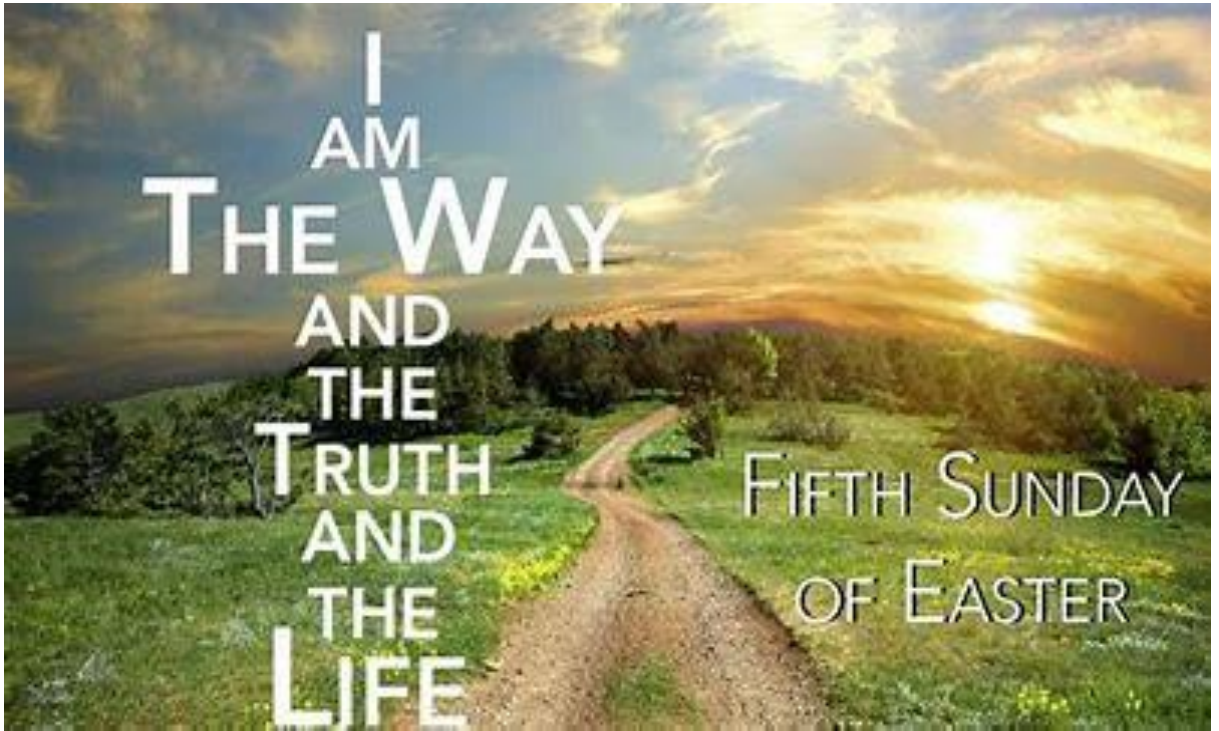


Triune Lutheran Church



Fifth Sunday of Easter



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

We thank you for joining us here at Triune Lutheran Church, a family united with you through our Lord, Jesus Christ!



In order to make you feel more at home, here are a few notes about our worship here. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. We hope to make your time here as meaningful as possible!



- You are invited to speak the **bold print**, as well as sing along with the hymns, which you will find in the red *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW) hymnal in front of you in the pews.
- The portions marked with * are times when we invite you to stand, as you are able.
- There will not be a separate time for an offering to be collected during worship. If you wish to do so today, you may place your offering in the offering plate at the back.
- We believe the body and blood of Christ is meant for everyone, regardless of your church affiliation, and so feel free to participate, if you feel so moved. We will celebrate Communion through intinction. You will be invited to come up the side aisle to the pastor who will have wafers (gluten-free available upon request). You are encouraged to keep the wafer in your hand as you go to the worship assistant with the chalice of wine. You are invited to dip your wafer into the chalice before consuming the wafer and returning to your seat through the center aisle.
- For visitors, if you so choose, we encourage you to fill out a card available in the pew to learn more about us.
- Bathrooms are available in the hallway.

WELCOME

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!
Christ is Risen, indeed! **Alleluia!**

* **Thanksgiving for Baptism**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the wellspring of grace,
our Easter and our joy.

Amen.

Look, here is water!

Here is our water of life! Alleluia!

Immersed in the promises of baptism,
let us give thanks for what God has done for us.
We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning
your voice thundered over the deep
and water became the essence of life.

Adam and Eve beheld Eden's verdant rivers.

The ark carried your creation through the flood into a new
day.

Miriam led the dancing as your people passed through the
sea

into freedom's land.

In a desert pool the Ethiopian official
entered your boundless baptismal life.

Look, here is water!

Here is our water of life! Alleluia!

At the river your beloved Son was baptized by John
and anointed with the Holy Spirit.

By the baptism of Jesus' death and resurrection
you opened the floodgates of your reconciling love,
freeing us to live as Easter people.

We rejoice with glad hearts,
giving all honor and praise to you,
through the risen Christ, our source of living water,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

Look, here is water!

Here is our water of life! Alleluia!

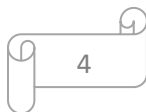
***GATHERING HYMN**

"Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen

ELW 377

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

O God, you give us your Son as the vine apart from whom we
cannot live. Nourish our life in his resurrection, that we may
bear the fruit of love and know the fullness of your joy,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and
reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and
forever. **Amen!**



FIRST READING

Acts 8:26-40

²⁶An angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a wilderness road.) ²⁷So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” ³⁰So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” ³¹He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside 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 silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

³³In his humiliation justice was denied him.
Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.”

³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” ³⁵Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?”

³⁸He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Word of God, word of life!
Thanks be to God!

PSALM

Psalm 22:25-31

²⁴For the LORD does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty; neither is the LORD's face | hidden from them;
but when they cry out, | the LORD hears them.

²⁵From you comes my praise in the | great assembly;

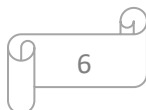
I will perform my vows in the sight of those who | fear the LORD.

²⁶The poor shall eat | and be satisfied,
Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts | live forever!

²⁷All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn | to the LORD;

all the families of nations shall bow | before God.

²⁸For dominion belongs | to the LORD,
who rules o- | ver the nations.



²⁹Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow | down in worship; all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel be- | fore the LORD.

³⁰Their descendants shall | serve the LORD, whom they shall proclaim to genera- | tions to come.

SECOND READING

1 John 4:7-21

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives 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 do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

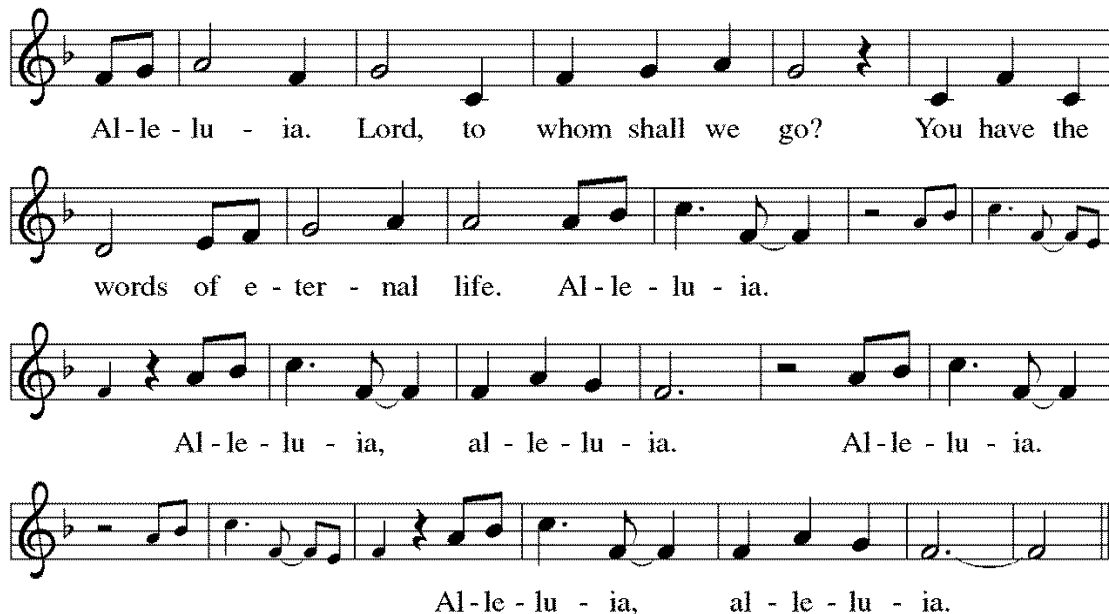
God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. ¹⁷Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world.



¹⁸There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. ²¹The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

Word of God, word of life!
Thanks be to God!

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



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

***GOSPEL**

John 15:1-8

The Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord!

[Jesus said:] ¹“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me as I abide in you. Just 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. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord!

Praise to you, O Christ!

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death”

ELW 452

***APOSTLES' CREED**

**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**

Rejoicing that Jesus is risen and love has triumphed over fear, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news.

A brief silence.

We pray for the church around the world, for all ministers, and for the mission of the gospel. Keep all the newly baptized and confirmed in your care. Cleanse our hearts with your word and help us to abide in you always. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For the well-being of the earth and of all created things: for rivers and lakes, streams and estuaries, melting glaciers and polluted waters. Renew the face of the earth and shower us with your goodness. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For the nations and all those in authority: for local, state, and national leaders, for elected representatives at every level, and for international organizations, that justice and peace may reign. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For all those in need: for any experiencing homelessness or unemployment, for those fleeing from oppression or seeking asylum, and for all who are ill or suffering including Niki Grigsby, John Kurtz, Phil Pesko, Annie Slaughter, Carol Szendel, Mardell Weiss, Clara Wilcox, and all those we name in our hearts. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For this congregation: for the caring ministries of this faith community, for all who visit and minister to one another, for all who take communion to homes or care centers, and for all who seek to share your love with the world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

With thanksgiving for the saints who rest from their labors. Help us, like them, to bear much fruit and to become your disciples, and at the last, bring us to that heavenly banquet where all will feast together at your 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 risen Christ be with you always!
And also with you.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

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!

It is indeed our delight
 that we give thanks and praise to you, loving and gracious
 God,
 for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ,
 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'r and might,
 heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry, 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, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy, living, and loving God,
we praise you for creating the heavens and the earth.
We bless you for bringing Noah and his family through the
waters of the flood,
for freeing your people Israel from the bonds of slavery,
and for sending your Son to be our Redeemer.

We give you thanks for Jesus who, living among us,
healed the sick, fed the hungry,
and with a love stronger than death,
gave his life for others.

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.

Remembering, therefore,
his life-giving death and glorious resurrection,
we await your promised life for all this world you still adore.

Holy Spirit, breathe on us and on this bread and cup:
carry us in your arms from death to life,
that we may live as your disciples,
clothed in the everlasting grace of Christ.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
both now and forever. **Amen!**

LORD'S PRAYER

**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**

Taste and see the joy of new life for us all!
Thanks be to God!

COMMUNION

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Shepherding God,
you have prepared a table before us
and nourished us with your love.
Send us forth from this banquet
to proclaim your goodness
and share the abundant mercy of Jesus,
our redeemer and friend. **Amen!**

*BLESSING

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

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

*SENDING HYMN

“Let All Things Now Living”

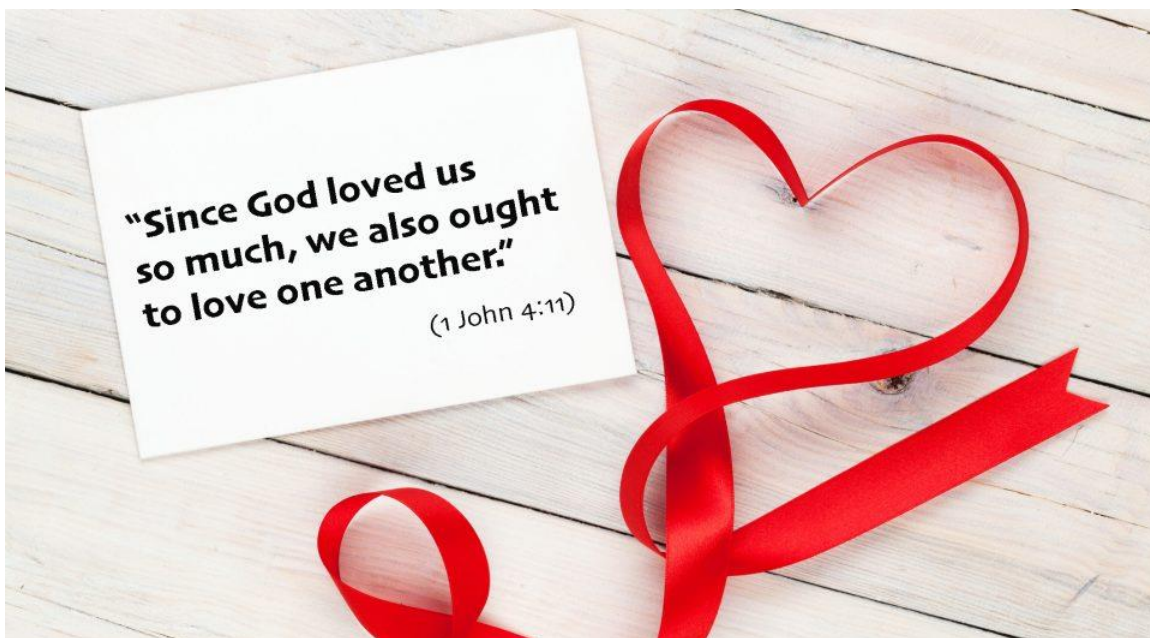
ELW 881

*DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Go in peace. Rejoice and be glad.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

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Ministers: **All People**
Presiding Minister: **Kathryn Rackley**
Worship Assistant: **Tina Schwab**
Organist: **Edith Schatt**
Office Manager: **Jan Piskac**



Lectionary Blog: Have you not heard?

Do you ever have those moments when you, after years of studying a subject, discover something that you should have known a long time ago? As an example, I've finally learned that it's much easier to clean our vacuum if I take both ends off the filter and blow compressed air through it rather than remove one end and pull the garbage out with my hand. Well, recently I stumbled across a pun in the Greek of John 15 that I should have seen long before now, and it is changing my reading of all the lectionary passages.

Where does that "clean" language come from in [John 15:3](#)? "You are already clean" What? I thought we were talking about grapes! Jesus talks about himself as the true vine and God as the vintner. All the branches that grow from the true vine that don't bear fruit are removed and thrown away (yikes!). But all the branches that do bear fruit, God "prunes." Except, the word there, *kathairei*, probably means something more like "cleans." Which explains Jesus' next sentence: "You are already clean because of the word that I have spoken to you." Jesus made a pun, and I only now see it.

Somehow Jesus' word cleans—in a way that is like pruning. It's not so much about adding soap or shampoo to remove dirt and grime but removing that which stifles growth and wastes energy. Jesus is saying that you have been cleaned/pruned by his word in a way that ensures the growth of much fruit. But what does that mean?

The one who hates their neighbor will be gathered with the unproductive branches, because that one has not been pruned/cleaned, and is, 1 John tells us, lying about loving God.

When I was younger and participating in other Christian denominations, I just assumed that bearing much fruit was necessarily, directly and *only* about making converts. I'm not sure that's the whole of the truth anymore. Instead, I think "bearing fruit" means waging love on behalf of the kingdom of heaven. I want to be like Jesus, lavishing love in exactly the form that it is needed to all the folks I encounter. Sometimes Jesus loved by including, centering and healing.

Sometimes he loved by rebuking, challenging and bewildering. But everything that Jesus did was motivated by love for the humans around him.

1 John foregrounds the loving way of Jesus to exclaim: “Since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another (4:11). Furthermore, the passage states that it isn’t possible to love God and hate a human. “Those who say, ‘I love God,’ and hate a [sibling] are liars, for those who do not love a [sibling], whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen” (20). We simply cannot love God or bear fruit for God if we hate our neighbor. It’s impossible. The one who hates their neighbor will be gathered with the unproductive branches, because that one has not been pruned/cleaned, and is, 1 John tells us, lying about loving God.

As a timely example, Philip in Acts 8 was waging some intense neighbor-love. He first journeyed to the Samaritans, who were reviled and distrusted by Second Temple Jews. Philip preached Christ to them, and soon the Spirit rained on the Samaritans. Then, in one of my favorite passages (I usually focus on it this week, but I’m trying something new), Philip joined an Ethiopian eunuch in a Bible study on Isaiah, and the rest of Scripture, to point to Jesus. The Ethiopian eunuch rejoiced and was baptized. But then, I always skip what comes next. The Spirit took Philip to “Azotus.”

We need to have our hearts cleaned/pruned by God’s word in Jesus to love our neighbors—all our neighbors—with all our hearts.

Azotus was the name that Alexander of Macedon bestowed on the already ancient city of Ashdod when he conquered it. The city was founded by Canaanites, and like much of the coastal area of the Levant, captured by sea-peoples. Eventually Ashdod became one of the five capital cities of the Philistines and a capital of Dagon worship (see [1 Samuel 5-6](#)). Eventually Uzziah captured Ashdod for Judah before it fell to the Assyrians, Babylonians and Greeks (the Persians rebuilt it after the Babylonian destruction). Then the Maccabees conquered the Ashdod, and it was ruled by the Hasmoneans until Rome seized it.

During these centuries of conflict, Jews who had anything to do with the idolatrous people of Ashdod, specifically, were censured ([Nehemiah 13:23-24](#)). The prophets looked forward to the destruction of these cities as a symbol of God's victory over the Philistines ([Amos 1:8](#); [Zephaniah 2:4](#); [Zechariah 9:6](#)). In short, Ashdod represented centuries of warfare, conflict, idolatry and threats to Jewish identity.

And that is exactly where the Spirit sent Philip. In Acts 8, Philip's heart had been cleaned, and he was prepared to bear much fruit. He went to enemies, foreigners and strangers alike to tell them the good news of God's love. Just as the Spirit sent Philip first to go to Gaza and then to Ashdod, so the Spirit sent emissaries committed to waging Jesus' love to break down dividing walls of hostilities ([Ephesians 2:14](#)). We need to have our hearts cleaned/pruned by God's word in Jesus to love our neighbors—all our neighbors—with all our hearts. That is the *only* way to bear fruit for the kingdom.



[Cory Driver](#)

Cory Driver is the director of L.I.F.E. (Leading the Integration of Faith and Entrepreneurship) at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. His book on wilderness spirituality, [Life Unsettled](#), is available from Fortress Press.