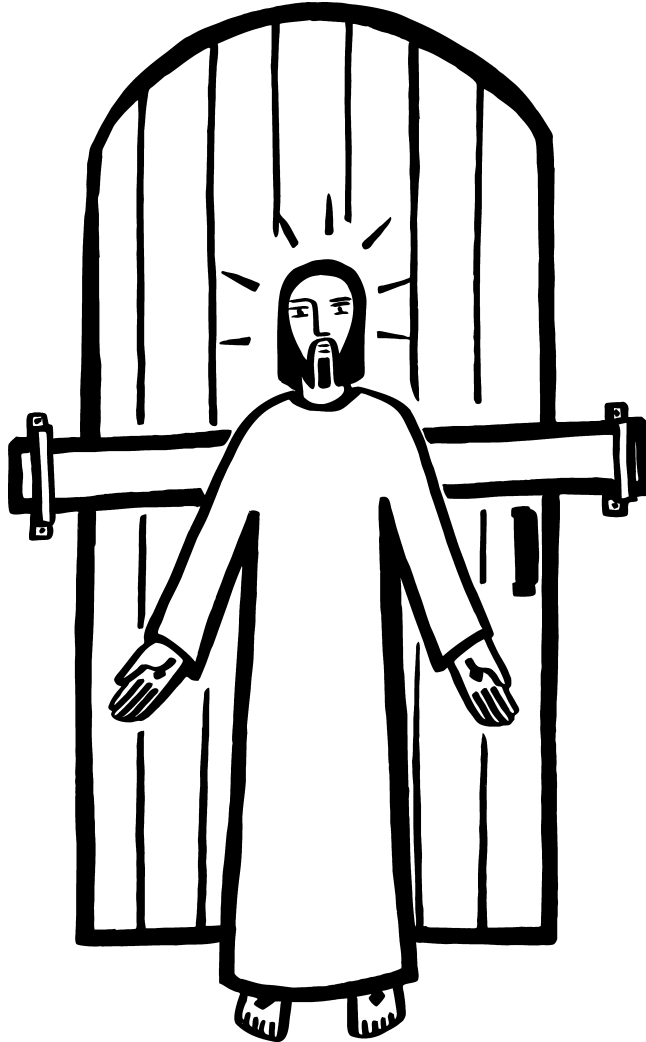




**Christ
Lutheran**
CHURCH

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



Second Sunday of Easter
April 7, 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.

The Easter season is a week of weeks, seven Sundays when we play in the mystery of Christ's presence, mostly through the glorious Gospel of John. Today we gather with the disciples on the first Easter, and Jesus breathes the Spirit on us. With Thomas we ask for a sign, and Jesus offers us his wounded self in the broken bread. From frightened individuals we are transformed into a community of open doors, peace, forgiveness, and material sharing such that no one among us is in need.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

Prelude in G

Mendelssohn

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.

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.

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.

READING: Acts 4:32-35

While the apostles testified to others about the resurrection of Jesus, the early Christian community shared what they owned or sold their possessions to help their fellow believers who were in need.

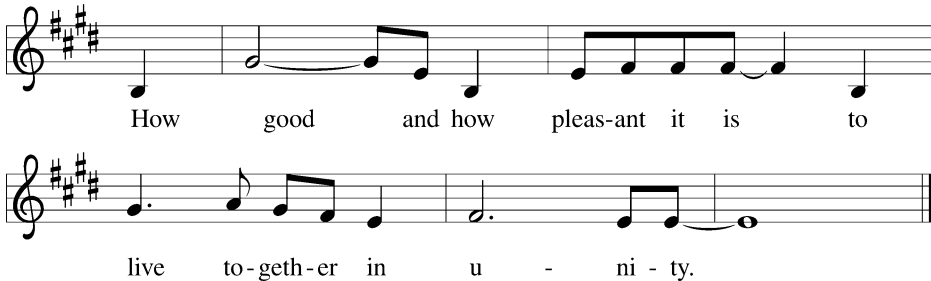
³²Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. ³³With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. ³⁵They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM 133

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

Refrain



How good and how pleas-ant it is to
live to-geth-er in u - ni - ty.

Psalm Tone



¹How good and how pleas-¹ ant it is,

when kindred live togeth-¹ er in unity!

²**It is like fine oil upon the head, flowing down up-¹ on the beard,
upon the beard of Aaron, flowing down upon the collar¹ of his robe. R**

³It is like the dew of Hermon flowing down upon the¹ hills of Zion.

For there the LORD has commanded the blessing: life for-¹ evermore. R

READING: 1 John 1:1-2:2

The opening of this letter serves as a reality check. The reality of God is light, but our confessed reality has been sin. God cleanses us from our sinful reality through Christ's death so that we live in fellowship with Christ and walk in God's light.

¹We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—²this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—³we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and

in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; ⁷but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

^{2:1}My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ²and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

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 20:19-31

The story of Easter continues as the risen Jesus appears to his disciples. His words to Thomas offer a blessing to all who entrust themselves in faith to the risen Lord.

The Holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁹When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked 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. ²¹Jesus 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. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So 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."

²⁶A 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."

³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹But these are written so that you may come 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!

Text: Latin hymn, 5th cent.; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866, alt.
Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621

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 church cries out, O God, and you listen. As you drew near to the disciples, draw near to us this day. Breathe on us your Holy Spirit, that our faith is renewed and we witness to your love. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Your creation cries out, O God, and you listen. Nurture trees, crops, wildflowers, and all growing things. Guide farmers, gardeners, arborists, and others who tend the soil and nurture plants into life. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Your world cries out, O God, and you listen. Guide police, firefighters, paramedics, and other first responders to work for the well-being of communities and the dignity of every person, that no one may need to live in fear. In Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, empower churches to be signs of your reconciliation, justice, and new life. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Your children cry out, O God, and you listen. Hear your people crying out for justice, for an end to racism and other oppression, and for a world where all are fed and safe. We pray for all who cry out in suffering or pain. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Your congregations cry out, O God, and you listen. Renew pastors, deacons, musicians, and other staff, administrators, and volunteers who facilitated Holy Week and Easter worship. Open our hearts to discern where God calls each of us to serve. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Accept our gratitude, O God, for the lives of those who now rest in you, especially Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Mikael Agricola. Grant us your peace amid our fears. 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 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 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 NWI Community Action www.nwi-ca.com (5240 Fountain Drive, Crown Point) and Housing Opportunities www.hoi.help (2001 Calumet Ave., Valpo) – now one combined organization.



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

That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright

arr. Manz

The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.

OFFERING PRAYER

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.

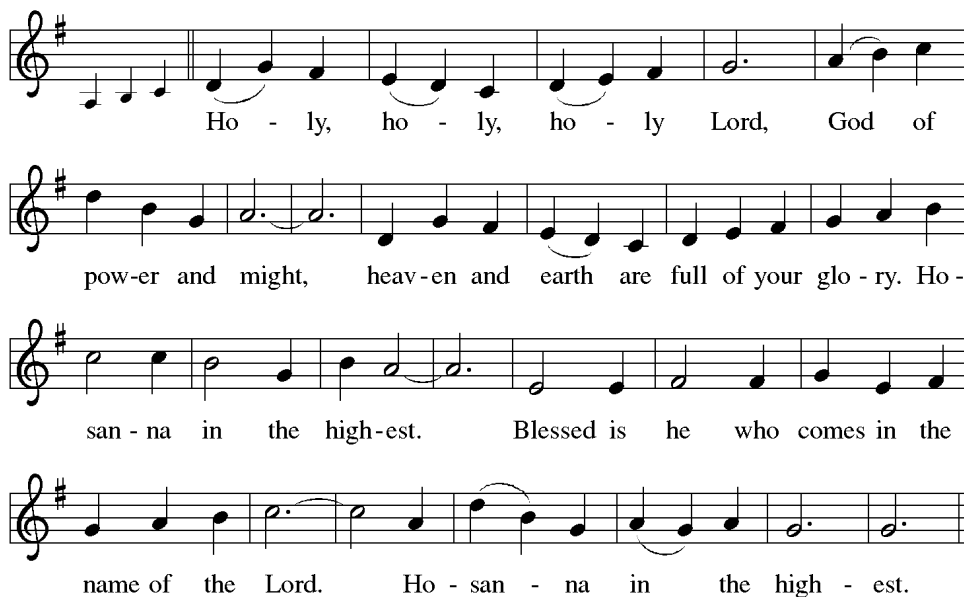


It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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.

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.

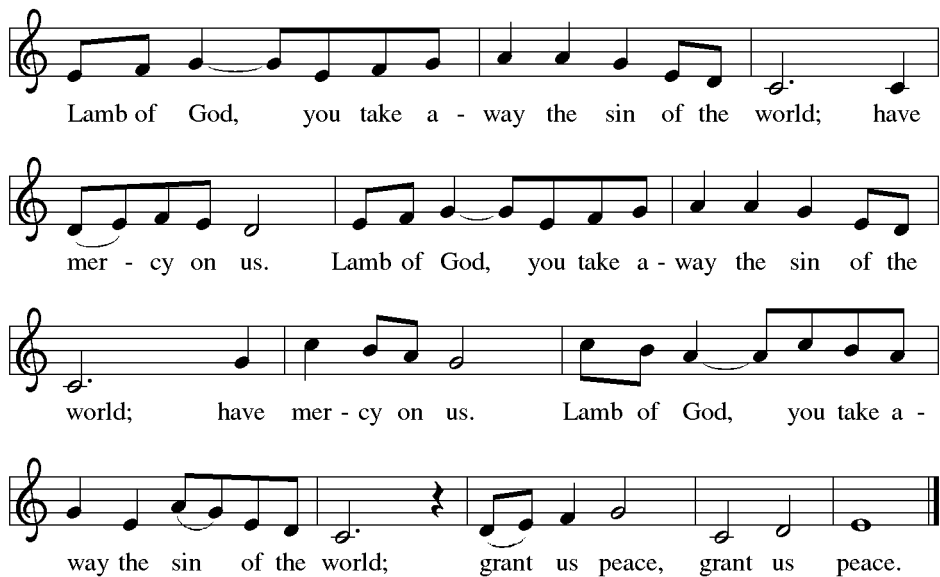
Amen (receive the bread)

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; 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



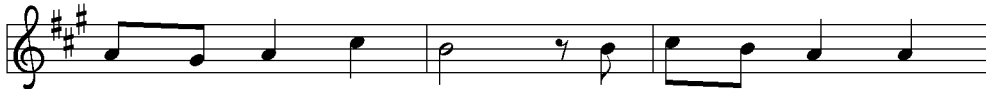
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.



COMMUNION HYMNS: ELW #635 *We Walk by Faith*



1 We walk by faith and not by sight; with
2 We may not touch your hands and side, nor
3 Help then, O Lord, our un - be - lief; and
4 For you, O res - ur - rec - ted Lord, are
5 And when our life of faith is done, in



gra - cious words draw near, O Christ, who spoke as
fol - low where you trod; but in your prom - ise
may our faith a - bound to call on you when
found in means di - vine: be - neath the wa - ter
realms of clear - er light may we be - hold you



none e'er spoke: "My peace be with you here."
we re - jice, and cry, "My Lord and God!"
you are near and seek where you are found:
and the word, be - neath the bread and wine.
as you are, with full and end - less sight.

Text: Henry Alford, 1810–1871, alt.

Music: SHANTI, Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music © 1984 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358.

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ACS # 933 *Day of Delight & 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!

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939
 Music: IN DIR IST FREUDE, Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi, 1556–1622
 Text © 2011 GIA Publications, Inc., giamusic.com. All rights reserved.

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.

SENDING HYMN ELW #548

Rise, O Church, like Christ Arisen



1 Rise, O church, like Christ a - ris - en,
 2 Rise, trans - formed, and choose to fol - low
 3 Rise, re - mem - ber well the fu - ture;
 4 Ser - vice be our sure vo - ca - tion;



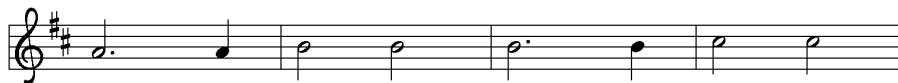
from this meal of love and grace;
 af - ter Christ, though wound - ed, whole;
 God has called us to re - ceive;
 cour - age be our dai - ly breath;



may we through such love en - vi - sion
 bro - ken, shared, our lives are hal - lowed
 pres - ent by God's lov - ing nur - ture,
 mer - cy be our des - ti - na - tion



whose we are, and whose, our praise.
 to re - lease and to con - sole.
 Spir - it - ed then let us live.
 from this day and un - to death.



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



God, the won - der of our days.
 Christ, our pres - ent, past, and goal.
 Spir - it, grace by whom we live.
 Rise, O church, a liv - ing faith.

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953
 Music: SURGE ECCLESIA, Timothy J. Strand, b. 1958
 Text © 1997 Susan Palo Cherwien, admin. Augsburg Fortress.
 Music © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

DISMISSAL

Children: Alleluia! Go in peace.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

POSTLUDE

Allegro moderato

Kittel

Worship Leaders

	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte	Luke Ridley	Audrey Crill
Lector	Crystal Ridley	Heather Budnik
Prayer Assistant	Darla Hernandez	Grace Safrin
Communion Assistants	Betty Lockett Bob Lockett	Amy Knauff Erin Crill
Ushers	Irene Adams Luke Venstrom	
Sound/Light	Zach Wehner	Jeff Peiffer
Video/Livestream	-----	Ben Crill
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartusch	
Worship Participants	Robert Summerville, guest organist Madeline Fry, cantor	
Communion Baker	Angela Wehner	

COMMEMORATIONS

Week of April 7, 2024

April 9

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, theologian, died 1945

Bonhoeffer (BON-heh-fer) was a German theologian who, at the age of twenty-five, became a lecturer in systematic theology at the University of Berlin. In 1933, and with Hitler's rise to power, Bonhoeffer became a leading spokesman for the Confessing Church, a resistance movement against the Nazis. He was arrested in 1943. He was linked to a failed attempt on Hitler's life and sent to Buchenwald, then to Schönberg prison. After leading a worship service on April 8, 1945, at Schönberg prison, he was taken away to be hanged the next day. His last words as he left were, "This is the end, but for me the beginning of life." *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* includes a hymn (626) by Bonhoeffer, "By Gracious Powers."

April 10

Mikael Agricola, Bishop of Turku, died 1557

Agricola was consecrated as the bishop of Turku in 1554, without papal approval. As a result, he began a reform of the Finnish church along Lutheran lines. He translated the New Testament, the prayerbook, hymns, and the mass into Finnish, and through this work set the rules of orthography that are the basis of modern Finnish spelling. His thoroughgoing work is particularly remarkable in that he accomplished it in only three years. He died suddenly on a return trip from negotiating a peace treaty with the Russians.



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

Stewardship Snippet

Acts 4:34-35 –There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

The earliest church presents a vision of community stewardship. When everyone shares, no one is needy. How does this passage challenge you? What would be a first-step response?

Sharing Joy

“Thank you for sharing our joy,” said the parents of the bride to the wedding guests. This simple message sums up the reason we gather with loved ones to celebrate the best moments of our lives. When we share our joy, it multiplies.

When the disciples were gathered in a locked room, the appearance of the risen Jesus transformed their fear into joy. On the evening of the resurrection, all the disciples except Thomas were together. They got to see Jesus standing among them, and they rejoiced! Immediately, Jesus gave them the gift of the Holy Spirit. He also sent them out to continue his work in the world, including the forgiveness of sins.

With that commissioning, Jesus channeled the disciples’ joy into a sense of belonging and purpose. Now they were no longer afraid or isolated. Jesus was alive. Everything had changed! Their risen Lord made them into a new community. But Thomas wasn’t there when Jesus first stood among them, and he couldn’t grasp the good news. He saw the joy radiating from the other disciples’ faces, but he didn’t share it.

As a gift of grace, Jesus appeared again and brought Thomas into the new community. He let the skeptical disciple see and touch the wounds on his body. By doing so, Jesus extended the joy and sense of belonging that the others had experienced to Thomas, who responded with joy, “My Lord and my God!”

As disciples of Jesus, we belong to the same resurrection community that our risen Lord created that first Easter evening. We get to share our joy in the promise of forgiveness of sins and eternal life with those around us. Our believing and sense of belonging fortify each other. As today’s reading from 1 John declares, when we celebrate Jesus’ resurrection and carry out God’s work in the world together, our joy is made complete.

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