

WELCOME TO BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH

God's Family Serving Christ with Love

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5th SUNDAY of EASTER

APRIL 28 & May 2, 2021



Holy Communion is celebrated each week; all people of God are welcome. Please fill out a Communion Registration card found in the pew racks, and put it in the offering bowl as you leave the sanctuary. **Please pick up your prepackaged communion elements on your way into the sanctuary.** It contains a wafer, which you open first by lifting the clear cellophane on top and then the grape juice. If you would like a **gluten free wafer**, please let the usher know before the start of worship.

Children's Worship Activity Bags are available in the Narthex with activities for your children, please help yourself. You can place the used activity bags in the basket located beneath the activity bag tree as you leave. We have a **Cry Room** for your comfort where you can hear and see the service. Due to Covid-19 we are asking that you **reserve the Cry Room** and it will only be for one family as a time.

Hearing assistance devices are available on the counter in the Narthex for your convenience. Please ask the greeter or usher for help.

Large print copies of the bulletin are available in the Narthex.

Enter to Praise

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

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

Please rise in body and/or spirit.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ, let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We thank you, risen Christ, for these waters where you make us new, leading us from death to life, from tears to joy. We bless you, risen Christ, that your Spirit comes to us in the grace-filled waters of rebirth, like rains to our thirsting earth, like streams that revive our souls, like

cups of cool water shared with strangers. Breathe your peace on your church when we hide in fear. Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness. Send us companions on our journey as we share your life. Make us one, risen Christ. Cleanse our hearts. Shower us with life. To you be given all praise, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

You may be seated for the readings

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.

²⁶An 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.) ²⁷So 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 ²⁸and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." ³⁰So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³²Now 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. ³³In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." ³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As 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?" ³⁸He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When 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. ⁴⁰But 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 22:25-31

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

²⁵From you comes my praise in the great assembly;

I will perform my vows in the sight of those who fear the LORD.
²⁶**The poor shall eat and be satisfied,
Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts live forever!**
²⁷All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD;
all the families of nations shall bow before God.
²⁸**For dominion belongs to the LORD, who rules over the nations.**
²⁹Indeed, 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.
³⁰**Their descendants shall serve the LORD,
whom they shall proclaim to generations to come.**
³¹They 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.

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

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

Please rise in body and/or spirit for the Gospel

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. I am the vine, you are the branches.* Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit. *Alleluia.* (John 15:5)

GOSPEL: John 15:1-8

The holy gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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:] ¹“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide 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. ⁵I 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. ⁶Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.” The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

You may be seated

THE SERMON

Please rise in body and/or spirit to proclaim what we believe

NICENE CREED

Let us say together the words of 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.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE - *Pray aloud as the spirit guides you*

P: 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.

A brief silence.

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.

P: 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 especially, for all of those on our prayer list. 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.

P: 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.**

You may be seated

Blessing of the Church Council

Due to Covid-19, we will not be collecting offerings as usual. You may put your offering in the bowl upon leaving the sanctuary. We share our offerings for the mission of Christ through Bethlehem. Thank you for your participation in this ministry to the Glory of God!

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.**

Please rise in body and/or spirit

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The risen Christ invites us to this table. Come, eat and be satisfied.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Communion is celebrated with individual elements in your pew. You may sit after receiving Communion

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.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- We continue to need worship volunteers: ushering and reading
- Do you want to learn how to run the video equipment for Live streaming worship? Contact the office.
- *(Wed Night only)* - Fashion Show here at church, May 1st. Tickets available from the office, on our website and at Theresa's Boutique.
- Carla will be playing requested hymns during Communion. To request a hymn contact Carla or the office.
- May 10th is All Committee Night – we are encouraging ALL people to come.
- May 16th: Sunday School End of Year Gathering, High School Senior Blessing during worship, Plant Sale

Please rise in body and/or spirit

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.**

DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Christ is risen. **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia! **Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

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Depart to Share

Today's Worship Team

Wednesday 5:30pm, 4/28

Music: Carla

Usher: Geoff Gilbert

Sunday Morning Service 9am, 5/2

Music: Carla Gerhardt

Reader:

Usher: Kory Anderson

Video Production: Tania Anderson

Next Week's Worship Team

Wednesday 5:30pm, 5/5

Music: Samantha

Usher: Geoff Gilbert

Sunday Morning Service 9am, 5/9

Music: Carla Gerhardt

Reader:

Usher:

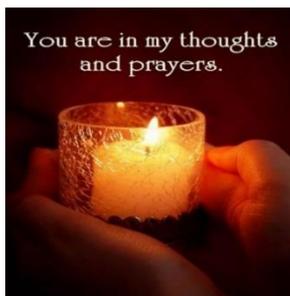
Video Production: Justice Oh

**You can still tune
in at 9am
Worship to listen
from your car –
88.3 FM.**

Please Pray For

Church Prayer List:

Mary Ellen Miller
Angie & Jim Buchholtz
Abby Leader & Family
Jeremy Schilling
Bonnie Bender
Lynn Grueneberg
Bob O'Halloran
Noretta Moran



Our Extended Family Prayer Concerns:

Wayne Ostertag
Holland Family
Julie Grueneberg (Lynn & Diane's daughter)
Brad Kohnke
Deb Moe & family (Sandra Sween's cousin)
Randy VonRuden
Betty Hayes (Chad Hayes' grandma)
Steve Rohrbacher (Marie & Ed's son)
Lucca
Bill (Ann Ciske's father-in-law)
Randy
Tom Teslik (Mark Teslik's son)
Rick Voight (Halley Harms' father)
Shannon Henderson
Dick & Rene' Johnson
Patty McGee
Natalie Pierce



Featuring fashions from
Theresa's Boutique

When: Saturday, May 1st, 1:00 pm
Where: Bethlehem Lutheran Church
W8267 Hwy 33 E, Portage, WI
Tickets: \$10 - purchase at church or online @
www.bethlehemlcportage.org



May 10th at 6:30 pm
Meeting at church in
Sanctuary

We will be discussing plans for the rest of 2021, calendar of events, moving through Covid. We would like All members of any committee to join us AND any church members that would like to share ideas or just listen



Lawn Mowers Wanted

Now that the grass is growing, it needs to be mowed. Are you able to come help? Contact Jack Paulson 608.577.4598 or the office

May 16th

Honoring our High School Seniors at 9 am Worship

High School Seniors you are invited to join us at worship at 9 am for a special blessing to celebrate your accomplishments.

Sunday School End of Year Gathering 10 am

All are welcome to join the Sunday School families as we celebrate the end of school year

Plant Sale 10 am

Are you dividing your perennials or have plants at home you want to donate for our plant sale? Please bring them to church the week of the sale. Include the name of the plant and care or planting instructions.

This Week:

Wednesday, April 28

10:30 am Tai Chi

5:30 pm In person Worship

6:30 pm Confirmation Grades 6th-8th

7:30 pm Fashion Show Rehearsal

Friday, April 30

10:30 am Tai Chi

Saturday, May 1

1 pm Spring Fashion Show

Sunday, May 2

9 am In person & Online Worship –
Blessing of the Council

Monday, May 3

10:30 am Tai Chi

Tuesday, May 4

9 am Quilters

5 pm Finance Mtg

Wednesday, May 5

Food Pantry Helpers

10:30 am Tai Chi

5:30 pm In person Worship

6:30 pm Confirmation Grades 6th-8th