

17

May

So That They May Be One

Stories That Matter

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, YEAR A

Jesus prays for our unity and glorification in him. This service invites creative engagement with what it means to live as answers to Christ's prayer for oneness in the world.

REFERENCES

Isaiah 45:1-7

Psalm 21:1-7

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

John 17:1-11

COLORS

White

If you have decided not to observe Ascension of the Lord Sunday for the final Sunday in Eastertide this year, you are in the right place! In nearly every music ministry I have worked or participated in, this Sunday tended to feel overshadowed by Pentecost. The choir had recovered from Easter Sunday and would focus on an extra special anthem for Pentecost. I would prepare an extra special organ voluntary and/or coordinate with other musicians for hymns and special music...for Pentecost. The altar guild would start gathering materials to mark the shift...to Pentecost. With our limited time and resources, we would focus much more on the celebration of Pentecost than on the completion of Eastertide, almost to the point that it felt like Pentecost was the end of Eastertide. But it's not. Today marks the end of Eastertide, the culmination of the season in which we celebrate Christ's resurrection and reflect on what it means to live as Easter people.

So, as you reflect on Jesus' farewell prayer in John 17, consider how it paints a picture of who we are to be as followers of Jesus as the body of Christ in the world. How do Jesus' words speak to you and

your congregation right here and right now? What would it look like for your church to take these words to heart? Perhaps you could give everyone (not just the kids) paper and crayons before the service and ask them to draw what they think “so they may be one” looks like for your church. Or perhaps you invite an active lay member to discuss with the pastor during part of the sermon what it means for Jesus to be glorified in us, as those who have received and known the truth about who Jesus is. You might even consider having a “theology moment” to dive into a bit of Trinitarian theology and the impact our understanding of the Trinity has on our understanding of how we live and act as the church, based on John 17:11. This is such a rich passage, and while we can easily get lost in parsing it out, find ways to make the passage real to your congregants. Jesus was not giving a seminary lecture. He was praying for us. So, how do we, members of the body of Christ of all times and places, live as answers to Jesus’ prayer?

Dr. Lisa Hancock, Director of Worship Arts Ministries, served as an organist and music minister in United Methodist congregations in the legacy Northwest Texas and North Texas Annual Conferences. After receiving her Master of Sacred Music and Master of Theological Studies from Perkins School of Theology, she earned her PhD in Religious Studies from Southern Methodist University, where she researched and wrote on the doctrine of Christ, disability, and atonement. Lisa is also the co-lead of Growing in Grace: Accessible Worship for All God’s Children.

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