



Grace Lutheran Church | 824 N. Buchanan Blvd. | Durham, NC 27701

The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod



FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

APRIL 28, 2024

David H. Brooks, Pastor

Mission Statement: Welcoming Everyone to Walk the Way of GRACE:
Grow with Jesus • Rejoice in God • Answer with Hope • Care for the Neighbor
• Embrace Community

Website: www.gracedurham.org

Contact Us: office@gracedurham.org • 919.682.6030

Service Times: Sunday – 8:30 AM & 11:00 AM

Livestream (11:00 AM): www.gracedurham.org/livestream-channel

Call In - Audio Only (11:00 AM): 309-205-3325, 360-209-5623, 386-347-5053, 507-473-4847, 564-217-2000, 669-444-9171

Meeting ID: 825 4920 8056 / **Passcode:** 9196826030

WELCOME TO GRACE:

“I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go into the house of the LORD.’”

- Psalm 122:1

Worshiping with us the first time? Please fill out a guest card in the pew racks and tell us about yourself. If you have any questions, please ask an usher or any friendly face you see!

Copies of the week’s eNews announcements are located in the Narthex.

We welcome children in worship services.

Age-appropriate activity bags are located in the Narthex.

PRELUDE: *"Sinfonia from Cantata 129" - J. S. Bach*

CALL TO WORSHIP

ENTRANCE HYMN: *"Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation" LBW 367*

1 Christ is made the sure foun - da - tion, Christ, our head and
2 To this tem - ple, where we call you, Come, O Lord of
3 Grant, we pray, to all your faith - ful All the gifts they
4 Praise and hon - or to the Fa - ther, Praise and hon - or

cor - ner - stone, Cho - sen of the Lord and pre - cious,
hosts, and stay; Come, with all your lov - ing - kind - ness,
ask to gain; What they gain from you for - ev - er
to the Son, Praise and hon - or to the Spir - it,

Bind - ing all the Church in one; Ho - ly Zi - on's
Hear your peo - ple as they pray; And your full - est
With the bless - ed to re - tain; And here - af - ter
Ev - er three and ev - er one: One in might and

help for - ev - er And our con - fi - dence a - lone.
ben - e - dic - tion Shed with - in these walls to - day.
in your glo - ry Ev - er - more with you to reign.
one in glo - ry While un - end - ing a - ges run!

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KYRIE:

A In peace let us pray to the Lord.

B Lord, have mer - cy.

A For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



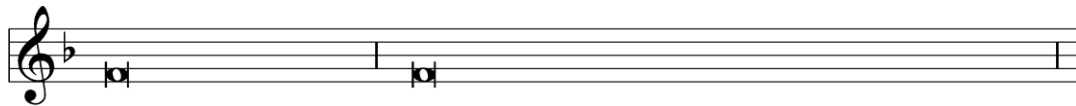
A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



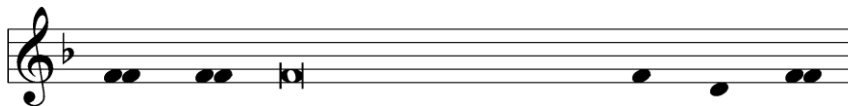
A For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise



let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



A Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord.



C A - men.

THIS IS THE FEAST:

Refrain

C 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
 2 Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and strength, and
 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of God, and
 4 Bless - ing, hon - or, glo - ry, and might be to
 5 For the Lamb who was slain has be -

blood set us free to be peo - ple of God. *Refrain*
 hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are His. *Refrain*
 join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: *Stanza 4*
 God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men. *Refrain*
 gun His reign. Al - le - lu - ia. *Final Refrain*

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.

Text: 66 66 D; Christian H. Bateman, 1813–1889, alt. Music: anon. melody, Philadelphia, 1826. Contributors: MADRID, Christian Bateman; Reprinted / Streamed with Permission under One License #A-701734. All Rights Reserved.

SALUTATION AND COLLECT FOR THE DAY:

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray . . .

O God, You make the minds of Your faithful to be of one will. Grant that we may love what You have commanded and desire what You promise, that among the many changes of this world our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

THE FIRST LESSON:

Acts 8:26–40 (Pew Bible, pg. 917)

The First Lesson is from the 8th Chapter of Acts.

26An angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place.

27And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship²⁸and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

29And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.”

30So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

31And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

32Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep He was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He opens not His mouth.

33In His humiliation justice was denied Him. Who can describe His generation? For His life is taken away from the earth.”

34And the eunuch said to Philip, “About Whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?”

35Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.

36And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?”

38And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

39And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

40But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM 150: *“Praise God in His Holy Dwelling” Gather Comp. 142*

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

1. Praise God in his ho - ly dwell - ing; Praise him on his
 2. Praise him with the blast of trum - pet; Praise him now with
 3. Praise him with re - sound - ing cym - bals; With cym - bals that
 4. Praise God the al - might - y Fa - ther; Praise Christ his be -

might - y throne; Praise him for his won - der - ful
 lyre and harps; Praise him with the tim - brel and
 crash, give praise; O let ev - 'ry - thing that has
 lov - ed Son; Give praise to the Spir - it of

deeds; Praise him for his sov - 'reign maj - es - ty.
 dance; Praise him with the sound of string and reed.
 breath, Let all liv - ing crea - tures praise the Lord.
 love; For ev - er the Tri - une God be praised.

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

al - le - lu - ia. lu - ia.

Text: Psalm 150:1-2, 3-4, 5-6; adapt. by Omer Westendorf, © 1964, World Library Publications, Inc.; Reprinted / Streamed with Permission Under One License #A-701734. All Rights Reserved.

EPISTLE LESSON:

1 John 4:1–21 (*Pew Bible, pg. 1023*)

The Epistle Lesson is from the 4th Chapter of First John.

¹Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

²By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,³and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you

heard was coming and now is in the world already.

⁴Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for He Who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

⁵They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them.

⁶We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

⁸Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

⁹In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.

¹⁰In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us.

¹³By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.

¹⁴And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world.

¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in Him, and He in God.

¹⁶So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

¹⁷By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as He is so also are we in this world.

¹⁸There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

¹⁹We love because He first loved us.

²⁰If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God Whom he has not seen.

²¹And this commandment we have from Him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

ALLELUIA AND VERSE:

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.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the fifteenth Chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

HOLY GOSPEL:

John 15:1–8 (*Pew Bible, pg. 901*)

¹[Jesus said:] “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.

²Every branch of Mine that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.

⁴Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it

is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

⁶If anyone does not abide in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

⁷If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

⁸By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples.”

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON: **The Rev. Dr. David H. Brooks**

HYMN OF THE DAY: *WOV 668 "There in God's Garden"*

1 There in God's gar - den stands the Tree of Wis - dom,
 2 Its name is Je - sus, name that says, "Our Sa - vior!"
 3 Thorns not its own are tan - gled in its fo - liage;
 4 See how its branch - es reach to us in wel - come;

whose leaves hold forth the heal - ing of the na - tions:
 There on its branch - es see the scars of suf - fring;
 our greed has starved it, our de - spite has choked it.
 hear what the Voice says, "Come to me, ye wea - ry!

Tree of all knowl - edge, Tree of all com -
 see where the ten - drils of our hu - man
 Yet, look! it lives! its grief has not de -
 Give me your sick - ness, give me all your

pas - sion, Tree of all beau - ty.
 self - hood feed on its life - blood.
 stroyed it nor fire con - sumed it.
 sor - row, I will give bless - ing."

5 This is my ending,
 this my resurrection;
 into your hands, Lord,
 I commit my spirit.
 This have I searched for;
 now I can possess it.
 This ground is holy.

6 All heav'n is singing,
 "Thanks to Christ whose Passion
 offers in mercy
 healing, strength, and pardon.
 Peoples and nations,
 take it, take it freely!"
 Amen! My Master!

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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; by the power of the Holy Spirit He became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.

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. With the Father and the Son He is worshiped and glorified. He 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.

..... **WE OFFER OURSELVES TO THE LORD**

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH:

- P** Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs. . .
- P** Lord in Your mercy,
- C** **Hear our prayer.**

- P** Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- C** **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE:

Following the prayers, the people may greet one another in the name of the Lord, with the 'hand wave of peace', as a sign of reconciliation and of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Matthew 5:22–24; Ephesians 4:1–3).

OFFERTORY: “On a Melody of Vulpius” - Healey Willan (no choir today)

OFFERTORY:

† meaning the whole Church as it confesses the wholeness of the Christian doctrine



C What shall I ren-der to the Lord for all His ben-e-fits to me? I will of-fer the sac-ri-fice of thanks-giv-ing and will call on the name of the Lord. I will take the cup of sal-va-tion and will call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the pres-ence of all His peo-ple, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Je-ru-sa-lem.

..... OUR LORD GIVES HIMSELF TO US

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT


PREFACE:



P The Lord be with you.



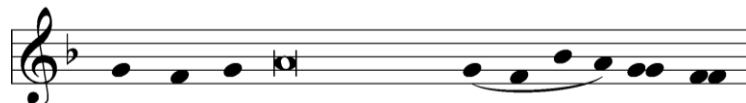
C And al - so with you.



P Lift up your hearts.



C We lift them to the Lord.



P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



C It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

P It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, . . . and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS:



C 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.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER AND WORDS OF INSTITUTION:

P You are indeed Holy, O God, the Fountain of all holiness; You bring light from darkness, life from death, speech from silence . . .

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

C **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

P Therefore, O God, with this bread and cup we remember the incarnation of Your Son . . . with us the great and promised feast.

C **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

P Send now, we pray, Your Holy Spirit, that we and all who share in this bread and cup may be united in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, may enter the

fullness of the Kingdom of Heaven, and may receive our inheritance with all Your saints in light.

C Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

P Join our prayers with those of Your servants of every time and every place, and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our Great High Priest until He comes as victorious Lord of all. Through Him, with Him, in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are Yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

C Amen.

P Remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

LORD'S PRAYER:

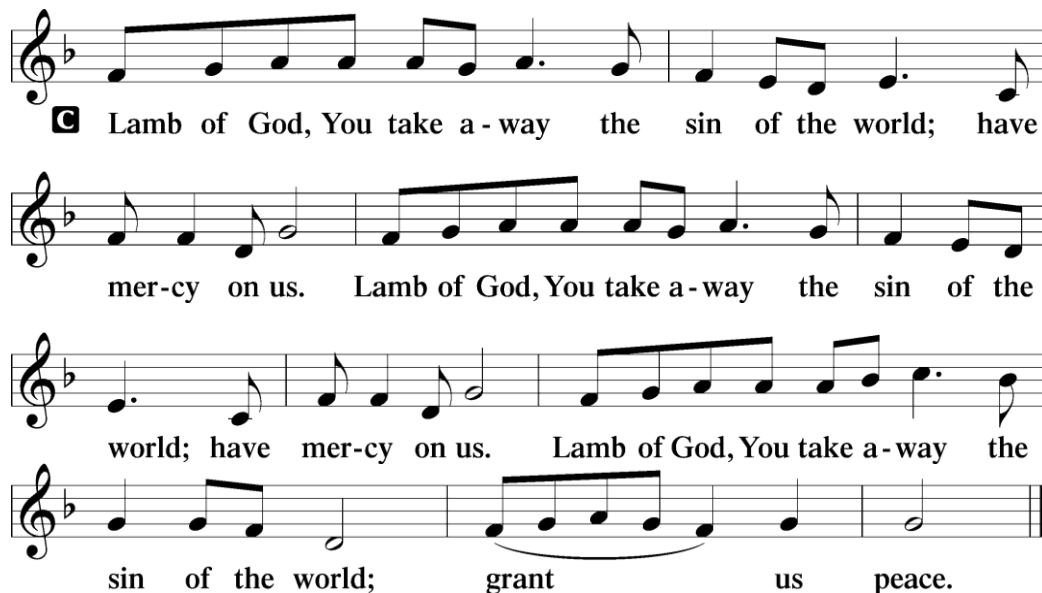
C Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

PAX DOMINI:

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.

AGNUS DEI:



C 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.

HOLY COMMUNION:

Receiving Holy Communion

As Lutheran Christians, we believe, teach, and confess that Jesus Christ gives us His own true Body and Blood via the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 10:16). We trust His promise that this Supper is for the forgiveness of our sins, the increase of our faith, and the strengthening of our life as the Church. Baptized Christians who share our confession, repent of their sins, and seek the Lord's blessing are welcome to receive. *First time guests are kindly asked to speak to our pastor or an usher before receiving communion.* Those not communing are welcome to come forward to receive a blessing.

[For silent prayer before communing]

Dear Savior, at Your gracious invitation I come to Your table to eat and drink Your holy body and blood. Let me find favor in Your eyes to receive this Holy Sacrament in faith for the salvation of my soul and to the glory of Your holy name; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

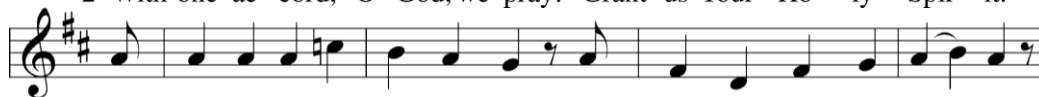
[For silent prayer after receiving the Sacrament]

Almighty and everlasting God, I thank and praise You for feeding me the life-giving body and blood of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Send Your Holy Spirit that, having with my mouth received the holy Sacrament, I may by faith obtain and eternally enjoy Your divine grace, the forgiveness of sins, unity with Christ, and life eternal; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

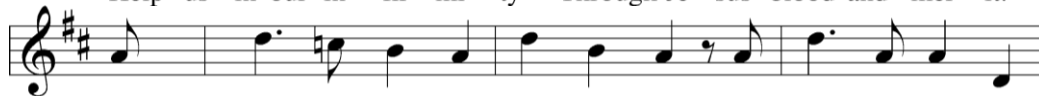
DISTRIBUTION HYMNS: **LSB 601 "All Who Believe and Are Baptized"**



1 All who be-lieve and are bap-tized Shall see the Lord's sal - va - tion;
2 With one ac - cord, O God, we pray: Grant us Your Ho - ly Spir - it.



Bap-tized in - to the death of Christ, They are a new cre - a - tion.
Help us in our in - fir - mi - ty Through Je - sus' blood and mer - it.



Through Christ's re-demp-tion they shall stand A - mong the glo-rious,
Grant us to grow in grace each day That by this sac - ra -



heav'n - ly band Of ev - 'ry tribe and na - tion.
ment we may E - ter - nal life in - her - it.

Text: Thomas Hansen Kingo, 1634-1703; tr. George A. T. Rygh, 1860-1942, alt.; Tune: Etlich Cristlich liden, 1524, Wittenberg
Text and tune: Public domain

LSB 595 "O Blessed Spring"

1 O bless-ed spring, where Word and sign Em - brace us
 2 Through sum-mer heat of youth-ful years, Un - cer - tain
 3 When au-tumn cools and youth is cold, When limbs their
 4 As win - ter comes, as win - ters must, We breathe our
 5 Christ, ho - ly Vine, Christ, liv - ing Tree, Be praised for

in - to Christ the Vine: Here Christ en - joins each one to
 faith, re - bel - lious tears, Sus - tained by Christ's in - fus - ing
 heav - y har - vest hold, Then through us, warm, the Christ will
 last, re - turn to dust; Still held in Christ, our souls take
 this blest mys - ter - y: That Word and wa - ter thus re -

be A branch of this life - giv - ing Tree.
 rain, The boughs will shout for joy a - gain.
 move With gifts of beau - ty, wis - dom, love.
 wing And trust the prom - ise of the spring.
 vive And join us to Your Tree of Life.

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, 1953; Tune: English; Text: © 1993 Susan Palo Cherwien, admin. Augsburg Fortress.
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LBW 290 "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"

1 There's a wide - ness in God's mer - cy, Like the wide-ness of the sea;
 2 There is wel - come for the sin - ner, And a prom-ised grace made good;
 3 For the love of God is broad-er Than the mea-sures of our mind;
 4 'Tis not all we owe to Je - sus; It is some-thing more than all:

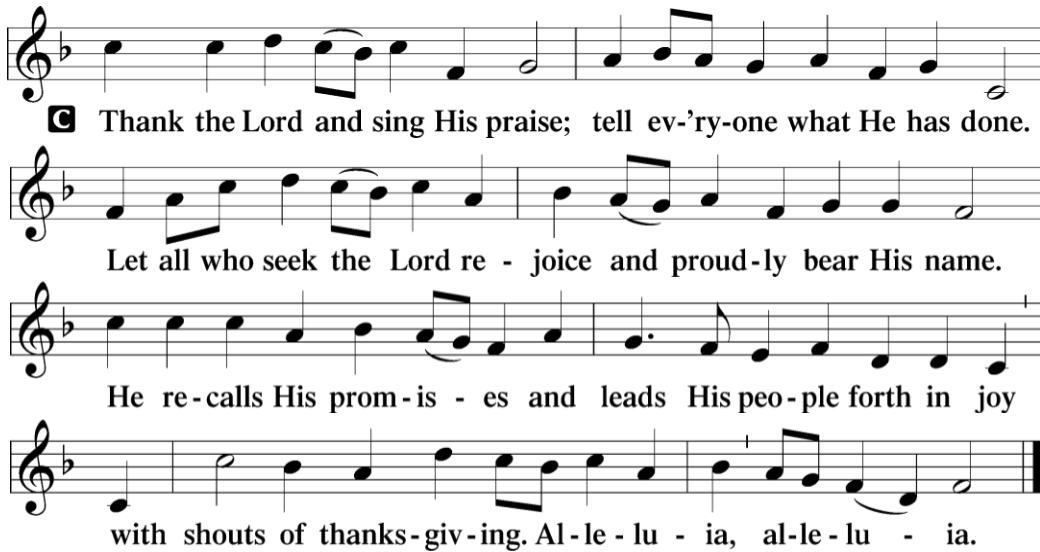
There's a kind - ness in his jus - tice Which is more than lib - er - ty.
 There is mer - cy with the Sav - ior; There is heal - ing in his blood.
 And the heart of the e - ter - nal Is most won - der - ful - ly kind.
 Great - er good be - cause of e - vil, Larg - er mer - cy through the fall.

There is no place where earth's sor - rows Are more felt than up in heav'n.
 There is grace e - nough for thou-sands Of new worlds as great as this;
 There is plen - ti - ful re - demp-tion In the blood that has been shed;
 If our love were but more sim - ple, We should take him at his word;

There is no place where earth's fail - ings Have such kind - ly judg-ment giv'n.
 There is room for fresh cre - a - tions In that up - per home of bliss.
 There is joy for all the mem-bers In the sor - rows of the head.
 And our lives would be all sun - shine In the sweet-ness of our Lord.

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THANK THE LORD:



C Thank the Lord and sing His praise; tell ev-'ry-one what He has done.
Let all who seek the Lord re - jice and proud-ly bear His name.
He re-calls His prom-is - es and leads His peo-ple forth in joy
with shouts of thanks-giv-ing. Al-le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia.

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT:

P Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

..... GOD BLESSES US AND SENDS US OUT

BENEDICTION:

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: *LBW 378 "Amid the World's Bleak Wilderness"*

1 A - mid the world's bleak wil - der - ness A vine - yard grows with
2 His love se - lect - ed this ter - rain; His vine with love he
3 We are his branch - es, cho - sen, dear, And though we feel the
4 From him we draw the juice of life, For him sup - ply his
prom - ise green, The plant - ing of the Lord him - self.
plant - ed here To bear the choic - est fruit for him.
dress - er's knife, We are the ob - jects of his care.
win - er - y With fruit from which true joys de - rive.
5 Vine, keep what I was meant to be: Your
branch, with your rich life in me.

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DISMISSAL:

- P** We go in the strength and joy of God! Let us not forget the things that our eyes have seen or let them fade from our hearts as long as we live (Deut 4:9). So let us recall what the Lord has set before us.
- P** What is Confession?
- C** Confession has two parts. First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.
- P** What sins should we confess and which are these?
- C** Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer; but before the pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.

Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments: Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you been hot-tempered, rude, or

quarrelsome? Have you hurt someone by your words or deeds? Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any harm?

P So go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

G Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE: *“Christ Lay in the Bonds of Death, BWV 625” - J. S. Bach*

SERVING YOU TODAY:

Guest Organist: Stephen Schaeffer

8:30 AM	<u>Ushers</u> Tom McGill* & Geoff Heintzeman <u>Greeter:</u> Kathy Peterson	<u>Readers</u> Marie Hammond	<u>Communion Assistants</u> Geoff Heintzeman
11:00 AM	Frank Oruwari & Gary Stuhlmiller* <u>Greeter:</u> Gary Stuhlmiller	Elmo Walston	Gary Stuhlmiller
	<u>Altar Guild:</u> John Kolba, Setup, Between Services & Clean-up		<u>A/V Operator:</u> Barb Tippin

*Acolyte

Jesus Christ Is the True Vine Who Bears Much Fruit in Us

“God is love,” and He has manifested Himself to us by sending “his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him” (1 John 4:9, 16). By the ministry of the Gospel, “he has given us of his Spirit,” so that we also believe and confess “that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.” In this way, we “abide in him and he in us,” and we “love one another” (1 John 4:2, 7, 13). Such divine love is exemplified in Philip’s preaching of “the good news about Jesus” to the Ethiopian eunuch. And when “they came to some water,” the eunuch was baptized into the very Gospel that Philip had preached (Acts 8:35–38). That Ethiopian was thereby grafted into “the true vine,” Jesus Christ (John 15:1), just as we are. Already we are clean because of the Word that Christ has spoken to us and by the washing of water with His Word. We now abide in Him by faith in His forgiveness. As He abides in us, both body and soul, with His own body and His blood, He “bears much fruit” in us (John 15:3–5).

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Acknowledgments: Divine Service, Setting One from Lutheran Service Book

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