

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH EASTER 4
APRIL 30, 2023

PRELUDE and WELCOME

GATHERING

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is 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.

In the waters of Baptism, we have passed over
from death to life with Jesus Christ
and we are a new creation.

**For this saving mystery, and for this water,
let us bless God, who was, who is, and who is to come.**

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

We thank you, God, for your river of life,
flowing freely from your throne:

**through the earth,
through the city,
through every living thing.**

You rescued Noah and his family from the flood,
You opened wide the seas for the Israelites.
Now in these waters you flood us with mercy,
and our sin is drowned forever.

You open the gates of righteousness and we pass safely through.

In Jesus Christ, you calm the troubled waters.

You nourish us and enclose us in safety.

You call us forth and send us out.

In lush and barren places you are with us.

You have become our salvation.

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 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.

HYMN: ELW # 619 I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVES verses 1-4, 8

I know that my Redeemer lives!

What comfort this sweet sentence gives!

He lives, he lives, who once was dead;

he lives, my ever-living head!

He lives triumphant from the grave;

he lives eternally to save;

he lives exalted throned above;

he lives to rule his church in love.

He lives to grant me rich supply;

he lives to guide me with his eye;

he lives to comfort me when faint;

he lives to hear my soul's complaint.

He lives to silence all my fears;

he lives to wipe away my tears;

he lives to calm my troubled heart;

he lives all blessings to impart.

He lives, all glory to his name!

He lives, my Savior, still the same.

What joy this blessed assurance gives:

I know that my Redeemer lives!

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 our shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD

ACTS 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd,

I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside still waters;

he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil;

for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

1 PETER 2:19-25

For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

The Holy Gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

JOHN 10:1-10

"Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

HYMN ELW # 502 THE KING OF LOVE MY SHEPHERD IS

**The King of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never:
I nothing lack if I am His
And He is mine forever.**

**Where streams of living water flow
My ransomed soul He leadeth,
And where the verdant pastures grow,
With food celestial feedeth.**

**Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
But yet in love he sought me,
And on his shoulder gently laid,
And home, rejoicing, brought me.**

**In death's dark vale I fear no ill
With Thee, dear Lord, beside me;
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me.**

**Thou spread'st a table in my sight;
Thy unction grace bestoweth;
And, oh, what transport of delight
From Thy pure chalice floweth!**

**And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing Thy praise
Within Thy house forever.**

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:

by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from 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.

He 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

United in the hope and joy of the resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

You are the shepherd who gathers us in your mighty and loving arms. Help us to listen for your voice, especially when the voices of sin, idolatry, and oppression threaten to overpower us.

Hear us, O God.....**your mercy is great.**

The green pastures, still waters, and dark valleys of this earth all belong to you, O Lord. Sustain your creation with a love that is both mighty and just. Where there is destruction, bring healing. Where there is desolation, bring abundance. Bless this time of blooming and awakening growth.

Hear us, O God.....**your mercy is great.**

You proclaim shepherding love, comfort, and protection for all people and all creation. Direct leaders in our time to learn from your example and instruction. Give them servant hearts, that they generously seek the good of all. We pray for King Charles III. Bless his reign with truth and justice, harmony, and fairness. May your loving voice of peace reach Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Palestine, Sudan and all places of conflict and danger.

Hear us, O God.....**your mercy is great.**

You journey with us wherever our pathways may lead. We pray that soothing comfort may rest with those in our thoughts today.....for Ingrid, Johanna, Bryan, Harold and Margaret.....and all we name before you.....

pause

Hear us, O God.....**your mercy is great.**

You are the sheeppate that gives safety to your beloved flock. Provide protection for all enduring disaster. We continue to pray for Turkey and Syria. We pray for refugees, victims of domestic violence, those who are imprisoned, and all people who are vulnerable to violence and mistreatment. Give strength and courage to those advocating for the lives of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and two-spirited individuals, and all victims of shootings and stabbings in our streets, schools and homes.

Hear us, O God.....**your mercy is great.**

Rejoicing in the victory of Christ's resurrection, we lift our prayers and praise to you, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ our risen Lord. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE and OFFERING

MEAL

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Generous God, in this meal you offer your very self. We give thanks for these gifts of the earth. In the breaking of this bread reveal to us the Risen One. In the pouring of this wine pour us out in service to the world; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

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.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Holy God, Holy Love, Holy Wonder,
out of silence and emptiness you created the heavens and the earth.
The oceans sing your praise. The rivers chant your glory.
Out of Abraham and Sarah's dead end, you made promises,
you granted laughter, you brought forth descendants to continue your story.
Out of the deathly power of oppression and slavery you liberated your people
and blessed them with water, bread, wine.
Out of their lifeless wandering from your justice and mercy
you sent them prophets who sang poems that serenaded them back to you.
In your great compassion for every tribe and nation, you sent Jesus,
to bring everyone out of the tomb of hatred and sin and into a life of your love.
He fully embodied your compassion,
lifting up the poor, raising up the lowly, forgiving the sinner, suffering and dying
so that no one need suffer injustice and fear anymore.
Out of the death of his own tomb,
you raised him up so your story of love will not end.
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.
Together with one voice, we celebrate the paschal mystery of faith:
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.
Send your Spirit to fill us with the joy of the resurrection.
Grant us hope beyond our comprehension.
Bless these gifts of bread and wine,
so that the endless life and love of Jesus may dwell in us,
and flow from us through acts of love for our neighbours.
Holy God, Holy Love, Holy Wonder,
we give you more praise than we can utter,
as we await that great day when the feast of your love
has no walls, no exceptions, no end,
when we gather with Christ, by the Spirit, and know life in you:

love that cannot die, love that enlivens our weary bones,
love that exceeds every hope and dream,
love, now and forever.

Amen.

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

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.

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come and know Christ, broken and poured out for you.

Thanks be to God.

HOLY COMMUNION

you are invited to eat your bread and drink your wine as you hear the words

"the body of Christ given for you" "the blood of Christ shed for you"

TABLE BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus the Christ strengthen us and keep us always in his grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Gracious God, in you we live and move and have our being. With your word and this meal of grace you have nourished our life together. Strengthen us to show your love and serve the world in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

The God of all, who raised + Jesus from the dead, bless you by the power of your Holy Spirit to live in the new creation. **Amen.**

HYMN ELW # 544 PRAISE THE LORD, RISE UP REJOICING

**Praise the Lord, rise up rejoicing,
Worship, thanks, devotion voicing:
Glory be to God on high!
Christ, your cross and passion sharing,
By this Eucharist declaring
Yours the final victory.**

**Scattered flock, one shepherd sharing,
Lost and lonely, one voice hearing,
Ears attentive to the word;
By the blood new life receiving,
In the body, firm believing,
We are yours, and you the Lord.**

**Sins forgiven, wrongs forgiving,
We go forth alert and living
In your Spirit, strong and free.
Partners in your new creation,
Seeking peace in ev'ry nation,
May we faithful foll'wers be.**

DISMISSAL

**Go in peace. Serve the Risen One.
Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE