

ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sixth Sunday of Easter



SUNDAY, MAY 5, 2024

10 A.M.

INTRODUCTION

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.

PRELUDE

The assembly stands.



+ GATHERING +

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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

C **Amen.**

P Look, here is water!

C **Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

Silence for reflection.

P 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!

C **Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

P 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.

C Amen.

P Look, here is water!

C Here is our water of life! Alleluia!

GATHERING HYMN 880 *O God Beyond All Praising*

1 O God be-yond all prais-ing, we wor-ship you to-day
2 The flow'r of earth-ly splen-dor in time must sure-ly die,
3 Then hear, O gra-cious Sav-ior, ac-cept the love we bring,

and sing the love a-maz-ing that songs can-not re-pay;
its frag-ile bloom sur-ren-der to you, the Lord most high;
that we who know your fa-vor may serve you as our King;

for we can on-ly won-der at ev-ry gift you send,
but hid-den from all na-ture the e-ter-nal seed is sown-
and wheth-er our to-mor-rows be filled with good or ill,

at bless-ings with-out num-ber and mer-cies with-out end;
though small in mor-tal stat-ure, to heav-en's gar-den grown:
we'll tri-umph through our sor-rows and rise to bless you still:

we lift our hearts be-fore you and wait up-on your word,
for Christ, your gift from heav-en, from death has set us free,
to mar-vel at your beau-ty and glo-ry in your ways,

we hon-or and a-dore you, our great and might-y Lord,
and we through him are giv-en the fi-nal vic-to-ry,
and make a joy-ful du-ty our sac-ri-fice of praise.

GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Refrain
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 blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.

Refrain
This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 2 Pow - er, rich-es, wis - dom, and
strength, and hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his.

Refrain
This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of
God, and join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon - or,



PRAYER OF THE DAY



P 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.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

CHILDREN'S TIME



+ 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.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 98 *We sing the psalm responsively.*



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

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

L 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.

C ¹Shout with joy to the LORD, | all you lands;
 lift up your voice, re- | joice, and sing.

L ²Sing to the LORD | with the harp,
 with the harp and the | voice of song.

C ³With trumpets and the sound | of the horn
 shout with joy before the | king, the LORD.

L ⁴Let the sea roar, and | all that fills it,
 the world and those who | dwell therein.

C ⁵Let the rivers | clap their hands,
 and let the hills ring out with joy before the LORD, who comes
to | judge the earth.

L ⁶The LORD will judge the | world with righteousness
 and the peo- | ples with equity.

Spoken after the psalm is sung:

Amen.

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. 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.

R The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

The assembly stands.

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.

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.

P The holy gospel according to John, the fifteenth chapter.

C **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.”

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated.

SERMON *We encounter the living word of God in the preaching.*

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY 637 *Holy God, Holy and Glorious*



1 Ho - ly God, ho - ly and glo - ri - ous,
2 Ho - ly God, ho - ly and pow - er - ful,
3 Ho - ly God, ho - ly and beau - ti - ful,
4 Ho - ly God, ho - ly and on - ly wise,
5 Ho - ly God, ho - ly and liv - ing one,



glo - ry most sub - lime, you come as one a - mong us
pow - er with - out peer, you bend to us in weak - ness;
beau - ty un - sur - passed, you are de - spised, re - ject - ed;
wis - dom of great price, you choose the way of fol - ly:
life that nev - er ends, you show your love by dy - ing,



in - to hu - man time, and we be - hold your glo - ry.
emp - tied, you draw near, and we be - hold your pow - er.
scorned, you hold us fast, and we be - hold your beau - ty.
God the cru - ci - fied, and we be - hold your wis - dom.
dy - ing for your friends, and we be - hold you liv - ing.

Text: Susan R. Briehl, b. 1952

Music: NELSON, Robert Buckley Farke, b. 1950

Text © 2002 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358.

All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Music © 2001 Robert Buckley Farke, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

APOSTLES' CREED

A Let us confess our faith.

C 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

Each petition ends: God of grace,

Congregational response: hear our prayer.

PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

We greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

The assembly is seated.



OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

ANTHEM *"Love One Another"* - Bell

(Refrain)

Love one another for love is of God.

Those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

Those who show love are the children of God;

Father and mother is God to them. (Refrain)

God showed his love in the face of the Son;

Christ lives in us so that we might live through him. (Refrain)

Love has no place for the menace of fear;

Fear is abandoned where love is found. (Refrain)

Love has its purpose in God's holy will;

We learn to love from the one who loved us first. (Refrain)

OFFERING HYMN ELW 870 (*versus 1*)

The assembly stands to sing the offering hymn as the collection and the gifts are brought forward.

We Praise You, O God



I We praise you, O God, our re - deem - er, cre - a - tor;
in grate - ful de - vo - tion our trib - ute we bring.
We lay it be - fore you; we kneel and a - dore you;
we bless your ho - ly name; glad prais - es we sing.

Text: Julia C. Cory, 1882–1963
Music: KREMSER, A. Valerius, *Nederlandsch Gedenckclanck*, 1626

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also 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 our thanks and praise.**

P 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

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'HOLY, HOLY, HOLY'. It consists of four staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are: '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.'

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 presiding minister continues to give thanks.

P 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.

C Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray.

C Our Father 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 TO COMMUNION

P The risen Christ is made known to us in the breaking of the bread. Come and eat at God's table.

The assembly is seated.

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.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

As the ushers direct you, come to the altar using the side aisles and return to your seat via the central aisle. The assisting ministers offer both the common cup (wine) and a pouring cup (wine or grape juice). If you prefer to receive the wine or juice in an individual glass, take one from the tray as you approach the rail. Leave the empty glass on the rail. Wheat-free wafers are available--simply tell the pastor.

COMMUNION HYMNS	838	<i>Beautiful Savior</i>
	595	<i>Jesus Loves Me</i>
	863	<i>My God, How Wonderful Thou Art</i>

The assembly stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Let us pray.

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.

C Amen.

+ SENDING +

BLESSING *We receive the blessings of the triune God.*

P Alleluia! Christ is risen!

C **Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

P The God of resurrection power, the Christ of unending joy, and the Spirit of Easter hope ✝ bless you now and always.

C Amen.

The assembly stands.

SENDING HYMN 836 *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*

1 Joy - ful, joy - ful we a - dore thee, God of glo - ry, Lord of love!
 2 All thy works with joy sur - round thee, earth and heav'n re - flect thy rays,
 3 Thou art giv - ing and for - giv - ing, ev - er bless - ing, ev - er blest,

Hearts un - fold like flow'rs be - fore thee, prais - ing thee, their sun a - bove,
 stars and an - gels sing a - round thee, cen - ter of un - bro - ken praise,
 well - spring of the joy of liv - ing, o - cean - depth of hap - py rest!

Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness, drive the gloom of doubt a - way,
 Field and for - est, vale and moun - tain, flow - 'ry mead - ow, flash - ing sea,
 Thou our Fa - ther, Christ our broth - er, all who live in love are thine;

Giv - er of im - mor - tal glad - ness, fill us with the light of day,
 chant - ing bird, and flow - ing foun - tain call us to re - joice in thee,
 teach us how to love each oth - er, lift us to the joy di - vine!

Text: Henry van Dyke, 1852-1922
 Music: HYMN TO JOY, Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770-1827, adapt.

DISMISSAL

- A We believe out loud that God's mission for us is:
- C to be an active community that welcomes all people to nurture and share their faith and gifts with everyone, according to God's call.**
- A Alleluia! Go in peace. Rejoice and be glad.
- C Thanks be to God!**

+ + +

Sundays and Seasons v.20220805.1416

Copyright © 2024 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.



Today's altar flowers are dedicated
to
the glory of God.

Calendar for May 5 - 12

May	5	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
			9:30 am	Choir practice
			10:00 am	Worship, Sixth Sunday of Easter
			11:30 am	Potluck
	8	Wed.	7:00 p.m	Choir practice
	12	Sun.	9:00 am	Book study
			9:30 am	Choir practice
			10:00 am	Worship, Seventh Sunday of Easter

Next Sunday's Readings, Seventh Sunday of Easter:

[Acts 1:15-17, 21-26](#)

[Psalm 1](#)

[1 John 5:9-13](#)

[John 17:6-19](#)



SERVING EVERY SUNDAY

Pastor Tom, presiding and preaching

Katharine Gossman, piano

Karl Barton, flute

Denise Bookwalter, announcements

Choir: Karl Barton, Melissa Barton, Mark Canning, Judi Duffy, Kirsten Ebbesen, Rita Ford, Martin Guttenplan, Vicki Guttenplan, Ron Hartung, Rudy Hehn, Susan Hehn, Colleen Holdcraft, Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Sandy Ness, Dave Suhrweir, Cassandra White

SERVING TODAY AND ONE WEEK FROM TODAY

Serving	May 5	May 12
Assisting Minister	Colleen Holdcraft	Rob Schiffer
Cup Minister	Rita Ford	Susan Warren
Cantor	Susan Hehn	
Lector	Karen Olson	Mark Bertolami
Acolyte	Cup Minister - or Colton Allen or Graham Reece	
Tech Team	Caroline Collins Mark Greeley	Sandy Lamb-Daniels Cindy Suhweir
Ushers	Bob Eshleman Jan Harrison	
Altar Guild	Linda Eshleman Barbara Sullivan	Rita Ford Susan Warren
Counters	Kirsten Ebbesen Rob Schiffer	Janet Barber Susan Warren

PRAYER REQUESTS

New concerns: Phil Williams and family, mourning the passing of his mother, Gertrude Williams; Scott Simmons (son of Sharon Simmons), recovering from surgery for cancer; Jim Saxman (uncle of Rob Schiffer), undergoing treatment for throat cancer; Doris Michel (sister of Dave Suhrweir), recovering from gall bladder surgery; Sue Berent (sister of Sharon Simmons) for comfort and peace at end of life; Kathleen Bieke (friend of Audrey Post), mourning the death of her son Matthew; Wayne McCully (friend of Audrey Post), undergoing dialysis for kidney failure. Bob Eshleman, recovering from heart surgery; Gladys Kane for continued healing.

For the sick: Margarete Decker (mother of Caroline Collins); Sallie Robinson (wife of Erik Robinson); Theresa Martin (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Dan Graney (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Sarah (friend of Cassandra White); Laura McDuffie (sister of Rob Schiffer), diagnosed with primary immunodeficiency and Sjogren's syndrome.

In treatment for cancer: Phil Williams; Gordon Fleischer; Stephanie Barber; Jenny (niece of Laura Sullivan & Colin Hackley); Rosalinda Wright; James Sablan (brother of Donna Schiffer); Craig Timm (friend of Cheryl & Steve); Laura Ketchum-Jahn, (friend of Cheryl & Steve); Aubrey Thonvold (Reconciling Works Exec. Dir.); Judy Renwick (friend of Judi Duffy); Gil Johnson (friend of Judi Duffy); Amanda George (daughter-in-law of Rob Schiffer).

Health and protection: For all affected by the coronavirus – especially those experiencing mental-health difficulties due to isolation, those struggling to recover from the disease, those on the front lines fighting, researching and treating the disease (doctors, nurses, medical personnel, EMT's), the millions of unemployed people, etc.; for the unaccompanied children entering the U.S., including those “unaccounted for.”

For prisoners: All those on Death Row.

Other concerns: For Karen Olson; Kevin Robinson (son of Erik Robinson), in need of encouragement; Isaac (son of Terri Schmitt), for physical and emotional healing; Steve Michael (cousin of Rob Schiffer), in rehab after a serious accident.

Church concerns: St. Stephen's Church Council; the Florida-Bahamas Synod Council; all congregations searching for ways to stay connected and proclaim the Good News; Reconciling Works; Grace Lutheran Church; Bishop Pedro Suarez; Atonement Lutheran Church, Wesley Chapel, as they live into what it means to be Reconciling in Christ; Our Savior Lutheran Church in Freeport, Bahamas; the ELCA Advocacy offices and ministry; St. Paul Lutheran Church, Pensacola.

World concerns: For all people suffering and/or recovering from hurricanes; migrants and asylum seekers; civil rights for people around the world; a ceasefire in Ethiopia and in Ukraine; peace in Afghanistan and the Middle East.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FLOWER CHART FOR 2024: Do you have an anniversary, birthday or special memory you would like to honor? Celebrate the occasion by sponsoring the flowers for our service by signing up for the 2024 Flower Chart located in the narthex. The cost is \$40, and you can place it in the offering plate.

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER: Want to read a sermon you missed? Visit <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>. Want to read the latest newsletters? Go to <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>. Want to browse a collection of St. Stephen songs? They're at <https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters>.