



**Christ  
Lutheran**  
CHURCH

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**Sixth Sunday of Easter  
May 5, 2024**

## **We Welcome You to Christ Lutheran Church! We are a community of people sharing God's love through Christ and growing together in faith.**

We celebrate all the ways we are made in the image of God, seeking to see God in everyone. We honor and respect each person's age, ethnicity, family composition, gender identity, gender expression, life history, mental well-being, physical ability, relationship status, sexual orientation, skin color, and socioeconomic standing. Together, we strive to love and serve our neighbor and all creation, including working toward racial and social justice. We would love to walk with you on this creative adventure\* of faith, grace, and love.

*\* The first sermon ever preached at Christ Lutheran was titled "A Call to Creative Adventure."*

### **ABOUT WORSHIP**

We gather to worship weekly to hear and remember our shared 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, with hymns found in the red hymnals ("ELW") in the seats in front on you.

If you have a prayer request, note it on a yellow card from the seatback holder and pass it to an usher; 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.

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.**

*This Sunday's image of the life the risen Christ shares with us is the image of friendship. We are called to serve others as Jesus came to serve; but for John's gospel, the image of servanthood is too hierarchical, too distant, to capture the essence of life with Christ. Friendship captures the love, the joy, the deep mutuality of the relationship into which Christ invites us. The Greeks believed that true friends are willing to die for each other. This is the mutual love of Christian community commanded by Christ and enabled by the Spirit.*

## **GATHERING**

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God*

### **PRELUDE**

*Sonatina No. 2*

*Helman*

### **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 (on the 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).*

### **EASTER ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

### **THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
the wellspring of grace,  
our Easter and our joy.

**Amen.**

Look, here is water!

**Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

Immersed in the promises of baptism,  
let us give thanks for what God has done for us.

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning  
your voice thundered over the deep  
and water became the essence of life.  
Adam and Eve beheld Eden's verdant rivers.  
The ark carried your creation through the flood into a new day.  
Miriam led the dancing as your people passed through the sea  
into freedom's land.  
In a desert pool the Ethiopian official  
entered your boundless baptismal life.

Look, here is water!  
**Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

At the river your beloved Son was baptized by John  
and anointed with the Holy Spirit.  
By the baptism of Jesus' death and resurrection  
you opened the floodgates of your reconciling love,  
freeing us to live as Easter people.  
We rejoice with glad hearts,  
giving all honor and praise to you,  
through the risen Christ, our source of living water,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

Look, here is water!  
**Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

### **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!**

# CANTICLE OF PRAISE



This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God.



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



1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose  
2 Sing . . with all the peo - ple of God, and



blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.  
join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion:



Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and strength, and  
Bless - ing and hon - or, glo - ry and might be to



hon - or and bless - ing and glo - ry are his.  
God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.



3 For the Lamb who was slain has be -



gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

God of abiding love,  
you choose us as your servants  
and dare to call us friends:  
take our fragmented hearts,  
commanding them to love,  
making whole our joy,  
our life reborn in you;  
through Jesus Christ, who laid down his life for us.

**Amen.**

## **WORD**

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

## **CHILDREN'S TIME**

*The assembly is seated as children are invited for a time together.*

## **HANDBELL ANTHEM**

*I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light*

Austin

## **READING: Acts 10:44-48**

*While Peter shares the good news of Jesus with a Gentile soldier and his family, the Holy Spirit comes upon them. Recognizing that the Spirit works inclusively in the lives of both Jews and Gentiles, Peter commands that these Gentiles also be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.*

<sup>44</sup>While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. <sup>45</sup>The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, <sup>46</sup>for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, <sup>47</sup>“Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” <sup>48</sup>So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM 98

*The congregation is invited to sing the psalm refrain when indicated (R). Verses will be chanted alternately by the leader and the people.*

### Refrain



### Psalm Tone



- <sup>1</sup>Sing a new song to the LORD, who has done | marvelous things,  
whose right hand and holy arm have | won the victory.
- <sup>2</sup>**O LORD, you have made | known your victory,  
you have revealed your righteousness in the sight | of the nations.**
- <sup>3</sup>You remember your steadfast love and faithfulness to the | house of Israel;  
all the ends of the earth have seen the victory | of our God.
- <sup>4</sup>**Shout with joy to the LORD, | all you lands;  
lift up your voice, re- | joice, and sing. R**
- <sup>5</sup>Sing to the LORD | with the harp,  
with the harp and the | voice of song.
- <sup>6</sup>**With trumpets and the sound | of the horn  
shout with joy before the | king, the LORD.**
- <sup>7</sup>Let the sea roar, and | all that fills it,  
the world and those who | dwell therein.
- <sup>8</sup>**Let the rivers | clap their hands,  
and let the hills ring out with joy before the LORD,  
who comes to | judge the earth.**
- <sup>9</sup>The LORD will judge the | world with righteousness  
and the peo- | ples with equity. R

**READING: 1 John 5:1-6**

*God's children believe that Jesus is the Messiah and love God by keeping God's commandments. Thus the world is conquered not through military might but through love and faith.*

<sup>1</sup>Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. <sup>2</sup>By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. <sup>3</sup>For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, <sup>4</sup>for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. <sup>5</sup>Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

<sup>6</sup>This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**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.

*Repeat alleluia*

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.



## **HOLY GOSPEL: John 15:9-17**

*On the night of his arrest, Jesus delivers a final testimony to his disciples to help them in the days ahead. Here, he 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:] <sup>9</sup>“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup>I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

<sup>12</sup>“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup>No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. <sup>14</sup>You are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup>I 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. <sup>16</sup>You 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. <sup>17</sup>I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.”

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 #367**      *Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds*  
*The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.*



1 Now all the vault of heav'n re - sounds  
 2 E - ter - nal is the gift he brings,  
 3 Oh, fill us, Lord, with daunt - less love;  
 4 A - dor - ing prais - es now we bring



in praise of love that still a - bounds: "Christ has  
 there - fore our heart with rap - ture sings: "Christ has  
 set heart and will on things a - bove that we  
 and with the heav'n-ly bless - ed sing: "Christ has



tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!" Sing, choirs of  
 tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!" Now still he  
 con - quer through your tri - umph; grant grace suf -  
 tri - umphed! Al - le - lu - ia!" Be to the



an - gels, loud and clear! Re - peat their song of glo - ry  
 comes to give us life and by his pres - ence stills all  
 fi - cient for life's day that by our lives we tru - ly  
 Fa - ther, and our Lord, to Spir - it blest, most ho - ly



here: "Christ has tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!"  
 strife. "Christ has tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!"  
 say: "Christ has tri - umphed! He is liv - ing!"  
 God, all the glo - ry, nev - er end - ing!



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

Text: Paul Z. Strodach, 1876–1947, alt.  
 Music: LASST UNS ERFREUEN, *Geistliche Kirchengesänge*, Köln, 1623  
 Text © 1958 *Service Book and Hymnal*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

## **NICENE CREED**

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.

## PRAYERS

*Our prayers draw on the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle and the Church's calendar of Commemorations—further information is found each week at the end of the bulletin.*

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.

*A brief silence.*

Your Holy Spirit falls upon all who hear the word. Fill your church with the gifts of your Spirit and give understanding hearts to those who strengthen our commitments with our ecumenical and interreligious partners. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

You speak and the face of the earth is renewed. Revive your creation, that habitats and every kind of living thing might flourish. Protect endangered species and help us to care for all your creatures. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Your world is divided and the nations rage. Grant wisdom and vision to world leaders, that they may seek justice, peace, and the good of all. Strengthen international partnerships and cooperation. Tend to the lands, people, and churches of India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka; empower all who work there for peace and justice. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Your children are in need. Comfort all those who suffer, especially those afflicted by anxiety, depression, and mental illness. Help us to be conduits of your love in our care for one another. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Your work is done in this place with our hands. Bless the ministries of this congregation, including the Lutheran Braille Workers, Lutheran World Relief quilt and kit workers, and the Men's Overnight Shelter, that we may embody your love for the world. Inspire those who plan and lead worship, council members, committee members, and volunteers. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Your blessed saints now rest in you. Give us thankful hearts for those who have gone before us, especially Julian of Norwich and Nicolaus von Zinzendorf. With them, teach us to abide in your love, and at the last, bring us all together around your heavenly banquet 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.**

## 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

*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 Reconciling Works [www.reconcilingworks.org/ric](http://www.reconcilingworks.org/ric) and our CLC Youth attending ELCA Youth Gathering [www.elca.church/gathering](http://www.elca.church/gathering).*



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

## OFFERTORY

*Fugue in A minor*

Pachelbel

## OFFERING PRAYER

*The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.*

Risen One,

**you call us to believe and bear fruit.**

**May the gifts that we offer here**

**be signs of your abiding love.**

**Form us to be your witnesses in the world,**

**through Jesus Christ, our true vine.**

**Amen.**

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

The image shows a musical score for 'Great Thanksgiving' in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff has the lyrics 'The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.' The second staff has 'Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.' The third staff has 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.' The fourth staff has 'It is right to give our thanks and praise.' The music is written in a simple, melodic style with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#).

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## 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.

The image shows a musical score for 'Sanctus' in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff has the lyrics 'Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of'. The second staff has 'pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -'. The third staff has 'san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the'. The fourth staff has 'name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.' The music is written in a simple, melodic style with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#).

## 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

The risen Christ is made known to us  
in the breaking of the bread.  
Come and eat at God's table.  
**Thanks be to God!**

*The assembly is seated.*

### DISTRIBUTION

*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; wine is received either by Common Cup or from individual cups in the trays. **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.

## 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.





COMMUNION HYMNS: ELW #708 *Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love*

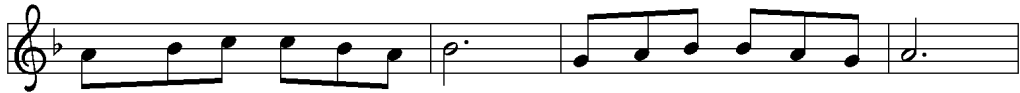
*Refrain*



Je - su, Je - su, fill us with your love, show



us how to serve the neigh-bors we have from you.



- 1 Kneels at the feet of his friends, si - lent - ly wash - es their feet,
- 2 Neigh-bors are wealth-y and poor, var - ied in col - or and race,
- 3 These are the ones we will serve, these are the ones we will love;
- 4 Kneel at the feet of our friends, si - lent - ly wash - ing their feet:



mas - ter who acts as a slave to them.  
 neigh-bors are near - by and far a - way.  
 all these are neigh - bors to us and you.  
 this is the way we will live with you.

*Refrain*

Text: Tom Colvin, 1925–2000, alt.

Music: CHEREPONI, Ghanaian folk tune, adapt. Tom Colvin

Text and music © 1969 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

ELW #838 *Beautiful Savior*

1 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, King of cre - a - tion,  
 2 Fair are the mead - ows, fair are the wood - lands,  
 3 Fair is the sun - shine, fair is the moon - light,  
 4 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, Lord of the na - tions,

Son of God and Son of Man!  
 robed in flow'rs of bloom - ing spring;  
 bright the spar - kling stars on high;  
 Son of God and Son of Man!

Tru - ly I'd love thee, tru - ly I'd serve thee,  
 Je - sus is fair - er, Je - sus is pur - er,  
 Je - sus shines bright - er, Je - sus shines pur - er  
 Glo - ry and hon - or, praise, ad - o - ra - tion,

light of my soul, my joy, my crown.  
 he makes our sor - rowing spir - it sing.  
 than all the an - gels in the sky.  
 now and for - ev - er - more be thine!

*When all have returned to their places, the assembly stands.*

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**Amen.**

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Shepherding God,

you have prepared a table before us

and nourished us with your love.

Send us forth from this banquet

to proclaim your goodness

and share the abundant mercy of Jesus,

our redeemer and friend.

**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**

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

The God of resurrection power,

the Christ of unending joy,

and the Spirit of Easter hope

✠ bless you now and always.

**Amen.**

1 In Christ there is no east or west, in him no south or north,  
 2 In Christ shall true hearts ev-'ry-where their high com - mu - nion find;  
 3 Join hands, dis - ci - ples of the faith, what-e'er your race may be.  
 4 In Christ now meet both east and west, in him meet south and north;

but one com - mu - ni - ty of love through-out the whole wide earth.  
 his ser - vice is the gold - en cord close bind - ing hu - man - kind.  
 All chil - dren of the liv - ing God are sure - ly kin to me.  
 all Christ-ly souls are one in him through-out the whole wide earth.

Text: John Oxenham, 1852–1941, alt.

Music: MCKEE, African American spiritual; adapt. Harry T. Burleigh, 1866–1949

*Children join the pastors to send us in mission***DISMISSAL***Children:* Alleluia! Go in peace.**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!****POSTLUDE***Herr Gott, Nun sei Gepreiset*

J.S. Bach

## Worship Leaders

	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte	Atley Lewis	Valerie Hernes
Lector	Becky Fry	Becky Fry
Prayer Assistant	Linda Mapes	Phil Hahn
Communion Assistants	Darla Hernandez Barbara Clements	Phil Hahn Jacquie Chevalier
Ushers	Irene Adams Luke Venstrom	Justin Pearson
Sound/Light	Lance Nolting	Jeff Peiffer
Video/Livestream	-----	Ben Crill
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch	
Worship Participants	Celebration Ringers Handbell Ensemble Mike & Lois Felten, Cantors	
Communion Baker	Marilyn McGawn	
Communion Table	Barb Clements Terry Albrecht Helen Arvidson	Diana Ahlbrand Marilyn McGawn Marla Niksch Lori Schwartz

## COMMEMORATIONS

Week of May 5, 2024

### May 8

#### **Julian of Norwich, renewer of the church, died around 1416**

Julian (or Juliana) was most likely a Benedictine nun living in an isolated cell attached to the Carrow Priory in Norwich (NOR-rich), England. Definite facts about her life are sparse. However, when she was about thirty years old, she reported visions that she later compiled into a book, *Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love*, a classic of medieval mysticism. The visions declared that love was the meaning of religious experience, provided by Christ who is love, for the purpose of love. A prayer and a hymn attributed to Julian are included in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (p. 87, #735).

### May 9

#### **Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, renewer of the church, hymnwriter, died 1760**

Count Zinzendorf was born into an aristocratic family and after the death of his father was raised by his Pietistic grandmother. This influence was a lasting one, and he moved away from what he felt was an overly intellectual Lutheranism. When he was twenty-two, a group of Moravians asked permission to live on his lands. He agreed, and they established a settlement they called Herrnhut, or “the Lord’s watch.” Eventually worldwide Moravian missions emanated from this community. Zinzendorf participated in these missions and is also remembered for writing hymns characteristic of his Pietistic faith, including “Jesus, Still Lead On” (ELW 624).



## Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of **India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka.**

We **give thanks** for:

- the diversity of peoples in these countries: their cultures, values and spirituality
- for the resilience of minority religious groups and those on the margins of society such as indigenous communities, Dalits, women, youth, the disabled and sexual minorities, amid discrimination and persecution
- for the contributions of Christians and Christian churches in these countries to education and health services and for their innovative attempts in contextualizing their worship, theology and institutional life
- efforts to forge inter-religious solidarity for the sake of the common good

We **pray** for:

- those who struggle to overcome grinding poverty
- Christians and others who selflessly work in the community, their efforts at ensuring the rights of all citizens, and their collaborative work
- efforts to build understanding and harmony among peoples across religious, caste and ethnic identities
- peoples' movements struggling for the rights of women, Dalits, Indigenous peoples, and the integrity of the earth

### *Stewardship Snippet*

**John 15:16** – Jesus said, “You 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.”

*God has chosen us and given us our bodies, our minds and our spirits. As steward/disciples we are entrusted with these gifts (and God's Holy Word) for a purpose – to bear fruit for a world that needs it.*

## The Unconditional Love of Disciple-Friends

Friend requests are a common feature of Facebook and similar digital platforms. When it comes to social media, “friends” are just a click away. But there is no automatic guarantee of accountability, warmth, relationship, or true belonging in a virtual community. In stark contrast, Jesus invites the disciples to become part of a community where selfless, sacrificial, unconditional *agape* love is the core criterion. The kingdom, or “kin-dom,” of God is present wherever God’s people are affirmed as children of God and siblings in Christ. But Jesus gives his disciples an additional identity: that of “friends.”

In the new status Jesus confers on his disciples, the single most important criterion is love, including the readiness to lay down one’s life for another. Jesus has just taught this lesson by example when he washed the feet of his disciples, including Judas Iscariot. The new commandment to love one another as Jesus loved us summarizes the whole of the gospel mandate. It is not an easy commandment by any human standards, but it is possible because Jesus himself showed us the way and forgives us when we fall short. The status of “disciple-friends” is not a request for the church, but a faith mandate.

How can we live as disciple-friends of Jesus in this world? When we believe, trust, obey, and follow the word, and the new commandment Jesus gave his disciples, a real new community is born. When we learn to embrace the other—those who are marginalized and “othered”—we partner with God in enabling the image of God to blossom to its fullest.

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