



The Fifth Sunday of Easter

Service of Holy Communion

Grace Lutheran Church ~ ELCA

May 2, 2021

Christ is risen! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Good morning & Welcome to Grace!

*Our mission is to invite and welcome all
to the fellowship of Christ in service to our community.*

***This is a house of praise and prayer, of worship and rejoicing!
We are glad you are with us for worship today, as we continue to
celebrate the Resurrection of our Messiah, and the promise
of new life that is ours because of his sacrificial love!***

***We offer a special welcome to our guests, and to all those
who are joining us remotely through Facebook Live or on YouTube.***

CHILDREN ARE WELCOME IN WORSHIP AT GRACE! Each week, prior to the reading of scripture, a special Children's Message is offered for our young ones. While we are not having the children come forward at this time, we will still include it in the service.

YOUR BULLETIN contains the worship service in its entirety, **and your parts are printed in bold type.**

YOU WILL NOTICE that we currently do not have any hymns included in the service. However, music is still an important part of our service! Please, enjoy listening to these musical offerings. However, for the health and safety of everyone in attendance, we do ask that you refrain from singing along. Thank you.

IN THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR THE SAVING GRACE SHOWN TO US IN THE LIFE, DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, WE CELEBRATE THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION EACH WEEK. All are welcome at the Table. For those with us in person, you will see that each person has a small, plastic container of wine or juice and there is a plastic bag with a wafer inside for each person in your group. If you asked for a gluten free wafer, it will be in its own bag and will be marked as "GF".

FOR THOSE PARTICIPATING FROM HOME, please have a small glass of wine or juice and a small piece of bread available for all who are planning to commune. When we come to the Meal portion of the service, please follow along on the screen or in the bulletin. We will go through the Great Thanksgiving and the prayers and, after the Lord's Prayer, all will be invited to commune in unison – at Grace, and at home. We are grateful that we can celebrate together this very important part of our Christian worship service.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS about our worship service - generally or specifically in this time of pandemic - about Baptism or Communion, about what Lutherans believe, or even about Grace Lutheran Church, please do not hesitate to reach out to our pastor.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

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

PRELUDE

"Now the Green Blade Rises"

ELW 379

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

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

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.

Water is poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.

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 Risen 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

MUSICAL OFFERING

"Here I Am, Lord"

Arr. Mark Hayes

WORD ~ God speaks to us in scripture, preaching, and song.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

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 (*Read responsively: Plain font: pulpit side; **Bold font: organ side***).

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

First 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.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (*John 15:5*):

***Alleluia. I am the vine, you are the branches.
Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit. Alleluia.***

The holy gospel according to Saint John, the 15th chapter. **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 our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON (*a moment of silent reflection follows the sermon*)

THE CREED ~ *Let us confess our faith using 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

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION ~ *We pray for the church, the world, and all in need.*

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 – and we – bear fruit and offer witness 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, and may we offer our service to help protect all you have made. 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. Give us wisdom in how we chose our leaders, and inspire us to speak truth to power. 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. We pray for our society, as it continues to struggle with how to address the issue of gun violence. We ask that you would provide for the needs of all, especially those impacted by COVID-19, those who are still unable to receive the vaccine and those who are afraid to be vaccinated, all those on our church prayer list, and everyone we lift up to you in our hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

May is Asian-Pacific-American Heritage Month. We give thanks for the rich heritage, gifts, cultures and contributions to our nation and church of our Asian and Pacific Islander neighbors and siblings in Christ. And we ask that you would be with them during these times, as you have promised, when they are being victimized, attacked and even killed due to hate and misunderstanding. We ask that you would protect them from harm, and move us to action, that we may be faithful allies to them. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You gather us with all the saints by the power of your Spirit. Today we remember in particular Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, and all those whose faith has nurtured and inspired our own (pause for reflection). 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**

MEAL ~ God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING

This is normally the place in the service where we would collect the offering. We give thanks for your spirit of generosity and prayerfully ask that – if at all possible – you continue to be faithful to your financial commitment to Grace. Thank you again.

MUSICAL OFFERING

“Shout to the Lord”

ELW 821

OFFERING PRAYER *(Those moved to do so may stand.)*

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

THE 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:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Amen

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE & THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Holy, living, and loving God, we praise you for creating the heavens and the earth.

We bless you for bringing Noah and his family through the waters of the flood, for freeing your people Israel from the bonds of slavery, and for sending your Son to be our Redeemer.

We give you thanks for Jesus who, living among us, healed the sick, fed the hungry, and with a love stronger than death, gave his life for others.

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 life-giving death and glorious resurrection, we await your promised life for all this dying world.

Breathe your Spirit on us and on this bread and cup: carry us in your arms from death to life, that we may live as your chosen ones, clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. **Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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

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

COMMUNION – This is the Body and Blood of Christ, given and shed for you.

At this time, all are invited to partake of the Bread and Cup in place. Please hang on to your cup and the bag – there will be a bin for you to dispose of these items as you leave the service.

MUSICAL OFFERING

"I Received the Living God"

ELW 477

During this short musical offering, you are invited to observe a moment of silent reflection on the gift of the Sacrament. Please remain in your seats. Thank you.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION *(Once all have received the meal)*

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**

SENDING ~ God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

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! **We will! Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

POSTLUDE *"They'll Know We're Christians By Our Love"* Arr. M. Hayes



2919 Miccosukee Road, Tallahassee, FL 32308
www.gracelutheran.faith

MINISTERS: All the people of God

PASTOR: The Rev. Jennifer M. Kopacz – pastorjenn@rocketmail.com

PASTOR'S CELL PHONE: 850-800-7197

CHURCH OFFICE PHONE: 850-877-5423

CHURCH OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR: Lisa D. Rubin – graceluthch@earthlink.net

READER: Kris Albers

MUSIC PROGRAM COORDINATOR: Leslie Heffner – heffnerl@gmail.com

ORGANIST / PIANIST: Johnny Shaw, IV – jfs18e@my.fsu.edu

USHERS: Bob Becker, George Ohlin, Frank Piepmeier

A/V TEAM: Joy Becker, Nick Gandy, Mary Grant, Leslie Heffner, Denise Wetzel.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

If you have a need, or if you know someone who does, please let the church office know! We are a community in Christ, and we are here to support, love and serve one another.

Don't Forget – We Still Need Your Reservations for Sunday Worship! We ask that you make your reservation by 5pm on Thursday. The reservation link is on our website, <http://www.gracelutheran.faith>, or you can call the church office (850-877-5423) and we'd be happy to help. Worship is also streamed online and the link for that is also on our website.

If You Need Assistance or Information, please contact the church office **by phone (850-877-5423) or email (graceluthch@earthlink.net)**. In the case of a pastoral care emergency, we ask that you contact Pastor Jenn on her cell at 850-800-7197. Thanks!

Deadline for Announcements - Please email announcements to Lisa Rubin in the church office at graceluthch@earthlink.net by 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday morning.

The Chancel Flowers this week are given by Sue Homant, in celebration of all grandchildren.

Zoom TextTalk with Pastor Jenn is held on Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m. The link is sent out weekly - we hope you'll join us.

Grace Notes Newsletter Deadline is the 20th of the month prior to publication month. Please send submissions to Grace Notes Editor, Nick Gandy, at ngandyman@yahoo.com. Thank you!

The Relay for Life “Drive-Up Relay” will be held on Saturday, May 15th, from 4 – 7pm, at Tallahassee Community College. Every car gets 4 parking spaces, and you can bring lawn chairs, hang out, walk and dance to the music within your four spaces! You can also make an online donation to the Grace Relay Team by going to our Relay Website: [https://secure.acsevents.org/site/STR?pg=entry\\$fr_id=99471](https://secure.acsevents.org/site/STR?pg=entry$fr_id=99471)

Manna on Meridian - You can support Manna through your prayers and monetary donations, as well as through continued donations of tuna (leave your cans in the box outside the Church Office door). Thank you for your faithful support of this ministry.

Doing Some Spring Cleaning? Please consider donating any new or gently used items to Goodwill, the Salvation Army or ECHO. These programs in our community offer help to those who need it – and they need our support! Thank you for your generosity and care!

Fellowship Via Zoom - If you are interested in participating, please contact Mary Grant at grantmlcic@hotmail.com or (609) 602-0155. We hope you'll join us.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

This week at Grace, please remember in prayer:

Mallory Wharton, Carey Loveland, Louise Price, Mike Bussell, Sam Rubin, Ginny Nervina, Ed Mellon, Bill Pomidor, Reed Kallestad, Riley Littlefield, Emily Noel, Jennifer Taylor, Joe Aubert, Molly Mojher, Kathy Bolling, Nancy Adams, Bill Owen, Buddy Jacobs, Bill Halpine, Nick Pleskovich, Rochelle Steinlauf, Gwen Carriere, Kevin Robinson, Jackie Barksdale, Jane (Joe) McRory, Maria Eckard, Beatriz Fernandez, Trevor Rogers, Judy, Billy, Lisa, Jessica, Bridget; Anita and Ralph Braun; Jim and Wendy Akin; Jim and Nancy Banks; Pastor Jenn and Rob; Dan and Irene Poole, and family; Gordon Evans and family; Lindsey and family; Adrie Belcher, her daughters, Bailey & Paisley, and Adrie's half-brother, Jacob; the family of Peter Nervina; the family of Caden Staats; Gerry and the family of her grandson, Jaxson; the people of Grace Lutheran Church and our Congregational Council, especially our Nominating Committee; St. Stephen Lutheran Church and Pastor Tom Holdcraft; the Florida-Bahamas Synod and our Bishop, Pedro Suarez; the ELCA and our Presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton.

Please also lift up:

All the nations of the world and their leaders, that your wisdom, justice and peace may guide their actions. victims of gun violence and the families of those who have been killed; victims of hate crimes.

The families in mourning for loved ones lost to COVID-19, in the United States and worldwide; all those currently dealing with this disease; medical professionals and first responders who risk their safety for the sake of others; all those involved in creating and distributing the vaccines.

The homeless and the hungry; military personnel and their families; those who are incarcerated, and are unable to have visitors, go to chapel, or participate in healthy social interaction; healing and answers for all those with chronic pain, disease process or illness; all those whose needs are known only to God.

If you would like to have someone included on the prayer list, please contact Lisa in the Church Office (graceluthch@earthlink.net or 850-877-5423) or our Prayer Team Leaders, Tina Frese: (freset@comcast.net) or Erik Robinson (robinsoe@flcourts.org).