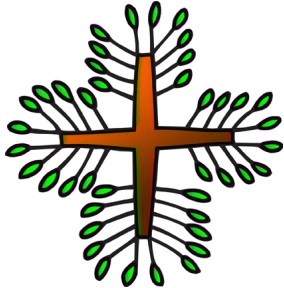


# St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church

Fifth Sunday of Easter + Saturday, April 27, 2024



## INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

*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.*

## WELCOME

### 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.**

The word is near you,

**on your lips and in your heart.**

If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord,

**and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead,**

**you will be saved.**

Faith comes from what is heard,

**and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.**

### SCRIPTURE SONG

**Salvation belongs to our God and to Christ the Lamb forever and ever.**

Great and wonderful are your deeds, O God of the universe;

just and true are your ways, O Ruler of all the nations.

Who can fail to honor you, Lord, and sing the glory of your name?

**Salvation belongs to our God and to Christ the Lamb forever and ever.**

For you alone are the Holy One.

All nations will draw near and worship before you,

for your just and holy works have been revealed.

**Salvation belongs to our God and to Christ the Lamb forever and ever.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

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 LESSON: 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.*

A reading from Acts.

<sup>26</sup>An 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.) <sup>27</sup>So 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 <sup>28</sup>and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. <sup>29</sup>Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." <sup>30</sup>So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" <sup>31</sup>He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. <sup>32</sup>Now 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.

<sup>33</sup>In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth."

<sup>34</sup>The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" <sup>35</sup>Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. <sup>36</sup>As 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?" <sup>38</sup>He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. <sup>39</sup>When 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. <sup>40</sup>But 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: Psalm 22:25-31**

<sup>25</sup>From you comes my praise in the great assembly;

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

<sup>26</sup>**The poor shall eat and be satisfied,**

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

<sup>27</sup>All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD;

all the families of nations shall bow before God.

<sup>28</sup>**For dominion belongs to the LORD,**

**who rules over the nations.**

<sup>29</sup>Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow down in worship;

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

<sup>30</sup>**Their descendants shall serve the LORD,**

**whom they shall proclaim to generations to come.**

<sup>31</sup>They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people yet unborn,

saying to them, "The LORD has acted!"

**SECOND LESSON: 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.*

A reading from 1 John.

<sup>7</sup>Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

<sup>9</sup>God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>In 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. <sup>11</sup>Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup>No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

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

<sup>17</sup>Love 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. <sup>18</sup>There 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. <sup>19</sup>We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup>Those 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. <sup>21</sup>The 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.**

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Alleluia! Lord, to whom shall we go?**

**You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia!**

### **GOSPEL: John 15:1-8**

*On the night of his arrest, Jesus taught his disciples about the relationship they would have with him. Those who abide in his word and love bear fruit, for apart from him, they can do nothing.*

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the fifteenth chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] <sup>1</sup>"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. <sup>2</sup>He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide 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. <sup>5</sup>I 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. <sup>6</sup>Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **SERMON**

#### **RESPONSE TO THE WORD: CREED AND CONFESSION**

In Christ, you have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

**We believe in him and are marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.**

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.**

**He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again 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**

Build yourselves up on your most holy faith;

**pray in the Holy Spirit.**

Keep yourselves in the love of God;

**look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:

**Everything old has passed away; behold, everything has become new!**

God has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

Therefore, let us be reconciled to God and to one another.

Gracious God,

**have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins,**

**known and unknown, things done and left undone.**

**Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life,**

**to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Amen**

Almighty God have mercy on you,

forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ,

strengthen you in all goodness,

and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

**Amen**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Rejoicing that Jesus is risen and love has triumphed over fear, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news.

We pray for the church around the world, for all ministers, and for the mission of the gospel. Keep all the newly baptized and confirmed in your care. Cleanse our hearts with your word and help us to abide in you always. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

For the well-being of the earth and of all created things: for rivers and lakes, streams and estuaries, melting glaciers and polluted waters. Renew the face of the earth and shower us with your goodness. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

For the nations and all those in authority: for local, state, and national leaders, for elected representatives at every level, and for international organizations, that justice and peace may reign. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

For all those in need: for any experiencing homelessness or unemployment, for those fleeing from oppression or seeking asylum, and for all who are ill or suffering in mind, body or spirit, especially those whose names we speak out loud, in our hearts or by listing online. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

For this congregation: for the caring ministries of this faith community, for all who visit and minister to one another, for all who take time to abide with and care for neighbors, and for all who seek to share your love with the world. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

With thanksgiving for the saints who rest from their labors. Help us, like them, to bear much fruit and to become your disciples, and at the last, bring us to that heavenly banquet where all will feast together at your table. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, most merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abiding love; through Jesus Christ, our resurrected and living Lord.

**Amen.**

## **PEACE**

Sisters and brothers, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace. The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

## **OFFERING**

*We give our offerings in praise and thanksgiving for all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ and for the sake of Jesus' ongoing mission and ministry in this world. We have been entrusted to carry out this mission Jesus' name, bringing the good news of Jesus to the people of this community and around the world. Please, take a minute of your time to make an electronic gift through the St. Paul's Website [www.stpauls-edison.org/online-giving.html](http://www.stpauls-edison.org/online-giving.html). Please consider making this gift a recurring gift, and look for ways to grow in your giving for the sake of Christ's mission through this congregation. You may also mail your offering to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 445 Old Post Rd., Edison NJ 08817.*

## OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Gracious God,

**in the abundance of your steadfast love, you call us from death to life, from silence to speech, from idleness to action. With these gifts we offer ourselves to you, and with the Church through all the ages we give thanks for your saving love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

## THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Let us pray.

Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you. For your Word of life, O God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness: forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love. For your Word of life, O God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

**Amen.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

**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.**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**DO YOU SPEAK ANOTHER LANGUAGE?. Sunday, April 28, after worship.** If you speak another language or if your first language is not English, please gather for a special Pentecost worship planning meeting. When we worship on Pentecost (May 19) we want to praise God in our own language and join together to worship the Lord in as many languages as are spoken at St. Paul's.

**WALKING AT MENLO MALL (OR ROOSEVELT PARK). Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m.** Call your friends and put on your walking shoes and meet at the entrance to Nordstrom under the cover of the parking garage and enjoy fellowship and walk around the park.

## **BIBLE STUDY.**

**Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m.** We gather in the lounge on Wednesdays for fellowship and discussion around God's Word. In the Easter Season we will read and discuss the First John. This book will be read as the second reading in worship each week.

**Thursday at 7:00 p.m.** This study meets on Zoom. See your virtual bulletin for the link to join this study from any place.

**DAILY PRAYER.** Daily prayer is one of the means the Holy Spirit uses to keep us in faith. Here are two ways to make daily prayer part of your life: a daily service of morning prayer and a daily service of night prayer.

**Morning Prayer:** Start each day (Monday through Saturday) with a brief service of Morning Prayer. This service is available as an audio file on the [St. Paul's Website](#) and the St. Paul's Facebook each morning. You can listen and pray along from your home or take it with you as you exercise or commute.

**Night Prayer:** End your day in prayer and fellowship. This ongoing prayer group meets **on Zoom each night at 9:00 p.m.** to share what has been happening in their day, to let go of each day's trouble and to participate in a brief service of night prayer. Zoom log info: Meeting ID = 401 244 599 + Password: 042662

## **BLESSING**

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen**

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

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