

"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

~ John14: 6

# St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

Fifth Sunday of Easter – May 7, 2023 420 Beaver St., PO Box 411 Mars, PA 16046-0411 www.stjohnchurchmars.org

Phone: 724-625-1830 email: office@stjohnchurchmars.org

Rev. Katie McNeal, Presiding Minister
Maizy Fisher, Director of Music Ministries

We are delighted to have you worship with us this morning! Know that you are welcome here just as you are.

If you are looking for a church to call home, why not consider making this one your own? If this is your first time visiting us, please fill out the visitor information card stapled to your bulletin.

Everything you need to follow worship can be found in this bulletin. As you are comfortable, please rise when there is an \* and join in the congregational responses, noted in **bold**.

All songs are marked with numbers. The red book in the pew has all the songs. Look for the large number in the upper corner of the page to find the correct song.

During the time of **Peace**, you are invited to turn to those around you and offer a word of peace. We suggest a handshake and saying, "Peace be with you." You are also welcomed to offer another gesture of peace (wave, fist-bump, smile, etc.). Hand sanitizer is available in each pew. At the time of **Offering**, you are invited to share a gift as you are comfortable. You may also place any updates to our ongoing prayer list using the yellow cards in the pews and placing them in the offering plates.

At the time of **Holy Communion**, all are welcome to come forward via the center aisle, receive the elements, and return via the side aisles. We begin at the front of the right side, commune all on the right side, then we will invite the left side forward. When you come forward, you may receive the bread from the pastor, then pre-filled cups with wine or grape juice from the assisting minister. You may consume the elements after receiving them then place the empty cup in the tray held by the acolyte. Those who do not receive Holy Communion are welcome to come forward for a blessing.

If you need a restroom, restrooms are located on the bottom floor at the far side of the building from the elevator. Restrooms may be accessed either via the stairs in the rear of the sanctuary, the stairs by the Greeting Area, or the elevator.

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to fill out the blue prayer request forms located in each pew. The cards will be collected during our hymn of the day, and prayers will be offered during the prayers of intercession.

### **PRELUDE**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **GATHERING**

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

### \*GREETING

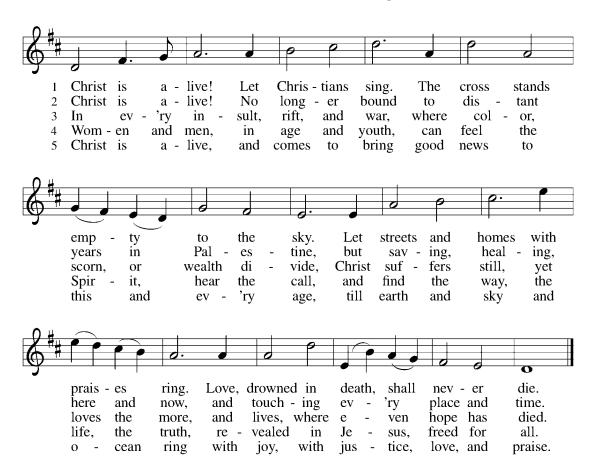
Alleluia! Christ is risen!

### Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

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.

## \*GATHERING SONG Christ is Alive! Let Christians Sing. (ELW 389)



### \*THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, by whose hand we are given new birth, by whose speaking we are given new life. **Amen.** 

Water! We praise you, O God, for water: for oceans and lakes, for rivers and streams. We praise you for waters that wash us clean, quench our thirst, and nurture your whole creation. Praise to you for the life-giving water of baptism, the outpouring of the Spirit of the new creation.

Satisfy the world's need through this living water. Where drought dries the earth, bring refreshment. Where despair prevails, grant hope. Where chaos reigns, bring peace. We ask this through Christ, who with you and the Spirit reigns forever. **Amen.** 

Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism. Holy God, holy and merciful, holy and mighty, you are the river of life, you are the everlasting wellspring. In mercy and might you have freed us from death and raised us with Jesus. In baptismal waters our old life is washed away, and in them we are born anew.

Wash away our sin and all that separates us from you. Empower our witness to your resurrection. Strengthen our resolve in seeking justice for all.

Let us come before the Lord, singing *kyrie eleison*, Lord, have mercy, trusting in God's abundant grace promised in these waters of life.

### \*KYRIE



## \*THIS IS THE FEAST



### \*PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his commandments, and to share his risen life with all the world, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

#### FIRST READING: Acts 7:55-60

A reading from Acts.

<sup>55</sup>Filled with the Holy Spirit, [Stephen] gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. <sup>56</sup>"Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" <sup>57</sup>But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. <sup>58</sup>Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. <sup>59</sup>While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." <sup>60</sup>Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

## **PSALM 31:1-5, 15-16** *Metrical Psalter*



- 1. I find my refuge, Lord, in you; In justice set me free; Save me from shame, Lord, hear my prayer, Make haste, deliver me.
- 2. Be my strong rock, my castle, crag, To keep my life from harm; For your Name's sake, lead me, O Lord; Guide me with your strong arm.
- 3. Lord, rescue me from secret snares; You are my strength, my tower; I place my spirit in your hands; You save me by your power.
- 4. My times are in your hand, O Lord, Save me from all distress; Let your face shine upon me, save Me in your faithfulness.

### **SECOND READING: 1 Peter 2:2-10**

A reading from 1 Peter.

<sup>2</sup>Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation—<sup>3</sup>if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

<sup>4</sup>Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and <sup>5</sup>like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup>For it stands in scripture:

"See, I am laying in Zion a stone,

a cornerstone chosen and precious;

and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

<sup>7</sup>To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe,

"The stone that the builders rejected

has become the very head of the corner,"

<sup>8</sup>and

"A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall."

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

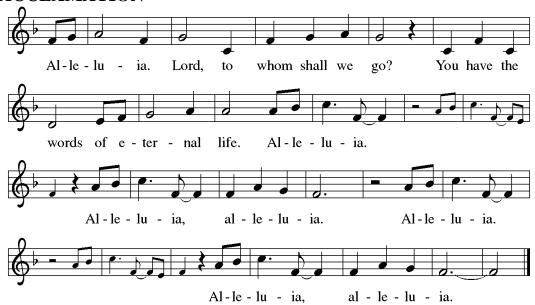
<sup>9</sup>But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people,but now you are God's people;once you had not received mercy,but now you have received mercy.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

# \*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



\*GOSPEL READING: John 14:1-14

The holy gospel according to John.

# Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup>"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. <sup>2</sup>In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. <sup>4</sup>And you know the way to the place where I am going." <sup>5</sup>Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" <sup>6</sup>Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup>If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

<sup>8</sup>Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." <sup>9</sup>Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? <sup>10</sup>Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. <sup>11</sup>Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup>Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup>I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup>If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

## **CHILDREN'S SERMON**

#### **SERMON**

## \*HYMN OF THE DAY Hallelujah! Jesus Lives! (ELW 380)

(Blue prayer cards are collected)



- 1 Hal-le lu jah! Je sus lives! He is now the Liv ing One;
- 2 Je sus lives! Why do you weep? Why that sad and mourn ful sigh?
- 3 Je sus lives! And thus, my soul, life e ter nal waits for you;
- 4 Je sus lives! Let all re joice. Praise him, ran somed of the earth. 5 Hal-le - lu - jah! An - gels, sing! Join with us in hymns of praise.



from the gloom-y halls of death Christ, the con-quer-or, has gone, Christ who died our broth-er here lives our broth-er still on high, joined to Christ, your liv-ing head, where he is, you shall be too; Praise him in a no-bler song, cher-u-bim of heav'n-ly birth. Let your cho-rus swell the strain which our fee-bler voic-es raise:



bright fore - run - ner to the skies of his peo - ple, yet to rise. be - stow bless-ings on his church be - low. lives for - ev - er to with the Lord, at God's right hand, as a vic - tor you shall stand. Praise the king, whose sway sin and death and hell o - bey. vic - tor Glo - ry to our God a - bove and on earth his peace and love!

#### \*NICENE CREED

We believe in one God,

Let us confess our faith in the words of the Nicene Creed

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

United in the hope and joy of resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need. *A brief silence for reflection* 

God of life, strengthen your church to proclaim your gospel even in times of trouble. As we remember Stephen, we give thanks for diaconal ministry. Bless all deacons and strengthen them for their bridge-building ministry between church and world. Hear us, O God.

## Your mercy is great.

Creating God, you show your steadfast love through mighty waters, towering mountains, verdant fields, and arid deserts. Protect the earth's diverse habitats from the forces of pollution, erosion, extinction, and global warming. Hear us, O God.

# Your mercy is great.

Mighty God, your Spirit guides us into all truth. Give wisdom to world and local leaders and organizations as they begin, build, or renew relationships. Strengthen leaders and aid organizations in areas needing to be rebuilt following conflict, unrest, or natural disaster. Hear us, O God.

## Your mercy is great.

Loving God, you make your home among us. Abide with refugees, those experiencing homelessness, those fleeing war and poverty, and all who question if there is a home in your heart. We pray for all who are sick, especially Jeff, Bob, Geneva, Cherry, Winnie, Chuck, Henry, Harry, Roy, Ellen, Ruth, Sally, Katie, Larry, Debi, those on our prayer list, and all whom we remember aloud or in our hearts. Hear us, O God.

# Your mercy is great.

Assuring God, you accompany your people amid uncertainty and change. Uphold people in this community who have recently moved, changed jobs or schools, retired, or are going through transitions of any kind. Lead us in your ways. Hear us, O God.

# Your mercy is great.

Renewing God, you gather the saints at your heavenly banquet. We give you thanks for the care shown us by those who have gone before us. Grant confidence and comfort for all awaiting the place you have prepared. Hear us, O God.

# Your mercy is great.

Rejoicing in the victory of Christ's resurrection, we lift the prayers on the hearts of this congregation this day (*blue prayer cards are read*). We offer to you the prayers that we do not yet dare to speak, but we know you hear, trusting in your abundant and ever-present mercy. **Amen.** 

#### \*PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

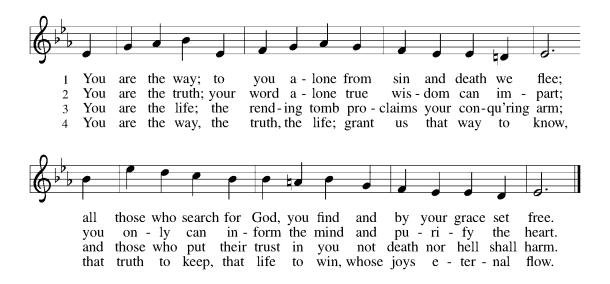
## And also with you.

Let us share Christ's peace with one another.

### **OFFERING**

## OFFERTORY HYMN You Are the Way (ELW 758)

Rise on verse 4



### \*OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray:

Blessed are you, O God, ruler of heaven and earth. Day by day you shower us with blessings. As you have raised us to new life in Christ, give us glad and generous hearts, ready to praise you and to respond to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen**.

### \*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.

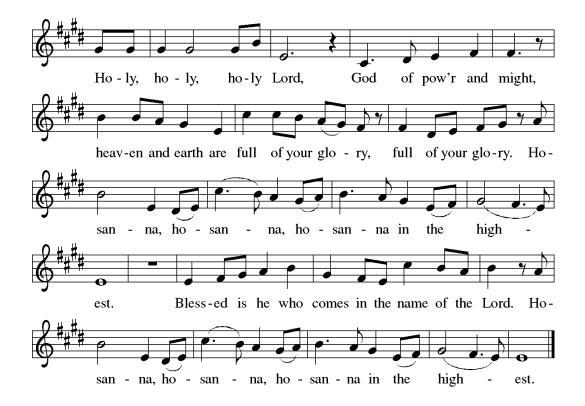
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed 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:



You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God, and great is your glory. You so loved the world that you gave your only Son, that whoever believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. Having come into the world, he fulfilled for us your holy will and accomplished our salvation.

To explain God's love, to show it and share it, 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 good command, his life-giving Passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension, and his promise to come again, we give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, not as we ought, but as we are able; and we ask you to accept our praise and thanksgiving, and, with your Word and Holy Spirit, to bless us, and these your own gifts of bread and wine; that we and all who share in the body and blood of your Son may be filled with heavenly peace and joy, and, receiving the forgiveness of sin, may be made holy, and have our place with all your saints.

All blessing, praise, and thanks to you, Holy God, through Jesus Christ, by your Spirit, in your church, without end.

Amen

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

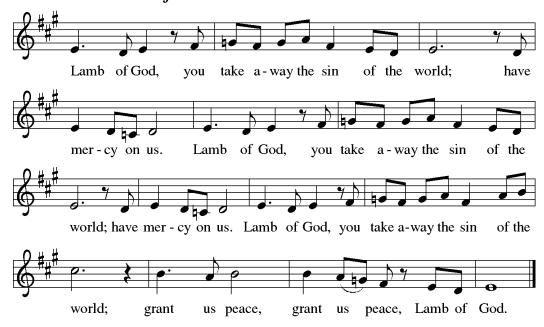
### \*INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Come, for all is now ready.

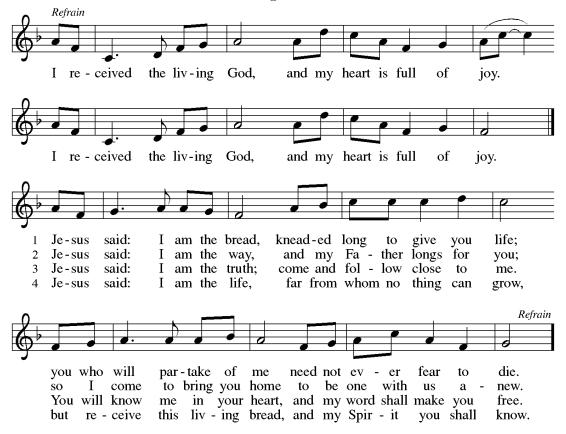
Through this meal, we know forgiveness, life, and salvation as the blessings of God's sacramental grace. In response to Jesus' invitation, all are welcome to come forward and experience the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine of communion. Those who do not receive the elements of bread and wine are invited to come forward for a blessing. Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available.

# **COMMUNION SONG** Lamb of God



### **DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION**

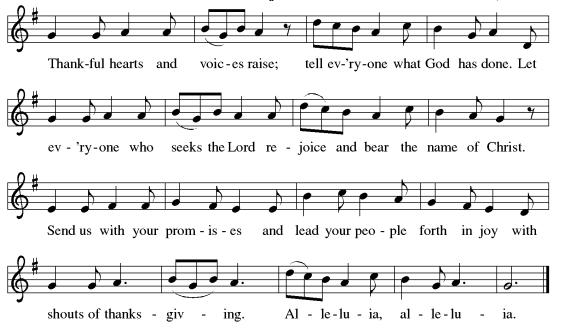
## COMMUNION HYMN I Received the Living God (ELW 477)



### \*POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and preserve you in grace. **Amen** 

## \*POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise (ELW 207)



### \*POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray.

Life-giving God, in the mystery of Christ's resurrection you send light to conquer darkness, water to give new life, and the bread of life to nourish your people. Send us forth as witnesses to your Son's resurrection, that we may show your glory to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

#### Amen.

### \*BLESSING

The God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus. **Amen.** 

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.** 

The God of all grace + bless you now and forever. **Amen.** 

## \*SENDING SONG Alleluia! Jesus is Risen! (ELW 377)



### \*DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

### Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.

### **POSTLUDE**

The flowers on the altar today are from Erin & Jamie Weaver in honor of their mothers: Denise Hager and Carol Weaver.

Assisting in worship today:

**Assisting Minister: Missy Kramer** 

**Acolyte: Emma Niklewicz** 

**Ushers:** 

**Greeters: Kim Richards** 

Offering: Luca Knauff & Abigail Cardinal

Attendance last week: 42 + 3 zoom

# Notes for the day's texts:

The gospel begins by Jesus saying that he will prepare a place for each one of us. But as the text continues, we can see that our place is not an isolated room of our own in a giant heavenly mansion. Jesus' words are less about a place than a relationship: our relationship with Jesus and God the Father. They tell us that in Jesus we know all we need to know about God, and just as we can have a relationship with another human person, we can also have a relationship with God that will one day be as real and obvious as are our relationships with one another. The hope of one day being with Christ fully and forever is as real as the works we are called to do in his name today.

This text allows us the opportunity to contemplate what is ultimately unknowable, yet is also a central part of our faith: what heaven will be like.

# **Today's Music**

*Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing.* Text: Brian A. Wren, b. 1936, Music: T. Williams, Psalmodia Evangelica, 1789. Hope Publishing Company (ASCAP) / Public Domain.

Psalm 31. Text: The New Metrical Psalter, Christopher L. Webber, © 2008. Music: AZMON, Carl G. Glaeser, 1784-1829, Public Domain.

Hallelujah! Jesus Lives! Text: Carl B. Garve, 1763-1841; tr. Jane L. Borthwick, 1813-1897, alt.,

Music: Ludvig M. Lindeman, 1812–1887. Public Domain.

You Are the Way. Text: George W. Doane, 1799-1859, alt., Music: Psalter, Edinburgh, 1615. Public Domain.

I Received the Living God. Text: Anonymous, Music: Anonymous. Public Domain / Augsburg Fortress.

Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise. Music: Ronald A. Nelson, b. 1927. Augsburg Fortress.

*Alleluia! Jesus is Risen!* Text: Herbert F. Brokering, b. 1926, Music: David N. Johnson, 1922–1987. Augsburg Fortress.

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# **Next Week's Readings**

Acts 17:22-31 Paul's message to the Athenians
Psalm 66:8-20 Bless our God, you peoples; let the sound of praise be heard
1 Peter 3:13-22 The days of Noah, a sign of baptism
John 14:15-21 Christ our advocate