

St. John & Bethesda Lutheran Churches
Sunday, May 9, 2021

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

GATHERING

WELCOME

Shout with joy to the LORD, all you lands. (Ps. 98:4)

BLESSING OF MOTHERS

God of all creation,
pour out your blessing on all mothers
and those who provide motherly care.

**You have made them in your image
and given them children to love and care for in your name.**

Bless them with a heart like your heart:
loving and kind, comforting and strong,
nurturing and grace-filled.

**As they participate in your ongoing creativity,
give them discernment
to help the children in their lives discover their unique gifts.**

As they teach these children,
grant them wisdom to know what is truly valuable.

As they strive to share your unconditional love,
give them long-suffering patience and a lively sense of humor.

As they model your mercy,
help them extend the forgiveness
they themselves freely receive from you.

**In all circumstances fortify their faith,
that they may love you above all.**

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG

Love Divine, All Love Excelling

ELW 631

GREETING

Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

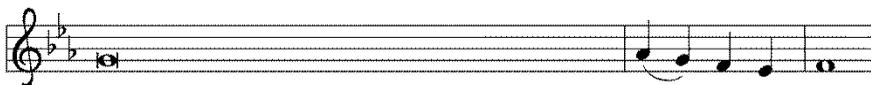
KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



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



Lord, have mer - cy.



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.



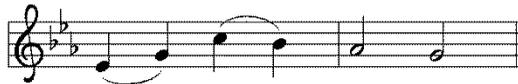
Lord, have mer - cy.



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



let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men, a - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.**

WORD

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.

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 grass withers and the flower fades,
but the Word of the Lord endures forever.

PSALM: Psalm 98

¹Sing a new song to the LORD, who has done marvelous things,
whose right hand and holy arm have won the victory.

²**O LORD, you have made known your victory,
you have revealed your righteousness in the sight of the nations.**

³You remember your steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel;

all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

⁴**Shout with joy to the LORD, |all you lands;
lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.**

⁵Sing to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and the voice of song.

⁶**With trumpets and the sound of the horn
shout with joy before the king, the LORD.**

⁷Let the sea roar, and all that fills it,
the world and those who dwell therein.

⁸**Let the rivers clap their hands,
and let the hills ring out with joy before the LORD, who comes to judge the
earth.**

⁹The LORD will judge the world with righteousness
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.

¹Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. ²**By 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 grass withers and the flower fades,
but the Word of the Lord endures forever.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION





Repeat alleluia



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

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.

[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. ¹⁶**You did not choose me but I chose you.** And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

Not for Tongues of Heaven’s Angels

ACS 1044



1 Not for tongues of heav - en’s an - gels, not for wis - dom to dis -
2 Love is hum - ble, love is gen - tle, love is ten - der, true, and
3 Nev - er jeal - ous, nev - er self - ish, love will not re - joice in
4 In the day this world is fad - ing, faith and hope will play their



cern, not for faith that mas - ters moun - tains, for this
kind; love is gra - cious, ev - er pa - tient, gen - er -
wrong; nev - er boast - ful nor re - sent - ful, love be -
part; but when Christ is seen in glo - ry love shall



bet - ter gift we yearn:
ous of heart and mind: may love be ours, O Lord.
lieves and suf - fers long:
reign in ev - 'ry heart:

BLESSING OF OUR GRADUATES

We are delighted to recognize high school graduates of St. John today. It is our privilege to affirm these members of our congregation who have completed one phase of their lives and move with great expectations to another.

Graduates, we invite you to come forward. As you celebrate your achievements and prepare to begin new endeavors, be mindful of your grounding in faith, and of your vocation to serve God in all your life's work and accomplishments.

Let us pray.

Gracious God, you bless your servants with many achievements. We give thanks especially for the milestones that our students have attained. As they begin new phases of their lives, may they also know your love and experience your peace in all the experiences they encounter. Bless also the parents of these students, who have raised their children and nourished them in the Christian faith. Give them strength in your continuing presence and give them many joyful reunions with their sons and daughters, who may be leaving home soon to begin new and varied ventures, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

CREED

The Apostles' Creed is the oldest known creed of the Christian faith and is a foundation of the church believes. We join with the faithful of all times in confessing our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

Loving God, you call us to be your fruit-bearing church. Strengthen the bonds among all Christian churches. Today we pray for the Moravian Church, giving thanks for the life and witness of Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, renewer of the church and hymnwriter. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creating God, the earth praises you. The seas roar and the hills sing for joy. Fill the earth with your love so that by their song, all creatures of land and sea and sky, burrowing and soaring, may call us to join with them in praise. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Faithful Savior, you conquer the world not with weapons but with undying love. Plant your word in the hearts of the nations' leaders and give them your Spirit, so that the peoples of the world may live in peace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Caring Healer, you forget no one and accompany the lonely. Be present with those who are sick or suffering *especially at Bethesda*: **Mary Cumming, Lenyce Lawrence**, **Kristi** Lee Little, **Mary** Hieber, **Daryl** Lauritsen, **Bernadine** Hansen, **Judy** Kuhlman, **Roger** Hansen, and *at St. John*: **Bev** Crafton, **Lillian** Smithson, **Vern** Andrews, **Adriaan** (Schaben) van boord, **Rachelle** Tucker, **Karen** Cadwell, **Audrey** Androy, **Jim** Berka, and those we name in our hearts or on our lips. Provide for those needing homes or

medical care and point us towards life-changing responses to these needs in our own communities. Be with the dying. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Gracious God, as a mother comforts her child, you comfort us. Bless mothers and mothering people in our lives. Comfort those who miss their mothers, mothers who grieve, those who grieve because they cannot be mothers, and those who have never known a loving mother. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Source of All Knowledge, bless our young people who complete one part of the learning journey and begin a new stage in life. Grant them courage to keep learning and wisdom to make healthy choices for life in your universe. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Gentle Redeemer, all who die in you abide in your presence forever. We remember with thanksgiving those who shared your love throughout their lives. Keep us united with them in your lasting love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

OFFERING

OFFERING PRAYER

Faithful God,

you walk beside us in desert places,

and you meet us in our hunger with bread from heaven.

Accompany us in this meal,

that we may pass over from death to life

with Jesus Christ, our Savior and 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, our duty and our joy,
 that we should at all times and in all places
 give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
 for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ,
 the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin;
 who in dying has destroyed death,
 and in 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:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

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.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
Our lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
Broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
And gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
Shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The risen Christ invites us to this table. Come, eat and be satisfied.

COMMUNION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. Wellspring of joy,
**through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts.
Satisfy the hunger still around us,
and send us as joyful witnesses,
that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SENDING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom
to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus.

The God of life,

Father, ✚ Son, and Holy Spirit,

bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG

Lord Be Glorified

ELW 744

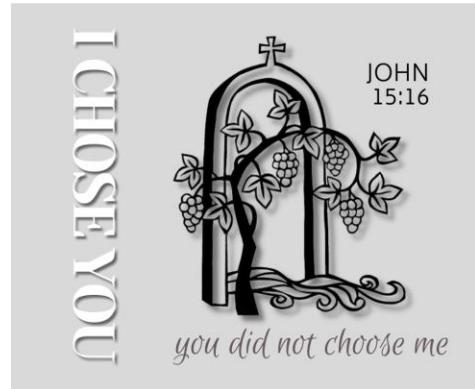
DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!



We Are the Branches

Eternal, Unconditional, and Unchanging

To abide is to put down roots: to dwell in the same location and with the same people for the long term. Unlike in Jesus' time, today few of us live in the same place in which we were born. Families are routinely scattered across the country and around the world. Yet Jesus invites us, "Abide in my love" (John 15:9). While so much else in our lives seems impermanent, Jesus' love is eternal, unconditional, and unchanging.



In today's gospel, Jesus is on his way to the cross. Pressed for time and filled with urgency, he can convey only the most important message. Of all the subjects he has explored during his ministry, he chooses to emphasize that which matters most: his own love. Jesus knows that love is eternal, that it transcends death and the grave. He knows that love is essential, that it must be at the core of our being. He knows that love is the embodiment of all his teachings, healings, and ministry.

Jesus knows that Judas has already betrayed him. He knows that shortly, Peter will deny him. In preaching love, he shows us that the sort of love he has for each of us is stronger than our own very human shortcomings—and that his love for us, and for his disciples, is forever. As followers of Jesus, we are charged with loving one another

with the unconditional, eternal love that he has for us. In a world of change, such a responsibility is challenging, yet living out that challenge is what gives our lives purpose.

The secret to love is that it puts others first. Love is the only emotion that can defeat our instinctive self-centeredness. In charging us to love one another, Jesus issues an invitation to be awake and aware, to see others as beloved children of God, and to reflect divine love back onto everyone we encounter. In this way, Jesus lives in each of us.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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Our Long-Term Prayers

Each week we lift up each other in prayer. Sometimes the need for prayer continues for extended periods of time. As a church family, we care about those long-term needs. Please continue to keep these individuals and families in your prayers as they deal with long term illnesses and life changes. Also, please keep Pastor Chip and the office updated so the congregation knows when extra prayers are needed.

At Bethesda

† Lenyce Lawrence

At St. John

† Audrey Gorham

† Jodi Klein

† Jan Behm

† Ed DeLozier

† Sam and Diane Jacobs

† Russ Miller (Leonard and Helen Miller's nephew)

† Pam Odland

† Pat DeLong

† Joel Berka

† Dennis Schrauth (Suzie Schutz's brother-in-law)

† Arlene Eisermann (Ron Holst's Sister)

† Cheryl Rath (Tom Heistand's sister)

† **Grant Gorham's new address:** Grant Gorham

Ronald McDonald House, room 3101

350 Erkenbrecher Ave.

Cincinnati, OH 45229

Your prayers are still needed.