

# Long Green Valley Church of the Brethren

Long Green and Kanés Rds., near Glen Arm, MD

April 24, 2016

Worship 10:00 am                      Sunday School 11:10 am

**Large print hymnals are available                      see an usher**

This room is equipped with a sound loop for the hearing impaired

## Fifth Sunday of Easter

“Behold, I am making all things new.”

(Revelation 21:1-6)

Beginning with Praise (9:50 am)                      “Great is the Lord”                      87

Announcements

Prelude

\*In Psalm and Song 148:1-6, 7-12, & 13-14                      *Common English Bible*

“All creatures of our God and King”                      48

(vs. 1-2, 3-4, 5,7)

\*In prayer be aware: God is near

God’s promise for all – part one                      Acts 10:1-48

Responsive affirmation of faith                      716

Returning our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory                      (Please sign the attendance pad and pass it on)

Remembering what Jesus said                      John 13:31-35

Sharing a joy, a concern, a word of testimony or praise

(please be brief, and aware of God’s listening presence)

Hymn                      “They’ll know we are Christians”                      (insert)

Pastoral Prayer

God’s promise for all – part two                      Acts 11:1-18

Message

\*Hymn                      “Proclaim the tidings near and far”                      282

\*End thoughts as Blessing for our Journey                      Revelation 21:1-6

\*Postlude

\* Rise in body or in spirit

\* \* \* \* \*

Today’s sermon and service will be posted on [www.lgvcob.org](http://www.lgvcob.org)  
and our church’s *facebook* page.

# In Psalm and Song

Ps. 148:1-6, 7-12, and 13-14

“All creatures of our God and King”

(follow pattern throughout – come up with your own directions)

- 1 - Praise the Lord from heaven! *(point to ceiling)*
- 2 - Praise God on the heights! *(point to balcony)*
- 1 - Praise God, all of you who are his messengers!  
*(point to congregation)*
- 2 - Praise God, all of you who comprise  
his heavenly forces! *(point up ... etc.)*
- 1 - Sun and moon, praise God!
- 2 - All of you bright stars, praise God!
- 1 - You highest heaven, praise God!
- 2 - Do the same, you waters that are above the sky!
- 1 - Let all of these praise the Lord’s name
- 2 - because God gave the command & they were created!
- 1 - God set them in place always and forever.
- 2 - God made a law that will not be broken.

(vs. 1-2 of “All creatures of our God and King” - #48)

- 1 - Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters  
and all you ocean depths!
- 2 - Do the same, fire and hail, snow and smoke,  
stormy wind that does what God says!
- 1 - Do the same, you mountains, every single hill,  
fruit trees, and every single cedar!
- 2 - Do the same, you animals - wild or tame –  
you creatures that creep along and  
you birds that fly!

- 1 - Do the same, you kings of the earth  
and every single person,  
you princes and every single ruler on earth!
- 2 - Do the same, you young men - young women too! –  
you who are old together with you who are young!

(vs. 3-4 of “All creatures of our God and King” - #48)

- 1 - Let all of these praise the Lord’s name  
because only God’s name is high over all.
- 2 - Only God’s majesty is over earth and heaven.
- 1 - God raised the strength of his people,
- 2 - the praise of all his faithful ones.
- 1 & 2 - Praise the Lord!

(vs. 5,7 of “All creatures of our God and King” - #48)

Scripture text © 2011 by *Common English Bible*

## In prayer be aware: God is near

You, whose very name is in every “Allelu-**yah**,” you are closer to us than the air we breathe. **Creator** of all that is, who spoke goodness into this world in the beginning, your voice still resounds in all things, even in silence. **Savior** of the world, who long ago died once and for all and then left the grave behind, you still raise the dead to life. **Promised Advocate**, who empowered *disciples* to become *apostles* – *learners* to become *those who are sent* with purpose, you still blow through your people like a mighty wind. In these moments of worship, we sense your presence, and add our praise to the song of all creation. Bless this hour. Amen.

# God's promise for all – part one

Acts 10:1-48

Our good news story from the Bible on this fifth Sunday of Easter is a pivotal one in the book of Acts. God is on the move. Old boundary lines are breaking away under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The apostles are being led with their Jesus message, step by step, out into the wider world. Philip heads into enemy territory and preaches the good news in Samaria (8:4-13). When the believers in Jerusalem hear about it, they send Peter and John to investigate, who discover people on fire for God (8:14-25). Philip also shares the message with and baptizes a foreigner on the road, an emissary of an Ethiopian queen and a eunuch at that (8:26-40). God is on the move, indeed. And then there is this Paul guy, who is shifted from being an enemy to an apostle of Jesus when he is blinded by the light on his way to Damascus. He would become a key figure in reaching out to non-Jewish people (9:1-31).

Last week, we heard about the healing of two persons, Aeneas and Tabitha, whose name means “Gazelle.” The latter happened in the seaside town of Joppa, which is where Peter stays for while (9:32-43). That’s his location as we begin today’s story. Several miles up the coast lives a Roman soldier, an officer from the heart of the empire presently occupying Palestine. A huge wall is about to be torn down by God, a barrier separating Jews and Gentiles (or non-Jews)... Be forewarned, this is a lengthy story, involving several scenes – so pay attention. Let’s enter the first part. Listen to the Word of God...

\*\*\*\*\*

(N - Narrator, 1 - Angel/Voice, 2 - Cornelius, 3 - Peter, 4 - messenger)

## Scene 1

N - There was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion in the Italian Company. He and his whole household were pious, Gentile God-worshippers. He gave generously to those in need among the Jewish people and prayed to God constantly. One day at nearly three o’clock in the afternoon, he clearly saw an angel from God in a vision. The angel came to him and said,

1 - “Cornelius!”

N - Startled, he stared at the angel and replied,

2 - “What is it, Lord?”

N - The angel said,

1 - “Your prayers and your compassionate acts are like a memorial offering to God. Send messengers to Joppa at once and summon a certain Simon, the one known as Peter. He is a guest of Simon the tanner, whose house is near the seacoast.”

N - When the angel who was speaking to him had gone, Cornelius summoned two of his household servants along with a pious soldier from his personal staff. He explained everything to them, then sent them to Joppa.

## Scene 2

N - At noon on the following day, as their journey brought them close to the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted to eat. While others were preparing the meal, he had a visionary experience. He saw heaven opened up and something like a large linen sheet being lowered to the earth by its four corners. Inside the sheet were all kinds of four-legged animals, reptiles, and wild birds. A voice told him,

1 - "Get up, Peter! Kill and eat!"

N - Peter exclaimed,

3 - "Absolutely not, Lord! I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

N - The voice spoke a second time,

1 - "Never consider unclean what God has made pure."

N - This happened three times, then the object was suddenly pulled back into heaven. Peter was bewildered about the meaning of the vision.

## Scene 3

N - Just then, the messengers sent by Cornelius discovered the whereabouts of Simon's house and arrived at the gate. Calling out, they inquired whether the Simon known as Peter was a guest there. While Peter was brooding over the vision, the Spirit interrupted him,

1 - "Look! Three people are looking for you. Go downstairs. Don't ask questions; just go with them because I have sent them."

N - So Peter went downstairs and told them,

3 - "I'm the one you are looking for. Why have you come?"

N - They replied,

4 - "We've come on behalf of Cornelius, a centurion and righteous man, a God-worshipper who is well-respected by all Jewish people. A holy angel directed him to summon you to his house and to hear what you have to say."

N - Peter invited them into the house as his guests.

## Scene 4

N - The next day he got up and went with them, together with some of the believers from Joppa. They arrived in Caesarea the following day. Anticipating their arrival, Cornelius had gathered his relatives and close friends. As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in order to honor him. But Peter lifted him up, saying,

3 - "Get up! Like you, I'm just a human."

N - As they continued to talk, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. He said to them,

3 - “You all realize that it is forbidden for a Jew to associate or visit with outsiders. However, God has shown me that I should never call a person impure or unclean. For this reason, when you sent for me, I came without objection. I want to know, then, why you sent for me.”

N - Cornelius answered,

2 - “Four days ago at this same time, three o’clock in the afternoon, I was praying at home. Suddenly a man in radiant clothing stood before me. He said,

1 - ‘Cornelius, God has heard your prayers, and your compassionate acts are like a memorial offering to him. Therefore, send someone to Joppa and summon Simon, who is known as Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, located near the seacoast.’

2 - I sent for you right away, and you were kind enough to come. Now, here we are, gathered in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has directed you to say.”

#### Scene 5

N - Peter said,

3 - “I really am learning that God doesn’t show partiality to one group of people over another. Rather, in every nation, whoever worships him and does what is right is acceptable to him. This is the message of peace he sent to the Israelites by proclaiming the good news through Jesus Christ: He is Lord of all! You know what happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism John preached. You know about Jesus of Nazareth, whom God anointed with the Holy Spirit and endowed with power. Jesus traveled around doing good and healing everyone oppressed by the devil because God was with him. We are witnesses of everything he did, both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him up on the third day and allowed him to be seen, not by everyone but by us. We are witnesses whom God chose beforehand, who ate and drank with him after God raised him from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

#### Scene 6

N - While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on everyone who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. They heard them speaking in other languages and praising God. Peter asked,

3 - “These people have received the Holy Spirit just as we have. Surely no one can stop them from being baptized with water, can they?”

N - He directed that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited Peter to stay for several days.

Scripture text © 2011 by *Common English Bible*

## Responsive affirmation of faith

Turn to #716 in your hymnal and add your voice to our responsive affirmation of faith. Those on the left or piano side of the sanctuary - your left - please read the words in plain print. Those on the right or organ side of the sanctuary - your right - please read the words in **bold print**.

No one can lay any foundation

other than the one already laid,  
which is Jesus Christ.

**In Christ the whole building is joined together  
and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.**

**And in Christ we too are being built together  
to become a dwelling  
in which God lives by the Spirit.**

As we come to Christ, the living Stone -  
rejected by builders but chosen by God -  
we also, like living stones,  
are being built into a spiritual house  
to be a holy priesthood,  
offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God  
through Jesus Christ.

**So then we are no longer foreigners and aliens,  
but citizens with God's people  
and members of God's household,  
built on the foundation  
of the apostles and prophets,  
with Christ Jesus as the chief cornerstone.**

Hymnal #716, ©1992 The Hymnal Project,  
based on 1 Corinthians 3:1-11, 1 Peter 2:4-5,  
and Ephesians 2:19-22, *New Revised Standard Version*

## Returning our Tithes and Offerings

As members of God's household, let's respond to the needs we have identified as a congregation with our tithes and offerings.

Ushers?

# Remembering what Jesus said

John 13:31-35

According to the gospel of John, Jesus said the following on the night he was betrayed. He had just washed the feet of his disciples, and Judas left to do the unthinkable. Still, let's remember what Jesus then said. Listen...

<sup>31</sup> When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. <sup>32</sup> If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

<sup>33</sup> "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

<sup>34</sup> "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Holy Bible, *New International Version*®  
NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011  
by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission.  
All rights reserved worldwide.

## Pastoral Prayer

(prayed in the moment, words not written down ahead of time)

# God's promise for all – part two

Acts 11:1-18

We return to the second part of our good news story. God is on the move. A massive shift has just taken place. Call it a spiritual earthquake. The promise of God is being extended beyond old boundaries. The wall between Jews and Gentiles, which was there to protect God's chosen people, is coming down. Do you understand why some would be afraid of this change back then? We feel it today as things change around us. Where - after all - is God in all this upheaval? That's the question behind this next scripture scene. Peter must make sense of what happened in Caesaria when he returns to Jerusalem. The Easter people there need to know. What is God doing?... Listen...

(N - Narrator, 1 - Angel/Voice, 2 - Jerusalem church folks, 3 - Peter)

## Scene 7

N - The apostles and the brothers and sisters throughout Judea heard that even the Gentiles had welcomed God's word. When Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him. They accused him,

2 - "You went into the home of the uncircumcised and ate with them!"

N - Step-by-step, Peter explained what had happened.

3 - “I was in the city of Joppa praying when I had a visionary experience. In my vision, I saw something like a large linen sheet being lowered from heaven by its four corners. It came all the way down to me. As I stared at it, wondering what it was, I saw four-legged animals—including wild beasts—as well as reptiles and wild birds. I heard a voice say,

1 - ‘Get up, Peter! Kill and eat!’

3 - I responded,

3 - ‘Absolutely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’

3 - The voice from heaven spoke a second time,

1 - ‘Never consider unclean what God has made pure.’

3 - This happened three times, then everything was pulled back into heaven. At that moment three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea arrived at the house where we were staying. The Spirit told me to go with them even though they were Gentiles. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered that man’s house. He reported to us how he had seen an angel standing in his house and saying,

1 - ‘Send to Joppa and summon Simon, who is known as Peter. He will tell you how you and your entire household can be saved.’

3 - When I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as the Spirit fell on us in the beginning. I remembered the Lord’s words:

1 - ‘John will baptize with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’

3 - If God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, then who am I? Could I stand in God’s way?”

N - Once the apostles and other believers heard this, they calmed down. They praised God and concluded,

2 - “So then God has enabled Gentiles to change their hearts and lives so that they might have new life.”



# End thoughts as Blessing for our Journey

Revelation 21:1-6

At the end of the Bible we find these thoughts from John which reveal / unveil / disclose / open for us a blessing for the journey that lies ahead of us. Listen and be blessed.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

<sup>4</sup> he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away.”

<sup>5</sup> And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” <sup>6</sup> Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.