



ST. PAUL'S

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sunday, May 2, 2021

Fifth Sunday of Easter

11:00 a.m. Sanctuary Worship

www.facebook.com/SPLutherville and www.stpaulslutherville.org

Welcome to our sanctuary worship service. If you haven't already done so, take a moment to check-in on social media to share that you are here before silencing any electronic devices, and breathe a bit to center yourself before we begin.

Directions from the pastor will invite you to stand or "rise in body or spirit" for that section, also indicated by an asterisk. Our digital assembly may choose to rise or remain seated.

For Our Digital Worship Assembly

Participation: You can find everything you need to participate in the service within the Facebook video description or alongside our website homepage. If you're joining the live feed through Facebook, comment to "say hello" and connect with one another. Feel free to use the "share" button and to help spread the reach of our ministry. If you are joining at the Table to celebrate Communion this day, please have your bread and wine close at hand.

Offering: In addition to sending your gifts to the church, you may also choose to give your offering gift electronically at www.stpaulslutherville.org. Thank you for your generosity!

For Our In-Person Worship Assembly

Social Distancing: Please wear your mask throughout the service, other than briefly removing it to commune when directed by the Pastor. Remain in your space throughout the service, but if you need to leave your seat, please be aware of your proximity to others, keeping at least 6' of distance as much as possible. Follow any posted signage for aisle and door directions. The worship host or Pastor will indicate how and when to leave your seat safely to exit the space.

Singing: This service includes recorded music with singing leadership by the Pastor. We ask the in-person participants to please refrain from singing, and instead take this time for silent prayer or mouthing the words as they are sung.

Restrooms: The bathrooms outside the Wilkening Room are available for one person at a time (parents may accompany children if needed) - please use the signage on the door to indicate if/when that restroom is occupied. Please give one another space in navigating around the hallway.

Offering: An offering plate is at both doors in the worship space, where you may place your gifts as you come or go from the service. You may also choose to give your offering gift electronically at www.stpaulslutherville.org. Thank you for your generosity!

GATHERING

WELCOME

PRELUDE: *Hear My Prayer* (Instrumental) by Debbie Owen

RINGING OF THE BELL

Please rise in body or spirit at the ringing of the bell.

*THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ, let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We thank you, risen Christ, for the waters where you make us new, leading us from death to life, from tears to joy. We bless you, risen Christ, that your Spirit comes to us in the grace-filled waters of rebirth, like rains to our thirsting earth, like streams that revive our souls, like cups of cool water shared with strangers.

Breathe your peace on your church when we hide in fear. Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness. Send us companions on our journey as we share your life. Make us one, risen Christ. Cleanse our hearts. Shower us with life. To you be given all praise, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God, now and forever.

Amen.

*GATHERING SONG: *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling vs. 1-2 (ELW 631)*

Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of Heav'n to earth come down;
Fix in us thy humble dwelling; All thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, Thou art all compassion, Pure unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation, Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit, Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit; Let us find that second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning, Set our hearts at liberty.

*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.

* PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

WORD

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Children of all ages are welcome to come and gather close to the screen to join in a message just for them! Any children in the physical worship space are invited to listen from their seats. After we pray together, all will be invited to rejoin others in body or spirit for the readings of the day.

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.

A reading from Acts.

²⁶An angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a wilderness road. ²⁷So Philip 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. Philip asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹the eunuch 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 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.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND 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.

A reading from First John.

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 into the world God's only Son so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us and sent the 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 God's love is perfected in us.

¹³By this we know that we abide in God and God in us, because we have been given of God's own Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent the 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 the Son 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 God 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 God is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: John 15:1-17

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. He then repeats the most important of all his commands, that they love one another.

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said: ¹"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. ²My Father removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit my Father 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. ⁷"If 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.

⁹"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and

abide in my Father's love. ¹¹I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

¹²"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

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.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

God of all fruitfulness, you abide in your church and your church abides in you. Cleanse us by your word and give yourself to the whole church on earth so that it bears fruit and witnesses to your love. We pray for leaders throughout the whole Church: for our church-wide bishop, Elizabeth, and our local bishop, William. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You have created the heavens and the earth. As we wonder at the beauty of creation, may we seek vital connections among all that depends on the earth for life. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You rule the nations with justice and love. Give the leaders of the earth assurance of your abiding presence, that they lead not by fear but with love for those they are called to serve. We pray for the service women and men of our country, and for peace-keepers and peace-makers everywhere. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You have loved us so that we can love others. We pray for all in need of your love: those who are poor, lowly, outcast, weak, or fearful. Provide for the needs of all. Guide the work of our LEAD journey: for our community partners and our neighbors in Lutherville. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You are present with what remains in our hearts and minds. May we listen to your voice that resounds within us. Abide with the prayers, concerns, and thanksgivings from our voices and hearts, shared now within this space... Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You gather us with all the saints by the power of your Spirit. With them, may our hearts live forever in your keeping. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

MEAL

PREPARING THE TABLE

If you will be joining in sharing the Meal of Holy Communion, now is the opportunity to prepare by making sure you have what you need close at hand. If you are a part of the In-Person Assembly and do not have what you need at your seat, please carefully make your way to the entrance to see a worship host. If you are a part of the Digital Assembly, now is the opportunity to prepare your home table with bread and cup.

***GATHERING AROUND THE TABLE**

The Lord be with you.
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.

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Holy, living, and loving God,
we praise you for creating the heavens and the earth.
We bless you for bringing Noah and his family through the waters of the flood,
for freeing your people Israel from the bonds of slavery,
and for sending your Son to be our Redeemer.
We give you thanks for Jesus, who, living among us, healed the sick,
fed the hungry, and with a love stronger than death, gave his life for others.

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.

Remembering, therefore,
his life-giving death and glorious resurrection,
we await your promised life for all this dying world.
Breathe your Spirit on us and on this bread and cup:
carry us in your arms from death to life,
that we may live as your chosen ones, clothed in the righteousness of Christ.
Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church, both now and 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.**

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

The risen Christ invites us to this table. Come, eat and be satisfied.

SHARING THE MEAL

For our In-Person Assembly sharing in the Meal of Holy Communion, be careful as you peel back the foil to expose the bread and wine. You may pray or whisper the words "The body of Christ, given for you." as you consume the bread, and "The blood of Christ, shed for you." as you consume the drink.

For our Digital Assembly sharing in the Meal of Holy Communion, you may use the words "The body of Christ, given for you." as you share the bread with one another, and "The blood of Christ, shed for you." as you share the cup. You may choose to dip your bread into the cup, or to consume the bread and then drink from the cup.

If you are not sharing in the Meal today, please join in reflection and prayer, until we all regather.

REFLECTION SONG: *The Power of Your Love* by Geoff Bullock

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. We thank you, O God, that you have strengthened our hearts through this feast of life and salvation. Shine the light of Christ on our path, that we may do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you, now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***BLESSING**

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus. The God of life, Father, ✚ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

***SENDING SONG: *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* vs. 3-4 (ELW 631)**

Come, Almighty to deliver, Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never, Nevermore Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray and praise Thee without ceasing, Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish, then, Thy new creation; Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory, Till in Heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee, Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

***DISMISSAL**

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

OFFERING

God has given us so much! The Offering is the opportunity for us to share some of those gifts for the work of the church and the needs of the world. Thank you for your generosity!

We encourage you to contribute your offering to help sharing in the ongoing mission and work of the church through making an online offering at www.stpaulslutherville.org. You can also mail your offerings in to the church office - we have a secured mailbox which is checked regularly.

COPYRIGHTS

Portions of the liturgy and hymns are from Sundays and Seasons.com © 2021 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress liturgies license #SAS012371.

Additional music included in this worship service is covered under CCLI license #1592054, expiration December 31, 2021.

TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Thank you for helping to lead our worship service this holy day!

Reader, First Lesson	Sam Reh
Reader, Second Lesson	Sam Reh
Prayer Leader	Anne South
Contemporary Worship Musician	Steve Dooley