

Minnesota River Valley Pastors' Conference
Opening Service
November 14, 2017

The Party After the Party

The 500th Anniversary celebration is over. The Reformation is a thing of the past, and so is the party about it. Unless you are living and breathing. Unless you've been changed by the pure gospel message. Unless your eyes are looking toward a bright future. Then, as people changed by grace, there is so much yet to come! According to what God says, there's a party after the party, and we need to get into the full swing of it!

CHILDREN'S SONG – Come, Christians, Join to Sing

by Dave & Jean Perry

*Come, Christians, join to sing: Alleluia! Amen! Loud praise to Christ our King: Alleluia! Amen!
Let all, with heart and voice, before his throne rejoice; Praise is his gracious choice. Alleluia! Amen!*

*Come, lift your hearts on high: Alleluia! Amen! Let praises fill the sky: Alleluia! Amen!
He is our guide and friend; to us he'll condescend; His love shall never end: Alleluia! Amen!*

*Praise yet the Lord again: Alleluia! Amen! Life shall not end the strain: Alleluia! Amen!
On heaven's blissful shore his goodness we'll adore, singing forevermore: Alleluia! Amen!*

WELCOME

OPENING HYMN – Thy Strong Word

- 1. Thy strong word did cleave the darkness; at thy speaking it was done.
For created light we thank thee while thine ordered seasons run.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise to thee who light dost send!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia without end!**

2. Lo, on those who dwelt in darkness, dark as night and deep as death,
Broke the light of thy salvation, breathed thine own life-giving breath.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise to thee who light dost send!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia without end!
3. Thy strong Word bespeaks us righteous; bright with thine own holiness,
Glorious now, we press toward glory, and our lives our hopes confess.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise to thee who light dost send!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia without end!
5. Give us lips to sing thy glory, tongues thy mercy to proclaim,
Throats to shout the hope that fills us, mouths to speak thy holy name.
Alleluia! Alleluia! May the light which thou dost send
Fill our songs with alleluias, alleluias without end!

OPENING VERSES

Psalm 118, selected verses

- L: Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever!
In my anguish I cried to the LORD, and he answered by setting me free.
- C: The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?**
- L: It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man.
- C: It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.**
- L: All the nations surrounded me, but in the name of the LORD I cut them off.
- C: They surrounded me on every side, but in the name of the LORD I cut them off.**
- L: The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.
- C: Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: "The LORD's right hand has done mighty things!"**
- L: "The LORD's right hand is lifted high; the LORD's right hand has done mighty things!"
- C: I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the LORD has done.**

(continued on the next page)

L: The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone;
C: the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes!
 L: This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!
C: O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success!
 L: The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine upon us.
C: With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar.
 L: You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you!
C: Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever!

CONFESSION OF SINS

L: As we rejoice in the great love God has for us, we must admit we deserve none of his blessings. Let us now humbly confess in all honesty to him who loves to forgive.

C: Oh, what great things you have done, O God, Creator and Ruler of the Universe! This is yet another day of celebration. Only one thing mars my joy, and that is my sin. I confess to you that I have not done everything your law demands, and I have broken your laws in countless ways. I confess this sinful condition.

But for this very reason you sent your own Son Jesus to be the Savior of the world – my own Savior too. What great things you have done! In his name I come humbly and confidently, seeking your assurance of full and free forgiveness.

L: Rest assured, brothers and sisters, the King of the Universe has sent his Son to be the eternal answer to sin. His coming was in humility; in great love he suffered and died for you; and his rising was in victory. Now you, brought to life in his name, are dressed in his forgiveness; you are clean and pure in his sight. Now, holy and dearly loved, come receive his special assurance, given in his body and blood. What great things he has done for us!

THE SACRAMENT

L: It is good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who preserves his Church to the end of time when he will come again as king to judge all people and take his own to glory. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er,
God of might: heav'n and earth are full of your glo -
ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless -
ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san -
na in the high - est. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

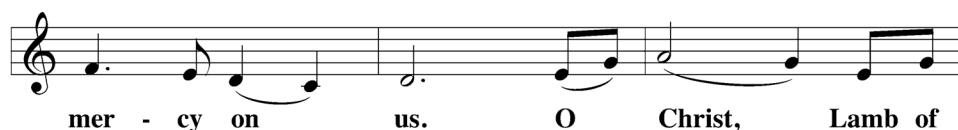
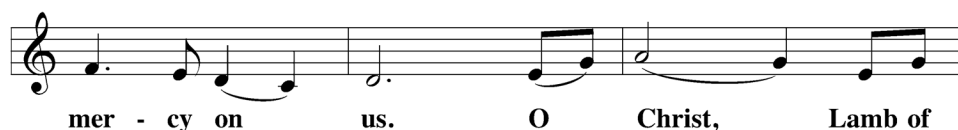
WORDS OF INSTITUTION

L: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.





DISTRIBUTION

THANKSGIVING

1. ♪ O Lord, we praise you, bless you, and adore you,
In thanksgiving bow before you.
Here with your body and your blood you nourish
Our weak souls that they may flourish.
O Lord, have mercy!
May your body, Lord, born of Mary,
That our sins and sorrows did carry,
And your blood for us plead in all trial, fear, and need:
O Lord, have mercy!
3. May God bestow on us his grace and favor
To please him with our behavior
And live together here in love and union,
Cherishing our blest communion.
O Lord, have mercy!
Let not your good Spirit forsake us;
Grant that heav'nly-minded he make us.
Give your Church, Lord, to see days of peace and unity.
O Lord, have mercy!

THE WORD

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Micah 4:1-5, 11-13 – *The Worldwide Plan*

In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it.

²Many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ³He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. ⁴Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken. ⁵All the nations may walk in the name of their gods; we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.

¹¹But now many nations are gathered against you. They say, "Let her be defiled, let our eyes gloat over Zion!" ¹²But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD; they do not understand his plan, he who gathers them like sheaves to the threshing floor.

¹³"Rise and thresh, O Daughter of Zion, for I will give you horns of iron; I will give you hoofs of bronze and you will break to pieces many nations."

You will devote their ill-gotten gains to the LORD, their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.

Luke 17:20-37 – *The vultures are coming!*

²⁰Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, ²¹nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."

²²Then he said to his disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. ²³Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them. ²⁴For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. ²⁵But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

²⁶"Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

²⁸"It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. ²⁹But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

³⁰"It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. ³¹On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything.

³²Remember Lot's wife! ³³Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. ³⁴I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. ³⁵Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left."

³⁷"Where, Lord?" they asked.

He replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather."

Romans 12:1-2 – Reformation-Transformation

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.

²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

HYMN – *Built on the Rock*

1. Built on the Rock the Church shall stand, even when steeples are falling.
Crumbled have spires in every land; bells still are chiming and calling,
Calling the young and old to rest, but above all the soul distressed,
Longing for rest everlasting.
2. Surely in temples made with hands God, the Most High, is not dwelling;
High above earth his temple stands, all earthly temples excelling.
Yet he who dwells in heaven above chooses to live with us in love,
Making our bodies his temple.
3. We are God's house of living stones, built for his own habitation.
He through baptismal grace us owns, heirs of his wondrous salvation.
Were we but two his name to tell, yet he would deign with us to dwell
With all his grace and his favor.
4. Here stands the font before our eyes, telling how God did receive us.
Th'altar recalls Christ's sacrifice and what the sacrament gives us.
Here sound the Scriptures that proclaim Christ yesterday, today, the same,
And evermore, our Redeemer.
5. Grant then, O God, your will be done, that, when the church bells are ringing,
Many in saving faith may come where Christ his message is bringing:
"I know my own; my own know me. You, not the world, my face shall see.
My peace I leave with you always."

MESSAGE

Now...What About 501?

John 10:14-18

¹⁴“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me — ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father — and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life — only to take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

PROFESSION OF FAITH

C: I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death.

All this he did that I should be his own, and live under him in his kingdom, and service him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally.

This is most certainly true.

OFFERING

HYMN – Dear Lord, to Your True Servants Give

1. Dear Lord, to your true servants give the grace to you alone to live.
Set free from sin to serve you, Lord, they go to share your living Word,
The gospel message to proclaim that all may know your saving name.
2. They gladly go at your command to spread your Word o'er sea and land.
Be with them, Lord, and make them strong to heal sin's ills, to right the wrong.
Your rule is over wind and wave, and mighty is your arm to save.
3. When all their labor seems in vain, revive their sinking hopes again;
And when success crowns what they do, oh keep them humble, Lord, and true
Until before your judgment seat they lay their trophies at your feet.

PRAYER FOR GRACE IN MINISTRY

Luther's Prayer at Worms, adapted

L: O God, Almighty God everlasting! How dreadful is the world! See how its mouth opens wide to swallow us up!

C: Oh, how small is our faith in you!

L: Oh, the weakness of the flesh, and the power of Satan! If we are to depend on any strength of this world...

C: - all is over... The knell is struck... The sentence is rendered!

L: O God! O powerful God! O our gracious God! Help us against the wisdom of this world.

C: Do this, we pray you – you should, in fact help us by your mighty power, because the work is not ours; the kingdom is yours.

L: We are not fit for this struggle. We have nothing in ourselves by which we might do battle against the great people of the world!

C: How tempting it is to pass our days in happiness and peace, doing nothing.

L: But the cause is yours – and it is righteous and everlasting! O Lord, help us! O faithful and unchangeable God, we will not trust in man, nor our own strength. That would be a vain hope! Whatever is of man is tottering, whatever proceeds from him must fail.

- C: O God, our only God, surely you do not stand far off! Surely you hear everything! It cannot be that you sleep or die.**
- L: You are the God who hides yourself from the prying, vaunting eyes of men, but you surely live and are near to all who call on you in truth.
- C: You have chosen us for this work in your kingdom. We know it!**
- L: So then, O God, accomplish your will! For the sake of your dearly-loved Son, our shield and buckler, our stronghold in times of trouble, do not forsake us.
- C: We are ready, prepared to lay down our life for your truth, prepared to lose possessions, family, fame, personal time – whatever you may claim from us. The cause is holy. It is your own cause!**
- L: We will not let go of you! No, never into all eternity!
- C: Though the world were thronged with devils, and this body, the work of your hands, were cast down, trampled, cut in pieces, consumed to ashes, yet our soul belongs to you.**
- L: We have your own word that nothing can separate us from your love!
- C: that our competence comes from you!**
- L: that by your Word we can demolish strongholds!
- C: reach past the gates of Hades!**
- L: bend a bow of bronze!
- C: stand on the heights!**
- L: and live, more than conquerors!
- C: Therefore, O God, send help today!**
- L: Because those who look to you are radiant, never covered with shame, we boldly say...
- C: Amen!**

CLOSING HYMN – *God’s Word Is Our Great Heritage*

**God’s Word is our great heritage and shall be ours forever;
To spread its light from age to age shall be our chief endeavor.
Through life it guides our way; in death it is our stay.
Lord, grant, while worlds endure, we keep its teachings pure
Throughout all generations.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS



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COMMUNION ASSISTANTS Pastor Scott Muske
Pastor Matthew Sprunger
ORGANIST/PIANIST Rachel Cordes
CHOIR St. John’s School
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Laurie Silfies, Accompanist

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