**Announcements:** Today is the fifth Sunday of Easter. As we continue to celebrate the 50 days of Easter, today’s gospel includes Jesus’ promise that he goes to prepare a place for his followers in his Father’s house. Our baptism commissions us to share Jesus’ mission in the world. In words and deeds we bear witness to the risen Christ- our way, our truth, our life.

**Confession and Forgiveness:** We continue with confession and forgiveness -

In the name of the Father, and the Son + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God, we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins.in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Greeting:** The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirt be with you all. Let us pray.

**Prayer of the Day:** 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 live and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Reading: Acts 7: 55-60**

**Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16**

**1 Peter 2: 2-10**

**Gospel: John 14: 1-14**

**Kid’s do people see Jesus when they see you? ask Charlotte who is this and she thinks it her, but it’s Mike**

**Sermon** Perhaps a little background would be helpful before we look closer at our gospel today. Starting in the chapter before this one and going on through chapter 17 is Jesus’ farewell discourse. It is just before Jesus is arrested in the garden. In chapter 13 he has washed the disciple’s feet teaching them to be servant like. He has told them he knows he will be betrayed and by whom. He has given them the commandment to love one another just as he has loved them. He knows Peter will deny him and tells him so. And now at the beginning of chapter 14 he says, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.” Jesus knows there is only a small amount of time he will be with his disciples and he has some things he needs them to know and try to understand before he departs. I know how Jesus feels.

I too only have a small amount of time that I will be your pastor. My time here has gone fast and many things have happened to me both personally and professionally. I have enjoyed getting to know you and being your pastor. I have been with you in happy joyous times like confirmations, weddings, and baptism and welcoming new members. I have been with you in sad, scary times like deaths and funerals and break out of a pandemic. I have been honored to share those times with you and through it all continue to bring you the good news of God in good and bad times. Now we will be separated from one another and we will all continue to do ministry where we are.

This is the time of year for other transitions too. Although not as obvious to the naked eye, but the school year has ended and there have been many tearful goodbyes by teachers and their students. The end of the school year was made so much more difficult because the kids and the teachers were unable to be together. There were no “end of year” celebrations or saying good bye to your friends for the summer.

The last time they were in school they never dreamt they would not have a proper chance to say their goodbyes at the end. No one knows when or if they will get to come back together at the beginning of the next school year.

But Jesus knew. He knew it was his last time with his disciples. He knew after that night their lives would change dramatically. They would have new tasks to do. Jesus knew he was going to entrust them to carry on the proclamation of the good news he had brought to the world and would be accomplishing on the cross.

The disciples didn’t really think this was their last time with Jesus. There would be no time to say good bye, no parties to send Jesus away. Were they ready? Had Jesus given them all the instructions they needed to carry on? Would they be able to do what Jesus was asking of them?

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.” Jesus was reassuring them that he had their backs. No matter what had happened or what would happen they would be together again.

He was going to prepare a place for them and for us. He would not leave us alone forever. That is how it is with relationships. You all have that friend that you don’t see for years, but as soon as you are back together it is like you had never been apart. For me it is my friend Cindy. We grew up together, our parents were best friends, she was in my wedding, I conducted her wedding, but we are lucky if we are in contact every other year and sometimes it can be three or four years go by before we talk, but as soon as we hear each other’s voice we are connected again.

A relationship with Jesus is a little different than your childhood best friend though. Because even if Jesus is no longer on earth that we are able to see him and carry on a conversation like we do with friends, Jesus is always with us. He is available anytime to talk to and to listen to. We can see and hear him in others and we can show him to others in what we say and do.

That is what believing in God and believing in Jesus gives us. We are able to dwell with God now and forever. God will never leave us or abandon us even if it feels to us like we are all alone. We are not. God dwells in us and gives us all we need to survive a world of joy and a world of sorrow.

And the wondrous part of all of that is it doesn’t depend on us. Jesus doesn’t say you chip in on the rent of your place in heaven. No, he says he will prepare it, he will come to us and he will take us there. “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.”

As I leave you, not knowing when or if we will see each other again I want you to remember one thing, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God.” No matter what happens in this world, God has your back. God will never leave you or abandon you. If others do or if the world seems to God will always be there in the joyful times and in the sad times. God loves you more than our minds or hearts can ever imagine.

We know God loves us because God sent Jesus to save us. We know because those disciples had received the Holy Spirit after Jesus left them and they were able to tell others and then those people received the Holy Spirit and they were able to tell others and so on and so on until you received the Holy Spirit in your baptisms and you are able to tell others so they receive the Holy Spirit and it will go on and on with or without us.

That is the power of God and nothing will ever stop that. For now it is our time to be sent forth in the Holy Spirit. We are sent to be servants and to love one another as Jesus has loved us and even if we betray or deny we are still loved and saved. So listen again to Jesus words for us. “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.” Goodbye, Farewell, and Amen

New members Jenna and Justin Moege (Kent and Nicole Frickel)

**Intercessory Prayers** Response: Lord, listen to your children praying, Lord, send your Spirit in this place; Lord, listen to your children praying; send us love, send us pow’r, send us grace.

**Lord’s Prayer**

**Sending Hymn:** #551 “The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve”

**Blessing:** The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord’s face shine on you and give you peace. In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Dismissal:** P: Christ is risen, just as he said. Go in peace. Serve the Lord. C: OK, we will!