

St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church

6 Easter + Saturday, May 4, 2024



INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

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.

BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves.

We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

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.

HYMN OF PRAISE *This Is the Feast*

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia!

Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,
whose blood set us free to be people of God. Refrain

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia!

Power, riches, wisdom, and strength, and honor, blessing, and glory are his.

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia!

Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation.

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia!

Blessing, honor, glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia!

For the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign. Alleluia.

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

O God, you have prepared for those who love you joys beyond understanding. Pour into our hearts such love for you that, loving you above all things, we may obtain your promises, which exceed all we can desire; through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST 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.

A reading from Acts.

⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. ⁴⁵The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, ⁴⁶for they heard them speaking in

tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷“Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸So 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: Psalm 98

¹Sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done marvelous things.

²**With his right hand and his holy arm
has he won for himself the victory.**

³The LORD has made known his victory;
his righteousness has he openly shown in the sight of the nations.

⁴**He remembers his mercy and faithfulness to the house of Israel,
and all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.**

⁵Shout with joy to the LORD, all you lands;
lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.

⁶**Sing to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and the voice of song.**

⁷With trumpets and the sound of the horn
shout with joy before the king, the LORD.

⁸**Let the sea make a noise and all that is in it,
the lands and those who dwell therein. R**

⁹Let the rivers clap their hands,
and let the hills ring out with joy before the LORD,
when he comes to judge the earth.

¹⁰**In righteousness shall he judge the world
and the peoples with equity.**

SECOND 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.

A reading from 1 John.

¹Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. ²By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. ³For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, ⁴for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our

faith. ⁵Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

⁶This 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

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia, alleluia.

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 St. John, the fifteenth chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] ⁹“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

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

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

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

THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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.

Your Holy Spirit falls upon all who hear the good news of Jesus. Fill your church with the gifts of your Spirit and give us understanding hearts to strengthen our commitments and friendships with our ecumenical 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. Draw nations and people together in partnership and cooperation for the well being of all. 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. Have mercy on all in need of your love, care and

healing, especially those whose names we speak out loud, in our hearts, or list online.
... 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. Inspire those who plan and lead
worship, and our council members as they meet next week. Bless the ministries of this
congregation: the work of our food pantry; the plans of our fellowship team; our
partnerships for childcare; the efforts of our online and streaming team; and the witness
of all your people here at St. Paul's. Empower us to embody your love for the world.
God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Your blessed saints now rest in you. Give us thankful hearts for those who have gone
before us. 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.

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
And also with you.

OFFERING

*We give our offerings in praise and thanksgiving for all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ
and for the sake of Jesus' ongoing mission and ministry in this world. We have been entrusted to
carry out this mission Jesus' name, bringing the good news of Jesus to the people of this
community and around the world. Please, take a minute of your time to make an electronic gift
through the St. Paul's Website www.stpauls-edison.org/online-giving.html. Please consider
making this gift a recurring gift, and look for ways to grow in your giving for the sake of Christ's
mission through this congregation. You may also mail your offering to St. Paul's Lutheran
Church, 445 Old Post Rd., Edison NJ 08817.*

PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS

**Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.
Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,
that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gather the hopes and dreams of all; unite them with the prayers we offer now.
Grace our table with your presence, Lord,
and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.**

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray.

Blessed are you,

O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also 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.

PREFACE

It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everliving God. But chiefly we are bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of our Lord; for he is the true Passover Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin, who by his death has destroyed death, and by his rising has brought us to eternal life. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

We give you thanks, Father, through Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, whom you sent in this end of the ages

to save and redeem us and to proclaim to us your will.

He is your Word, inseparable from you.

Through him you created all things, and in him you take delight.

He is your Word, sent from heaven to a virgin's womb.
He there took on our nature and our lot
and was shown forth as your Son,
born of the Holy Spirit and of the virgin Mary.

It is he, our Lord Jesus, who fulfilled all your will
and won for you a holy people;
he stretched out his hands in suffering
in order to free from suffering those who trust you.

It is he who, handed over to a death he freely accepted,
in order to destroy death, to break the bonds of the evil one,
to crush hell underfoot, to give light to the righteous,
to establish his covenant, and to show forth the resurrection,
taking bread and giving thanks to you, said:

Take and eat; this is my body, broken for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This is my blood poured out for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, then, his death and resurrection,
we lift this bread and cup before you,
giving you thanks that you have made us worthy
to stand before you and to serve you as your priestly people.
And we ask you:

Send your Spirit upon these gifts of your Church;
gather into one all who share this bread and wine;
fill us with your Holy Spirit to establish our faith in truth,
that we may praise and glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ.

Through him all glory and honor are yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church both now and forever.

Amen, amen, amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

**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.**

COMMUNION HYMN

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.**

COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you provide the true bread from heaven, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that we who have received the Sacrament of his body and blood may abide in him and he in us, that we may be filled with the power of his endless life, now and forever.

Amen

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WALKING AT MENLO MALL (OR ROOSEVELT PARK). Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Call your friends and put on your walking shoes and meet at the entrance to Nordstrom under the cover of the parking garage and enjoy fellowship and walk around the park.

BIBLE STUDY.

Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. We gather in the lounge on Wednesdays for fellowship and discussion around God's Word. In the Easter Season we will read and discuss the First John. This book will be read as the second reading in worship each week.

Thursday at 7:00 p.m. This study meets on Zoom. See your virtual bulletin for the link to join this study from any place.

DAILY PRAYER. Daily prayer is one of the means the Holy Spirit uses to keep us in faith. Here are two ways to make daily prayer part of your life: a daily service of morning prayer and a daily service of night prayer.

Morning Prayer: Start each day (Monday through Saturday) with a brief service of Morning Prayer. This service is available as an audio file on the [St. Paul's Website](#) and the St. Paul's Facebook each morning. You can listen and pray along from your home or take it with you as you exercise or commute.

Night Prayer: End your day in prayer and fellowship. This ongoing prayer group meets **on Zoom each night at 9:00 p.m.** to share what has been happening in their day, to let go of each day's trouble and to participate in a brief service of night prayer. Zoom log info: Meeting ID = 401 244 599 + Password: 042662

INVITE YOUR FRIENDS TO JOIN THE CELEBRATION. Pentecost! Sunday, May 19. When we worship on Pentecost (May 19) we will praise God and hear God's Word in the variety of languages spoken by the people of St. Paul's. Invite your friends to join us in a lively celebration of our life together in the Holy Spirit.

MEMORIAL FOR ELAINE HENNING. Saturday, May 11, at 10 a.m. Gather with Elaine's family and as part of her loved ones for a memorial service and time of fellowship, love and support.

CHURCH COUNCIL. Tuesday, May 14, at 7:00 p.m. Our regularly scheduled monthly meeting. Executive committee meets Sunday, May 12, after worship to set the agenda. See a council member if you have an item you would like on the agenda.

SENIOR LUNCHEON. Tuesday, May 21, at 11:30 a.m.. Bring a light lunch and come gather and abide with friends. It's a great way to invite your neighbors to come and see what God's doing at St. Paul's and always a way God refreshes our souls. Drinks, sweets and sides provided.

VBS! MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR CAMP FIRELIGHT

"When I am Afraid, I put my trust in you." Psalm 56:3

- Friday evening, June 28, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Saturday evening, June 29, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Sunday, June 30, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Camp Firelight St. Paul's Takeover!
VBS for All of Us!

You'll want your neighbors to come and be part of this amazing adventure in learning and discipleship at the beginning of our summer!

Volunteers of all kinds needed! See Erin Somes or Pastor if you would like to serve as a volunteer at VBS this year. We need all kinds of volunteers. How do you want to help?

BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, **+** Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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