

Sixth Sunday of Easter
Sermon Text: Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5
Related Text: John 14:23-29
Date preached: May 9, 2010
Note: Mothers day, youth choir sing.

Alleluia, Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Jesus is giving each one of us a gift. From Jesus we receive many gifts, each of which is for the benefit of faithful living as children of God. Each gift from Christ our Lord builds us up, affirms God's love even in those times when we feel completely unworthy of anyone's love, much less God's.

In the reading from the 14th Chapter of John the gift of Christ we hear this day is peace. Jesus' words to us are "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." This peace is a gift we have now.

It is a word this world so desperately needs. Examples of brokenness are all around us. For many, life is many things but peace. We are tempted to see peace as only being attainable in heaven.

Wars, terrorism, declining morals, increased drug and alcohol abuse, racism, sexism, natural disasters, high divorce rates, poverty, and the litany can go on and on, all point to the lack of peace in society. In our

personal lives we too lack the ability or desire to claim the peace that is a gift.

Fill up the appointment book with activities for kids, meetings, extra work hours, helping with homework, tending to ailing parents or grandparents and the only sense of peace some may feel are those too few precious hours of sleep.

Even the church is not without its moments of hardship where peace seems far too fleeting. We can get caught up in doing so many things that the church is a place where we become busy and forget the gift of peace that is right in front of us.

The peace of God is a vision for the future. The peace of God is also a present gift to the church and one the church is called to share.

Look more closely at our reading this morning from Revelation. We are at the end of the book. We are past judgment day. We are past the last conflicts with sin, death and the devil. This is an image of the coming of God himself.

And look what he brings. The pure glory of God is so bright that there is no shadow. The gates are open. It is a future where the unclean in this life have a

place, because we who are stained with sin will be changed. God makes whole our broken selves and restores us to peace in its fullest measure.

The peace of God is one of assurance for those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. That is you. You who have been claimed by God are embraced in the promise of eternal life. The peace we have is that our Lord Jesus Christ through his death and resurrection has written our names there.

This vision for the future includes the peace of gently flowing water free of pollutants. There is the tree of life its peace. "and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."

There is our hope. There is the promise of healing and that promise is the peace God offers a troubled world. It is the full reconciliation of those who live as enemies. It is the fullness of forgiveness. It is a peace that God has given the church the privilege to share with the world.

And yeah, I understand that this is a great vision for the future. It is also our present work for us now. Our baptismal calling is one in which we strive for this peace and reconciliation to be a present reality in this life. It is why members of the ELCA and other

Christian denominations travel the world, engage world leaders in an effort to foster peace living in all countries and among nations.

To bring this further into where we are today, our calling is to be agents of peace in our homes, in our workplaces, in our church, in our community, which will then spread like ripples in the pond.

In worship, we share the gift of peace that we carry in our lives as we go forth throughout the week. Here in this place, embraced with singing, prayer, the reading of scripture, the sermon, choir anthems, the Lord's Supper and the fellowship we share in Sunday school lessons and throughout the individual conversations among us all are means for celebrating God's gift of peace through Christ.

So we are blessed to spend an hour learning God's Word in Sunday school. We are blessed with God's peace that comes in the worship and in the weekly distribution of our Lord Jesus in with and under the elements of bread and wine. For in these ways, God's Word of peace enters our weary souls ushering in the peace that calms our fears, renews our souls and leads us along right pathways for daily living. Amen.