

Trinity Lutheran Church, LCMS

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Pastor Michael R. Ruhl

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5th Sunday of Easter

Witnessing the Word

April 28, 2024 Creative Worship



PRE- SERVICE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SERVANT PROCESSIONAL

AS WE GATHER

How far can the human voice travel? Scientists tell us that the normal outdoor range for an adult voice traveling through still air is about 180 meters or 590 feet. Communication in Silbo, a whistled language of Spanish-speaking inhabitants of the Canary Islands, can travel five miles under ideal conditions. The sound of a voice traveling across still water at night can range up to 10.5 miles. Voices can carry! The message that the voices carry is what is most important. The spoken message about Jesus shared by Philip the deacon with the Ethiopian stranger made an eternal difference in that man's life. The words that we speak and the messages that we share are of great importance and have the divine potential to "spread the reign of God the Lord" (*Lutheran Service Book - Hymn #830 - Stanza 1*).

✠ PREPARATION ✠

HYMN "O Holy Spirit, Enter In" *LSB 913*

- 1 O Holy Spirit, enter in,
And in our hearts Your work begin,
Your dwelling place now make us.
Sun of the soul, O Light divine,

Around and in us brightly shine,
 To joy and gladness wake us
 That we may be
 Truly living,
 To You giving
 Prayer unceasing
 And in love be still increasing.

2 Give to Your Word impressive pow'r,
 That in our hearts from this good hour
 As fire it may be glowing,
 That in true Christian unity
 We faithful witnesses may be,
 Your glory ever showing.
 Hear us, cheer us
 By Your teaching;
 Let our preaching
 And our labor
 Praise You, Lord, and serve our neighbor.

3 O mighty Rock, O Source of life,
 Let Your dear Word, in doubt and strife,
 In us be strongly burning
 That we be faithful unto death
 And live in love and holy faith,
 From You true wisdom learning.
 Your grace and peace
 On us shower;
 By Your power
 Christ confessing,
 Let us see our Savior's blessing.

Text: Michael Schirmer, 1606–73, adapt.; (sts. 1, 3): tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.; (st. 2): tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, alt.

Text: Public domain

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and
 of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES

Psalm 66:1–4, 8–9; 40:5

P Shout for joy to God, all the earth;

C **sing the glory of His name; give to Him glorious
 praise!**

P Say to God, “How awesome are Your deeds!

C **All the earth worships You and sings praises to
 You; they sing praises to Your name.”**

P Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of His
 praise be heard,

- C** who has kept our soul among the living and has not let our feet slip.
- P** You have multiplied, O LORD my God, Your wondrous deeds and Your thoughts toward us; none can compare with You!
- C** I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

- P** Humble yourselves then before God, confess your sins to Him, and implore His forgiveness.
- C** **O almighty God, most merciful Father, I, a repentant sinner, confess to You all my sins and iniquities with which I have offended You. By nature, I am a sinful creature. In thought, word, and deed I have continually transgressed Your law. For this I justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of the sufferings and death of Your Son, Jesus Christ, be gracious and merciful to me, a penitent and contrite being. Forgive me all my sins and grant me the power of Your Holy Spirit that I may amend my sinful life and bear fruit in keeping with true repentance.**
- P** God be gracious to you and strengthen your faith.
- C** **Amen.**
- P** As you believe, so let it be. As a called and ordained servant Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** **Amen.**

☩ WORD ☩

INTROIT *Psalm 145:1–2, 8, 10, 21; antiphon:
John 16:16*

- P** A little while, and you will see Me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see Me.
- C** **I will extol You, my God and King, and bless Your name forever and ever.**
- P** Every day I will bless You and praise Your name forever and ever.
- C** **The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

P All Your works shall give thanks to You, O LORD, and all Your saints shall bless You!

C **My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless His holy name forever and ever.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P A little while, and you will see Me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see Me.

SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

Risen and ascended Lord, You are the vine and we are the branches. Apart from You there is no life. By Baptism You have grafted us into Your gracious life. Cause Your Word to abide in us and make us fruitful to the glory of Your Father, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

FIRST READING Philip witnesses about Jesus to the Ethiopian official. *Acts 8:26–40*

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place.

²⁷ And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship
²⁸ and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

²⁹ And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” ³⁰ So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” ³¹ And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

³² 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 before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. ³³ In his humiliation justice

was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth."

³⁴ And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" ³⁸ And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. ³⁹ And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

CHOIR "Power of the Cross"

Verse 1

Oh to see the dawn of the darkest day
Christ on the road to Calvary
Tried by sinful men torn and beaten then
Nailed to a cross of wood

Chorus 1

This the pow'r of the cross
Christ became sin for us
Took the blame bore the wrath
We stand forgiven at the cross

Verse 2

Oh to see the pain written on Your face
Bearing the awesome weight of sin
Ev'ry bitter thought ev'ry evil deed
Crowning Your bloodstained brow

Verse 3

Now the daylight flees now the ground beneath
Quakes as its Maker bows His head
Curtain torn in two dead are raised to life
Finished the vict'ry cry

Verse 4

Oh to see my name written in the wounds
For through Your suff'ring I am free

Death is crushed to death life is mine to live
 Won through Your selfless love

Chorus 2

This the pow'r of the cross
 Son of God slain for us
 What a love what a cost
 We stand forgiven at the cross

CCLI Song # 4490766

Keith Getty | Stuart Townend

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EPISTLE An exhortation to live a life of Christian
 love *1 John 4:1–11*

¹ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. ⁴ Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. ⁵ They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶ We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

God Is Love

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

VERSE *Romans 6:9; John 14:23*

P Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him.

C **Alleluia. If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. Alleluia.**

HOLY GOSPEL *Jesus is the Vine and His people are the branches. John 15:1–8*

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the fifteenth chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

1 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.
2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

HYMN OF THE DAY “O Blessed Spring”

LSB 595

1 O blessèd spring, where Word and sign
Embrace us into Christ the Vine:
Here Christ enjoins each one to be
A branch of this life-giving Tree.

2 Through summer heat of youthful years,
Uncertain faith, rebellious tears,
Sustained by Christ’s infusing rain,
The boughs will shout for joy again.

3 When autumn cools and youth is cold,
When limbs their heavy harvest hold,

Then through us, warm, the Christ will move
With gifts of beauty, wisdom, love.

4 As winter comes, as winters must,
We breathe our last, return to dust;
Still held in Christ, our souls take wing
And trust the promise of the spring.

5 Christ, holy Vine, Christ, living Tree,
Be praised for this blest mystery:
That Word and water thus revive
And join us to Your Tree of Life.

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, 1953

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SERMON *‘The Sandwiches Are for the Road’* **Acts 8:26-40**

CONFESSION OF FAITH *The Second Article of the Apostles’ Creed*

P As we celebrate the risen Christ in this season of Easter, let us speak together the words of the Apostles’ Creed regarding our Savior, who is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.

C **I believe in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

P What does this mean?

C **I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord,**

who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH *LSB, p. 215*

P Friends in Christ, I urge you all to lift up your hearts to God and pray with me as Christ our Lord has taught us and freely promised to hear us.

God, our Father in heaven, look with mercy on us, Your needy children on earth, and grant us grace that Your holy name be hallowed by us and all the world through the pure and true teaching of Your Word and the fervent love shown forth in our lives. Graciously turn from us all false doctrine and evil living whereby Your precious name is blasphemed and profaned. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P May Your kingdom come to us and expand. Bring all transgressors and those who are blinded and bound in the devil's kingdom to know Jesus Christ, Your Son, by faith that the number of Christians may be increased. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Strengthen us by Your Spirit according to Your will, both in life and in death, in the midst of both good and evil things, that our own wills may be crucified daily and sacrificed to Your good and gracious will. Into Your merciful hands we commend [*name(s)*] and all who are in need, praying for them at all times: Thy will be done. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Grant us our daily bread, preserve us from greed and selfish cares, and help us trust in You to provide for all our needs. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Forgive us our sins as we also forgive those who sin against us so that our hearts may be at peace and may rejoice in a good conscience before You, and that no sin may ever frighten or alarm us. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Lead us not into temptation, O Lord, but help us by Your Spirit to subdue our flesh, to turn from the world and its ways, and to overcome the devil with all his wiles. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P And lastly, O heavenly Father, deliver us from all evil of both body and soul, now and forever.

Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P We trust, O Lord, in Your great mercy to hear and answer us, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

OFFERING

OFFERTORY HYMN “Take My Life and Let It Be” LSB 784. Sts. 1 and 4

1 Take my life and let it be
 Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
 Take my moments and my days,
 Let them flow in ceaseless praise,
 Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

4 Take my silver and my gold,
 Not a mite would I withhold;
 Take my intellect and use
 Ev’ry pow’r as Thou shalt choose,
 Ev’ry pow’r as Thou shalt choose.

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836–79

Text: Public domain

COLLECTING OUR THOUGHTS IN CLOSING PRAYER

P O God, You make the minds of Your faithful to be of one will. Grant that we may love what You have commanded and desire what You promise, that among the many changes of this world our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found.

C **O God, by the power of the Holy Spirit and through your Holy Word, bless and keep our branches connected to Jesus, the True Vine;**

P through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen and Amen. It shall be so, Amen.**

PARTING BLESSING

P The grace of our Lord ✠ Jesus Christ and the love of God and the warm fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **Amen.**

HYMN

“Spread the Reign of God the Lord”

LSB 830

- 1 Spread the reign of God the Lord,
Spoken, written, mighty Word;
Ev'rywhere His creatures call
To His heav'nly banquet hall.
- 2 Tell how God the Father's will
Made the world, upholds it still,
How His own dear Son He gave
Us from sin and death to save.
- 3 Tell of our Redeemer's grace,
Who, to save our human race
And to pay rebellion's price,
Gave Himself as sacrifice.
- 4 Tell of God the Spirit giv'n
Now to guide us on to heav'n,
Strong and holy, just and true,
Working both to will and do.
- 5 Enter, mighty Word, the field;
Ripe the promise of its yield.
But the reapers, oh, how few
For the work there is to do!
- 6 Lord of harvest, great and kind,
Rouse to action heart and mind;
Let the gath'ring nations all
See Your light and heed Your call.

Text: Jonathan Friedrich Bahnmaier, 1774–1841; tr. composite

Text: Public domain

Creative Worship for the Lutheran Parish, Series B, Quarter 2.

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YOUR CHURCH COUNCIL has been engaged in long-term strategic planning for pastoral staffing at Trinity Lutheran Church. A special congregation *Information Question and Answer Session* is planned for a Sunday Morning Coffee Hour after one of our worship services in **May (to be announced)**. If any of you desire preliminary information about the proposed pastoral staffing plan for our church, please speak with Congregation Chairman Mike Myher - or Board of Elders Chairman Greg Eppler.

ABOUT GOD THE FATHER AND HIS WORD That's the topic that was discussed this morning during the first session of the Pastor's Sunday Morning Adult Information Class (**9:00 - 9:45 am**). This 5-week class qualifies for adult confirmation and membership in the Lutheran Church - and also is an excellent review of the Lutheran Christian Faith as it is drawn from the Bible. The topic for next week, Sunday, May 5, is *About the Savior, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit*.

MINISTRY CALENDER FOR THE WEEK *April 29-May 5*

Monday (29) Youth Confirmation Class (6:30 pm)

Tuesday (30) Authentic Community Bible Class (10:00 am)
Prayer Warrior Intercessory Prayers (11:00 am)

Thursday (2) Godly Men Supper and Study Group at ZLT
(6:00 pm)

Sunday (5) Adult Information / Review Class (9:00 am)
Youth Sunday School Classes (9:00 am)

Sunday Easter 6 Worship with Holy Communion (10:00 am)

DID YOU KNOW ... that SUNDAY MORNING worship attendance is ultimately a SATURDAY NIGHT decision? (smile and chuckle).