

6th Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday, July 20, 2025

Introduction to the day

Perhaps the church, at its best, is “all ears.” God urges the faithful, again and again, to “listen up!”—to heed the word that gives life. So it was with Abraham and Sarah, Mary and Martha, and the early church at Colossae. So it is today as we join the assembly to hear the word of God, the word of life.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Eternal God, you draw near to us in Christ, and you make yourself our guest. Amid the cares of our lives, make us attentive to your presence, that we may treasure your word above all else, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Genesis 18:1-10a

The LORD visits Abraham and Sarah to tell them that the long-awaited promise of the birth of a child will be fulfilled for them in their old age.

PSALM: Psalm 15

LORD, who may abide upon your holy hill? (*Ps. 15:1*)

SECOND READING: Colossians 1:15-28

This letter offers a mystical teaching, that the great mystery of God is “Christ in you.” Because Christ is present in the church, Christians share in his life, suffering, and glory.

GOSPEL: Luke 10:38-42

During his visit to the home of Mary and Martha, Jesus reminds Martha that her concern for her many tasks distracts from the one thing that precedes all else: abiding in the presence of God.

GOSPEL MESSAGE - Paying Attention in a Distracted World

Our attention is a valuable thing, and what we pay attention to matters. The tech industry employs more than 12 million people in the United States and generates over 10 percent of the total US GDP. While we might think their innovative apps, devices, and software are the industry’s biggest money-makers, the truth is that human attention is the real cash cow. The attention economy knows how valuable our attention really is, and social media and tech companies work hard to glean as much of it as possible, mostly for advertisers, setting the stage for overwhelming distraction.

Martha, after inviting Jesus into her home, becomes distracted by her many tasks. She has her attention diverted from the presence and preaching of Jesus right in front of her. The experience of distraction is certainly one we can relate to, especially living in an attention economy. Like Martha, we can have our attention diverted at a moment’s notice by seemingly endless and urgent checklists, projects, social media, and more. And like Martha, we can become so ensnared by our distractions that we simply accept them as priorities despite the better parts in front of us.

But Jesus speaks a word of grace to Martha and to us, reminding us that worry and distraction need not consume us. That the saving love of Jesus casts out all fear and sets us free to pay attention to the kingdom of God breaking in all around us. With the assurance of God’s love, we can embrace a posture of attention, setting down needless distractions in favor of “the better part” (Luke 10:42), the presence of God in our daily lives. We can devote our valuable attention to a conversation with our neighbor, to

prayer and spiritual practice, to the beauty of table fellowship, and to being fully present in worship. Most importantly, we can pay attention to the love of God, which raises us to new life every day.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

In solidarity with all creation, we join our voice to the voice of the whole church and pray for the needs of the world.

Inspire your church, like Sarah and Mary, to listen with eager longing for your words of life. Equip biblical interpreters and teachers with faithful discernment, that your word may be more fully known. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Every creature under heaven has been promised the hope of the gospel. From that promise, generate in humankind an eagerness to protect and care for creation. Bring healing to the earth with your words of life. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Peel away the distractions, worries, and fears of all who govern the nations of the world. May your word of love and life dispel all other voices. Provide gracious hospitality in places where hostile forces hold sway. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Speak your word of comfort to any who suffer pain, illness, grief, depression, or despair especially Shirley Glickman, Donna L. Hoffman, Cassie Jessup, Glenda Panke, Barry Rogers, Marilyn Schneider, Danny Schultz, Doug Sell, Debbie Thom, Keith Weckwerth, and those in long term care facilities and senior residences. Bring honor to any who experience slander and evil intent or are discredited by others. In this moment of silence, we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts, those who need your healing touch. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Enliven and uphold all siblings in Christ who strive to provide hospitality and safe spaces where everyone, without exception, can receive and be transformed by your word of life. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Mary, Martha, and all the saints who attended to your word, we give thanks. Open our ears to your voice until that day when we realize the promise of the gospel with all creation. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Trusting in your lovingkindness, we place our prayer and hope in you, in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 182)

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

BLESSING (ELW p. 183)

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.

DISMISSAL (ELW p. 183)

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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