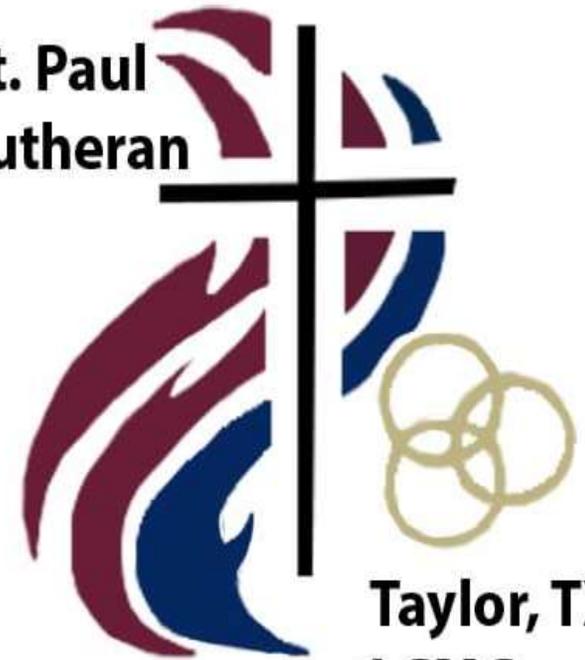


I  
AM  
THE WAY  
AND  
THE  
TRUTH  
AND  
THE  
LIFE

April 28, 2024

FIFTH SUNDAY  
OF EASTER

St. Paul  
Lutheran



Taylor, TX  
LCMC

***Welcome to  
St. Paul Lutheran Church  
Child Development Center and Pre-School  
Rev. Dr. George R. Qualley, D.R.S., Ph.D., Pastor***



# JOHN

Chapter 15:1-8

WELCOME  
WE'RE GLAD YOU JOINED US



***Welcome to  
St. Paul Lutheran Church  
Child Development Center and Pre-School  
Rev. Dr. George R. Qualley, D.R.S., Ph.D., Pastor***

# **Announcement**

***Elections for Church Council – May 5***

***If you are interested in serving, please notify the one  
of the current council members.***

## **INTRODUCTION**

*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.*

# **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

In the name of God,  
who makes a way in the wilderness,  
walks with us,  
and guides us in our pilgrimage.

**Amen.**

Holy One,  
**we confess that we have wandered far from you:  
we have not trusted your promises,  
we have ignored your prophets in our own day,  
we have squandered our inheritance of grace,  
we have failed to recognize you in our midst.  
Have mercy on us!  
Forgive us and turn us again to you.  
Teach us to follow in your ways,  
assure us again of your love,  
and help us to love our neighbor.  
Amen.**

Beloved in Christ,  
the Word draws near to you,  
and all who call out to God shall be saved.  
In Jesus, God comes to you again and again  
and gathers you under wings of love.  
In + Jesus' name, your sins are forgiven.  
God journeys with you and teaches you how to live in  
love.

**Amen.**

## **Gathering Song**

**“Alleluia! Sing to Jesus!”**

**Hymn # 392**

**<sup>1</sup> Alleluia! Sing to Jesus;  
his the scepter, his the throne;  
Alleluia! his the triumph,  
his the victory alone.  
Hark! The songs of peaceful  
Zion**

Hymn # 392

**thunder like a mighty flood:  
"Jesus out of ev'ry nation  
has redeemed us by his  
blood."**

Hymn # 392

**2 Alleluia! Not as orphans  
are we left in sorrow now;  
Alleluia! he is near us;  
faith believes, nor questions  
how.**

Hymn # 392

**Though the cloud from sight  
received him  
when the forty days were o'er,  
shall our hearts forget his  
promise:  
"I am with you evermore"?**

Hymn # 392

**3 Alleluia! Bread of heaven,  
here on earth our food, our  
stay;**

**Alleluia! here the sinful  
flee to you from day to day.**

**Intercessor, friend of sinners,**

Hymn # 392

**earth's redeemer, hear our  
plea  
where the songs of all the  
sinless  
sweep across the crystal sea.**

Hymn # 392

**4 Alleluia! King eternal,  
Lord omnipotent we own:  
Alleluia! born of Mary,  
earth your footstool, heav'n  
your throne.**

**As within the veil you entered,**

Hymn # 392

**robed in flesh, our great high  
priest,  
here on earth both priest and  
victim  
in the eucharistic feast.**

Hymn # 392

**Final Alleluia! Sing to Jesus;  
his the scepter, his the throne;  
Alleluia! his the triumph,  
his the victory alone.  
Hark! The songs of peaceful  
Zion**

Hymn # 392

**thunder like a mighty flood;  
"Jesus out of ev'ry nation  
has redeemed us by his  
blood."**

Hymn # 392

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

*Kyrie eleison*

***Lord, have mercy.***

*Christe eleison*

***Christ, have mercy.***

*Kyrie eleison*

***Lord, have mercy.***

## **Glory To God**

*Glory to God, glory to God,  
glory to God in the highest,  
glory to God, glory to God,  
and peace to God's people on  
earth.*

*Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you  
thanks, we praise you for your  
glory.*

*[Refrain]*

*[Refrain]*

*Glory to God, glory to God,  
glory to God in the highest,  
glory to God, glory to God,  
and peace to God's people on  
earth.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the  
Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us; you are seated  
at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.*

*[Refrain]*

*[Refrain]*

*Glory to God, glory to God,  
glory to God in the highest,  
glory to God, glory to God,  
and peace to God's people on  
earth.*

*For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus  
Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the  
glory of God the Father. Amen.*

*[Refrain]*

*[Refrain]*

*Glory to God, glory to God,  
glory to God in the highest,  
glory to God, glory to God,  
and peace to God's people on  
earth, and peace to God's people  
on earth.*

## **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**

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

*Led by the Spirit, Philip encounters an Ethiopian official who is returning to his African home after having been to Jerusalem to worship. Philip uses their encounter to proclaim the gospel to him. Upon coming to faith in Jesus, he is baptized by Philip.*

<sup>26</sup>Then 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.

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## **PSALM: Psalm 22:25-31**

*All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD. (Ps. 22:27)*

<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!"

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

*We love God and others because God first loved us. We cannot say we love God, whom we have not seen, while hating fellow Christians, whom we regularly see. Love toward God is to be matched by love toward others because the essence of God is love.*

<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.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

***Gospel Acclamation***

***Alleluia. Lord, to  
who shall we go?***

***Alleluia. You have the words  
of eternal Life.***

***Alleluia, alleluia.***

# GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel according to John 15:1-8

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

## **GOSPEL: John 15:1-8**

*On the night of his arrest, Jesus taught his disciples about the relationship they would have with him. Those who abide in his word and love bear fruit, for apart from him, they can do nothing.*

[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.**

# **Children's Message**

# **Sermon**

Rev. Dr. George R. Qualley



## **Hymn of the Day**

**“We Know That Christ is Raised”**

**Hymn # 449**

**<sup>1</sup> We know that Christ is  
raised and dies no more.  
Embraced by death, he broke  
its fearful hold, and our  
despair he turned to blazing  
joy. Hallelujah!**

Hymn # 449

**2 We share by water in his  
saving death.**

**Reborn, we share with him an  
Easter life, as living members  
of our Savior Christ.**

**Hallelujah!**

Hymn # 449

**<sup>3</sup> The Father's splendor  
clothes the Son with life.  
The Spirit's fission shakes the  
church of God.  
Baptized, we live with God the  
Three in One. Hallelujah!**

Hymn # 449

**Final** A new creation comes to  
life and grows  
as Christ's new body takes on  
flesh and blood.

**The universe restored and  
whole will sing. Hallelujah!**

Hymn # 449

With the whole church let us confess our faith.

## **CREED**

*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.

*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 (especially). 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.**

We pray for all our military, especially those deployed. We keep in our prayers all the Wounded Warriors that have returned home to heal. We pray for our missionaries: for Cheryl Kruckemeyer our missionary in Tanzania, for Juan in Bolivia, serving with the World Mission Prayer League, and for our sister congregation at St. John Lutheran Church in Dime Box, Texas & Christus Lutheran Church in Clintonville, Wisconsin. Bless and protect all our local nurses, doctors, healthcare workers and first responders, our students, teachers and school administrators. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, you call your people to pass on the faith to future generations. Help us and all congregations to raise up ministry leaders for the next generation of your church. We pray for this work in LCMC Texas as we lift up the faculty and students of Harvest Workers, our online ministry training program. Today we also give you thanks for Trinity in Stonewall, Texas and their pastor, Ryan Meyer. Bless their ministry both now and for generations to come. 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 Christ be with you always.

**And also with you. Amen.**

## **Canticle of Thanksgiving**

*Refrain* ***Salvation belongs to our God  
and to Christ the Lamb for ever and  
ever.***

***<sup>1</sup> Great and wonderful are your deeds, O God of the universe; just and true are your ways, O Ruler of all the nations.***

***Who can fail to honor you, Lord, and sing the glory of your name?***

*Refrain* **Salvation belongs to our God  
and to Christ the Lamb forever and  
ever.**

***2 For you alone are the Holy One,  
and blessed is the one whose  
name is the Word of God.  
All praise and thanks to you, holy  
God!***

*Refrain* ***Salvation belongs to our God  
and to Christ the Lamb forever and  
ever.***

## **THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD**

Let us pray.

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

**Amen.**

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

## **THE 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.**

**SENDING**

**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 Song**

**“Let All Things Now Living”**

**Hymn # 881**

**<sup>1</sup> Let all things now living a  
song of thanksgiving  
to God the Creator  
triumphantly raise,  
who fashioned and made us,  
protected and stayed us,**

Hymn # 881

**who Still guides us on to the  
end of our days.**

**God's banners are o'er us,  
God's light goes before us,  
a pillar of fire shining forth in  
the night,**

Hymn # 881

**till shadows have vanished  
and darkness is banished,  
as forward we travel from light  
into light.**

Hymn # 881

**Final God rules all the forces:  
the stars in their courses and  
sun in its orbit obediently  
shine;  
the hills and the mountains,  
the rivers and fountains,**

Hymn # 881

**the deeps of the ocean**

**proclaim God divine,**

**We too should be voicing our**

**love and rejoicing;**

**with glad adoration a song let**

**us raise,**

Hymn # 881

**till all things now living unite  
in thanksgiving:  
“To God in the highest,  
hosanna and praise!”**

Hymn # 881

# DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Go in peace. Rejoice and be glad.

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

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