

## MAY 2 2021 Fifth Sunday of Easter ~Worship with Holy Communion

### Preparing for worship:

We will have Holy Communion together - separately this worship time. You will need either wine or grape juice and bread of some kind. You may use what cups & plates you have – do not go out & purchase. Here is a list: a white cloth, large cup or individual ones, a large paten(plate) for bread or small – depending on the size of your family. A cross and a candle.

### Welcome to worship,

This Liturgy is from the Evangelical Lutheran Book of Worship and the modified prayers this morning are based on those from Sundays & Seasons. Shut off all the distractions in your home. Sit in the quiet for a bit – take some deep breaths. Light the candle.

## GATHERING

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

*The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.*

In the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*Silence for reflection and self-examination.*

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus**

**Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for you, and for his sake God forgives you all your sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ he gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit.  
**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.**

**Hymn: ELW 853 / LBW 546 - When Morning Gilds the Skies**

**The 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.

### **THE WORD**

The first reading is from **Acts 8: 26-40**

**Psalms 22:25- 31** found on page 224

The second reading is from **1 John 4:7-21**

***Holy, Holy, Holy, our hearts adore you. Our hearts are glad to say the words: you are Holy God.***

The Gospel is from **John 15:1-8**

**Sermon-** Rev. Norine Gullons

Abide is not a commonly used word these days. 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 ministry of mutuality.

Baptism makes us 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, and we are sent out to bear fruit for the life of the world. Never does our status before God depend on how we feel or having the right experience, or being free of doubt, or what we accomplish or our success or our position. It is about new life and about staying connected or abiding.

Martin Luther once observed that the branch does not need to be taught how to bear fruit, and neither does the branch count how many grapes it has produced. There is no quota, no goal. The key is to stay connected.

Jesus said that we're like that. He said that we work better when we are connected to him. But how can we be connected? What can we do to develop a strong relationship?

For one thing, we can do what you did today. You have joined us for worship. Another way to be connected to Jesus is to try to live like he would want us to live. To me that means He wants us to love one another, to treat each other with respect, and He wants us to be honest. Our National Bishop Susan Johnson would say to abide or live our faith we are invited to pray, read scripture, worship and love.

I also believe that we need to abide with each other and stay in contact with our faith community, our families, our friends and our neighbors.

Many people are overwhelmed with day to day living that they have become very discouraged. Many people are struggling through this time when we have our movements restricted. As one person we think we don't have any impact or that we cannot make a difference in someone else's life. We get ready to throw in the towel or ignore the situations around us. That is not true. Any contact you make with someone is meaningful. You are abiding with them, and in turn telling them that they matter. That is "loving one another."

The Father is the vine grower—Jesus is the vine—we are the branches.

The purpose of the vineyard is to grow grapes—not vines or branches, but grapes. A well-tended vineyard is a thing of beauty, but beauty isn't what a vineyard is about. The owner of a vineyard plants a vineyard to grow grapes. We understand that. As we plan now to plant our fields and gardens this month, we look forward to the abundance of the fruits of our labors.

Finding an unproductive branch, God removes it--cuts it off and tosses it aside. But finding a fruit-bearing branch, God cuts it too. He doesn't remove it. Instead, he snips away the suckers--the parts that steal the plant's energy without producing any fruit--leaving the good part of the branch to do its work. It's pruning--helping us to rid ourselves of friends or habits or allegiances that threaten to pull us down. On our own, we might not do that. On our own, we might never change. We need God to help us start moving in the right direction.

That makes sense. I'm not much of a gardener, but I know that gardens need tending. Without a gardener, weeds will win. Without a gardener, the bad will crowd out the good. When God goes through the vineyard, it doesn't matter whether the branches are good or bad. In both cases, God takes a sharp knife and does some pruning.

Jesus goes on to say, "Remain in me" and then assures us that he is with us all the time. He calls us to walk with him—to abide in him. There's something wonderful in that. We have a Lord who wants to walk alongside us. He wants to be there for us—to nurture us—to protect us and to bless us.

Christ stands by us, the baptismal grace poured out as a sign and this sacrament has power when we lose hope or despair. We live day after day. One day at a time. Stay connected to your faith, to your God, to your spiritual soul, and give him space to live in your heart. **Amen**

## Hymn: WOV 668 / ELW 342 - There in God's Garden

God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

### 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 church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE - BY JOANNE BRETZLAFF

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. We pray for the people of India in their fight against the virus. 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 *especially those we name in our hearts.* 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.**

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.**

**The Peace of Christ be with you always - and also with you.**

#### **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.**

### **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

#### **DIALOGUE**

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.**

#### **PREFACE**

It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everliving God. But chiefly are we bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of our Lord; for he is the true Passover Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin, who by his

death has destroyed death, and by his 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:

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.

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.  
Amen.**

#### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Please take time now to have your Communion at home.

#### **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.**

#### **HYMN ELW 379 / LBW 148 - Now the Green Blade Rises**

#### **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. **Thanks be to God.**