

BETHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

You have a place here!

*"Joyfully we profess our faith through God's unconditional love.
Here and now God dwells in all of our lives,
bears our sins on the cross, and forgives us all."*

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

9:00 am Sunday, April 28, 2024

Pastor Dave Johnson

TODAY'S REFLECTION

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.



All baptized and confessing believers are welcome to receive Holy Communion.

THE GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

*We hope that your worship experience is spiritually fulfilling
and your day begins with our Lord's gifts of peace and joy*

▼ **Prelude Reflections for Meditation**

▼ **Welcome Greeting—Prayers and Praises**

▲ **Opening Hymn**

“My Life Is In You” page 9

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

▲ **Confession & Forgiveness**

We serve a risen Savior yet we live as if in chains.

Forgive us, Lord that we are so hesitant to live the resurrection life.

Forgive us that we fail to show through word and action the truth that you loved us into
your kingdom through the glorious mystery of the Cross.

Forgive us that there is still fear in our lives that prevents us from achieving our full
potential. Draw us close. Open our eyes to the glory of the risen Christ, our hearts to the
wonder of the Cross and our hands to the service of your kingdom where you have
placed us, that your name might be glorified through our lives.

Amen.

God of resurrection
of life and death and rebirth
Renew our hearts and minds

God of promise
of all beginnings and all endings
Renew our hearts and minds

God of hope
of new growth and harvest
Renew our hearts and minds

(by John Birch, Faith and Worship Blogspot)

▲ **Absolution**

▲ **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

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song

▼ **God's Word from the Scriptures (NRSV)**

The First Reading is from Acts 8:26-40

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

▼ **God's Word from the Psalms (NRSV)**

Psalm 22:25-31

From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.

The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord.

May your hearts live forever!

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord;
and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.

For dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations.

To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him.

**Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord,
and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.**

▼ **God's Word from the Scriptures (NRSV)**

The Second Reading is from 1 John 4:7-21

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. 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. 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. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. 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.

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. 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. We love because he first loved us. 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. 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.**

▲ **God's Word from the Gospel (NRSV)**

The Holy Gospel according to John 15:1-8

Glory to you, O Lord.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. 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. 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. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 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—God's Word Applied to Life**

▼ **Hymn of the Day**

"Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil" page 10

▲ **The Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.**

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again 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 the Church*

Let us pray to our victorious Savior on behalf of the Church, the world, and all people.

A brief silence

Lord Jesus, thank you for cutting us from our tree of death and grafting us to yourself, the Living Vine. Give us courage: your Father's pruning shears frighten us at times! Give us faith: he prunes us to bear much fruit in you! Give us love: it is the sweetest fruit of your blessed vine.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Grant that your holy Church may always abide in you, and you in it. May its words and deeds bear the fruits of your Holy Spirit. Through its witness, graft many souls to yourself.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give to your persecuted servants the knowledge that through their faithful endurance, they will bear rich fruit that refreshes and nourishes many hearts – perhaps even their enemies'.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You are the vine, and we are the branches. Keep this congregation united to you. Make our ministries bear fruit in the lives of those around us. Give us joy in knowing and serving you.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless and direct everyone learning the way of being your disciple. May their friendship with those who do not yet know you well, bear much fruit. Use them to kindle or renew faith in many hearts.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Prune the hearts of our earthly rulers. Cut away the greed, pride, and lust for power that leads to hatred and violence. Build up all that enriches the lives of the poor and humble. Let the desire to do your Father's will abide in all our hearts and minds.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You have overcome the world. Be the joy and strength of all those who defend us against violence, sickness, and injustice. Protect and guide them. Prosper all they do that works for peace and health. Bring them home safely and soon.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Grant to all who suffer a double portion of your Spirit, *especially we pray for those we name before you now (either in silence or out loud)*. Fill them with your life. Keep them steadfast in faith. Bless and strengthen all who care for them.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, death shall never have the last word over your beloved people. Thank you⁷ for speaking words of forgiveness and life to all who have died trusting in you. Abide with us. Lead us to that place where we shall dwell with you and with all the redeemed, and shall feast at you heavenly Table forever.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Grant to us all that is in accordance with your will, dear Jesus, and accomplish your salvation among us; for you are risen from the dead and dwell in majesty with your Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

▲ **Sharing of the Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Greet each other with a sign of Christ's peace.

THE MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

▼ **Offering and Presentation of the Gifts**

April—June Mission Designation ***Fortune Lake***

▼ **Offering Prayer**

Risen One,

you call us to believe and bear fruit.

May the gifts that we offer here be signs of your abiding love.

**Form us to be your witnesses in the world,
through Jesus Christ, our true vine. Amen.**

▼ **The Great Thanksgiving and Words of Institution**

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, 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, 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 and Distribution of Communion**

The risen Christ is made known to us in the breaking of the bread.
Come and eat at God's table.

▼ **Post Communion Blessing**

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
strengthen you and keep you in His grace until He comes again.
In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

▼ **Post Communion Prayer**

Shepherding God,
**you have prepared a table before us and nourished us with your love.
Send us forth from this banquet to proclaim your goodness
and share the abundant mercy of Jesus, our redeemer and friend. Amen.**

THE SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

▼ **Closing Hymn**

"Will You Come And Follow Me" page 11

▼ **Announcements**

Anyone is welcome to make announcements at this time.

▲ **Blessing and Dismissal**

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.
In the name of the Father and the † Son and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Alleluia! Go in peace. Rejoice and be glad.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

My Life Is In You

Words and Music by
Daniel Gardner

$\text{♩} = 160$ **CHORUS**

B \flat /C F C/F F C/F F C/F Dm C/D Dm C/D Dm C/D B \flat C/B \flat B \flat

My life is in You, Lord, my strength is in You, Lord, my hope is in

6 C/B \flat B \flat F/C Last time to Coda \oplus 1, 3. C B \flat /C 2. C **VERSE** B \flat C/B \flat B \flat C/B \flat

You, Lord, in You, it's in You. My You. I will praise You with all of my

12 F/A F F/A B \flat C/B \flat B \flat C/B \flat F/A F F/A

life, I will praise You with all of my strength; With

18 C G 7^{sus} /D C/E F D A 7^{sus} /E D/F \sharp Gm Gm/F

all of my life, with all of my strength.

22 E \flat Gm 7 /D C $^{\text{sus}}$ C B \flat /C D.S. al Coda

All of my hope is in You. My

\oplus Coda **ENDING**

26 C B \flat /C F

You, in You.

Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil



Lord, let my heart be good soil, o-pen to the seed of your word.



Lord, let my heart be good soil, where love can grow and peace is un-der-stood.



When my heart is hard, break the stone a - way. When my heart is cold,



warm it with the day. When my heart is lost, lead me on your way.



Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart, Lord, let my heart be good soil.

Text: Handt Hanson, b. 1950

Music: GOOD SOIL, Handt Hanson

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Will You Come And Follow Me

The Summons

- 1 "Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?"

- 2 "Will you leave yourself behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare,
should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer pray'r
in you and you in me?"

- 3 "Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the pris'ners free
and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean,
and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me?"

- 4 "Will you love the you you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?"

- 5 Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

Text: John L. Bell, b. 1949

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MORE SPECIAL WAYS TO GIVE THROUGH YOUR TIME AND TALENTS

Sunday Worship Lectors and Communion Assistants are needed

Service Assistant to advance projected bulletin slides

Maintenance chores around the facility

Christian Education Volunteers

BETHANY WEEKLY EVENTS CALENDAR

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Sunday | 9:00 am Worship, in the Great Room and Facebook Live-Stream/Video |
| Tuesday | 9:00 am Community Coffee in Great Room 9:00 am Cover Girls in Classroom |
| Wednesday | 10:00 am Women's Bible Study via ZOOM |
| Thursday | 7:00 am Men's Breakfast and Bible Study in Great Room 10:00 am Women's Bible Study in Conference Room |

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