

## Introduction to the day

This Sunday's image of how the risen Christ shares his life with us is the image of the vine. Christ the vine and we the branches are alive in each other, in the mystery of mutual abiding described in the gospel and the first letter of John. Baptism makes us a part of Christ's living and life-giving self and makes us alive with Christ's life. As the vine brings food to the branches, Christ feeds us at his table. We are sent out to bear fruit for the life of the world.

# GATHERING

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the diverse people of God.*

---

## WELCOME

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS (ACS p. 29)

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who looks upon us in compassion,  
forgives our sin,  
and heals our lives.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Have mercy, O God,  
**against you, you alone,  
we have sinned.**

**In your compassion,  
cleanse us from our sin  
and take away our guilt.  
Create in us a new heart  
and give us a steadfast spirit.**

**Do not cast us away,  
but fill us with your Holy Spirit  
and restore your joy within us.**

**Amen.**

As tender as parent to child,  
so deep is God's compassion for you.  
As high as heaven is above earth,  
so vast is God's love for you.  
As far as east is from west,  
so far God removes your sin from you,  
renewing your life through Jesus Christ.  
Blessed be God who crowns us with mercy and love.

**Blessed be God forever.**

**GATHERING SONG** *We Know That Christ Is Raised* (ELW 449)



1 We know that Christ is raised and dies no more.  
2 We share by wa - ter in his sav - ing death.  
3 The Fa - ther's splen - dor clothes the Son with life.  
4 A new cre - a - tion comes to life and grows



Em - braced by death, he broke its fear - ful hold,  
Re - born, we share with him an Eas - ter life,  
The Spir - it's fis - sion shakes the church of God.  
as Christ's new bod - y takes on flesh and blood.



and our de - spair he turned to blaz - ing joy.  
as liv - ing mem - bers of our Sav - ior Christ.  
Bap - tized, we live with God the Three in One.  
The u - ni - verse re - stored and whole will sing:



Hal - le - lu - jah!

**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.**

**HYMN OF PRAISE** *Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen!* (ELW 377)

Music & lyrics on next page



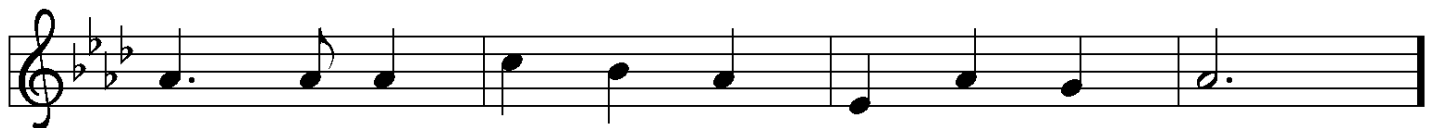
1 Al - le - lu - ia! Je - sus is ris - en!  
 2 Walk - ing the way, Christ in the cen - ter  
 3 Je - sus the vine, we are the branch - es;  
 4 Weep - ing, be gone; sor - row, be si - lent:  
 5 Cit - y of God, Eas - ter for - ev - er,



Trum - pets re - sound - ing in glo - ri - ous light!  
 tell - ing the sto - ry to o - pen our eyes;  
 life in the Spir - it the fruit of the tree;  
 death put a - sun - der, and Eas - ter is bright.  
 gold - en Je - ru - sa - lem, Je - sus the Lamb,

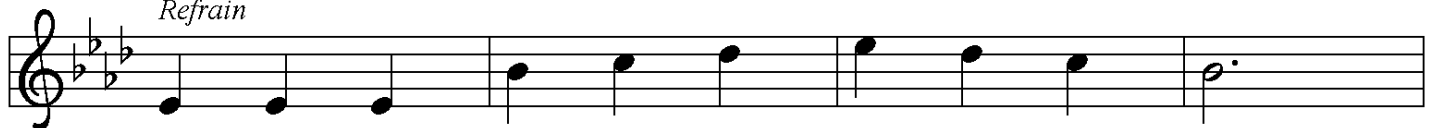


Splen - dor, the Lamb, heav - en for - ev - er!  
 break - ing our bread, giv - ing us glo - ry:  
 heav - en to earth, Christ to the peo - ple,  
 Cher - u - bim sing: O grave, be o - pen!  
 riv - er of life, saints and arch - an - gels,



Oh, what a mir - a - cle God has in sight!  
 Je - sus our bless - ing, our con - stant sur - prise.  
 gift of the fu - ture now flow - ing to me.  
 Clothe us in won - der, a - dorn us in light.  
 sing with cre - a - tion to God the I AM!

*Refrain*



Je - sus is ris - en and we shall a - rise.



Give God the glo - ry! Al - le - lu - ia!

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

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.**

## WORD

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

---

### FIRST READING: Acts 8:26-40

*A reading from Acts.*

<sup>26</sup>An 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.) <sup>27</sup>So 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 <sup>28</sup>and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. <sup>29</sup>Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." <sup>30</sup>So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" <sup>31</sup>He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. <sup>32</sup>Now 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.

<sup>33</sup>In his humiliation justice was denied him.  
Who can describe his generation?  
For his life is taken away from the earth."

<sup>34</sup>The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" <sup>35</sup>Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. <sup>36</sup>As 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?" <sup>38</sup>He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. <sup>39</sup>When 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. <sup>40</sup>But 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

<sup>25</sup>From you comes my praise in the great assembly;  
I will perform my vows in the sight of those who fear the LORD.

<sup>26</sup>**The poor shall eat and be satisfied,  
Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts live forever!**

<sup>27</sup>All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD;  
all the families of nations shall bow before God.

<sup>28</sup>**For dominion belongs to the LORD,  
who rules over the nations.**

<sup>29</sup>Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow down in worship;  
all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel before the LORD.

<sup>30</sup>**Their descendants shall serve the LORD,  
whom they shall proclaim to generations to come.**

<sup>31</sup>They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people yet unborn,  
saying to them, "The LORD has acted!"

## **KIDS' MESSAGE**

### **SECOND READING:** 1 John 4:7-21

*A reading from 1 John.*

<sup>7</sup>Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. <sup>9</sup>God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>In 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. <sup>11</sup>Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup>No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

<sup>13</sup>By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup>And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup>God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. <sup>16</sup>So 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. <sup>17</sup>Love 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. <sup>18</sup>There 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. <sup>19</sup>We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup>Those 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. <sup>21</sup>The 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:** John 15:1-8

The holy gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] <sup>1</sup>"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. <sup>2</sup>He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide 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

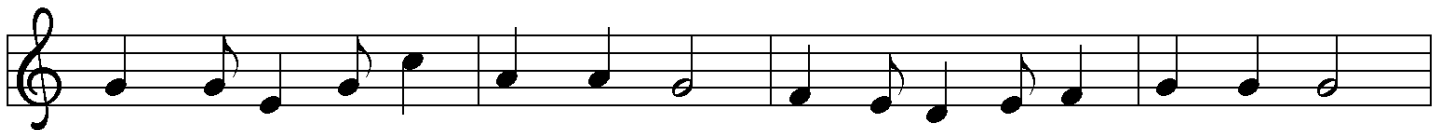
me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”

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

**SERMON:** *Preparing For Service*



**HYMN OF THE DAY** *Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ* (ELW 674)



1 Let us tal - ents and tongues em - ploy, reach - ing out with a shout of joy:  
 2 Christ is a - ble to make us one, at the ta - ble he sets the tone,  
 3 Je - sus calls us in, sends us out bear - ing fruit in a world of doubt,



bread is bro - ken, the wine is poured, Christ is spo - ken and seen and heard.  
 teach - ing peo - ple to live to bless, love in word and in deed ex - press.  
 gives us love to tell, bread to share: God (Im - man - u - el) ev - 'ry - where!

*Refrain*



Je - sus lives a - gain, earth can breathe a - gain, pass the Word a - round: loaves a - bound!

## CREED

In this Easter Season, let us join with Christians throughout the world and confess our shared faith using the words of the 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

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

God of all fruitfulness, you abide in your church and your church abides in you. Cleanse us by your word and give yourself to the whole church on earth so that it bears fruit and witnesses to your love. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You have created the heavens and the earth. As we wonder at the beauty of creation, may we seek vital connections among all that depends on the earth for life. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You rule the nations with justice and love. Give the leaders of the earth assurance of your abiding presence, that they lead not by fear but with love for those they are called to serve. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You have promised to guide us in this life. Continue to be with the people of Bethel and its Call Committee. Grant them patience and discernment as the journey to calling a new pastor continues. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You have loved us so that we can love others. We pray for all in need of your love: those who are poor, lowly, outcast, weak, or fearful. Provide for the needs of all. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You gather us with all the saints by the power of your Spirit. With them, may our hearts live forever in your keeping. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*The congregation may offer additional prayer concerns either aloud or in the chat box*

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

**Amen.**

## PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.  
**And also with you.**

## MEAL

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

---

## OFFERING

*We acknowledge that all we have is a gift from God and in gratefulness  
we return to God a portion of the time, finances, and gifts that God has given us.  
Thank you so much for your continued support in these unusual times.*

*If you are worshipping with us onsite,  
please place your offerings into the basket on the back table as you leave today.*

## OFFERING PRAYER

God of love,  
you call us beloved children and welcome us to your table.  
Receive our lives and the gifts we offer.  
Abide with us and send us in service to a suffering world;  
for the sake of your beloved Child, Jesus Christ.  
**Amen.**

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

As the shadows lengthen,  
we bless you, sheltering God.

We glorify you for the endless, starlit sky,  
deep with the mystery of your creative labor  
through all time and space.

We praise you for the fertile earth  
and for the life its darkness holds and births:  
plants of every variety,  
animals curled in sleep,  
humankind you shaped by your own hand.  
Stay with us, for it is evening.  
**Stay with us, for it is evening.**

Through the night  
you led your people into freedom.  
At day's end  
you rained down manna in the wilderness.  
At sundown  
your Son brought healing to people in need.  
In the midday night  
when Jesus died on the cross,



life came forth for all.

Stay with us, for it is evening.

**Stay with us, for it is evening.**

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.

Our hearts burn within us  
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:  
**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Like a mother hen,  
hold us close through the coming night.  
Watch with those who labor,  
accompany those who long for peaceful sleep,  
welcome those whose waking will be only in you.  
Into our deepest night, come, Lord Jesus.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come, Holy Spirit,  
make here the body of Christ:  
in the breaking of the bread,  
in justice for our broken world,  
in rest for the weary, come, Holy Spirit.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

To you, O God,  
painter of both night and day,  
guiding star and healing sun,  
breath of peace and wind of change,  
be all glory, all honor, all praise  
this night unto the coming dawn, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

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

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever.**

**Amen.**

## COMMUNION

If you are joining us online,  
you welcome to take communion in your home or to be in a time of prayer.  
If you are worshiping with us onsite,  
please follow the directions of Pastor Ron and the ushers.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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

**Amen.**

## SENDING


*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

## BLESSING

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom  
to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus.  
The God of life, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.  
**Amen.**

## SENDING SONG


*Shout to the Lord* (ELW 821)



My Je - sus, my Sav - ior, Lord, there is none like you.



All of my days I want to praise the won - ders of your might - y love.



My com - fort, my shel - ter, tow - er of ref - uge and strength;



let ev-ry breath, all that I am nev-er cease to wor-ship you.



Shout to the Lord, all the earth; let us sing pow-er and maj - es - ty, praise



to the King. Moun-tains bow down and the seas will roar at the



sound of your name. I sing for joy at the work of your hands;



for - ev - er I'll love you, for - ev - er I'll stand.



Noth - ing com - pares to the prom - ise I have in you.

## DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

**Thanks be to God and we will. Alleluia!**

## CELEBRATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS