



Grace Sanctuary 1921-2021

Fifth Sunday of Easter ~ May 2, 2021 ~ 8:30 AM Service

ROGATION SUNDAY ~ Blessing of the Seeds and Soil

Grace Lutheran Church

Welcomes You to Worship

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PRELUDE

Congregation responses in Bold Print

Welcome and Announcements

GATHERING SONG:

“As Rain From the Clouds”

ELW 508

- 1 As rain from the clouds will your word come to earth,
as snow from the heavens refreshing the land.
Then soften our soil that the good seed may grow
and ripen rich fruit to return to your hand.
We praise you, our God, for the dew of your word;
we thank you, good gard'ner, for your tender toil.
We bless you, best farmer, for hundredfold yield,
for harvest of grace in our once-barren soil.
- 2 As grain that is scattered your word has been sown
on rocks and on roadways, in good earth and sand.
Make fertile our soil that the good seed may grow
and ripen rich fruit to return to your hand.
We praise you, our God, for the seed of your word;
we thank you, good gard'ner, for your tender toil.
We bless you, best farmer, for hundredfold yield,
for harvest of grace in our once-barren soil.
- 3 As rays of the sun shall your word light the world,
awaking and warming and healing our land.
Then shine in our hearts that the good seed may grow
and ripen rich fruit to return to your hand.
We praise you, our God, for the light of your word;
we thank you, good gard'ner, for your tender toil.
We bless you, best farmer, for hundredfold yield,
for harvest of grace in our once-barren soil.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We thank you, gracious God, for Jesus Christ the true vine, with his roots eternally

grounded in you. We rejoice that by grace we have been grafted into him, to be branches on a vine which bears the loveliest of all the fruits of earth. Yet we confess that all is not well with the way we live.

Vine of Life, forgive us when we have been the ones to introduce disease into the vine, preferring its contamination to the vigour of health. Forgive us for neglecting to draw deeply on the sap of Life, for our tendency to wander instead of growing on the framework you provide, for being content of a few sparse or undersized fruits, or even seasons without bearing any fruit. Have mercy on us. Do not sever us from the true vine. Rather heal our diseases, discipline and train our wandering tendrils, prune our unfruitful branches and cut away our diseased ones. Let us delight in bearing the fruits of love for your Name's sake. Amen!

FORGIVENESS

Jesus said: "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you." Friends, we have asked for forgiveness and correction. It has been truly done for us. It is being done for us. And it will be done for us.

Thanks be to God

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.**

First Reading: Acts 8:26-40

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.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

RESPONSIVE READING: 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.

²⁶**The 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.

²⁸**For dominion belongs to the LORD, who rules over 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 before the LORD.

³⁰**Their descendants shall serve the LORD,
whom they shall proclaim to generations to come.**

³¹They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people yet unborn,
saying to them, "The LORD has acted!"

Second Reading: 1 John 4:7-21

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.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

"Alleluia! Lord and Savior"

ELW p 205

Alleluia! Lord and Savior; open now your saving word.

Let it burn like fire within us; speak until our hearts are stirred.

Alleluia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

GOSPEL: John 15:1-8

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

*Response: **Glory to you, O Lord.***

[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.**

MESSAGE

HYMN OF THE DAY: *"Lord, You Give the Great Commission"*

ELW 579

1 Lord, you give the great commission:

"Heal the sick and preach the word."

Lest the church neglect its mission,
and the gospel go unheard,
help us witness to your purpose
with renewed integrity:

Refrain

With the Spirit's gifts empow'r us
for the work of ministry.

2 Lord, you call us to your service:

"In my name baptize and teach."

That the world may trust your promise,
life abundant meant for each,

give us all new fervor, draw us
closer in community: *Refrain*

3 Lord, you make the common holy:

"This my body, this my blood."

Let us all, for earth's true glory,
daily lift life heavenward,
asking that the world around us
share your children's liberty: *Refrain*

4 Lord, you show us love's true measure:

"Father, what they do, forgive."

Yet we hoard as private treasure
all that you so freely give.

May your care and mercy lead us

to a just society: *Refrain*
5 Lord, you bless with words assuring:
"I am with you to the end."
Faith and hope and love restoring,

may we serve as you intend
and, amid the cares that claim us,
hold in mind eternity: *Refrain*

BLESSING OF THE ELEMENTS

Almighty and everlasting God, Creator of all things and giver of all life, we come before you for your blessing upon the seed, livestock, fields, and all things needed for a bountiful harvest. Grant that these may serve to your glory and the welfare of your people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for the Seeds: God you have given us these seeds: **Creating God, you have given seed for the sower and bread to the people.** Nourish, protect, and bless the seeds which your people sow in hope. By your loving and bountiful giving, may they bring forth their fruit in due season, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer for the Soil: God you have created and given us this soil. **Giver of life, we give you thanks that in the richness of the soil, nature awakens your call to spring. We praise you for the smell of freshly tilled earth, awakening blossoms, budding trees, the beauty of a cleanly sown field, and the freshness of new grass. We ask that you help us to be good stewards of the land.** Bless the soil to bear bountifully, in the name of the one who gives us new life, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer for Water and Rain: God, this water is your creation. **Sustaining God, we receive the snows and the rains from you. We give you thanks for the smell of the earth after rain, for its welcome cooling, and its necessary hydration for the land. We ask that the rain come as often as it is needed so crops may flourish and the coming harvest be indeed bountiful, through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Prayer for the Animals: God, the animals of the field are yours. **Caring God, who created all beasts and cattle in a wonderful order and gave them into our care, make us good shepherds of all your creatures. We ask for knowledge to care properly for the animals you have given us, that they may be strengthened and free from disease, in Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Prayer for the Equipment: God, you bless us with resourcefulness. **Gracious Lord, be with us now and bless us as we set apart the equipment to your glory and praise. Grant us diligence in maintenance, safety and caution in use, and patience during breakdowns. Give us the faith to know your gracious purpose in all things, to lead us in building up of your kingdom through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Blessing of the Sower and Producers: God, these are your sowers and producers. We pray for all who care for the earth and its creatures, the water, and air that the riches of your creation may abound from generation to generation...

Creator God, you make the grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate. You give work as a gift for humans to participate in your creative activities on earth. You call us to produce from the land and your creatures, essential elements for nourishment and health for all. Bless our labor and grant us wisdom, safety and a feeling of satisfaction in our work. Enlighten us with faith to know your gracious purpose in rain or shine, fruitful work or break-downs, is to serve you for your glory and give you thanks in all things. Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you. *(Please share the peace with those around you with a nod or a wave. For those listening at home, we greet you all in peace.)*

OFFERING FOR THE MISSION AND MINISTRY of Grace Lutheran Church

PRAYER OF OFFERING: Let us pray... Creator God **we thank you for the gift of your good earth given in love and the task you called us to do. Receive our gifts offerings by mail and electronically this week as a testimony of our faith and gratitude. Let these gifts, and the offering of our lives, grow and multiply as seeds planted in spring, that we may be your fruit in the world. Amen.**

SONG of OFFERING: “Accept, O Lord, the Gifts We Bring” **ELW 691**

1 Accept, O Lord, the gifts we bring to place upon your table.

We do not worship as we ought but only as we're able.

2 The vines were planted, seeds were sown. They grew in your good pleasure.

What once was common, daily food becomes a holy treasure.

3 Our hopes and dreams, our toils and cares we lift in prayer before you.

Lord, by your grace now come to us, as humbly we adore you.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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.

PRAYER SONG: “Hear Our Prayer” **ELW 178**

Hear our prayer, hear our prayer, Lord, make us whole: peace to all people, hope for each soul. God of grace, in this place, hear now our prayer.

PRAYER PETITIONS:

God of all fruitfulness, you abide in your church and your church abides in you. Teach us to abide in the true vine, your Son who provide nourishment giving the whole church on earth strength and vigor so that it bears fruit and witnesses to your love.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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 earth resources for life.

Like a seed emerging from the earth, renew the life cycle of nature. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

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 our service men and women, law enforcement and all who serve the needs for a secure world. May changes and choices be shaped by the values of the true vine. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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 especially Rhys, Roy, Esther, Jim, Shannon, Roger, Joyce, Nila, Matt, Megan, Loren, Bruce, Sonja, Judy, Deb, Bob, Layla, Raef, Donnie, the family of Ruth Lowery, those in Care Centers, Assisted Living or who are homebound. May your love be a seed taking root and growing strong in you. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You gather us with all the saints by the power of your Spirit. Send forth your comforting love. We give you thanks for the fruit they have borne in our community and beyond. With them, may our hearts live forever in the branches of your keeping. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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

PRAYER SONG:

“Hear Our Prayer”

ELW 178

Hear our prayer, hear our prayer, Lord, make us whole: peace to all people, hope for each soul. God of grace, in this place, hear now our prayer.

THE LORD'S PRAYER: 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.

BLESSING *(inspired by Psalm 51)*

May God the Father, who created the world, grow within you wise shoots as stewards of his creation.

May God the Son, who redeemed the world, grow within you branches that are pleasing to you, giving sustenance to others.

May God the Holy Spirit, whose breath fills the whole of creation, help you to bear his fruits of love, joy and peace.

And may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN “To Be Your Presence”

ELW 546

1 To be your presence is our mission here, to show compassion's face and list'ning ear, to be your heart of mercy ever near, alleluia!

2 To be your presence is our mission bold, to feed the poor and shelter homeless cold, to be your hands of justice, right uphold, alleluia!

3 To be your presence is our mission blest, to speak for all the broken and oppressed, to be your voice of hope, your love expressed, alleluia!

4 We are your heart, O Christ, your hands and voice, to serve your people is our call and choice, and in this mission we, the church, rejoice, alleluia!

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. And abide in the true vine. **Thanks be to God. We Will!**

Thank you for worshiping with us today!

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO ASSIST IN OUR WORSHIP:

PASTOR: Cheryl Rondeau-Bassett

READER: Ed Williams

Sound/Video Tech Team: Paul Henrichs, Wyatt Sprouse, Larry Picht & Gary Rukstad.

USHERS: Steve Vogt & Geri Mohror

SONG LEADER: Leigh Carstensen

PIANIST: Judy Everson

Pastoral Calls: You can reach Pastor Cheryl at 605-237-1501(cell or text) or by E-mail: cherylgracelc@midconetwork.com

Announcements for May 2

Keep in your prayers - Those dealing with Health Issues:

Rhys Arnold, Roy Arnold, Esther Bakeberg, Jim Bakeberg, Shannon Beck, Roger Benthin, Joyce Brever, Nila Davis, Matt Engan, Loren Holzwarth, Bruce Jahraus, Sonja Rieh Johnson, Judy Lien, Deb Schlenner, Bob Starr, Layla Steen, Raef Stolp, and Donnie Vrtacnik, the family Ruth Lowery, those in Care Centers, Assisted Living, or who are Homebound. Pray for our military personal and their families as they serve to protect our country.