

# FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Sunday, April 21, 2024

9:30 AM

## INTRODUCTION

*The image of the good shepherd shows us how the risen Christ brings us to life. It is the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep, one of mutual knowledge and love, that gives the shepherd authority. The shepherd's willingness to lay down his life for the sheep shows his love. First John illustrates what it means to lay down our lives for one another by the example of sharing our wealth with any sibling in need.*

## PRELUDE

Improvisation on Gelobt Sei Gott

+ **Gathering** +

## WELCOME & RINGING OF THE BELL

Alleluia, Christ has Risen!

**He has risen indeed, Alleluia!** (x3)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

*The congregation may stand.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,  
the fountain of living water,  
the radiant sun of dawn,  
our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.  
**Amen.**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and with your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight.  
Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family.  
Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom.  
Through lion's dens, wilderness exile, and fiery furnaces you protected and guided us. At the river your beloved Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit.

By our baptism into 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.**

GATHERING HYMN

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing! (ELW 385)



1 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice and sing! Now is the tri - umph  
 2 The Lord of life is ris'n this day; death's might-y stone is  
 3 Praise we in songs of vic - to - ry that love, that life which  
 4 Your name we bless, O ris - en Lord, and sing to - day with



of our king! To all the world glad news we bring:  
 rolled a - way; let all the earth re - joice and say:  
 can - not die, and sing with hearts up - lift - ed high:  
 one ac - cord, the life laid down, the life re - stored:



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Text: Cyril A. Alington, 1872–1955, alt.

Music: GELOBT SEI GOTT, Melchior Vulpus, 1570–1615

Text © 1958, ren. 1986 *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, admin. Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188.

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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.**

# GLORIA

Assisting minister



Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,



we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together.

**O Lord Christ, good shepherd of the sheep, you seek the lost and guide us into your fold. Feed us, and we shall be satisfied; heal us, and we shall be whole. Make us one with you, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.**

**Amen.**

*The congregation may be seated.*

## + Word +

### READING I

Acts 4:5-12

A reading from Acts.

<sup>5</sup>The next day the rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, <sup>6</sup>with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. <sup>7</sup>When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” <sup>8</sup>Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, <sup>9</sup>if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, <sup>10</sup>let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. <sup>11</sup>This Jesus is

‘the stone that was rejected by you, the builders;

it has become the cornerstone.’

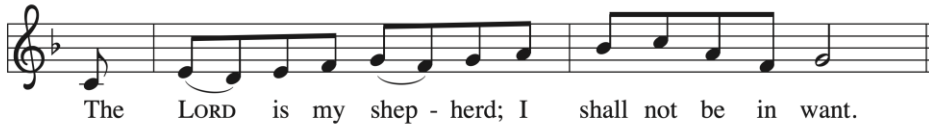
<sup>12</sup>There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.”

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The congregation sings the refrain and the verses in bold.*

*Psalm Refrain*



*Psalm Tone*



<sup>1</sup>The LORD<sup>|</sup> is my shepherd;  
I shall not<sup>|</sup> be in want.

<sup>2</sup>**The LORD makes me lie down<sup>|</sup> in green pastures  
and leads me be-<sup>|</sup> side still waters.**

<sup>3</sup>You restore my<sup>|</sup> soul, O LORD,  
and guide me along right pathways<sup>|</sup> for your name's sake.

<sup>4</sup>**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall<sup>|</sup> fear no evil;  
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they<sup>|</sup> comfort me.**

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the presence<sup>|</sup> of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is<sup>|</sup> running over.

<sup>6</sup>**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days<sup>|</sup> of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the<sup>|</sup> LORD forever. Refrain**

READING 2

1 John 3:16-24

A reading from First John.

<sup>16</sup>We know love by this, that Jesus Christ laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. <sup>17</sup>How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

<sup>18</sup>Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. <sup>19</sup>And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him <sup>20</sup>whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. <sup>21</sup>Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; <sup>22</sup>and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

<sup>23</sup>And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. <sup>24</sup>All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*The congregation may stand.*

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

GOSPEL

John 10:11-18

The gospel according to John.  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said: <sup>11</sup>“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup>The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. <sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. <sup>17</sup>For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. <sup>18</sup>No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

The gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

*The congregation may be seated.*  
Vicar Alex Linn

## HYMN OF THE DAY

*The congregation may be stand.*  
The King of Love My Shepherd Is (ELW 502)



1 The King of love my shep - herd is, whose good - ness  
2 Where streams of liv - ing wa - ter flow, my ran - somed  
3 Per - verse and fool - ish oft I strayed, but yet in  
4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill, with thee, dear



fail - eth nev - er; I noth - ing lack if  
soul he lead - eth and, where the ver - dant  
love he sought me, and on his shoul - der  
Lord, be - side me, thy rod and staff my



I am his and he is mine for - ev - er.  
pas - tures grow, with food ce - les - tial feed - eth.  
gent - ly laid, and home, re - joic - ing, brought me.  
com - fort still; thy cross be - fore to guide me.

5 Thou spreadst a table in my sight;  
thine unction grace bestoweth;  
and, oh, what transport of delight  
from thy pure chalice floweth!

6 And so, through all the length of days,  
thy goodness faileth never.  
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise  
within thy house forever.

Text: Henry W. Baker, 1821-1877  
Music: St. COLUMBA, Irish tune

## THE NICENE CREED

Let us confess our faith in the words of the 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 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. You may assume a posture of prayer.

*A brief silence.*

Shepherding God, gather your church whenever we wander from you and one another. Empower our church in ministries around the world to worship and serve alongside global companions as equal partners and coworkers in the gospel. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

Nurturing God, preserve the health of biomes and ecosystems. Inspire scientists, researchers, conservation organizations, and all people entrusted with the task of caring for creation, that we may be better stewards of the world around us. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, lead nations and communities to share resources, cooperate in solving conflicts, and listen to the wisdom of Indigenous peoples. Help all those with power to share it and to use such power for good. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

Loving God, protect the very young and the very old, those living without housing, victims of domestic abuse, and all who live with chronic illness or compromised immune systems. Guide communities to actively care for people who are vulnerable. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**



Gracious God, help this and all communities of faith to listen for your voice. Call us away from things that distract us from following you. Invite us to more deeply love and serve people who are lonely, isolated, and on the margins. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

People of God, for what else do we pray for this day? You may share your prayers aloud or in the silence of your heart...  
God of Grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

Living God, we give thanks for our ancestors in faith. Strengthen us to share the good news in our own day. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

*The presiding minister concludes the prayers*

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.**

## THE PEACE

The peace of the Risen Christ be with you all.  
**And also with you.**

*You are invited to share a sign of peace with one another (wave, handshake, hug, etc.), honoring the personal boundaries of all. Those online may unmute and verbally share the peace.*

*The congregation may be seated.*

## + Meal +

## OFFERTORY

*We give thanks for your ongoing support of the ministry of St. John's! Gifts may be placed in the offering plate, made in the Vanco Mobile app, or given online by scanning the QR code. Thank you for your generosity!*



## OFFERTORY ANTHEM

I am Jesus' Little Lamb by Robert A. Hobby

I am Jesus' little lamb, ever glad at heart I am;  
For my shepherd gently guides me, knows my need and well provides me,  
Loves me every day the same, even calls me by my name.

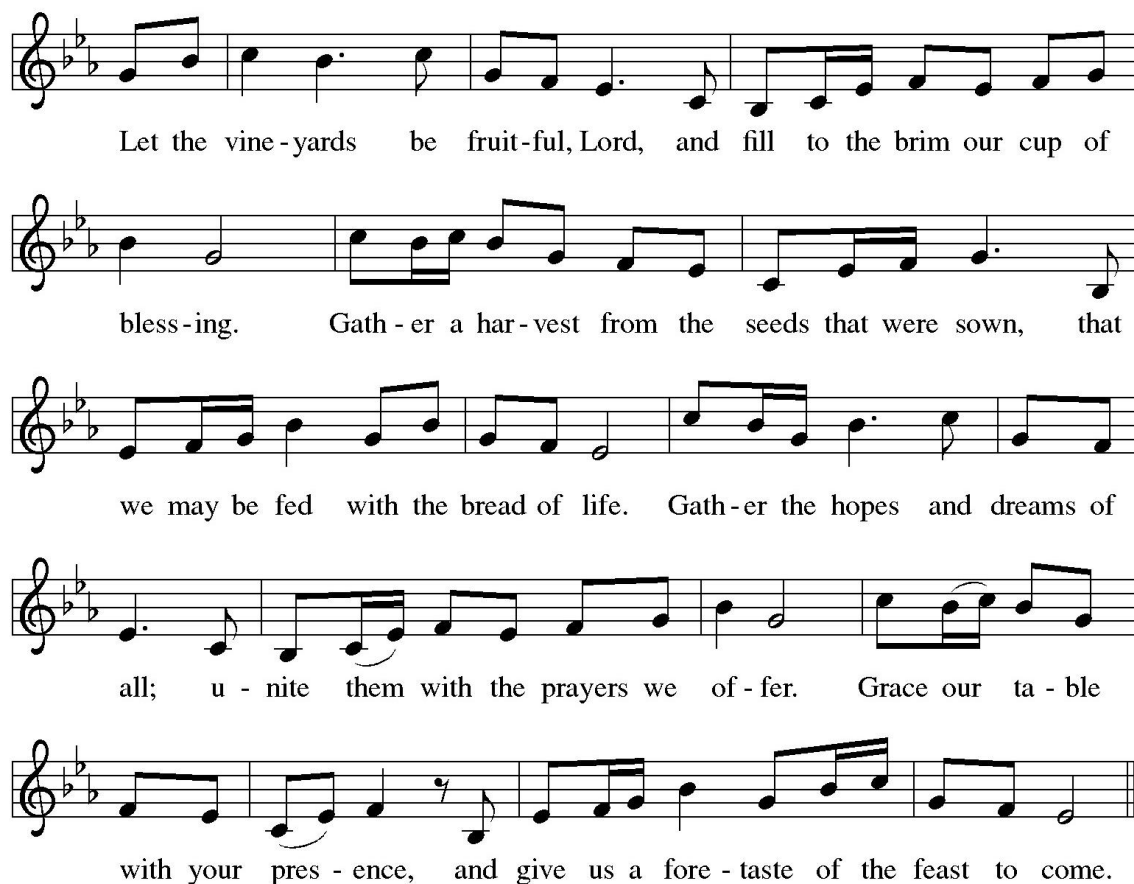
Day by day, at home, away, Jesus is my staff and stay,  
When I hunger, Jesus feeds me, into pleasant pastures lead me;  
When I thirst, he bids me go where the quiet waters flow.

Who so happy as I am, even now the Shepherd's lamb  
And when my short life is ended, by his angel host attended,  
He shall fold me to his breast there within his arms to rest.

I am Jesus' little lamb, ever glad at heart I am.

## OFFERTORY VERSE

*The congregation may stand.*  
Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful



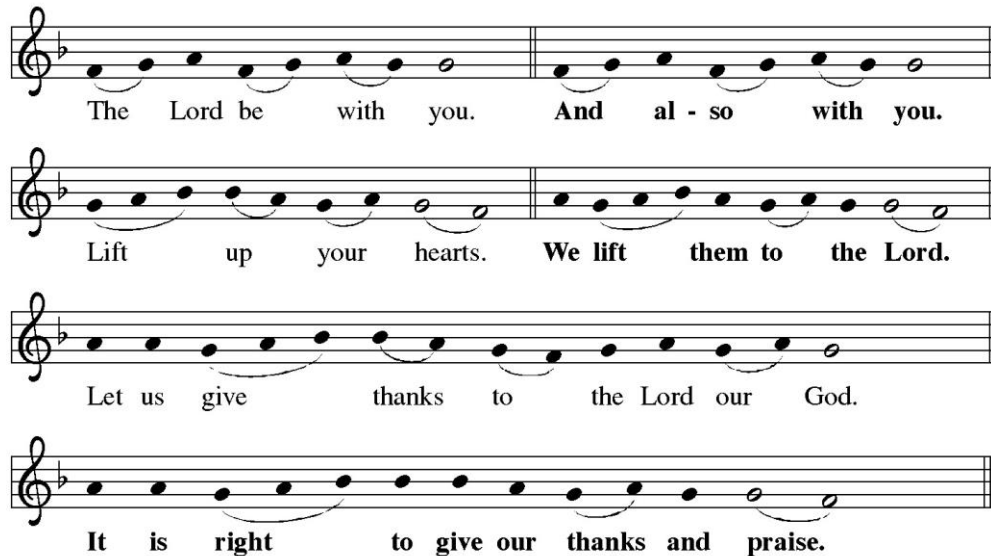
Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of  
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that  
we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of  
all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble  
with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980  
Music: Ronald A. Nelson, b. 1927  
Text and music © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

**Let us pray together,**  
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.**

## DIALOGUE

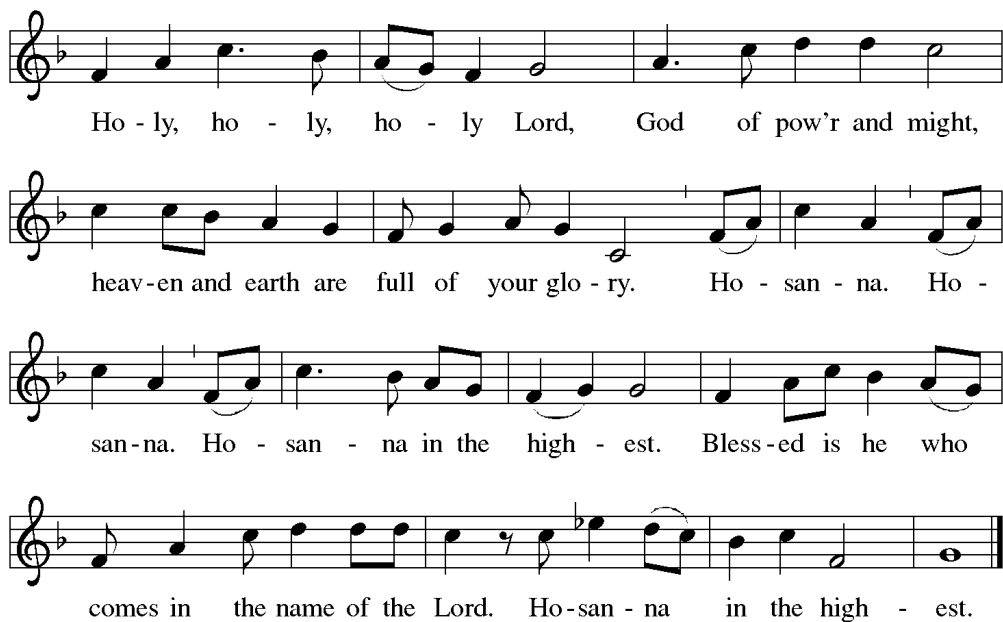


The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.  
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

## PREFACE

“... we praise your name and join their un-ending hymn:”

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



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

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God.  
You are most holy,  
and great is the majesty of your glory.

You so loved the world that you gave your only Son,  
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish  
but have eternal life.

We give you thanks for his coming into the world  
to fulfill for us your holy will  
and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

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.

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



Remembering, therefore, his salutary command,  
his life-giving passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension,  
and the promise of his coming again,  
we give thanks to you, O Lord God Almighty,  
not as we ought but as we are able;  
we ask you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving  
and with your Word and Holy Spirit to bless us, your servants,  
and these your own gifts of bread and wine,  
so that we and all who share in the body and blood of Christ  
may be filled with heavenly blessing and grace,  
and, receiving the forgiveness of sin,  
may be formed to live as your holy people  
and be given our inheritance with all your saints.

To you, O God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer  
be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever.



## LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us in the many and varied languages we hold dear...

**Our God in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

## INVITATION

Taste and see that the Lord is good. Come, for Christ first welcomed us.

## COMMUNION

*The congregation may be seated.*

*All are welcome to commune at Christ's table without exception! Please proceed down the center aisle at the direction of an usher. You may receive bread or request a gluten-free wafer. Please take a glass of wine (dark colored) or a glass of grape juice (light colored). After drinking, please place your empty glass in the basket before returning to your seat via the side aisle. If you would prefer to receive only a blessing, you may cross your arms across your chest to indicate this preference. If you would like to receive communion in your seat, please inform an usher, and the sacrament will be brought to you.*

## LAMB OF GOD

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

COMMUNION HYMN

At the Lamb's High Feast, vs. 1, 4, 8 (ELW 362)



1 At the Lamb's high feast we sing praise to  
 2 Praise we Christ, whose love di - vine gives his  
 3 Where the pas - chal blood is poured death's dread  
 4 Praise we Christ, whose blood was shed, pas - chal



our vic - to - rious king, who has washed us in the tide  
 sa - cred blood for wine, gives his bod - y for the feast—  
 an - gel sheathes the sword; Is - rael's hosts tri - um - phant go  
 vic - tim, pas - chal bread; with sin - cer - i - ty and love



flow - ing from his wound - ed side. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Christ the vic - tim, Christ the priest. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 through the wave that drowns the foe. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 eat we man - na from a - bove. Al - le - lu - ia!

5 Mighty victim from the sky,  
 hell's fierce pow'rs beneath you lie;  
 you have conquered in the fight,  
 you have brought us life and light.  
 Alleluia!

7 Easter triumph, Easter joy!  
 This alone can sin destroy;  
 from sin's pow'r, Lord, set us free,  
 newborn souls in you to be.  
 Alleluia!

6 Now no more can death appall,  
 now no more the grave enthrall;  
 you have opened paradise,  
 and your saints in you shall rise.  
 Alleluia!

8 Father, who the crown shall give,  
 Savior, by whose death we live,  
 Spirit, guide through all our days:  
 Three in One, your name we praise.  
 Alleluia!

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

*The congregation may stand.*

Let us pray together.

**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 +

### BENEDICTION

The God of resurrection power,  
the Christ of unending joy,  
and the Spirit of Easter hope  
✠ bless you now and always.  
**Amen.**

### SENDING HYMN

Praise the Lord, Rise Up Rejoicing (ELW 544)



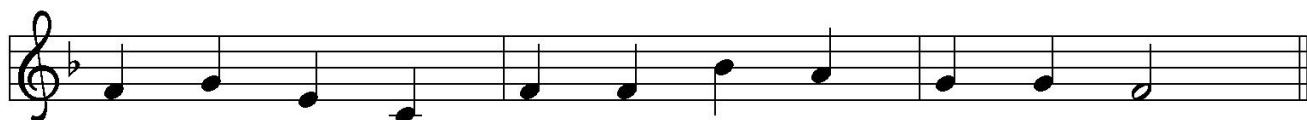
1 Praise the Lord, rise up re - joic - ing, wor - ship, thanks, de -  
2 Scat - tered flock, one shep - herd shar - ing, lost and lone - ly,  
3 Sins for - giv - en, wrongs for - giv - ing, we go forth a -



vo - tion voic - ing: glo - ry be to God on high!  
one voice hear - ing, ears at - ten - tive to your word;  
lert and liv - ing in your Spir - it, strong and free.



Christ, your cross and pas - sion shar - ing, by this eu - cha -  
by your blood new life re - ceiv - ing, in your bod - y,  
Part - ners in your new cre - a - tion, seek - ing peace in



rist de - clar - ing yours the fi - nal vic - to - ry.  
firm be - liev - ing, we are yours, and you the Lord.  
ev - 'ry na - tion, may we faith - ful fol - l'wers be.

Text: Howard C. A. Gaunt, 1902–1983, alt.  
Music: ALLES IST AN GOTTES SEGEN, Johann Löhner, 1645–1705, adapt.  
Text © Oxford University Press.

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE

Little Prelude and Fugue in G BWV 557

attrib. J.S. Bach

Worship materials adapted this day from multiple ecumenical partners and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (2023).

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- Scripture readings from the NR

## SERVING TODAY

*Interim Presiding Minister:*  
*Director of Youth & Families*  
*Director of Music:*  
*Cantor:*  
*Assisting Minister:*  
*Readers:*

*Ushers:*

*Communion Assistant*  
*Livestream Camera:*  
*Altar Guild:*

Vicar Alex Linn  
Evergreen Edwards  
Luke Duroc-Danner  
Audrey Neace  
Alan Swanson  
Chris Maglocchi  
Sam Novak  
Tom Morrison  
Brandon Leinberger  
Caroline Novak  
Jason Shutters  
Jan Wendel



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Nominate an Organization for EMF Consideration!**

Each spring, the Extended Ministries Fund (EMF) Committee distributes approximately 5% of the EMF fund balance to organizations and causes that further the mission of our congregation. The amount to be dispersed this year is about \$12,000, and we are looking for your input on which organizations to consider. Please nominate an organization or cause that you believe furthers our congregation's new mission and vision. You can access the form in your e-news, complete it and e-mail it to Michel Hauser or you can complete the form in your bulletin and place it in the offering plate or give it to Jan in the church office. You may nominate multiple orgs/causes by submitting multiple forms (ask an usher for extras). We appreciate your input as well as your prayers for the EMF Committee as we receive these submissions, reflect, and discern how to steward the EMF Fund this year.

### **Take Care Packages for Migrant Families:**

As an important part of our outreach ministry, St. John's is joining the Wilmette TAKE CARE project to help collect much-needed items for migrant families arriving here in our community. These families have little more than what they can carry. If you've seen recent reports from the city shelters, supplies for basic family necessities such as children's diapers and more are in short supply. We encourage members and families in our congregation to join this mission of helping others in need. There are many ways to help, from donating much-needed items to sorting the donations to packing health/wellness kits.

**DONATIONS:** You can find a list of supplies needed in your e-news. We have a drop box at the church, as well as the large colorful room on the lower level.

This project is a partnership with SaLT: Service and Learning Together.

### **Confirmation Field Trip**

The St. John's Confirmation class, along with the confirmation classes at Immanuel, Evanston and Grace, Evanston, will be taking a field trip to visit the Bahai Temple on Sunday, April 28, 12:30 pm – 2:00 pm. This is part of their interfaith class.

## IN OUR PRAYERS

- † Sandy Kaspar, sister of Bill Kaspar, recovering from abdominal surgery
- † Tom Fries, friend of Jim Dossa, cracked vertebrae
- † Family & friends of Lorraine Beutelspacher, who died 3/6/24
- † Buckley Crist
- † Family & friends of Peter Knobel, who died 1/13/24
- † Dottye Wolf, sister of Margye Smith
- † Rena Leinberger, cancer diagnosis 11/12/23
- † Family and Friends of Hing You Tam Siu, mother-in-law of Jim Dossa, who passed away
- † Family & friends of Viola Gonder, mother of Craig Gonder, who died 8/7/23
- † Congratulations to Dano Johnson & Emily Mock, who were married June 17, 2023
- † Family & friends of Richard Rusz, who died 6/6/23
- † Family & friends of Karen Daugherty, aunt of Erin Rasmussen, who died 5/8/23
- † Family & friends of Joan Schinler, who died 5/5/23
- † Sarah Rink, hospitalized after a fall 3/8/23
- † Family & friends of Ruby Winter, who died 1/10/23
- † Margaux Tauszig, granddaughter of Wolf Peddinghaus
- † Natalie Domchenko & Hilaire Sainson, sister of Olga Domchenko and sister's husband, in need of healing
- † Karen Brunn, daughter of Dave & Lyn Brunn, recovering from spinal cord injury

## NOTES ON TODAY'S MUSIC

Robert A. Hobby (b. 1962) is an American organist and composer. The son of a Lutheran pastor, Robert grew up steeped in church music, and he first began playing the organ for services at age 10. He earned a Bachelor's degree in music from Wittenberg University, and later a Masters in organ performance from the University of Notre Dame in 1987. He currently serves as the Director of Music for Trinity English Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He has also performed widely throughout the United States along with being active in both the American Guild of Organists and Association of Lutheran Church Musicians. He has composed over 150 works, and some of his compositions are present in both the ECLA Worship and Service book.

The Eight Short Preludes and Fugues (BWV 553-560) is a collection of works for organ that has been traditionally attributed to J.S. Bach (1685-1750), but the predominant opinion of contemporary musicologists is that these works were composed by one of Bach's pupils - likely candidates being Johann Tobias Krebs, Johann Ludwig Krebs, or Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer. This skepticism regarding the authorship of these works largely derives from the analyses by Alfred Dürr and Peter Williams who have broadly claimed that these pieces could not have been written by Bach himself due to the "standard of counterpoint and general musicianship" being too low for Bach himself given the likely date of composition. However, others have suggested that these pieces may indeed be early compositions by J.S. Bach, but they were explicitly teaching pieces, which were copied out by his students as part of their studies with Bach. Regardless of origin, these eight pieces are excellent learning pieces given the tremendous diversity of baroque styles represented within this collection.