



**Christ
Lutheran**
CHURCH

2610 Campbell Street • Valparaiso,
Indiana 46385 • (219) 462-6660
clcvalpo.org • office@clcvalpo.org



Season of Easter
May 21, 2023

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

At Christ Lutheran people of all backgrounds and experiences gather to worship because we all share a common hope: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ makes all things new, even us.

You will find everything that happens in worship printed in this bulletin. If you have a prayer request, the yellow cards in the seatback holders have a place for them; the other side is for any information you would like about Christ Lutheran. Please feel welcome to remain seated as necessary during the service.

CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN CHURCH!

God's people come in all shapes and sizes – it is a gift to the whole community when the smallest of us are present! Sitting with parents and learning to treasure times of worship is the foundation for helping build a growing faith in a child's life. There's some noise and movement that we expect from little ones - feel free to make use of the **activity bags, doodle pads, bookshelf in the overflow area and cry room at the back of the sanctuary** as needed. Whatever sacrifice of energy and effort you make to include your children in worship is multiplied as the good news of God's love takes root in their lives!

WHEN NURSERY CARE IS NEEDED DURING WORSHIP

A fully equipped and staffed Nursery is available for both infants and toddlers during all services. The Nursery is located west of our gathering area in **Room 110**.

RESTROOMS

Men's and women's restrooms off the Gathering Area and Church Hall have changing tables, as does the all-gender restroom near the nursery. A second all-gender restroom is through the Vestry off the East hallway, past the Welcome Center.

HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.

In-person distribution: When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. **WINE** is lighter-colored, and **GRAPE JUICE** is dark; they are received via individual cups in the trays. The **COMMON CUP** is available for anyone who wishes. **USED GLASSES** are placed in the basket located near the ramp. **GLUTEN-FREE BREAD IS AVAILABLE**, please indicate to the server that you require this. Also, if you unable to come up to the altar, let the usher know so that pastor can bring communion to you.

COVID Procedure Update

Masks are encouraged but optional during worship. Naturally if you prefer to stay masked throughout the service, you are of course welcome to do so. Masks are not required for singing but suggested.

Our services are on video, and occasional photographs are taken for our website and e-mail news. If you have concerns, please speak to a church staff member.

Hearing assistance devices are available to those who need help with listening to the service and are located at the entrance to the sanctuary, or please see an Usher for assistance.

A Reminder: Please turn off all cell phones during worship services.

In these days between Ascension and Pentecost, we gather with the disciples in the upper room, waiting for the Spirit to transform the church around the world. In today's gospel Jesus prays for his followers and for their mission in his name. Amid religious, social, and economic divisions, we seek the unity that Jesus had with his Father. Made one in baptism, we go forth to live our faith in the world, eager for the unity that God intends for the whole human family.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

Grateful Hymns of Praise

Larson

WELCOME

If you are joining us for the first time, welcome! We'd love to meet you, or if there's anything you'd like to know about the ministry of Christ Lutheran Church, please consider [filling out a Connection Card online](#) (you can point your phone at the graphic to the right) or using a yellow Connection Card in the pew holders.



***Prayer requests** can be posted to the livechat or use a yellow Prayer Request (backside of the Connection Card) and give them to an usher.*

*If you are worshipping with us via livestream, consider **preparing your space for Communion**: light a candle (if appropriate and safe), and have a plate with bread/cracker/tortilla and a cup for wine or grape juice (or an empty cup as a sign Jesus is sufficient in one or both elements).*

GATHERING HYMN ELW #393 *A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing!*



1 A hymn of glo - ry let us sing! New hymns through-out the world shall
 2 The ho - ly ap - os - tol - ic band up - on the Mount of Ol - ives
 3 To whom the shin - ing an - gels cry, "Why stand and gaze up - on the
 4 "You see him now, as-cend-ing high up to the por-tals of the
 5 O ris - en Christ, as-cend-ed Lord, all praise to you let earth ac -



ring: Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Christ, by a road be - fore un -
 stand, Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! and with his faith - ful fol - l'wers
 sky?" Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! "This is the Sav - ior!" thus they
 sky?" Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! "Here - af - ter Je - sus you shall
 cord: Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia! You are, while end-less ag - es



trod, as - cends un - to the throne of God.
 see their Lord as - cend in maj - es - ty.
 say, "this is his glo - rious tri - umph day!" Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le -
 see re - turn - ing in great maj - es - ty."
 run, with Fa - ther and with Spir - it one.



lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia!

Text: Bede, 673–735; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
 Music: LASST UNS ERFREUEN, *Geistliche Kirchengesänge*, Köln, 1623
 Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
 and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

Children: This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Threefold One,
relationship in unity,
love given and received
through all the ages long:
give us that unity
which is not enclosed
but alive and accepting
with the open heart of love;
through Jesus Christ, the glory of God.
Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

When children read, they may read a version that is appropriate to their reading level and voice, which may vary from the printed texts.

BLESSING OF GRADUATES AND RETIREES

The assembly is seated.

CHILDREN'S TIME

Children are invited forward for a time together.

HANDBELL ANTHEM:

The Lord's My Shepherd

Behnke

READING: Acts 1:1-14

Today's reading is part of the introduction to the narrative of the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost. These verses tell of the risen Lord's conversation with his disciples on the eve of his ascension, in which he promises that they will receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

¹In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning ²until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He replied, "It is not for you to know the times

⁵In your holy habita- | tion, O God,
you are a father to orphans, defend- | er of widows;
⁶**you give the solitary a home and bring forth prisoners | into freedom;
but the rebels shall live in | desert places.**
⁷O God, when you went forth be- | fore your people,
when you marched | through the wilderness,
⁸**the earth quaked, and the skies poured down rain,
at the presence of God, the | God of Sinai,
at the presence of God, the | God of Israel.**
⁹You sent a bountiful | rain, O God;
you restored your inheritance | when it languished.
¹⁰**Your people found their | home in it;
in your goodness, O God, you have made provision | for the poor. R**
³²Sing to God, O kingdoms | of the earth;
sing praises | to the Lord.
³³**You ride in the heavens, O God, in the | ancient heavens;
you send forth your voice, your | mighty voice.**
³⁴Ascribe pow- | er to God,
whose majesty is over Israel; whose strength is | in the skies.
³⁵**How wonderful you are in your holy places, O | God of Israel,
giving strength and power to your people! | Blessed be God! R**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the Gospel.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

HOLY GOSPEL: John 17:1-11

On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus prays to his heavenly Father, asking that those who continue his work in this world will live in unity.

The Holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹After Jesus had spoken these words [to his disciples], he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you,² since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.³ And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.⁴ I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do.⁵ So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

⁶“I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me is from you;⁸ for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.⁹ I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours.¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.¹¹ And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

The Gospel of the Lord.

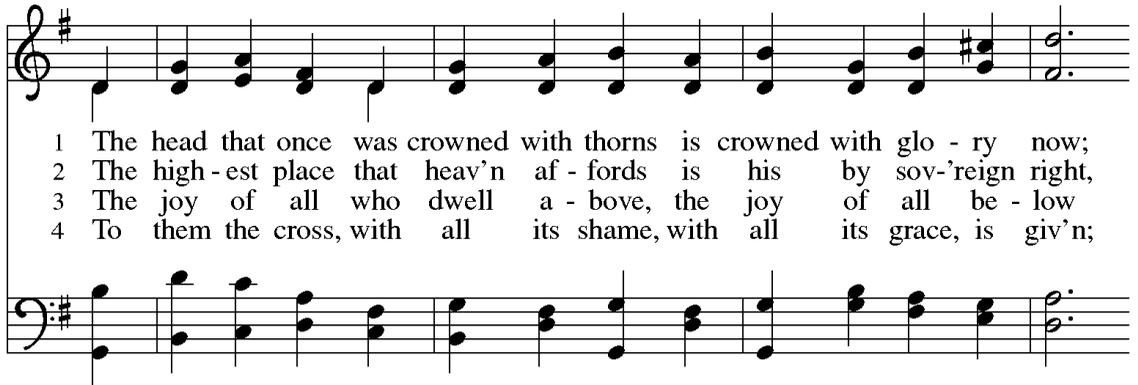
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

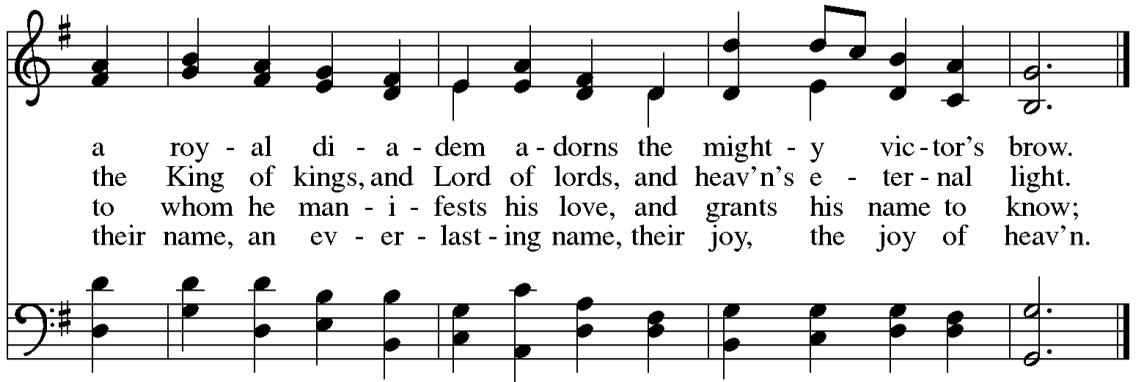
The assembly is seated. Time for reflection follows the sermon.

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW #432 *The Head That Once Was Crowned*

The assembly stands to proclaim the Word of God in song.



1 The head that once was crowned with thorns is crowned with glo - ry now;
2 The high - est place that heav'n af - fords is his by sov'-reign right,
3 The joy of all who dwell a - bove, the joy of all be - low
4 To them the cross, with all its shame, with all its grace, is giv'n;



a roy - al di - a - dem a - dorns the might - y vic - tor's brow.
the King of kings, and Lord of lords, and heav'n's e - ter - nal light.
to whom he man - i - fests his love, and grants his name to know;
their name, an ev - er - last - ing name, their joy, the joy of heav'n.

APOSTLES' CREED

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

**Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.*

PRAYERS

United in the hope and joy of the resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

God of harmony, as you drew your son to your side, you draw us to you and unite us with the planet and one another. Weave your church together in a web of mutual love for the sake of the world. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

As your Spirit hovered over the waters of creation, so your Spirit hovers over all that you have made. Bless the water that sustains the planet and grant wisdom to use it wisely. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You empower your people with the fire of your Spirit. Challenge activists and organizers, teachers and politicians, and all in leadership to speak a message of peace and justice. Equip people, churches, and leaders in the Indian Ocean Islands: Comoros, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, and Seychelles, that they might together tend to your creation and all people. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You care for all your children. Show your steadfast love to those suffering isolation, especially exiles, refugees, or prisoners. Break the chains of all held fast by systemic oppression of any kind. Comfort all who are afraid or suffering from illness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give thanks that humankind serves as your body in the world, stewarding your abundant gifts. Guide this congregation's leaders as they seek your will. We pray for our church staff and our council: Ellen, Kurt, Scott, Sara, Christine, Kathy, Jacqueline, Dana, Kris, Lisa, Crystal, Rachel, Scott, and Lois. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You raise your saints to new life in Christ. We give you thanks for Helena, Nicolaus Copernicus, Leonhard Euler, John Calvin, and all your saints who have given us glimpses of your redeeming love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Rejoicing in the victory of Christ's resurrection, we lift our prayers and praise to you, almighty and eternal God; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*We invite those worshipping by livestream to share a sign of peace in the chat, and for those in person we turn to offer them our greeting of peace before sharing a sign of peace with one another: **Peace be with you!***

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

OFFERING

*The assembly is seated. This congregation serves our neighbors, community, and the world through the participation and support of its members and guests. Because offerings are never just about us, this month we are sharing a portion of your gifts with **Summer 2023 Mission Trip to Costa Rica.***

If you wish to give electronically, browse to our secure on-line portal at clcvalpo.org/give or use [our CLC app](#) (download at clcvalpo.org/app).

OFFERTORY (8:00 am):

*Pastorale on 'St. Anne'
(O God, Our Help in Ages Past)*

Manz

OFFERTORY ANTHEM (10:30 am):*Look at the World*

Rutter

Look at the world, everything all around us. Look at the world and marvel every day. Look at the world: so many joys and wonders, so many miracles along our way. Praise to thee, O Lord, for all creation, Give us grateful hearts, that we may see: All the gifts we share and every blessing, all things come of thee. Look at the earth bringing forth fruit and flower; Look at the sky, the sunshine and the rain; Look at the hills, look at the trees and mountains, valley and flowing river, field and plain. Think of the spring, think of the warmth of summer bringing the harvest before the winter's cold. Everything grows, everything has a season, till it is gathered to the Father's fold. Every good gift, all that we need and cherish comes from the Lord in token of his love; We are his hands, stewards of all his bounty; His is the earth and his the heavens above.

OFFERING PRAYER

The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.

Generous God,

in this meal you offer your very self.

We give thanks for these gifts of the earth.

In the breaking of this bread

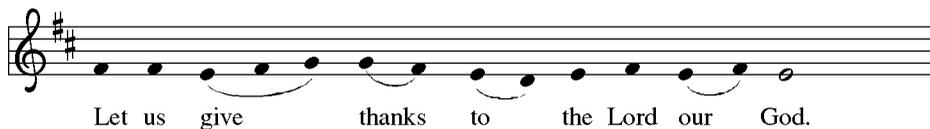
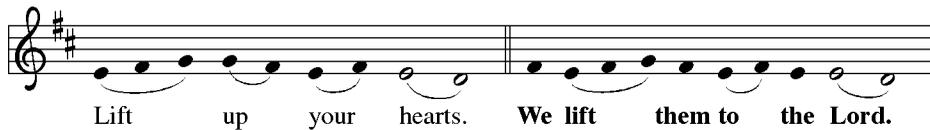
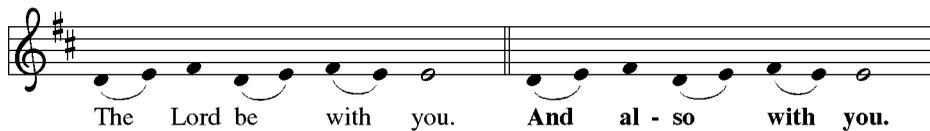
reveal to us the Risen One.

In the pouring of this wine

pour us out in service to the world;

through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The pastor begins the prayer and all join in singing:

SANCTUS

(An ancient practice invites us to make the sign of the cross in honor of Jesus at the words "Blessed is he.")

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of
pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

TABLE PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

Children: The Spirit makes us one. We pray as Jesus taught us:

**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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come and know Christ, broken and poured out for you.

Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION

The assembly is seated.

***Holy Communion** is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.*

*The pastor invites those worshipping via **livestream** to commune:*

The body of Christ, given for you.

Amen (receive the bread)

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen (receive the cup)

In-person distribution: When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. WINE is lighter-colored, and GRAPE JUICE is dark; they are received via individual cups in the trays. The COMMON CUP is available for anyone who wishes. USED GLASSES are placed in the basket located near the ramp. GLUTEN-FREE BREAD IS AVAILABLE, please indicate to the server that you require this. Also, if you unable to come up to the altar, let the usher know so that pastor can bring communion to you.

LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have



mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the



world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -



way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.





Christ, our peace, you break down the walls that di - vide us;

The first system of musical notation consists of a treble and bass staff in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is written in the treble staff, and the bass line is in the bass staff. The lyrics are placed below the treble staff.



Christ, our peace, come, make us one bod-y in you.

The second system of musical notation continues the melody and bass line from the first system. It concludes with a double bar line. The lyrics are placed below the treble staff.

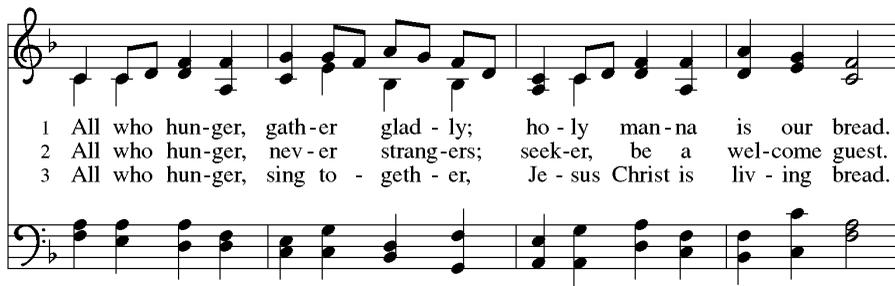
Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: CHRIST, OUR PEACE, Marty Haugen

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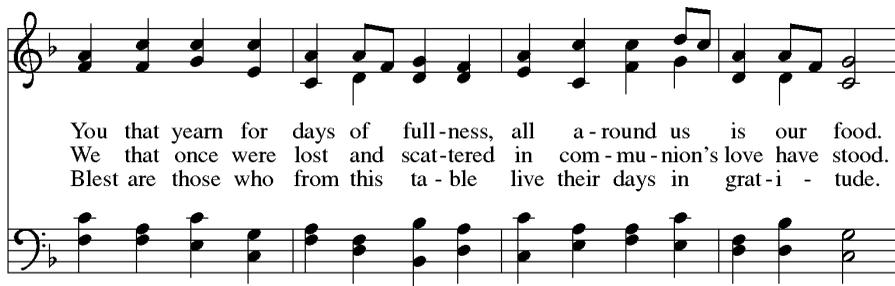
ELW #461 *All Who Hunger, Gather Gladly*



1 All who hun-ger, gath-er glad-ly; ho-ly man-na is our bread.
 2 All who hun-ger, nev-er strang-ers; seek-er, be a wel-come guest.
 3 All who hun-ger, sing to- geth-er, Je- sus Christ is liv- ing bread.



Come from wil-der-ness and wan-d'ring. Here in truth we will be fed.
 Come from rest-less-ness and roam-ing. Here in joy we keep the feast.
 Come from lone-li-ness and long-ing. Here in peace we have been fed.



You that yearn for days of full-ness, all a-round us is our food.
 We that once were lost and scat-tered in com-mu-nion's love have stood.
 Blest are those who from this ta-ble live their days in grat-i-tude.



Taste and see the grace e-ter-nal. Taste and see that God is good.
 Taste and see the grace e-ter-nal. Taste and see that God is good.
 Taste and see the grace e-ter-nal. Taste and see that God is good.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955–1993
 Music: HOLY MANNA, W. Moore, *Columbian Harmony*, 1825; arr. hymnal version
 Text © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358.
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 Arr. © 2003 Augsburg Fortress.

After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands as the minister continues.
The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Gracious God,
in you we live and move and have our being.
With your word and this meal of grace,
you have nourished our life together.
Strengthen us to show your love
and serve the world in Jesus' name.
Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

INVITATIONS

Brief invitations are shared, especially those related to the assembly's participation in God's mission in the world.

BLESSING

The God of all,
who raised † Jesus from the dead,
bless you by the power of the Holy Spirit
to live in the new creation.
Amen.

1 Re - joi - ce, ye pure in heart! Re - joi - ce, give thanks, and sing;
 2 With voice as full and strong as o - cean's surg - ing praise,
 3 With all the an - gel choirs, with all the saints on earth
 4 Still lift your stan - dard high, still march in firm ar - ray,

your fes - tal ban - ner wave on high, the cross of Christ your king.
 send forth the stur - dy hymns of old, the psalms of an - cient days.
 pour out the strains of joy and bliss, true rap - ture, no - blest mirth.
 as pil - grims through the dark - ness wend till dawns the gol - den day.

Refrain

Re - joi - ce! Re - joi - ce! Re - joi - ce, give thanks, and sing!
 Re - joi - ce! Re - joi - ce!

5 At last the march shall end;
 the wearied ones shall rest;
 the pilgrims find their home at last,
 Jerusalem the blest. *Refrain*

6 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.
 Music: MARION, Arthur H. Messiter, 1834–1916

Children join the pastors to send us in mission.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Risen One.

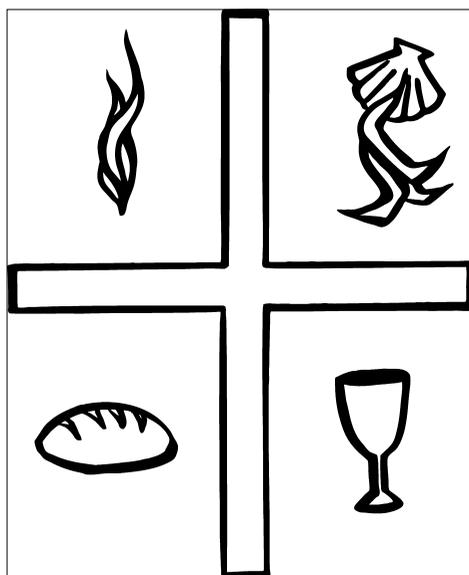
Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Fugue in C

Rheinberger

As worship concludes we move to the Gathering Place, where we are invited to greet one another and share in fellowship.



Worship Leaders

	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte	Shawn Longacre	Violet or Joan Furuness
Lector	Gail Lutze	Phil Hahn
Prayer Assistant	Linda Mapes	Tim Malchow
Communion Assistants	Linda Mapes Darla Hernandez	Phil Hahn Jacquie Chevalier
Ushers	Luke Venstrom Don MacMillan	Jonathan Bull Maya Bull
Sound/Light	Lance Nolting	Jeff Peiffer
Video/Livestream	_____	
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch	
Worship Participants	Celebration Ringers Handbell Ensemble Sanctuary Choir Nicole Lee, guest accompanist Luke Venstrom, cantor	
Communion Baker	Candace Jacques	

May Altar Gifts

Holy Communion	Sara & Jeremy Long ~ In celebration of our Moms JoAnn Murfey ~ In Memory of Lori Cross
Altar Candles	Ellen Swayne ~ In Memory of Gladys Swayne
Eternal Lamp Candles	Aria McIntire ~ In Honor of Mr. Bartusch for his music and for his patience with the Treble Makers

Stewardship Snippet

“When he had said this, as they were watching, Jesus was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven?’ ” –Acts 1:9-11

The men who watch Jesus ascend needed to be told to stop staring at heaven, to get busy in the world that needs Jesus’ gospel. Many today need to stop “staring at heaven” and focus on the work God has for us in the world, which still needs god’s love.



Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of **Indian Ocean Islands: Comoros, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles.**

We are **thankful** for:

- the spectacular scenery, exotic plants, rare animals and abundant sea life that flourish in the region
- how people who are ethnically and religiously diverse have long lived together
- the economic developments that have lifted some out of poverty
- the vital evangelism, social and public witness of churches, and how the churches relate to people of other faiths.

We **pray** for:

- the fragile environment and the unique plants, animals and lands, that they will be protected, especially as the sea rises
- tourism and other economic developments, that they will not threaten, but enhance life for all the people in these countries
- churches, that they will grow through evangelistic efforts and in their work with those of other faiths
- Christians to be bolder in their public witness for justice and reconciliation, especially in times of political turmoil.

COMMEMORATIONS

Week of May 21, 2023

May 21

Helena, mother of Constantine, died around 330

Influenced by her son to become Christian, Helena (or Helen) lived an exemplary life of faith. She is also remembered for traveling through Palestine building churches on the sites she believed to be associated with Christ's life.

May 24

Nicolaus Copernicus, died 1543; Leonhard Euler, died 1783; scientists

These two men were both scientists who helped to explain the wonders of God's universe. Copernicus is best known for promoting the idea that the sun, not the earth, is at the center of our solar system. Euler was one of the founders of pure mathematics, and contributed to many other fields.

May 27

John Calvin, renewer of the church, died 1564

Gifted both as a systematic theologian and as an interpreter of scriptures, Calvin embraced the Reformation, and as a preacher in Geneva, Switzerland, brought a theocratic government to it. He is regarded as the father of the Reformed churches.

God Doesn't Do Magic

It happens in the movies all the time: just as we are made to believe that all hope is lost and evil will triumph, suddenly the hero discovers a mystical phrase that will give him supernatural strength to defeat the enemy. Or the heroine finds a charmed sword that gives her the power to do the same. Believing in movie magic can be a welcome respite from the grind of everyday life. Knowing an enchanted word that keeps us impervious to harm sounds incredible—who wouldn't want that? Those moments may work in the movies, but they don't happen in real life.

Don't confuse Jesus' words in today's gospel with a magic spell or incantation. As Jesus prays for his disciples, he knows the suffering they will soon endure because they have come to believe in him. There is no way to avert what they will undergo; each one of his disciples is headed toward a certain and painful death, just as Jesus is. Jesus knows these things cannot be prevented, but that isn't the point of his prayer.

Being in the world means bad things will happen to us. Crosses aren't special charms that keep evil away, and wearing one won't keep you from harm. Tragedies take place, people get sick, bullies victimize, the innocent get blamed. There are no magic words to prevent hardships or disasters. When Jesus prays for the Father to protect those who belong to him, he isn't asking God to keep those bad things from happening. The name of God was never intended to create force fields around us keeping bad things out. God and the one who comes in God's name make us one together with them. In this unity, life always triumphs in the end.

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Portions from *Prayers for an Inclusive Church* by Steven Shakespeare.