

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 28, 2024

For the Gathered

This Sunday's image of how the risen Christ shares his life with us is the image of the vine. Christ the vine and we the branches are alive in each other, in the mystery of mutual abiding described in the gospel and the first letter of John. Baptism makes us a part of Christ's living and life-giving self and makes us alive with Christ's life. As the vine brings food to the branches, Christ feeds us at his table. We are sent out to bear fruit for the life of the world.

Greeting – ELW 147

(Pastor) - The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

(All) - And also with you.

(All those who are able may stand.)

Gathering Song – Beneath the Cross of Jesus – ELW 338

Beneath the cross of Jesus
I long to take my stand;
the shadow of a mighty rock
within a weary land,
a home within a wilderness,
a rest upon the way,
from the burning of the noontide heat
and burdens of the day.

Upon the cross of Jesus,
my eye at times can see
the very dying form of one
who suffered there for me.
And from my contrite heart, with tears,
two wonders I confess:
the wonder of his glorious love
and my unworthiness.

I take, O cross, your shadow
for my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than
the sunshine of his face;
content to let the world go by,
to know no gain nor loss,
my sinful self my only shame,
my glory all, the cross.

Text: Elizabeth C. Clephane, 1830-1869

Confession and Forgiveness – ELW 95

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Gracious God,

have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

Amen.

Kyrie – ELW 147

(Liturgist) In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above,
and for our salvation,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world,
for the well-being of the Church of God,
and for the unity of all,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house,
and for all who offer here their worship and praise,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

Canticle of Praise – ELW 149

(Liturgist)

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia.

**(SING) Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,
whose blood set us free to be people of God.**

**Power and riches and wisdom and strength,
and honor and blessing and glory are his.**

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia.

**Sing with all the people of God
and join in the hymn of all creation:
Blessing and honor and glory and might
be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God,
for the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign.**

Alleluia. Alleluia.

(Assembly may be seated.)

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

O God, you give us your Son as the vine apart from whom we cannot live.
Nourish our life in his resurrection, that we may bear the fruit of love and
know the fullness of your joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and
forever.

Amen.

First Reading – Acts 8: 26-40

Led by the Spirit, Philip encounters an Ethiopian official who is returning to his African home after having been to Jerusalem to worship. Philip uses their encounter to proclaim the gospel to him. Upon coming to faith in Jesus, he is baptized by Philip.

²⁶An angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.)

²⁷So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." ³⁰So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³²Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

³³In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth."

³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" ³⁸He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

⁴⁰But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 22: 25-31

²⁵From you comes my praise in the | great assembly;

I will perform my vows in the sight of those who | fear the LORD.

²⁶The poor shall eat | and be satisfied,

Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts | live forever!

²⁷All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn | to the LORD;

all the families of nations shall bow | before God.

²⁸For dominion belongs | to the LORD,

who rules o- | ver the nations.

²⁹Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow | down in worship;

all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel be- | fore the LORD.

³⁰Their descendants shall | serve the LORD,

whom they shall proclaim to genera- | tions to come.

³¹They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people | yet unborn,

saying to them, "The | LORD has acted!"

Epistle Reading – 1 John 4: 7-21

We love God and others because God first loved us. We cannot say we love God, whom we have not seen, while hating fellow Christians, whom we regularly see. Love toward God is to be matched by love toward others because the essence of God is love.

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. ¹⁷Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. ²¹The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Message for the Young at Heart

Special Music

Gospel Announcement – John 15: 1-8

(All those who are able may stand.)

Acclamation – ELW 151

(ALL SING) - - Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.

[Jesus said:] ¹"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

(Assembly may be seated.)

Message

(All who are able may stand)

Hymn of the Day – Shepherd of Love

Shepherd of Love, You knew I had lost my way;
Shepherd of Love, You cared that I'd lost my way;
You sought and found me, placed around me
Strong arms that carried me home;
No foe can harm me or alarm me Never again will I roam!
Shepherd of Love, Savior and Lord and Guide,
Shepherd of Love, Forever I'll stay by Your side.
You sought and found me, placed around me
Strong arms that carried me home;
No foe can harm me or alarm me Never again will I roam!
Shepherd of Love, Savior and Lord and Guide,
Shepherd of Love, Forever I'll stay by Your side.

Nicene Creed – ELW 104

(ALL)

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

(Assembly may be seated.)

Prayers of Intercession

Response

(Liturgist) – God of grace,
(All) – Hear our prayer.

Offering

Offertory - We Are An Offering – W&P 146

We lift our voices, we lift our hands,
we lift our lives up to you: we are an offering.
Lord, use our voices, Lord, use our hands,
Lord, use our lives, they are yours: we are an offering.
We are an offering.

Prayer

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, O God, ruler of heaven and earth. Day by day you shower us with blessings. As you have raised us to new life in Christ, give us glad and generous hearts, ready to praise you and to respond to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Great Thanksgiving – ELW 152

(PASTOR) - The Lord be with you.

(ALL) - And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Pastor's Preface

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ,
the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin;
who in dying has destroyed death, and in rising has brought us to eternal
life. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the
resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures,
and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Our Response – ELW 153

(ALL SING) - Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Lord's Prayer – ELW 154

(ALL) - 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.**

Words of Institution

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Confession Song – Lamb of God – ELW 154

(ALL SING) –

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.
Have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.
Have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.
Grant us peace. Grant us peace.**

Distribution

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray.
Life-giving God, in the mystery of Christ's resurrection you send light to
conquer darkness, water to give new life, and the bread of life to nourish
your people. Send us forth as witnesses to your Son's resurrection, that we
may show your glory to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.
Amen.

Blessing

The God of steadfastness and encouragement
grant you to live in harmony with one another,
in accordance with Christ Jesus.

Amen.

(All who are able may stand.)

Sending Song – Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart – ELW 873 (vs. 1, 2, 3 & 6)

Rejoice, ye pure in heart!
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing;
your festal banner wave on high,
the cross of Christ your king.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice!
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

With voice as full and strong
as ocean's surging praise,
send forth the sturdy hymns of old,
the psalms of ancient days. *Refrain*

With all the angel choirs,
with all the saints on earth
pour out the strains of joy and bliss,
true rapture, noblest mirth. *Refrain*

Praise God who reigns on high,
the Lord whom we adore:
the Father, Son, and Spirit blest,
one God forevermore. *Refrain*

Text: Edward H. Plumptre, 1821-1891, alt.

(Assembly may be seated.)

Announcements

Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the good news.
(ALL) - Thanks be to God.

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