



We acknowledge Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, upholding Scripture as the unchanging Word of God. We seek to be led by the Holy Spirit. We will endeavor to live life in fellowship and service in His name and to lead others into a relationship with Him through Biblical teaching and concern for their lives. We will be a community that reflects His teaching and love to the world around us.

Pentecost Sunday 5-24-2015

Psalm 104: 25-35

- 25 O LORD, how manifold are your works! *
in wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.
- 26 Yonder is the great and wide sea with its living things too many to number, *
creatures both small and great.
- 27 There move the ships, and there is that Leviathan, *
which you have made for the sport of it.
- 28 All of them look to you *
to give them their food in due season.
- 29 You give it to them; they gather it; *
you open your hand, and they are filled with good things.
- 30 You hide your face, and they are terrified; *
you take away their breath, and they die and return to their dust.
- 31 You send forth your Spirit, and they are created; *
and so you renew the face of the earth.
- 32 May the glory of the LORD endure for ever; *
may the LORD rejoice in all his works.
- 33 He looks at the earth and it trembles; *
he touches the mountains and they smoke.
- 34 I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; *
I will praise my God while I have my being.

35 May these words of mine please him; *
I will rejoice in the LORD.

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen*

Romans 8:22-27

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

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

John 20: 19-23

The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to St. John *Glory to you, O Lord*

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

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

Litany of Prayers for the Persecuted Church

Jay Blankespoor

One: Our Lord Jesus, in describing to his followers the work ahead of them, proclaims: "But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name.... You will be betrayed even by parents, siblings, relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death. All people will hate you because of me. But not a hair of your head will perish. By standing firm you will gain life." (Luke 21:12-14)

All: Give us the strength, Lord, to endure persecution for your name. Help us and all believers to stand firm in our faith.

One: "Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in

sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated-the world was not worthy of them." (Hebrews 11:36-38)

All: Thank-you for the faithful witness of those who have gone before us and gave their lives to share your hope with a dying world. May we learn from their example. One: "If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels." (Mark 8:38).

All: Give us courage, Lord, that we may speak forth light in this dark world. Forgive our weakness and our fear, transform our wavering into a certain proclamation of your salvation and justice.

One: In speaking of the body of Christ, Paul reminds us that "if one part suffers, every part suffers with it..." (I Corinthians 12:26). And elsewhere we are instructed, "Remember those in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering" (Hebrews 13:3).

(Silence. If desired, people can voice places in the world where they know religious persecution is taking place.)

All: Forgive us when we forget.

One: "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:10-12).

All: For all those who suffer for their faith-who face persecution, torment, imprisonment, separation from their families, violence, and hatred-we cry to you, Lord God. Have mercy on them.

One: "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse." (Romans 12:14).

All: We pray for those who persecute. Open their eyes and heal their lives; turn them toward peace.

One: In the midst of a desolate world, our Lord gives us this vision of a future reality: "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'" (Revelation 21:3-4).

All: Come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly; bring your healing to this earth.

Together: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Amen. (Romans 8:35-38).