would continue to advance our understanding of your cosmos, for our good and for your glory; through Jesus Christ, the firstborn of all creation, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**