**All Saints Lutheran Church, ELCA**

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## Sunday, May 18, 2025

## Fifth Sunday of Easter

## *You are absolutely invited into this sacred space.  We welcome all who are seeking God’s love and grace.  All Saints recognizes that we are all unique and beloved children of God.  We celebrate and give thanks for the many diverse gifts that God has given us.  We affirm the sacredness of people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.  We affirm the sacredness of all those who have experienced exclusion because of race, ability, age, or culture. We are committed to working towards anti-racism in ourselves and our community. We affirm the sacredness of all those who wrestle with addiction, physical or mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic circumstances, or anything that too often divides us.  We believe that through our openness we all grow in our faith through Christ’s teaching to love one another as God loves us.  We need each other and our sincere hope is by being in community together, we will experience God’s presence in new and real ways.*

*The offering plate is by the main door to the sanctuary for your convenience.*

*We practice open communion at All Saints Lutheran Church. What does that mean? It means that if you believe and trust that Christ offers his body and blood For You, you are welcome at the table. At All Saints, we believe that Christ invites all people to the feast. “Come to the banquet for all is now ready.”*

***\*\*Stand as you are comfortable***

***Prelude***

***Announcements***

**\*\**Thanksgiving for Baptism***

Blessed be the Holy Trinity: the God who creates us and all that exists, the Risen One + in whom we are set free from sin, and the Spirit who strengthens and enlightens us with her gifts.

**Amen.**

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

We are joined to Christ in the waters of our baptism, made part of God’s holy family that extends to every time and every place. Through our baptisms, we are given new birth each day, and through the Word and the Meal we receive new life in abundance.

Let us give thanks for the saving gift of our baptism.

**Holy God, in our baptism you reached out your saving hand to give to us the gift of new life in you. You are the river of life, the source of all renewal and all joy.**

We are blessed by your gift of holy water: oceans and lakes, rivers and streams.

**We are blessed by your gift of the holy water which cleans and sustains our bodies.**

We are blessed by your gift of holy water: rain and clouds, puddles and pools.

**We are blessed by your gift of the holy water which nourishes flowerbeds and fields, and sustains all of creation.**

**We thank you for the gift of our holy baptism into Christ’s death and resurrection.**

**Wash away all our sin in your holy water.**

**Empower and encourage us to share the good news of the empty tomb.**

**Help us find the courage to speak and act toward justice for all your children.**

Refresh us and the world through this holy and living water.

Where there is drought, bring rain and renewal.

Where there is doubt and despair, bring hope.

Where war and chaos thrive, bring the promise of peace.

We ask all these things through Christ, the Risen One,

who reigns with you and the Spirit forever.

**Amen.**

***\*\*Entrance Hymn All Are Welcome ELW#641***

***\*\*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.**

**\*\*Kyrie ELW#157**

**\*\*Now the Feast and Celebration ELW#167**

***\*\*Prayer of the Day***

**Loving God, you call us to follow you and to welcome all your followers. Help us not to get caught up in the questions that don’t matter. Instead, empower us to to be genuine and faithful in our love and welcome for all whom you love. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.**

***Bells Simple Gifts***

***Reading:*** **Acts 15:1-18**

1Then some Jewish Christians came down to Antioch and began to teach the believers, “Unless you follow exactly the traditions of Moses, you cannot be saved.” 2Paul and Barnabas strongly disagreed with them and hotly debated their position. Finally, it was decided that Paul, Barnabas and some others should go up to see the apostles and elders in Jerusalem about this question.

3All the members of the church saw them off, and as they made their way through Phoenicia and Samaria, Paul and Barnabas told how the Gentiles had been converted. Their story was received with great joy among the sisters and brothers. 4When Paul’s group arrived in Jerusalem, they were welcomed by that church, and by the apostles and the elders, to whom they gave an account of all that God had accomplished through them. 5Some of the converted Pharisees got up and demanded that such Gentiles be forced to convert to Judaism first, before being baptized, and be told to follow the Law of Moses. 6Accordingly, the apostles and the elders convened to look into the matter.

7After much discussion, Peter said to them, “Friends, you know that God chose me from your midst a long time ago—so that the Gentiles would hear the message of the Gospel from my lips and believe. 8God, who can read everyone’s heart, bore witness to this by granting the Holy Spirit to them as the Spirit has been granted to us. 8God made no distinction, but purified their hearts as well by means of faith.

10”Why, then, do you put God to the test by trying to place on the shoulders of these converts a yoke which neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear? 11But just as we believe we are saved through the grace of Jesus Christ, so are they.” 12At this, the whole assembly fell silent.

They listened to Barnabas and Paul as the two described all the signs and wonders God had worked among the Gentiles through them. 13When they finished their presentation, James spoke up. “Siblings, listen to me,” he said. 14Simon has told you how God initially became concerned about taking from among the Gentiles a people for God’s name. 15The words of the prophets agree with this, since the scriptures say,

16’”After that I will return

and rebuild the fallen house of David;

I will rebuild it from its ruins

and restore it.

17Then the rest of humankind,

all the gentiles who are called by my Name,

will look for God,”

18says the Most High,

who makes these things

which were known so long ago.’

Word of God, Word of Life

**Thanks be to God**

***\*\*Gospel Acclamation***

**\*\*Halle, Halle, Hallelujah ELW#172**

*Announcement of the Gospel*

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

***Gospel:* Luke 2: 29-32**

29“Now, O God, you can dismiss your servant in peace,

just as you promised;

30because my eyes have seen the salvation

31which you have prepared for all the peoples to see—

32a light of revelation to the Gentiles

and the glory of your people Israel.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon “Whose Church?”**

***Hymn of the Day* My Faith Looks Up to Thee ELW#759**

\*\***Affirmation of Faith – Immigrant’s Creed by Jose Luis Casal**

**I believe in Almighty God, who guided the people in exile and in exodus, the God of Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon, the God of foreigners and immigrants.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, a displaced Galilean, who was born away from his people and his home, who fled his country with his parents when his life was in danger. When he returned to his own country he suffered under the oppression of Pontius Pilate, the servant of a foreign power. Jesus was persecuted, beaten, tortured, and unjustly condemned to death. But on the third day Jesus rose from the dead, not as a scorned foreigner but to offer us citizenship in God’s kingdom.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the eternal immigrant from God’s kingdom among us, who speaks all languages, lives in all countries, and reunites all races.**

**I believe that the Church is the secure home for foreigners and for all believers. I believe that the communion of saints begins when we embrace all God’s people in all their diversity. I believe in forgiveness, which makes us all equal before God, and in reconciliation, which heals our brokenness. I believe that in the Resurrection God will unite us as one people in which all are distinct and all are alike at the same time. I believe in life eternal, in which no one will be foreigner but all will be citizens of the kingdom where God reigns forever and ever. Amen.**

***\*\*Prayers of Intercession***

**God of Love, hear the prayers that we lift before you. Hold close to you all those for whom we pray.**

Fill the church with the spirit of your redeeming love. Make us steadfast in our proclamation of your grace for all people without exceptions, especially those often overlooked in our communities. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You call us by name and form us. Nurture the baptized to receive your Spirit and proclaim boldly the grace, justice, and mercy of your reign. Hear us, O God,

**Your mercy is great.**

Awaken joy in the beauty and abundance of your creation. Show us the wonder of your presence from the smallest flower to the tallest tree. Recommit us to preservation of wild places. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Instruct all world leaders to protect the most vulnerable among us. Guide those in power toward equitable and just economic policies, so that all might have sufficient resources to live safely and with dignity. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Pour out your love on all in need of care: those mourning losses, enduring trauma, experiencing broken relationships, yearning for companionship, or facing illness especially Monty, Paul, Linda, Betty F, Carla, Becky H., Becky W., David, William and family, Helen, Larry, Stephen, Jennifer, Otto, Fran, families in our community who endure hunger, those who seek asylum or citizenship, and our beloved for whom death is near. Embrace all who are far from home or estranged from loved ones, and all who live with regret. Embolden your people to offer and to seek forgiveness. May all who weep now sing songs of joy again. Wipe away every tear. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Abide with all who are victims of racism, especially people who are doubly marginalized because of gender, sexuality, or ability. Destroy all forms of systemic oppression, and renew our commitment to healing the wounds of our collective body in this community and beyond. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

O God, eternal teacher, we ask your blessings upon all of the students and professors in our midst as they finish their semesters. Bless Evie as she attends preschool; Addison in high school; Zachary, Katy, Erec, and Katie in college; and bless Janet and Lisa as they teach. Bless Sue Lyn as she pursues continuing education. And we give thanks for Tyler and Kimberly, who graduate this month. Hear us, O God,

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for the South Sudanese communities in the US, especially the South Sudanese Authorized Worshiping Community in St Joseph. Hear us, O God,

**Your mercy is great.**

We pray for Border Servant Corps and all ministries and volunteer organizations whose mission is to care for those on the margins, and whose purposes are being challenged and budgets cut. Empower us, your people, to rise up in support. Hear us, O God,

**Your mercy is great.**

Gracious God, be with Pope Leo XIV (14th). Empower him to lead the Catholic Church with grace and mercy. May your Spirit continue to lead him to care for all people, especially the poor and marginalized. Hear us, O God,

**Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks for all the saints whose lives bear witness to your redeeming love. Guide us by their example, until we join them in your eternal home. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

**Good and loving God, we give everyone we have prayed for into your care. Amen.**

*\*\** ***Sharing of the Peace***

### *\*\*Offering is brought forward*

### *\*\** *Offertory Response*

### *As the Grains of Wheat (Refrain Only) ELW#465*

### *\*\*Offertory Prayer*

**Good and loving God, all you have created is good. Help us to be generous with that which you have first given us, so that we can respond to those who hunger in any way. As we gather now at your Table, prepare us to go out and proclaim Christ’s resurrection through what we say and do.** **Amen.**

**Dialogue**

The Risen Christ is with you!

**And also with you!**

Lift up your hearts in joyful praise!

**We lift them up to God in joy!**

We give thanks to God!

**It is good and right to raise our voices in praise and thanksgiving!**

**\*\*Preface:** As we celebrate Christ’s resurrection from the dead… this hymn of praise:

**Holy, Holy, Holy ELW#191**

***\*\*Words of Institution***

**\*\*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***

# ***Communion Hymn Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart ELW#800***

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### *\*\*Sending Song*

### *Praise to you, O God of Mercy ELW#208*

### *\*\*Prayer After Communion*

**Alleluia! We give you thanks, risen Lord, for your life-giving presence among us. You have fed and refreshed us with the healing gift of life. Now send us out to share the good news of the empty tomb, through all that we say and do. Amen! Alleluia!**

### *\*\*Blessing*

### *\*\*Closing Hymn The Church’s One Foundation ELW#*654

### *\*\*Dismissal*

Go in peace to serve our Risen Christ. Alleluia!

**THANKS BE TO GOD!**

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**Weekly Attendance**

***Week of May 11***

***33***

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**Calendar of Events**

***Today***

* ***Bells will perform Simple Gifts***
* ***Adult Bible Study***

***This Week***

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| --- | --- |
| ***May 19*** | ***Grain Valley High School Graduation*** |
| ***May 20*** | ***Creative Friends 1:00 pm*** |
| ***May 20*** | ***Newsletter Deadline*** |
| ***May 21*** | ***Council Meeting 6:30 pm*** |
| ***May 24*** | ***Project Comfort 9:00 am-Noon*** |
| ***May 25*** | ***Vigil 7:00 pm*** |

***Upcoming Events***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***May 26*** | ***Memorial Day Office Closed*** |
| ***May 27*** | ***Creative Friends 1:00 pm*** |
| ***June 1*** | ***Blessing of Contributions to BSCL*** |
| ***June 03*** | ***Creative Friends 1:00 pm*** |
| ***June 05-07*** | ***Synod Assembly*** |
| ***June 07*** | ***Kansas City Pride Parade 11:00 am*** |
| ***June 08*** | ***Pentecost*** |
| ***June 10*** | ***Creative Friends 1:00 pm*** |
| ***June 14*** | ***Men’s Breakfast 8:00 am Perkins by Walmart*** |
| ***June 17*** | ***Creative Friends 1:00 pm*** |
| ***June 18*** | ***Council Meeting 6:30 pm*** |
| ***June 19*** | ***Juneteenth-Office Closed*** |
| ***June 22*** | ***Coffee with Council*** |
| ***June 24*** | ***Creative Friends 1:00 pm*** |
| ***June 28*** | ***Project Comfort 9:00 am-Noon*** |
| ***June 29*** | ***Fifth Sunday of Conversation*** |
| ***July 04*** | ***Independence Day-Office Closed*** |
| ***July 13*** | ***Ice Cream Social after Worship*** |

**Vigil that was previously scheduled for May 24th has been moved to the evening of May 25th due to a schedule conflict.**

Pastor Sarah, Lisa, and David will be attending synod assembly June 5-7. Please keep them and all of the assembly’s voting members in your prayers as they do the work of the synod, including the election of a new bishop. Please keep all of the candidates for bishop in your prayers, including those whose names have been put forward: Rev. Chad Langdon, Wichita, KS; Rev. Peter Rehwaldt, Mission Hills, KS; Rev. Donna Simon, Kansas City, MO; Rev. Zach Sturm, Overland Park, KS; and any additional nominations from the floor of the assembly.

**“The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus (1849-1887)**

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.  
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she  
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

*(poets.org)*

This poem was written by Lazarus in 1883 as part of the fund-raising efforts for a base for the Statue of Liberty. It is cast on a plaque that is mounted on the inside of the base of the statue. Lazarus was an activist and advocate for Jewish refugees fleeing from Russian pogroms in the 1800s, and wrote the poem as a way to express empathy for Russian Jewish refugees to the US.

The statue was intended to be a symbol of republican (anti-imperialist) values; however, Lazarus’ poem gave it a new purpose, turning it into a symbol of welcome for immigrants and refugees at the front door of the country. *(Wikipedia article on “The New Colossus”)*

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*You may recall that there has been an announcement in the bulletin over the past year directing you to Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) if you wish to support the people of Ukraine. LIRS has changed its name to Global Refuge and can be found at* ***globalrefuge.org****. Although their name has changed, their mission remains the same: to assist and support refugees in the United States and around the world. Visit their website to see all the ways you can support this important work.*

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**BLUE SPRINGS COMMUNITY SERVICE LEAGUE** *is very appreciative of your continued support of your neighbor.*

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**Questions for Reflection and Discussion**

1. This text is about inclusion - before Acts 10-11 and the conversion of Cornelius and his household, all followers of Christ were Jews or Samaritans, who are closely related to Jews and have their own version of the Torah. Cornelius and his household were “grandfathered in” because the Holy Spirit came upon them in a very Pentecost-like way, bit this was seen as an exception, not a precedent. (If you have never read this story, I encourage you do to so. It’s a beautiful story of God’s inclusive and expansive love for all people and all of creation.)
2. Our translation sometimes does some really beautiful things with the text in the interest of inclusive language, but sometimes it makes it harder to figure out exactly what people are talking about. The “traditions of Moses” that the Gentile followers are being instructed to follow in verse 1 really boils down to circumcision. This demand is repeated again in verse 5, which helps to explain why this is such a hot-button issue. And it impacted women as well as men; if the men were required to be circumcised, the women would be required to only marry men who had been circumcised. This was not the ONLY point of the Law of Moses they were being told by certain believers that they needed to adopt, but it was the central one.
3. The strong language that’s used in this passage - words like “exactly,” “strongly disagreed,” “hotly debated,” “demanded,” “forced” indicate what a contentious issue this was. What we don’t see is any sort of historically accurate record of the debate. We only see the argument of the winning side.
4. Peter’s argument about the “yoke” that is being placed on the shoulders of the converts is awkward at best. At the places in the Old Testament where the Law is referred to as a “yoke,” it is a welcome one. Jesus himself says “my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” But in his commentary on Acts, Matthew Skinner says that Peter may be pointing back to a single statement that Jesus makes in Luke 11:46, in which he’s criticizing a group of Pharisees and says, “Woe also to you experts in the law! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you do not lift a finger to help them.” How do we make sure that faith is not a “heavy lift” for people who are newly discovering their faith?

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***Birthdays***

***May 23 Susan Limburg***

***Anniversaries***

***May 22 Ron & Linda Schwantes***

***May 24 Martin & Sara Meyers***

***Greeter –* May 18*-******Donna Taylor***

***Usher –* May 18*-Paul Blixrud***

***Altar Guild-* May 18-*Anne Lee & Paul Blixrud***

***Readers- May 18-Kent Deubner***

***Communion Assistant-May 18-Flavia Via***

***Tech-* May 18*-Gary Antes***

**Prayer Requests**

***Monty Health Concerns (May 15)***

*Paul Health Concerns (May 31)*

*Mary Health Concerns (May 15)*

*Carla (Pr. George’s wife) Health Concerns (June 26)*

*James & Family Health Concerns (September 11)*

*Betty F (Sara’s friend) Health Concerns (September 23)*

*William and Family Health Concerns (September 25)*

*Becky H Health Concerns (October 28)*

*David Health Concerns (November 18)*

*Becky W Health Concerns (November 18)*

*Larry Health Issues (December 16)*

*Helen Health Issues (January 14)*

*Stephen Health Concerns (February 27)*

*Jennifer Health Concerns (February 27)*

*Otto Health Concerns (April 23)*

*Fran Health Concerns (April 23)*

***Please pray for the South Sudanese communities in the US and especially South Sudanese Authorized Worshiping Community in St Joseph***

***Please pray for Border Patrol Servants***

***Please pray for the people of Haiti, Ukraine, Israel and Palestine.***

***Please pray for the people of the Sudan.***

***Please pray for the Homeless.***

***Please pray for the families of the victims that were affected by the tragedy of plane crashes.***

***Please pray for legal & illegal immigrants & those seeking asylum or citizenship.***