The words of today’s gospel are most often heard during a funeral service. It is a popular choice of scripture for that occasion because the words provide wonderful assurance that the one who has died in Christ has now taken up residence in their heavenly home. The gospel begins by Jesus saying that he will prepare a place for each one of us. But as the text continues, we can see that our place is not an isolated room of our own in a giant heavenly mansion. Jesus’ words are less about a place than a relationship: our relationship with Jesus and God the Father. They tell us that in Jesus we know all we need to know about God, and just as we can have a relationship with another human person, we can also have a relationship with God that will one day be as real and obvious as are our relationships with one another. The hope of one day being with Christ fully and forever is as real as the works we are called to do in his name today.

This text allows us the opportunity to contemplate what is ultimately unknowable, yet is also a central part of our faith: what heaven will be like.
Gathering

You may wish to prepare for worship by lighting a candle and/or placing a small bowl of water nearby as a remembrance for baptism.

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude

_Borning Cry_, arr. Mark Albrecht

Thanksgiving for Baptism

_During the thanksgiving, you may wish to gesture to remember your baptism:
- A light splash of water,
- Use water to trace a cross on your forehead
- Make a sign of the cross across your body

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

We bless you, almighty God, for the gift of water –
for the oceans that surround the earth
for the rivers that nurture the land,
for the Des Plaines River, Salt Creek, Lake Michigan that you provide
for our community,
we bless you, O God, for the waters of earth –
**we bless you, O God, for the waters of earth:**

We honor you, merciful God, for showering us with water –
for the rain that nourishes the plants and trees,
for the floods that restore the fields,
for the dew that freshens dry places –
we honor you, O God, for the waters you send:
**we honor you, O God, for the waters you send.**

We glorify you, Gracious God, for the waters of baptism –
for the water of the Jordan that washed our Lord Jesus,
for the water that baptized the believers on Pentecost,
for the water that illumines us with your Word,
for the water that pours out the gifts of the Spirit,
for the water that bathes the church universal – the Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Protestants, Pentecostals, Evangelicals, independents –
we glorify you, O God, for the waters of baptism:
**we glorify you, O God, for the waters of baptism.**
We worship you, O God, Father Son and Holy Spirit, Almighty, merciful and gracious. 
Well of forgiveness you revive us, 
Cup of cold water, you refresh us, 
Pool of rebirth, you renew us. 
To you comes the worship of all your people, now and forever:  
\textit{To you comes the worship of all your people, now and forever.} 
\textbf{Amen.}

\textbf{Gathering Hymn}

\textit{I Know that My Redeemer Lives, ELW 619} 
Stanzas 1, 4, 7 and 8 

\textit{The assembly joins in singing:} 

1 \textbf{I know that my Redeemer lives!} 
\textit{What comfort this sweet sentence gives!} 
\textit{He lives, he lives, who once was dead; he lives, my ever-living head!} 

4 \textbf{He lives to silence all my fears;} 
\textit{he lives to wipe away my tears;} 
\textit{he lives to calm my troubled heart; he lives all blessings to impart.} 

7 \textbf{He lives and grants me daily breath;} 
\textit{he lives, and I shall conquer death;} 
\textit{he lives my mansion to prepare; he lives to bring me safely there.} 

8 \textbf{He lives, all glory to his name!} 
\textit{He lives, my Savior, still the same;} 
\textit{what joy this blest assurance gives: I know that my Redeemer lives!} 

\textit{Text: Samuel Medley, 1738-1799, alt. Used by permission. Reprinted under OneLicense.net.}

\textbf{Greeting and Prayer of the Day}

\textit{Alleluia! Christ is risen.} 
\textbf{Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!} 

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
\textbf{And also with you.}
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.

Word

Children’s Message

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.

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.

55Filled 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!” 7But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. 58Then they dragged Stephen 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.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

As we welcome the gospel, we sing:

Be not afraid, sing out for joy! Christ is risen, alleluia!

Be not afraid, sing out for joy! Christ is risen, alleluia!
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.

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] 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 Jesus, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen

9 Jesus 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’? 10 Do 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. 12 Very 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.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Pastor Richard Johnson
Prayers of Intercession

As we begin our prayers, together, we join in singing:

Hear our prayer, hear our prayer, Lord, make us whole:
peace to all people, hope for each soul.
God of grace, in this place, hear now our prayer.

After each petition, the assembly responds:
O God, incline your ear to us: **Make haste to deliver us.**

We continue to hold in prayer:
Our bishops, Elizabeth Eaton and the ELCA Churchwide staff;
  Yehiel Curry, and the Metropolitan Chicago Synod staff
Missionaries throughout the world especially Pr. Mawien Ariik and Pr. Wal Luot Reat in South Sudan; and Pr. Alex LaChapelle in Nairobi, whom we support
Our ecumenical brothers and sisters in the countries of Bangledesh, Bhutan, Nepal
Our community of faith, especially our pastors and staff, leadership and volunteers.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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. 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.

Sending

Blessing

The God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing,
so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The God of all grace ✝ bless us now and forever. **Amen.**
Now Thank We All Our God, ELW 840

1 Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;
who, from our mothers’ arms, has blest us on our way
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

2 Oh, may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us,
and keep us all in grace, and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all harm in this world and the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given,
the Son, and Spirit blest, who reign in highest heaven,
the one eternal God, whom earth and heav’n adore;
for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

Text: Martin Rinkhart, 1586–1649; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878
Music: NUN DANDET ALLE GOTT, Johanna Crüger, 1598–1662
Dismissal

Christ is risen, just as he said. Share the good news. Alleluia!
**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

*As our service concludes, we share the peace with each other near and far.*

Postlude

*Variations on* “I Know That My Redeemer Lives,” Anne Krentz Organ

**Special thanks to our leaders this morning:**
The Rev. Richard Johnson
Michael Busbey, pastoral intern
Anne Krentz Organ, director of music ministries
Marin Rooney, reader and intercessor
The Ramsey family, ensemble
Anna Lynch, Thanksgiving for Baptism

**Acknowledgements**

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