

Sermon followed by Service

May 22, 2022

John 16:16-24 and Rev 22:12

100 - 99 - 98. 10 - 9 - 8. I've heard the countdown. Back in April, 100 days of school until summer break. Now just four, or five if you count the picnic. Just four or five days until what? May 27, the last day of school; May 28, the first day of summer break. And then what? "No more having to get up early. No more having to pay attention. No more homework." Or so we like to think.

I hear the countdown. "How much longer, Lord? How much longer with this pain, with this hurt? How much longer putting up with the chaos of life in this world? How much longer, Lord, till you get me out of here and take me home?" For that graduation we don't have a date on the calendar. God does, but we don't. And then what? More on that later.

For now, we count down. We count down with eager expectation. But our countdown isn't all glad, is it? We count down with apprehension - "What's it going to be like?" We count down with sadness - "What about my friends? When will I get to see them again?"

In our Gospel lesson from John, the disciples share some of that same graduation apprehension and sadness. We hear them wondering: "What's next? When?" We hear their sadness: "You're going, and we can't come along? When will we be together again?" And it wasn't just the disciples, was it? That night in the Garden of Gethsemane, we hear Jesus and his graduation apprehension: "Father, is there some other way around this?" But Jesus doesn't pull back,

does he? Instead, he steps forward, he graduates with God: “Father, not my will, but thy will be done. Let’s get this done!”

How could Jesus be so confident, for himself, for his disciples? Jesus knew what was coming. Jesus knew he had some hard days coming - he would be arrested, crucified, killed. And his disciples had some hard days coming. But Jesus knew that he had more than hard days ahead of him; he knew his disciples had more than hard days ahead of them. He knew that we have more than hard days ahead of us. Jesus knew Easter was coming. With Easter, he would be alive and well with the Father in heaven. With the cross and with Easter, his disciples would be set right with God. With the cross and with Easter, we are set right with God - we have Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with us and for us!

Jesus knew that as he counted down to graduation, as he counted down to the cross, as he counted down to whatever was next, Jesus knew he didn’t need to be on edge, worried, or afraid. Jesus knew he was going with God, doing what God gave him to do, going where God gave him to go. Jesus knew that even though he had the hard day of the cross ahead of him, Jesus knew he had Easter and Ascension Day and even Judgment Day ahead of him and all would be made right.

We get to count down the same way, with God and with Jesus. I’ll say it - not every one wants to count down with God and with Jesus. There is a whole world full of people who choose to live without God; they live and they count their days without God and without Jesus. You heard Jesus himself say it - **“Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.”** In other words, there are some people who want to live

the life, and sin the sins of the world - they count down without God and without Jesus. There are some people who would rather be true to themselves than true to God and to Jesus - they count down without God and without Jesus. That's not you, is it? You know ... and even if you don't know or aren't sure, let me tell you - Jesus went to the cross for you. He went to the cross with every wrong you've ever thought, said, or done - against him or against anybody else. In other words, he went to the cross with everything that God has against you. And with a shout: "It is finished" he finished safe in the Father's hands. Today, with Easter, your Jesus is alive and well with the Father, promising you: "We forgive you. We love you. We've got you." No matter what you've done in the past. No matter what hard days are ahead of you. "We love you. We forgive you. We've got you. We've got heaven for you!"

With those promises, we can count down to and through the good days, to and through the bad days. We can count down all the way, knowing this - we have a better day coming. We have our best graduation day coming. Not just a diploma and some cake, but life with God in heaven.

That's what we live to share here at St. John. There are all sorts of schools that can teach abc, 123; all sorts of schools that can teach how to count backwards - 10,9,8. There are all sorts of schools that offer diplomas and even cake. We get to teach something better. We get to offer something better. With Jesus, we can count down through the worst of days, with Jesus we can count down through the best of days in this world, with Jesus, we can count down and know that we have a better day, the best day coming - with Jesus in heaven. Amen.

May 21 & 22, 2022

NEW MORNING PRAISE

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we are in the Graduation Season, a season of unrealistic fantasy hopes, dreams, and promises.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we celebrate graduation at St. John and look ahead to our Best Graduation Ever!

HYMN

"On Eagle's Wings"
Hymn 821

You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord,
who abide in his shadow for life,
say to the Lord: "My refuge,
my rock in whom I trust!" *Refrain*

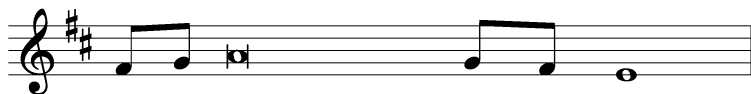
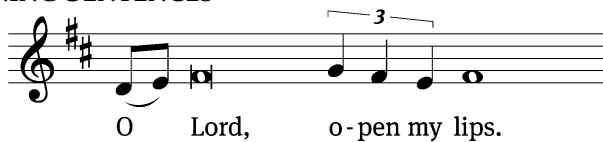
And he will raise you up on eagle's wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of his hand.

The snare of the fowler will never capture you,
and famine will bring you no fear;
under his wings your refuge,
his faithfulness your shield. *Refrain*

For to his angels he's given a command
to guard you in all of your ways;
upon their hands they will bear you up,
lest you dash your foot against a stone. *Final Refrain*

And he will raise you up on eagle's wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of his hand.
And hold you, hold you in the palm of his hand.

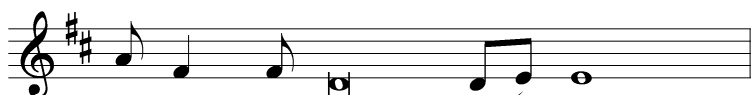
OPENING SENTENCES



And my mouth shall de - clare your praise.



Hasten to save me, O God.



O Lord, come quickly to help me.

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION OF SINS

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: **Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: **Amen.**

Give glory to God, our light and our life.

Come, O come, let us wor - ship.

COME, O COME, LET US SING TO THE LORD

Come, O come, let us sing to the Lord,

let us shout with joy to our sav - ing Rock;

come, en - ter in with our songs of praise,

come, en - ter in with thanks - giv - ing.

1 You are a great and a won - drous God,
2 Come, let us wor - ship and, bow - ing low,

cup - ping in your hands all the depths of earth.
kneel be - fore the One who has made us all.

You made the hills and the mountains high,
 You are the God whom we call our own,
 you made the seas and the dry land.
 we are the flock that you shepherd.

Refrain

SCHOOL SONG

“Jesus Loves Me”
 Hymn 584

*Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so.
 Little ones to him belong; they are weak, but he is strong. Refrain*

*Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
 Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.*

*Jesus loves me! He who died heaven’s gates to open wide.
 He will wash away my sin, let his little child come in. Refrain*

A MEDLEY OF SCHOOL THEME VERSES

- M: I am strong for all things
 C: **through Christ who strengthens me.** (Philippians 4:13 ~ 2014-2015)
- M: Be kind and compassionate to one another,
 C: **forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.**
 (Ephesians 4:32 ~ 2015-2016)
- M: Do not be anxious about anything,
 C: **but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,
 present your requests to God.** (Philippians 4:6 ~ 2016-2017)

M: I have told you these things,

C: **so that in me you may have peace.**

M: In this world you will have trouble.

C: **But take heart! I have overcome the world.** (John 16:33 ~ 2017-2018)

M: So do not fear, for I am with you;

C: **do not be dismayed, for I am your God.**

M: I will strengthen you and help you;

C: **I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.** (Isaiah 41:10 ~ 2018-2019)

M: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,

C: **and I will give you rest."** (Matthew 11:28 ~ 2019-2020)

M: "I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord,

C: **"plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future."** (Jeremiah 29:11~ 2020-2021)

M: Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.

C: **They will soar on wings like eagles;**

M: they will run and not grow weary,

C: **they will walk and not be faint.** (Isaiah 40:31~ 2021-2022)

HYMN

"In Christ Alone"

Hymn 510

Children sing v. 1-3

Congregation sing v. 4

In Christ alone my hope is found; he is my light, my strength, my song;

this cornerstone, this solid ground,

firm through the fiercest drought and storm.

What heights of love, what depths of peace,

when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!

My comforter, my all in all; here in the love of Christ I stand.

*In Christ alone, who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe;
this gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones he came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied;
for ev'ry sin on him was laid; here in the death of Christ I live.*

*There in the ground his body lay, light of the world by darkness slain;
then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave he rose again!
And as he stands in victory, sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
for I am his and he is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ.*

No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the pow'r of Christ in me;
from life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man can ever pluck me from his hand;
till he returns or calls me home, here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.

FIRST READING

Revelation 22:12–17, 20

“Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

“Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”

The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.”

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN

“Lord, When Your Glory I Shall See”

Hymn 884

Lord, when your glory I shall see and taste your kingdom’s pleasure,
your blood my royal robe shall be, my joy beyond all measure!
When I appear before your throne, your righteousness shall be my crown;
with these I need not hide me. And there, in garments richly wrought,
as your own bride I shall be brought, to stand in joy beside you.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

John 16:16–24

Jesus went on to say, “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.”

At this, some of his disciples said to one another, “What does he mean by saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,’ and ‘Because I am going to the Father?’” They kept asking, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.”

Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’? Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. In that day you will no longer ask me anything.

Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

HYMN

"Abide with Me"

Hymn 783

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
change and decay in all around I see;
O thou who changest not, abide with me.

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings,
but kind and good, with healing in thy wings,
tears for all woes, a heart for ev'ry plea;
come, Friend of sinners, thus abide with me.

Thou on my head in early youth didst smile,
and though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,
thou hast not left me oft as I left thee;
on to the close, O Lord, abide with me.

I need thy presence ev'ry passing hour;
what but thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me!

I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;
ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

SERMON

"The Best Graduation"

HYMN

"Speak O Lord"

Hymn 633

Speak, O Lord, as we come to you to receive the food of your holy Word;
take your truth, plant it deep in us, shape and fashion us in your likeness,
that the light of Christ might be seen today
in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us all your purposes for your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience, holy reverence, true humility;
test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of your purity.
Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see
your majestic love and authority.
Words of pow'r that can never fail, let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds,
help us grasp the heights of your plans for us,
truths unchanged from the dawn of time,
that will echo down through eternity.
And by grace we'll stand on your promises,
and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, till your Church is built,
and the earth is filled with your glory.

GRADUATION

Elizabeth Christy
Anna Haakenson
Erin Metz
Andrea Phua
Evan Weiss

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

M: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

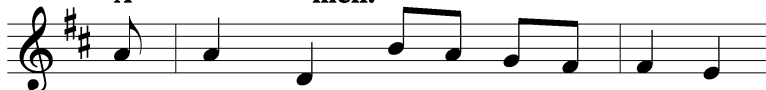
BLESSING



The Lord bless and keep you.



A - men.



The Lord's face ev - er shine up - on you.



A - men.



The Lord grant you peace for all your days.



A - men.

CLOSING HYMN

"Go, My Children, with My Blessing"

Hymn 930

Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you; you are my own.
In my love's baptismal river I have made you mine forever.
Go, my children, with my blessing, you are my own.

Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.
Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.
Here you heard my dear Son's story; here you touched him, saw his glory.
Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.

Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me;
grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.
Here my Spirit's power filled you; here his tender comfort stilled you.
Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.

I the Lord will bless and keep you and give you peace;
I the Lord will smile upon you and give you peace;
I the Lord will be your Father, Savior, Comforter, and Brother.
Go, my children; I will keep you and give you peace.

OFFERING

If you prefer online giving, you may scan this code with your mobile device.



(You heard our school children sing today. Tuition Grant Fund envelopes are available in the pew rack to support affordable tuition for our school.)

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