

Sixth Sunday of Easter, May 5

The Collect and Psalm will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer
The Lesson, Epistle and Gospel will be read from the Amplified Bible

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 10:44-48

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who were listening to the message [confirming God's acceptance of Gentiles]. 45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. 46 For they heard them talking in [unknown] tongues (languages) and exalting and magnifying and praising God. Then Peter said, 47 "Can anyone refuse water for these people to be baptized, since they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did?" 48 And he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay there for a few days.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Psalm 98

1 Sing to the Lord a new song, *

for he has done marvelous things.

2 With his right hand and his holy arm *

has he won for himself the victory.

3 The Lord has made known his victory; *

his righteousness has he openly shown in the sight of the nations.

4 He remembers his mercy and faithfulness to the house of Israel, *
and all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

5 Shout with joy to the Lord, all you lands; *
lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.

6 Sing to the Lord with the harp, *
with the harp and the voice of song.

7 With trumpets and the sound of the horn *
shout with joy before the King, the Lord.

8 Let the sea make a noise and all that is in it, *
the lands and those who dwell therein.

9 Let the rivers clap their hands, *
and let the hills ring out with joy before the Lord,
when he comes to judge the earth.

10 In righteousness shall he judge the world *
and the peoples with equity.

The Epistle: 1 John 5:1-6

5 Everyone who believes [with a deep, abiding trust in the fact] that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed) is born of God [that is, reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, and set apart for His purpose], and everyone who loves the Father also loves the child born of Him. 2 By this we know [without any doubt] that we love the children of God: [expressing that love] when we love God and obey His commandments. 3 For the [true] love of God is this: that we habitually keep His commandments and remain focused on His precepts. And His commandments and His precepts are not difficult [to obey]. 4 For everyone born of God is victorious and overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has conquered and overcome the world—our [continuing, persistent] faith [in Jesus the Son of God].

5 Who is the one who is victorious and overcomes the world? It is the one who believes and recognizes the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. 6 This is He who came through water and blood [His baptism and death], Jesus Christ—not by the water only, but by the water and

the blood. It is the [Holy] Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. [He is the essence and origin of truth itself.]

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

The Gospel: John 15:9-17

9 I have loved you just as the Father has loved Me; remain in My love [and do not doubt My love for you]. 10 If you keep My commandments and obey My teaching, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and remain in His love. 11 I have told you these things so that My joy and delight may be in you, and that your joy may be made full and complete and overflowing.

12 "This is My commandment, that you love and unselfishly seek the best for one another, just as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love [nor stronger commitment] than to lay down his own life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you keep on doing what I command you. 15 I do not call you servants any longer, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you [My] friends, because I have revealed to you everything that I have heard from My Father. 16 You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and I have appointed and placed and purposefully planted you, so that you would go and bear fruit and keep on bearing, and that your fruit will remain and be lasting, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name [as My representative] He may give to you. 17 This [is what] I command you: that you love and unselfishly seek the best for one another.

The Gospel of the Lord

On May 10 we celebrate the life of Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf Prophetic Witness. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

Nicolaus von Zinzendorf was a Count of the Holy Roman Empire who always had more interest in religious matters than in affairs of court. Following studies at the pietist center of Halle, he developed his own "theology of the heart," which placed great emphasis on a

close personal relationship with the suffering Savior. This “heart religion” was not just inner emotion, however, but was to result in a life totally devoted to the Savior. “All of life becomes a liturgy,” said Zinzendorf, and even the most mundane task can be an act of worship.

Always a champion of the underdog, he granted asylum to Bohemian Protestant exiles. Following a unifying experience on August 13, 1727, in their settlement of Herrnhut on his estate, the old church of the Unitas Fratrum (Bohemian Brethren) was reborn and developed a rich liturgical and devotional life. This Moravian Church, as it came to be called, launched pioneer mission work, first in the Caribbean and then around the world. Zinzendorf himself became a bishop, and devoted his personal fortune to furthering the work of the church.

He was an early advocate of ecumenism, and, in America, he attempted to bring Protestant denominations together in the “Pennsylvania Synods.” He was not a systematic theologian, but produced numerous theological writings, widely read in Germany. In addition to these, he was a prolific hymn writer, and many of his hymn texts remain in use today in the Moravian Church and beyond. His view of the church is summed up in his stanza:

Christian hearts, in love united,
seek alone in Jesus rest;
has he not your love excited?
Then let love inspire each breast.
Members on our Head depending,
lights reflecting him, our Sun,
brethren—his commands attending,
we in him, our Lord, are one.

(Moravian Book of Worship 1995, 673)

Let us pray: God of new life in Christ: We remember the bold witness of your servant Nicolaus von Zinzendorf, through whom your Spirit moved to draw many to faith and conversion of life. We pray that we, like him, may rejoice to sing your praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**