

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.²⁴ “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.²⁵ “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me.²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

We have offered many prayers since November of 2019 when our Pastor Bartelt accepted a call to Lake Geneva, WI. Prayers were offered as we were led by our district president or our circuit pastor as we met for ten meetings calling ten men to serve as our pastor. God’s answer to those prayers was in each case, “Not yet.” It was like Samuel asking to meet the sons of Jesse to see which one would be king of Israel. There was still one more son who had not met the prophet. David came in from shepherding sheep and learned that he was the man God had chosen to be king of Israel. Until Samuel met David his answer was, “Not yet.” On May 25, 2022 we first learned of the man God had chosen to be pastor of Christ the Vine Lutheran Church. Pastor Anthony Pflughoeft accepted the assigned call to serve as our pastor. For that we thank God. All those prayers answered with, “Not yet,” became this is the man the Lord has chosen. Of course we are not done praying for Pastor Pflughoeft and his family and for Christ the Vine, but today want to listen to another prayer as some 2000 years ago **JESUS PRAYED FOR PASTOR ANTHONY PFLUGHOEFT**. Jesus prayed for **his work** and **his goal**.

1. John 17 like chapters 13 to 17 is a record of what happened on Maundy Thursday before Jesus went with his disciples to Gethsemane, to the high priest’s palace, to Pontius Pilate, to the cross, to death, and to the grave. This entire chapter is called Jesus’ high priestly prayer. It was the work of the Old Testament high priest to offer prayers on behalf of the people he served as he served God. As our Prophet, our High Priest, and our King Jesus was doing part of his high priestly work as he prayed for himself, his disciples, and all believes. Usually we can only think in general terms about the disciples then and his apostles then and now. Today we can listen to Jesus praying much more specifically as we listen to his words as they apply to our new pastor.

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. A pastor is a shepherd, the sheep are the people he serves, God’s sheep. He serves the people who called him, but he is also a servant of God, one of the

sheep whom Jesus has saved from sin and death, forgiven and called to lead other sheep to Jesus. That is **the work**. As Pastor Pflughoeft was led by God to enter the holy ministry, and as he was trained for that work it all pointed to learning more about how to lead people to Jesus and to faith in Jesus along with him. Then God's call was extended by God's people here to serve God's people at Christ the Vine. The careful process led by the Holy Spirit led people who knew the gifts and talents of Pastor Pflughoeft and the needs of Christ the Vine Lutheran Church to put the two together.

God's plan and purpose is to bring people together to be united with one another, but even more, to be united together with God as one Holy Christian Church, one Communion of Saints, a gathering of believers in Christ, saints, a royal priesthood that we have now and will have all the way into eternity. That's the work. Pastor Pflughoeft has been trained to do it with the study of God's holy Word. That is the tool, God's gospel, his Good News about God's love. God the Holy Spirit works through that gospel, that Good News in his Word and in and with his two sacraments to create saving faith and keep it alive in his believers as long as they live. Pastor Pflughoeft like all of us is Jesus' witness, his ambassador to bring people the gospel and you have given him the additional responsibility and privilege to do that for you, but more importantly, with you as he equips you for acts of love to others in service to God. That is what Jesus prayed for on that Maundy Thursday. **JESUS WAS PRAYING FOR PASTOR PFLUGHOEFT, his work and his goal.**

2. “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”²⁵ “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me.”²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.” Jesus wants you with him in heaven. The only way that can happen is if God is working through his Word and his Sacraments to create saving faith in human hearts. People need to be equipped to answer who God should let them into his heaven. The answer will always begin with because Jesus. Because Jesus lived for me, died for me, paid for my sins with his life, and rose from the dead giving his people the assurance that as he lives we also will live.

Jesus also tells us why Jesus wants us with him in heaven. We look forward to living with God forever with a sinless body free of all the consequences of sin that we suffer now, free to serve God in perfect joy and eternal peace. St. Paul says that now we are looking at God and what he has done for us through a tarnished, cloudy mirror. In heaven we will be able to understand perfectly what the answers to all our questions are and clearly understand all that God has done for us in his love. We will be able to love God the way we want to now, but can't always do it because sin is always there to ruin our efforts and lead us in wrong directions. Jesus wants us with him and God has blessed the man the you have called to lead you there. You see, **JESUS WAS PRAYING FOR PASTOR PFLUGHOEFT** on that Maundy Thursday and I hope you noticed that as he prayed for him he was also praying for you.