

Welcome to Worship at
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI
Easter 5 - May 2, 2021

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

Hymn #558 - "Christ High-Ascended"

**Christ high-ascended, now in glory seated,
Throned and exalted, victory completed,
Death's dread dominion finally defeated -
We are his witnesses.**

**Christ, from the Father ev'ry pow'r possessing,
Who on his chosen lifted hands in blessing,
Sends forth his servants, still in faith confessing -
We are his witnesses.**

**Christ, who in dying won for us salvation,
Lives now the firstborn of the new creation;
To win disciples out of ev'ry nation,
We are his witnesses.**

**Christ in his splendor, all dominion gaining,
Christ with his people evermore remaining,
Christ to all ages, gloriously reigning -
We are his witnesses.**

**As at his parting, joy shall banish grieving,
Faith in his presence strengthen our believing;
Filled with his Spirit, love and pow'r receiving,
We are his witnesses.**

Confession of Sins:

P: Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace and forgiveness for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord, have mercy on us!

P: Upon this your confession, I as a called servant of Christ and His Word announce to you the grace of God, and in the place of and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

First Lesson: Acts 8:26-40

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is an isolated area.) So he got up and went. And there was a man, an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship. He was on his way home, sitting in his chariot and reading the prophet Isaiah. The Spirit told Philip, "Go over there and stay close to that chariot." Philip ran up to it and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet. Philip asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The man replied, "How can I unless someone explains it to me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading was this: He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who will talk about his generation? For his life is taken from the earth. The eunuch said to Philip, "I ask you, who is the prophet talking about - himself or someone else?" Then Philip began to speak. Starting with that very passage of Scripture, he told him the good news about Jesus. As they were traveling along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What is there to prevent me from being baptized?" He ordered the chariot to stop. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they stepped up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away. The eunuch did not see him anymore, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, found himself at Azotus. And as he went from place to place, he preached the gospel in all the towns until he came to Caesarea. (EHV)

Psalm 67

Refrain: Let the people praise you, O God. Let all the people praise you.

**May God be gracious to us and ‘bless us
And make his face shine up’ on us;**

**May your ways be ‘known on earth.
Your salvation among all ‘nations.**

**May the nations be glad and ‘sing for joy,
For you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations ‘of the earth.**

Refrain: Let the people praise you, O God. Let all the people praise you.

**Then the land will yield its ‘harvest,
And God, our God, will ‘bless us.**

**God will ‘bless us,
And all the ends of the earth will ‘fear him.**

**Glory be to the Father and ‘to the Son
And to the Holy ‘Spirit,
As it was in the be’ginning,
Is now, and will be forever. ‘Amen.**

Refrain: Let the people praise you, O God. Let all the people praise you.

Second Lesson: 1 John 3:18-24

Dear children, let us love not only with word or with our tongue, but also in action and truth. This is how we know that we are of the truth and how we will set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God. We also receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commands and do what is pleasing in his sight. This then is his command: that we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and that we love one another just as he commanded us. The one who keeps his commands remains in God and God in him. This is how we know that he remains in us: We know it from the Spirit, whom he has given to us. (EHV)

Verse of the Day: Alleluia. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! I am the way, the truth, and the life, says the Lord. Alleluia.

Gospel: John 15:1-8

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he is going to cut off. And he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, so that it will bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I am going to remain in you. A branch cannot bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Likewise, you cannot bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the Vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him is the one who bears much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers. Such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this: that you continue to bear much fruit and prove to be [b] my disciples.” (EHV)

The Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn #525 - “*The Son of God, Our Christ*”

**The Son of God, our Christ, the Word, the Way.
Shared human life and toiled throughout the day;
From common folk he called his friends to be
Co-workers in his sacred ministry.**

**In ev’ry test, in trials manifold,
These servants witnessed, by their faith made bold;
And with the gifts and talents which they brought,
The Church was founded and God’s message taught.**

**Today, as then, Christ summons us to dare
To follow boldly and his work to share,
Declaring to the world his holy name
And showing mercy to the sick and lame.**

**In city street, in town, or on the soil,
May each serve Christ in faithful daily toil,
And in each thought and kindly word and deed,
Obey Christ's call and go where he shall lead.**

**Where'er we find our witness should be made,
Whate'er our task, the Lord will be our aid,
And we will gladly give for him our best
And find each task divinely sent and blessed.**

**The Sermon: 1 John 3:18-24
 "The Proof Of Christian Loving Is In The Living"**

There is an old saying which goes, "The **proof** of the **pudding** is in the **eating**." What that actually means is that when it comes to **pudding** - no matter what kind of a **cook** you are, no matter what kind of **ingredients** you use, and no matter how fantastically **smooth** and **creamy** your pudding may look on the **outside** - when it comes to **pudding** you really can't tell what it **tastes** like until you **eat** it. The **proof** of the **pudding** is in the **eating**. A **similar** axiom can be applied to those people who call themselves **Christians**. No matter what they **look** like on the outside, or what kind of a **family** they come from - just because a person **says** he is a loving Christian, doesn't necessarily mean that it's **true**. The proof of a person's **Christianity** is in the way he **lives** his **life**. **The Proof Of Christian Loving Is In The Living**.

I don't know how many of you regularly read the **funny** pages in the newspaper, but I used to check them out pretty frequently. The "**funnies**" actually give a pretty good reflection of the things which are going on in the world around us. For example, I remember seeing one comic strip in which a teenage girl was bemoaning the fact that her family had to **move** to a new town, and in the process she had to leave her **boyfriend** behind. Her mother made the remark, "She doesn't even know what love **is**." But more significantly, the **neighbor** lady answered with the comment, "Does **anyone**?" There's a lot of **truth** to that. Love is an **abstract** idea - it's an **emotion** - it's one of those **intangible** things which is very **difficult** to

figure out. Sometimes when you can't explain something in **words**, you can get your point across by using an **example** - and that's what God does in our **text** today. He gives us an example of **love**. Just before our text today God tells us, *"This is how we have come to know **love**: Jesus laid down His **life** for us."*

The **proof** of Jesus' **love** was in His **life**. Jesus **proved** His love for every sinner by laying down that **life** for us. It's difficult for us to recognize the **enormity** of that action because we are born in **sin**. As we look around ourselves and see the different **kinds** of love in the world - love between **husbands** and **wives** - love between **parents** and **children** - even love between **brothers** and **sisters** in the **faith** - we have to see that even the **finest** earthly examples of love are all **tainted** by sin. Mere human beings are **incapable** of giving us an example of **real** love - of **perfect** love. But since Jesus is true God **and** true man, He can show us what **real** love is supposed to be like - and He **does**. The perfect **love** of Jesus begins with His perfect **life**. **The Proof Of Christian Loving Is In The Living.**

Again, none of us has ever **experienced** a perfect life - nor **can** we. As John began this letter he wrote, *"If we say we have **no sin**, we **deceive** ourselves, and the truth is not **in us** ... If we say we have **not sinned**, we make him out to be a **liar**, and his **Word** is not **in us**."* Again and again God tells us in His Word that we have **sinned**, that we have fallen **short** of what He demands, and that we will receive **death** as the **wages** for our sin. But it's **different** with Jesus. He **hasn't** sinned - He **hasn't** fallen short - He **doesn't** deserve **death**. Yet, He laid down His **life** for us by His own **choice** and without being **coerced**, in order to bring us **peace**.

That was Jesus' **reason** for coming to this earth, as He Himself said, *"A **thief** comes only to **steal** and **kill** and **destroy**. I came that they may have **life** and have it **abundantly**."* You know, we often talk about people having a **full** and **happy** life. But an important fact to keep in mind is that such a life is only **possible** through **Jesus**. There's **no way** a person can have a full and happy life if they're constantly burdened with the guilt of their **sins** in this present life. And there's **no way** a person can have a full and happy life if they continually feel the threat of eternal **damnation** in hell hanging over their heads. But that's the beauty of **Jesus**. He came to **pay** for those sins in **full**, thus **removing** from our lives all the **guilt** for them, and all the **punishment** for them.

Probably the most **remarkable** thing about this action on His part was that Jesus didn't expect anything in **return**. When was the last time you **freely** and **willingly** gave up something of great **value**, without **expecting** something in

return? That's not normally the way we operate. Ordinarily we might use large blocks of **time** or large sums of **money** as **investments** - not only fully expecting to get back our **principal**, but also expecting to receive **interest** on it. Now compare that with **Jesus**. The Bible says, "*For at the appointed time, while we were still **helpless**, Christ died for the **ungodly**. It is rare indeed that someone will die for a **righteous** person. Perhaps someone might actually go so far as to die for a person who has been **good** to him. But God shows his own love for us in **this**: While we were still **sinners**, Christ died for us.*" We were **powerless**, **ungodly**, and still **sinners** - totally **unlovable** and totally unable to **return** the favor. Yet, Jesus didn't just give up a few hours a **day**, or even a few thousand dollars a **year** for us. He gave up **everything**. He **died** for us. Jesus proved His love for **all** people by **living** for us, and by **dying** for us. **The Proof Of Christian Loving Is In The Living.**

Dear friends, that total **selflessness** and **devotion**, without expecting anything in **return**, is God's example of **perfect love** - an example which He wants **us** to try and **follow**. Jesus said, "*A **new commandment** I give you: **Love one another**. Just as **I** have loved **you**, so also **you** are to love **one another**. By this everyone will know that you are my **disciples**, if you have **love** for one another.*" Christians **prove** their love for fellow sinners by **living** for them. How? Our text gives us the answer to that **too**. "*Whoever has **worldly wealth** and sees his brother in **need** but closes his heart **against** him - how can God's love **remain** in him? Dear children, let us love not only with **word** or with our **tongue**, but also in **action** and **truth**.*" Here again we have the example of **Jesus** to follow. When He encountered people who were **hungry** or **thirsty** - He **fed** them and gave them **water**. When He found people who were **sick** or **diseased** - He **healed** them and made them **whole**. Jesus met the **physical needs** of each individual, and by **doing** so, He made them more **receptive** to the idea of having their **spiritual needs** met by Him as well. Because Jesus had already been a **friend** to them in times of **physical** need, they **trusted** Him. So later on, when they were in need of **spiritual** help from God's Word, they came to **Jesus** - their trusted **Friend**. Here's a little phrase which we would all do well to remember. "People don't **care** how much you **know**, until they **know** how much you **care**!"

Let's take just a minute to apply that to **ourselves** here at Trinity. We have all kinds of opportunities to show people how much we **care**. Every month we highlight a specific **mission** to support. Some of them are **close** by, while others are **far** away. Some of them involve the ministry of our **Wisconsin Synod**, while others are more **community** oriented. Giving from our resources to **support** them

is one small way of **showing** them that we are concerned about their **physical** and **spiritual** needs.

Our new Mission of the Month for the month of **May** is **Luther Prep School** - one of the high schools which is owned and operated by **us**, as members of the Wisconsin Synod. Remember, it's not just the **physical** blessing of a good **education** which is at stake here. But rather, it's also the **spiritual** blessings which these young people will **become** in the future, as they **serve** the LORD in His Church as pastors and teachers, as mothers and fathers, and as people who are **equipped** to carry out all the tasks which the LORD brings into their lives. The **Proof Of Christian Loving Is In The Living**. Dear friends, use your time, talents, and treasure to **live** and **love** as true disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ - all for the praise and glory of **His** name. Amen.

Prayers:

O Jesus, our risen and ever-living Savior, we praise You with our whole being, because You have done **wonderful** things for us. At the cross we find full **forgiveness** for our sins, eternal **life**, and **salvation**. There You **suffered** and **died** in our place. At the empty tomb we find full **comfort**, **joy**, and **hope**. Your resurrection **proves** that You are God's **Son**, whose sacrifice has been **accepted** for our transgressions. We give all **glory**, **honor**, and **praise** to You, for winning for us the **victory** over death, the devil, sin, and hell. We also praise You for Your **Word** of truth, by which we have been made wise for **salvation** through faith. Help us to **share** that wisdom, by living **caring** lives.

Lord and Savior, we also praise You for the privilege of **prayer** which God has given us in Your name - for Your **intercession** for us at God's throne - for Your never-failing **presence** in our lives, and Your constant **protection** - for Your gift to us of the **Holy Spirit** - for the washing away of our sins through **Baptism** - for our communion with You in the **Lord's Supper** - for Your **help** in troubles, as well as Your **healing** of our illnesses - and for Your **comfort** to ease our sorrows. We thank and praise You for the **home** that You are preparing for us in **heaven**, and for Your promise to **come again** and receive us to Yourself. And finally, we praise You for the hope of **our** resurrection from the dead, for the **forgiveness** of all our sins, and for the hope of **everlasting life**.

Precious Redeemer, through the Holy Spirit, fill us with a desire to feed on the **Bread of Life**. Make Your Word, through which You come to us, sweeter than **honey** to our taste, and let it constantly **nourish** our faith. Make Yourself known to

the **spiritually starving** nations of the world, as You cause the **Gospel** to be preached to all people. Amen.

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.**

Hymn #357 - "*Jesus, Lover of My Soul*"

**Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high.
Hide me, O my Savior, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide.
Oh, receive my soul at last!**

**Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul on thee.
Leave, ah, leave me not alone;
Still support and comfort me.
All my trust on thee is stayed;
All my help from thee I bring.
Cover my defenseless head
With the shadow of thy wing.**

**Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in thee I find.
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick, and lead the blind.**

**Just and holy is thy name;
I am all unrighteousness.
False and full of sin I am;
Thou art full of truth and grace.**

**Plenteous grace with thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin.
Let the healing streams abound;
Make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art;
Freely let me take of thee.
Spring thou up within my heart;
Rise to all eternity.**

P: Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel. 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.

The Blessing:

P: The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: **Amen.**

Hymn #467 - "May the Mind of Christ My Savior"

**May the mind of Christ my Savior
Live in me from day to day,
By his love and pow'r inspiring
All I do or say.**

**May the Word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through his pow'r.**

**May the peace of God my Father
Rule my life in ev'rything,**

**That I may be calm to comfort
Sick and sorrowing.**

**May the love of Jesus fill me
As the waters fill the sea,
Him exalting, self abasing -
This is victory!**

**May I run the race before me,
Strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus
As I onward go.**

**May his spirit live within me
As I seek the lost to win,
And may they forget the channel,
Seeing only him.**