



## PLUM Worship

# Paul's Sermon at Athens

Fifth Sunday of Easter

MAY 15, 2022

3:00 p.m.

PRELUDE My Hope is Built on Nothing Less

<https://youtu.be/-ft7ld5MB9g>

WELCOME and PRAYER REQUESTS

## GATHERING

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

### CALL TO WORSHIP

He is risen!

**Christ is alive!**

God meets us where we are.

**With compassion and grace God welcomes us home.**

HYMN The Strife is O'er, the Battle Done

<https://youtu.be/rCHXotyRK4g>

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

- 1 *The strife is o'er, the battle done;  
now is the victor's triumph won!  
Now be the song of praise begun. Alleluia!*
- 2 *The pow'rs of death have done their worst;  
Jesus their legions has dispersed.  
Let shouts of holy joy outburst. Alleluia!*
- 3 *The three sad days have quickly sped,  
Christ rises glorious from the dead.  
All glory to our risen head! Alleluia!*
- 4 *Christ closed the yawning gates of hell;  
the bars from heav'n's high portals fell.  
Let hymns of praise his triumph tell. Alleluia!*
- 5 *Lord, by the stripes that wounded you,  
from death's sting free your servants too,  
that we may live and sing to you. Alleluia!*  
*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

## THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the minister begins.*

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

In the waters of baptism,

we have passed over from death to life with Jesus Christ, and we are a new creation.

For this saving mystery, and for this water, let us bless God, who was, who is, and who is to come.

*Water may be poured into the font as the minister gives thanks.*

We thank you, God, for your river of life, flowing freely from your throne:

through the earth, through the city, through every living thing.

You rescued Noah and his family from the flood;

You opened wide the sea for the Israelites.

Now in these waters you flood us with mercy, and our sin is drowned forever.

You open the gate of righteousness and we pass safely through.

In Jesus Christ, you calm and trouble the waters.

You nourish us and enclose us in safety.

You call us forth and send us out.

In lush and barren places, you are with us.

You have become our salvation.

Now breathe upon this water

and awaken your church once more.

Claim us again as your beloved and holy people.

Quench our thirst; cleanse our hearts; wipe away every tear.

To you, our Beginning and our End,

our Shepherd and Lamb,

be honor, glory, praise, and thanksgiving,

now and forever. **Amen.**

## GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. God of all wisdom, Paul knew how to sit with people in their own reality before bringing them along the journey of the story of Christ. Teach us to honor people's journeys with grace and respect. **Amen.**

## WORD

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.*

## FIRST READING

**Acts 17:16-31**

<sup>16</sup>While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. <sup>17</sup>So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and also in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. <sup>18</sup>Also some Epicurean and

Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, “What does this babblers want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities.” (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.)<sup>19</sup> So they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?”<sup>20</sup> It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means.”<sup>21</sup> Now all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new.

<sup>22</sup> Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. <sup>23</sup> For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.

<sup>24</sup> The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, <sup>25</sup> nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. <sup>26</sup> From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, <sup>27</sup> so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. <sup>28</sup> For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’ <sup>29</sup> Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals.

<sup>30</sup> While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup> because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** <https://youtu.be/0k67nFHgvII>  
*Alleluia, Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia!*

**GOSPEL** **John 1:16-18**  
A reading from John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>16</sup> From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON** **PASTOR BRENDA HENRY**

**HYMN** **There's a Wideness in God's Mercy**

<https://youtu.be/Eus40UcsGLc>

- 1 *There's a wideness in God's mercy,  
like the wideness of the sea;  
there's a kindness in God's justice  
which is more than liberty.  
There is no place where earth's sorrows  
are more felt than up in heav'n.  
There is no place where earth's failings  
have such kindly judgment giv'n.*
- 2 *There is welcome for the sinner,  
and a promised grace made good;  
there is mercy with the Savior;  
there is healing in his blood.  
There is grace enough for thousands  
of new worlds as great as this;  
there is room for fresh creations  
in that upper home of bliss.*
- 3 *For the love of God is broader  
than the measures of our mind;  
and the heart of the Eternal  
is most wonderfully kind.  
But we make this love too narrow  
by false limits of our own;  
and we magnify its strictness  
with a zeal God will not own.*
- 4 *'Tis not all we owe to Jesus;  
it is something more than all:  
greater good because of evil,  
larger mercy through the fall.  
Make our love, O God, more faithful;  
let us take you at your word,  
and our lives will be thanksgiving  
for the goodness of the Lord.*

**NICENE CREED**

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,

**who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

Your servant, Paul, is a model for approaching the other and sharing the gospel in a spirit of generosity and openness. May we follow his lead and respectfully accompany those whom we serve, rather than preaching without listening or insisting that others agree with us. Risen Lord, **Hear our prayer.**

We too are your offspring, O Lord, created in your very image to give glory to you. Forgive us when we try to re-create you in an image of our own choosing, for reasons which do not honor you, and return us to our true identity as your children. Risen Lord, **Hear our prayer.**

There are fewer and fewer places like the Areopagus, where each may share their own experience and have their views heard and accepted. We are quick to judge, disqualify, and justify rather than opening ourselves to being transformed in the presence of one another. Expand our horizons to include more than just those who agree with us, and whom we consider part of us. Risen Lord, **Hear our prayer.**

When assumptions and self-righteousness are released, healing can begin. Free us of all that holds us prisoner without our realizing it, and make us agents of your renewal. Bless today those whom we bring before you, especially... Risen Lord, **Hear our prayer.**

God of all good gifts, your Son gathered children into his arms and blessed them. Help us to understand our youth as they grow in years and in knowledge of your world. Teach us to encourage their search for truth and value in their lives. Protect and bless all of our young people, especially.... Risen Lord, **Hear our prayer.**

Lord, you know what is best for the ministry of PLUM and have guided us in the calling of a new pastor. Continue to open our eyes, ears, and hearts, that we may faithfully carry out your work which you have entrusted to us. Risen Lord, **Hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We are a motley and diverse group, your saints. Thank you for making us different from one another, yet united in your love and redeemed by your salvation. Risen Lord, **Hear our prayer.**

For what else do we pray? [Silence]  
Steadfast Lord, **Hear our prayer.**

We have indeed received grace upon grace from you, loving God. Accept these our prayers and use them to transform hearts and lives. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

### **PEACE**

*The minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.*

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

### **MEAL**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

### **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

*At this time, we offer ourselves to God—our physical resources and our whole life—recognizing that all we are and all we have are God's given to us and for which we are stewards. If you have a monetary offering for your congregation, please send it or deliver it to the church.*

Let us pray. In you we live and move and have our being, holy God. We can nothing apart from you. Even these gifts we offer were first granted to us through your grace and generosity. Accept these gifts teach us to continue your work as we meet people where they are. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

### **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You call your people to cleanse their hearts and prepare with joy for the paschal feast, that, renewed in the gift of baptism, we may come to the fullness of your grace. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and 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.

In the night in which he was betrayed  
our Lord Jesus took bread, gave thanks; broke it,  
and gave it to his disciples, saying;  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me.

Together as the body of Christ, we proclaim the mystery of our faith:  
**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

### LORD'S PRAYER

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

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

### INVITATION

Too often we sit down to eat only with those that are like us. Jesus offers an extraordinary chance to participate in a meal that is shared by people of rich diversity. Come to the table, and as you receive the body and blood of Christ, recognize that you are part of the family of humanity.

Take and eat the body of Christ given for you. **Amen.**  
Take and drink the blood of Christ shed for you. **Amen.**

### COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

### POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. **We give you thanks, generous God, for in this bread and cup we have tasted the new heaven and earth where hunger and thirst are no more. Send us from this table as witnesses to the resurrection, that through our lives, all may know life in Jesus' name. Amen.**

### SENDING

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

### BLESSING

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus. The God of life, Father, ✚ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

**HYMN** **Thine Be the Glory** <https://youtu.be/FTXUsKFecJs>

**1** *Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son;  
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won!  
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,  
kept the folded grave-clothes where thy body lay.*

Refrain

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son;  
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won!*

**2** *Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb!  
Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;  
let his church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,  
for the Lord now liveth; death has lost its sting!*

Refrain

**3** *No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;  
life is naught without thee; aid us in our strife;  
make us more than conquerors,  
through thy deathless love;  
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.*

Refrain

### DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Go in peace. Tell what God has done.

**Thanks be to God.**

### ANNOUNCEMENTS and GOD SIGHTINGS

### COFFEE HOUR

**TODAY** – *Welcome!*

### May Bible Study:



Wednesday, May 4, 11, 18, & 25 at 7:00 p.m.  
Developing your Faith Narrative

To participate contact Pastor Martin at 314-248-0452 or  
[mjr9201@gmail.com](mailto:mjr9201@gmail.com) for the zoom link

**Participants are welcome to attend all or any session that fits their schedule.**

The call-in line for PLUM Worship Services and meetings:

Zoom online: <https://zoom.us/j/401596541>

Zoom by phone: (646) 876 9923 Meeting ID: 401 596 541

### PLUM Pastoral Team:

The Reverend John Gropp	412-680-7867
The Reverend Brenda Henry	412-390-8005
The Reverend Susan Devine	412-496-4889

If you are not already connected to one of our congregations and would like to support our ministry, please send donations to: **Pittsburgh Lutheran United Ministries, 405 Kennedy Avenue, Duquesne, PA 15110**