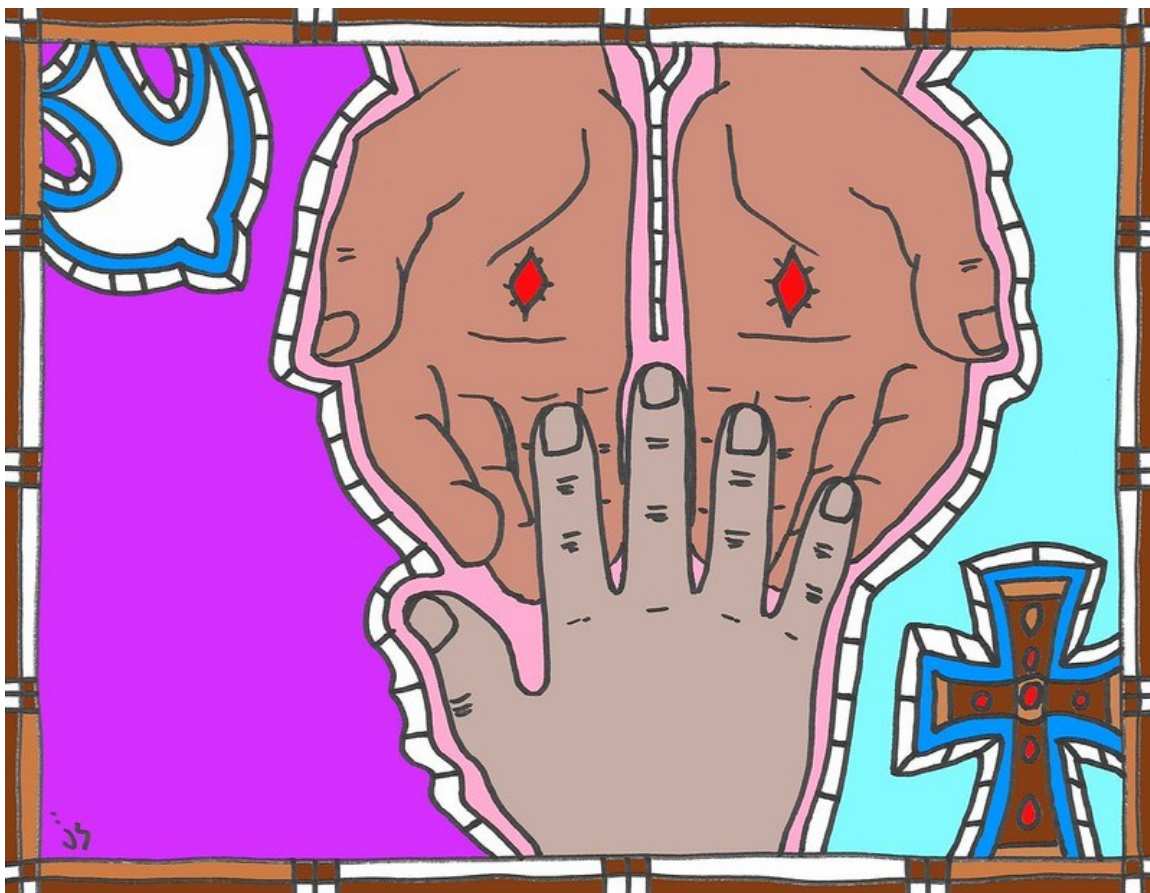




**Christ
Lutheran**
CHURCH

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



SEASON OF EASTER
April 12, 2026

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 of 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.

In today's gospel the risen Christ appears to the disciples and offers them the gift of peace. Even amid doubts and questions, we experience the resurrection in our Sunday gathering around word and meal, and in our everyday lives. Throughout the coming Sundays of Easter the first two readings will be from the Acts of the Apostles and the first letter of Peter. Even as the early Christians proclaimed the resurrection, we rejoice in the new birth and living hope we receive in baptism.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

Blessed Jesus, We are Here

J.S. Bach

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).*

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

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

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne
and to the Lamb!

Amen.

Let us give thanks for the gifts of baptism.

Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister continues.

Merciful God,
you are the one who was, who is, and who is to come.
You lead us beside still waters.
We thank you for the waters of creation:
morning dew, gentle rain, roaring waves.
We thank you for the waters that nourish us: our Lake Michigan, Little Calumet and
Kankakee Rivers, Salt Creek and all our local wetlands.
Blessed are you.
You guide us to springs of the water of life.

Jesus Christ, you are the faithful witness
who accompanies us on our journeys.
We give you thanks for your life-giving death and resurrection.
We praise you for joining us in joy and sorrow.
Blessed are you.
You guide us to springs of the water of life.

Holy Spirit, you anoint our head with oil and our cup overflows.
Break down barriers that divide us.
Fill us with the breath of peace.
Blessed are you.
You guide us to springs of the water of life.

Holy One, we thank you for the gifts and grace of baptism,
and for making us a new creation.
We join with saints and angels, giving you honor and praise,
now and forever.
Amen.

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

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb

who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 2 Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and

strength, and hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of

God, and join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon - or,

glo - ry, and might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Refrain

This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God. Al - le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 4 For the Lamb who was

slain has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

Final refrain

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

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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A silence is kept before the prayer.

Alpha and Omega,
our beginning and our end,
you break through the locks
of gated communities
and hardened hearts:
accept our doubts,
heal our desire for certainty
and, by your Spirit's gentle touch,
make us a people
forgiven and forgiving;
through Jesus Christ, the Giver of Peace.
Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

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

SPECIAL MUSIC

Pastorale

Zipoli

CHILDREN'S TIME

Children are invited forward for a time together.

READING: Exodus 15:1-11, 19-21

Song of Moses and Miriam at the sea

¹ [Then] Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD:

“I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;
horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.

² The LORD is my strength and my might,
and he has become my salvation;

this is my God, and I will praise him;
my father's God, and I will exalt him.

³ The LORD is a warrior;
the LORD is his name.

⁴ Pharaoh's chariots and his army he cast into the sea;
his elite officers were sunk in the Red Sea.

⁵ The floods covered them;
they went down into the depths like a stone.

- ⁶ Your right hand, O LORD, glorious in power—
your right hand, O LORD, shattered the enemy.
- ⁷ In the greatness of your majesty you overthrew your adversaries;
you sent out your fury; it consumed them like stubble.
- ⁸ At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up;
the floods stood up in a heap;
the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.
- ⁹ The enemy said, ‘I will pursue; I will overtake;
I will divide the spoil; my desire shall have its fill of them.
I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them.’
- ¹⁰ You blew with your wind; the sea covered them;
they sank like lead in the mighty waters.
- ¹¹ Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods?
Who is like you, majestic in holiness,
awesome in splendor, doing wonders?”

¹⁹ When the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his chariot drivers went into the sea, the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them, but the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground.

²⁰ Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron’s sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. ²¹ And Miriam sang to them:

“Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;
horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

READING: 1 Peter 1:3-9

This epistle was written to encourage Christians experiencing hardships and suffering because of their faith in Christ. The letter opens by blessing God for the living hope we have through Christ’s resurrection even amid difficult circumstances and surroundings.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ⁴ and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, ⁷ so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Although you

have not seen him, you love him, and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the Gospel.

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the

words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL: John 20:19-31

The risen Jesus appears to his disciples, offering them a benediction, a commission, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. But one of their number is missing, and his unbelief prompts another visit from the Lord.

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁹ When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” ²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

²⁴ But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶ A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” ²⁸ Thomas answered him,

“My Lord and my God!”²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

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 #384 *That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright*

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

1 That Eas - ter day with joy was bright; the
2 O Je - sus, king of gen - tle - ness, with
3 O Christ, you are the Lord of all in
4 All praise, O ris - en Lord, we give to

sun shone out with fair - er light when, to their long - ing
con - stant love our hearts pos - sess; to you our lips will
this our Eas - ter fes - ti - val, for you will be our
you, once dead, but now a - live! To God the Fa - ther

eyes re - stored, the a - pos - tles saw their ris - en Lord!
ev - er raise the trib - ute of our grate - ful praise.
strength and shield from ev - 'ry weap - on death can wield.
e - qual praise, and God the Spir - it, now we raise!

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.

Trusting in the power of Christ's resurrection to heal and redeem our broken world, let us pray for the needs of all creation.

A brief silence.

Almighty God, you give life to the dead and call into existence things that do not exist. Breathe your Spirit upon us, that our faith may be renewed day by day. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Maker of heaven and earth, your mercies are new every morning. Open us to the wonders of creation, from the beauty of flowers to the complexity of subatomic particles.

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God of peace, in every place where conflict rages, sow seeds of calm and openness to reconciliation. Strengthen the resolve of leaders and citizens to work for peace in their nations. In Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, equip the ministries of churches and nurture the growth of justice and peace. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Healing God, come alongside all who are doubting, fearful, or suffering in any way. Reveal to them your presence and assure them of the inheritance you have prepared for them. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Giver of joy, let this assembly be a place of genuine love and mutual affection. Deepen our care for one another and help us to embody your forgiving and sacrificial love.

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Holy Guide, we pray for our Little Lamb Preschool community, for Laura, Mallory and Trinity who teach the Lunch Bunch class, and for these students and their families: Ajay, Ava, Ben, Emilia, Emma, George, Jack, Tip, Nash, Nicolo, Parker, Tate, Titus, Ginny and Will. Bless the students in their growth and learning, that they might know your love more and more each day; strengthen and equip their families in their calling to nurture your beloved children. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Eternal One, we give thanks for saints who were faithful unto death and have joined the church triumphant. Inspire us by their witness and bring us with them into your glorious presence. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God of resurrection power, use us and these prayers to proclaim the good news of new life to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Savior.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*We invite those worshiping 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 offerings of its members and guests. Because offerings are never just about us, this month we are sharing a portion of your gifts with CoAction coaction.care.

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



OFFERTORY

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice & Sing

Manz

OFFERING PRAYER

The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.

Merciful God,

accept the fruits of our labor, gathered to give you glory.

You have set a table before us, a glimpse of that great day

when we will hunger and thirst no more.

Nourish us with the body and blood of Jesus,

that goodness and mercy may follow us

and bless the world you love.

In the name of Jesus,

Amen.

THE 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 four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The lyrics are: "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 words "And al - so with you.", "We lift them to the Lord.", and "It is right to give our thanks and praise." are in bold.

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'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

The image shows four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The lyrics are: "Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est." The words "Ho - san - na" are repeated three times.

TABLE PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

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

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the table of new life.

Receive the risen Lord.

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)

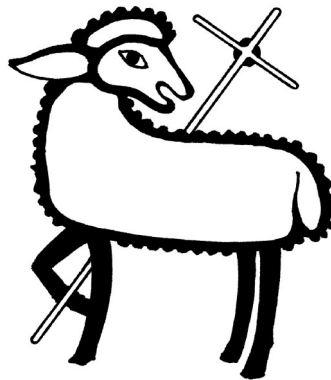
The blood of Christ, shed for you.

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; they are received via 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.



COMMUNION HYMNS

ACS #933 *Day of Delight and Beauty Unbounded*



1 Day of de - light and beau - ty un - bound - ed, tell the news, the gos - pel
2 Day of de - light and beau - ty un - bound - ed, tell the news, the gos - pel



spread! Day of all won - der, day of all splen - dor, praise Christ
spread! Day of all won - der, day of all splen - dor, praise Christ



ris - en from the dead! Sing of the sun from dark - ness ap -
ris - en from the dead! Sing now of mourn - ing turned in - to



pear - ing; sing of the seed from bar - ren earth green - ing;
danc - ing; sing now the mys - t'ry, hope of our glo - ry;



sing of cre - a - tion, al - le - lu - ia! Sing of the
sing with thanks - giv - ing, al - le - lu - ia! Sing now of



stream from Je - sus' side flow - ing; sing of the saints in
fast - ing turned in - to feast - ing; sing the Lord's fa - vor



wa - ter made ho - ly; sing of sal - va - tion, al - le - lu - ia!
last - ing for - ev - er; sing, all things liv - ing, al - le - lu - ia!

ELW #368 *With High Delight Let Us Unite*



1 With high de - light let us u - nite in
2 True God, he first from death has burst forth
3 Let prais - es ring; give thanks, and bring to



songs of great ju - bi - la - tion. You pure in heart, all
in - to life, all sub - du - ing. His en - e - my now
Christ our Lord ad - o - ra - tion. His hon - or speed by



bear your part, sing Je - sus Christ, our sal - va - tion. To
van-quished see; his death has been death's un - do - ing. "And
word and deed to ev - 'ry land, ev - 'ry na - tion. So



set us free for - ev - er, he is ris'n and sends to
yours shall be like vic - to - ry o'er death and grave," says
shall his love give us a - bove, from mis - er - y and



all earth's ends good news to save ev - 'ry na - tion.
he, who gave his life for us, life re - new - ing.
death set free, all joy and full con - so - la - tion.

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

Holy One,
through this meal you have made your home among us
and are making all things new.
Send us now to speak peace to anxious hearts,
to love our enemies,
and to bring your healing to the nations.
In the name of Jesus,
Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

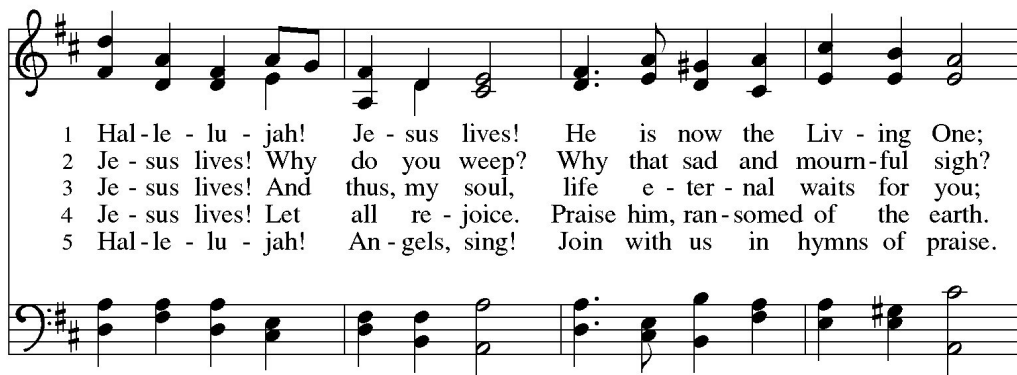
INVITATIONS

The assembly is seated as brief invitations are shared, especially those related to the assembly's participation in God's mission in the world.

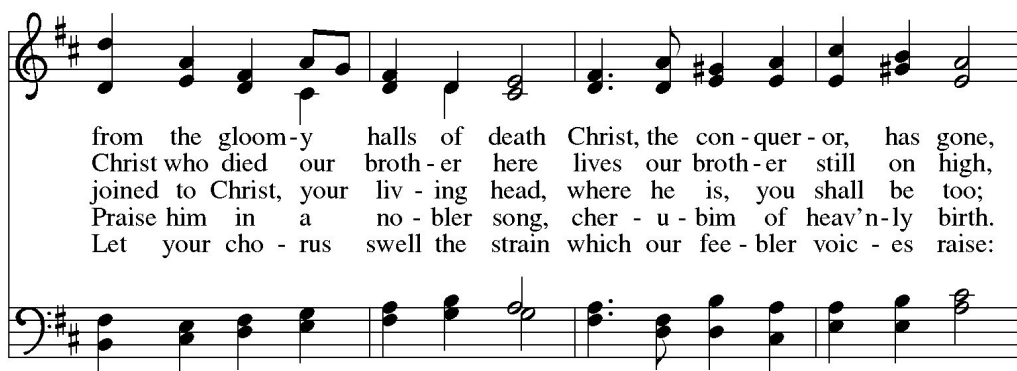
BLESSING

God Almighty, who is the beginning and the end,
Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the dead,
and the Spirit, our advocate and peace,
✠ bless you now and forever.
Amen.

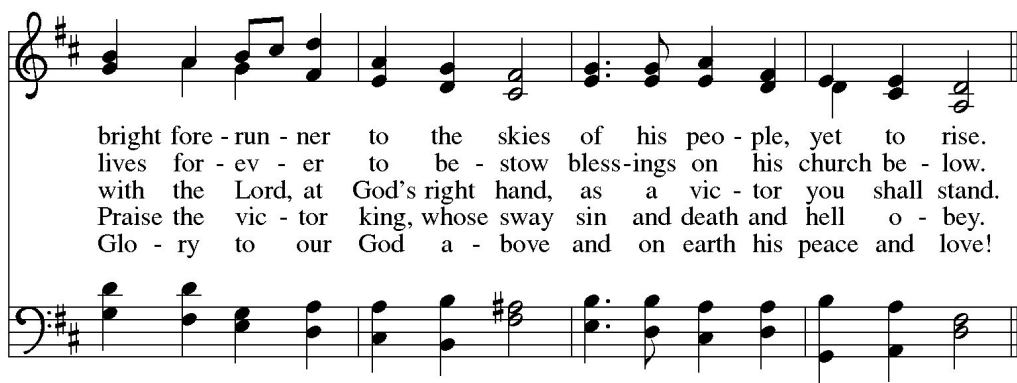
SENDING HYMN ELW #380

Hallelujah! Jesus Lives!


1 Hal-le - lu - jah! Je - sus lives! He is now the Liv - ing One;
 2 Je - sus lives! Why do you weep? Why that sad and mourn-ful sigh?
 3 Je - sus lives! And thus, my soul, life e - ter - nal waits for you;
 4 Je - sus lives! Let all re - joice. Praise him, ran-somed of the earth.
 5 Hal-le - lu - jah! An - gels, sing! Join with us in hymns of praise.



from the gloom-y halls of death Christ, the con - quer - or, has gone,
 Christ who died our broth - er here lives our broth - er still on high,
 joined to Christ, your liv - ing head, where he is, you shall be too;
 Praise him in a no - bler song, cher - u - bim of heav'n-ly birth.
 Let your cho - rus swell the strain which our fee - bler voic - es raise:



bright fore - run - ner to the skies of his peo - ple, yet to rise.
 lives for - ev - er to be - stow bless-ings on his church be - low.
 with the Lord, at God's right hand, as a vic - tor you shall stand.
 Praise the vic - tor king, whose sway sin and death and hell o - bey.
 Glo - ry to our God a - bove and on earth his peace and love!

Children join the pastors to send us in mission.

DISMISSAL

Children: Go in peace. Praise the Lord. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

POSTLUDE

Christ is Alive! Let Christians Sing

Kerr



Worship Leaders	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte		Noah DeJesus
Lector	Tim Kratz	Phil Hahn
Prayer Assistant	Paige Reichardt	Phil Hahn
Communion Assistants	Linda Mapes Betty Lockett	Phil Hahn Holly Knauff
Ushers	Tim Sutherland Kathy Sutherland	
Sound/Light	Lance Nolting	Tony Reinhold
Video/Livestream		
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch	
Communion Baker	Candance Jacques	

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of **Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania**

We give thanks for:

- the blending of Christian traditions and practices, from the West and East
- the faithful witness of churches amid political changes
- those working for more democratic governance in these countries
- those who welcome newcomers and provide for them and others in need.

We pray for:

- better relationships among different ethnic groups and traditions
- respect for the rights of children, women, the young and the elderly, so they can receive adequate education, jobs and health care
- economic developments that serve all people ending practices that harm the air, soil and forests, and installing instead measures to protect the environment.



Be Curious

The hit Apple TV series *Ted Lasso* became a cultural phenomenon as the first season was released in August 2020, in the thick of the global pandemic. This sports-comedy-drama told the story of the title character, an American college football coach turned professional English soccer coach with zero experience in that sport. Ted's genuine positivity was hilariously infectious amid the real challenges he faced in his work and relationships. He encouraged people not to make assumptions of one another and to "be curious" in life.

In many ways, the disciple Thomas could have been an acolyte of Ted Lasso. Though he is often dubbed "the doubter," Thomas's disposition was really one of curiosity. After all, how could he not be curious? He was the one disciple who missed out on Jesus' first resurrection appearance in that locked house. Who wouldn't feel the sting of missing such a sight, and hope to share in a similar experience? Thomas, in his faithfully curious way, desired to put his hands in Jesus' pierced hands and side. His belief in the resurrection was contingent upon the quenching of his curiosity. That is, without his inquisitiveness, the story lacks its climactic revelation: Thomas's proclamation, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).

We could go on labeling Thomas a doubter, but such a title is unfortunately riddled with disparaging connotations. Perhaps we would do well to claim him as "Thomas the curious," recognizing that doubt and belief intersect along curiosity's pathway. Thomas may just be our example of how to perceive the resurrection in our midst, thereby leading us into a deeper understanding of life with the risen Christ. After all, it is his proclamation we share in the Easter season as we declare Jesus crucified and risen. May we, too, be curious as we look for signs of Easter among us.

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2026 Augsburg Fortress.

All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #26201.

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Portions printed under OneLicense.net License #A-711129.

Cover art permission by Stushie Art.