

**Fifth Sunday of Easter— May 2, 2021**  
**Esther Lutheran Church**

**PRELUDE**

**BELL**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**GATHERING**

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God*

*Please stand as you are able*

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: God's salvation is for all!

**C: All lands and all peoples.**

L: No separation will stand

**C: Between us and our sisters and brothers.**

L: Let us praise the Lord of love,

**C: Whose grace has redeemed us all.**

**\*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

*Pause for silence and reflection.*

P: Risen Lord,

**C: We admit that we are slow to believe, and even slower to follow where you lead us. We doubt your promise, divide your people, and fail to proclaim the power of your resurrection. We choose to live small lives when you have given us the biggest gift of all: your eternal life. Forgive us. Raise us up to a place where we can serve you faithfully.**

P: Christ is arisen, bringing gifts of life, mercy and pardon for sin! Believe that you are forgiven, and go out and live in the joy of your Lord's resurrection in the power of God's Holy Spirit.

**All: Amen.**

**\*OPENING HYMN: *In the Cross of Christ I Glory***

**(ELW 324)**

- 1 In the cross of Christ I glory,  
tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time.  
All the light of sacred story  
gathers round its head sublime.
- 2 When the woes of life o'ertake me,  
hopes deceive, and fears annoy,  
never shall the cross forsake me;  
lo, it glows with peace and joy.
- 3 When the sun of bliss is beaming  
light and love upon my way,  
from the cross the radiance streaming  
adds more luster to the day.
- 4 Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,  
by the cross are sanctified;  
peace is there that knows no measure,  
joys that through all time abide.

Text: John Bowring, 1792-1872

**\*GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

*Please be seated*

**CANTICLE OF PRAISE: *In Thee Is Gladness***

**(ELW 867)**

- 1 In thee is gladness amid all sadness,  
Jesus, sunshine of my heart.  
By thee are given the gifts of heaven,

thou the true redeemer art.  
Our souls thou wakest; our bonds thou breakest.  
Who trusts thee surely has built securely  
and stands forever: Alleluia!  
Our hearts are pining to see thy shining,  
dying or living, to thee are cleaving;  
naught can us sever: Alleluia!

- 2 Jesus is ours! We fear no powers,  
not of earth or sin or death.  
He sees and blesses in worst distresses;  
he can change them with a breath.  
Wherefore the story tell of his glory  
with heart and voices; all heav'n rejoices  
in him forever: Alleluia!  
We shout for gladness, triumph o'er sadness,  
love him and praise him and still shall raise him  
glad hymns forever: Alleluia!

Text: Johann Lindemann, 1549-1631; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt.

#### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

**Loving God, you showed your followers that their salvation didn't depend upon culture or traditions, but on the grace freely offered by your Spirit. Show us the same open vision of mercy offered to all, regardless of background or practice, for the sake of the whole world. Amen.**

#### WORD

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song*

**Psalm 31:1-3** Congregation reads portion in **bold**

In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame;  
**deliver me in your righteousness.**

Incline your ear to me;  
**make haste to deliver me.**

Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe, for you are my crag and my stronghold;  
**for the sake of your name, lead me and guide me.**

#### NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Luke 2: 29-32

Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.'

#### The word of the Lord... Thanks be to God

*Please stand as you are able*

**\*GOOD NEWS ACCLAMATION: Jesus Shall Reign**

**(ELW 434)**

- 1 Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
does its successive journeys run;  
his kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
till moons shall wax and wane no more.

- 3 People and realms of ev'ry tongue  
dwell on his love with sweetest song;  
and infant voices shall proclaim  
their early blessings on his name.

4 Blessings abound where'er he reigns:  
the pris'ners leap to lose their chains,  
the weary find eternal rest,  
and all who suffer want are blest.

5 Let ev'ry creature rise and bring  
peculiar honors to our king;  
angels descend with songs again,  
and earth repeat the loud amen.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748, alt.

The good news according to Acts... **Glory to you, O Lord.**

### **GOOD NEWS: Acts 15:1-18**

Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.' And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders. So they were sent on their way by the church, and as they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, they reported the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the believers. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, 'It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses.'

The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter. After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, 'My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? On the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.'

The whole assembly kept silence, and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles. After they finished speaking, James replied, 'My brothers, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first looked favourably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written,

"After this I will return,  
and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen;  
from its ruins I will rebuild it,  
and I will set it up,  
so that all other peoples may seek the Lord—  
even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called.  
Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things known from long ago."

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

### **CHILDRENS STORY**

#### **SERMON**

#### **HYMN OF THE DAY: *let the Whole Creation Cry***

(ELW 876)

1 Let the whole creation cry,  
"Glory to the Lord on high!"  
Heav'n and earth, awake and sing,  
"Praise to our almighty king!"  
Praise God, angel hosts above,  
ever bright and fair in love;

sun and moon, lift up your voice;  
night and stars, in God rejoice.

2 Servants striving for the Lord,  
prophets burning with the word,  
those to whom the arts belong  
add their voices to the song.  
Pow'rs of knowledge and of law,  
to the glorious circle draw;  
all who work and all who wait,  
sing, "The Lord is good and great!"

3 Men and women, young and old,  
raise the anthem loud and bold,  
and let children's happy hearts  
in this worship take their parts;  
from the north to southern pole  
let the mighty chorus roll:  
"Holy, Holy, Holy One;  
glory be to God alone!"

Text: Stopford A. Brooke, 1832-1916, alt.

*Please stand as you are able*

**\*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 THE PEOPLE**

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

L: You helped changed the minds of the early disciples, guiding them towards grace and away from legalism. Likewise keep us focused on your wide mercy and inclusion of all, instead of the trivial things that would serve to keep us divided. God of all, **C: Hear our prayer.**

L: As our Orthodox brothers and sisters celebrate the festival of Easter, revive our own joy at the news of your resurrection and fill us with the gladness of your promises. God of all,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: You have made every one of us unique, and we each have something to bring to the body of Christ. Help us recognize and value our particular contributions and the things which make us different and important. God of all, **C: Hear our prayer.**

L: Unlock fixed minds and entrenched beliefs which focus on separation and keeping those with whom we differ at a distance. Show us the healing that needs to take place so that we can embrace all of ourselves, and thus embrace others. Send your Spirit's presence to those in need, especially... Joan, Colleen, Wilbur, Kristy, Mike, Lorraine, Bruce, Randy, Megan, Nicole, Cindy, Bonnie, Roxanne, and those we name in the quiet of our hearts. God of all, **C: Hear our prayer.**

L: We pray for all the saints; especially Elsie, Helen, Wally and Dean, that their proclamation might inspire ours, moving us out of our comfort zones to share the good news of everlasting life. God of all, **hear our prayer.**

L. Loving God, empower Habitat for Humanity with your strength and wisdom to build safe dwellings. Give us willing hearts Lord, and inspire us to action to support them with prayers and donations. God of all... **hear our prayer.**

L: Incline your ear to our prayers and fill us with power to begin living out our faith, by the power of your Son our savior, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

**\*PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always....**And also with you.**

When the congregation is invited to exchange the peace among themselves, they may do so without spoken words using one of the following gestures:

- A gentle nod, or even a deep, reverent bow toward one another
- A simple wave to one another
- Crossing arms over the chest, as a symbol of an embrace

**MEAL**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

**OFFERING:** The work of the church continues whether we gather in person or virtually. The offering plate is in the back, and will also be passed by the ushers. You may also mail your offering to Esther Lutheran.

*Please stand as you are able*

**\*OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Let us pray.

**When we give of ourselves, you prosper our hearts. Receive and bless these gifts and use them and us for the ongoing work of your merciful kingdom, for the sake of Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

**\* GREAT THANKSGIVING - Spoken**

L. The Lord be with you.

C. **And also with you**

L. Lift up your heart.

C. **We lift our hearts to the Lord**

L. Let us give thanks to the Lord

C. **It is right to give our thanks and praise!**

**\*PREFACE**

**\*RESPONSE - SPOKEN**

(ELW PG. 207)

Holy, holy, holy Lord. God of power and might,  
Heav'n 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. Hosanna in the highest.

**\*WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**\* OUR 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**

You gather all to your table, even when we keep some out. You welcome all to your supper even when we limit the guest list. Your grace and mercy are enough for all; now let us come at our savior's invitation.

*Please be seated*

**COMMUNION**

This morning we celebrate Holy Communion, upfront, in a continuous fashion. We also have prefilled communion cups up front.

**COMMUNION HYMN: *I Love to Tell the Story***

**(ELW 661)**

- 1 I love to tell the story  
of unseen things above,  
of Jesus and his glory,  
of Jesus and his love.  
I love to tell the story,  
because I know it's true;  
it satisfies my longings  
as nothing else would do.

***Refrain***

**I love to tell the story;  
'twill be my theme in glory  
to tell the old, old story  
of Jesus and his love.**

- 2 I love to tell the story:  
how pleasant to repeat  
what seems, each time I tell it,  
more wonderfully sweet!  
I love to tell the story,  
for some have never heard  
the message of salvation  
from God's own holy word. ***Refrain***

- 3 I love to tell the story,  
for those who know it best  
seem hungering and thirsting  
to hear it like the rest.  
And when, in scenes of glory,  
I sing the new, new song,  
I'll sing the old, old story  
that I have loved so long. ***Refrain***

Text: Katherine Hankey, 1834-1911

**COMMUNION HYMN: *Amazing Grace***

**(ELW 779)**

- 1 Amazing grace! how sweet the sound  
that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found;  
was blind, but now I see.
- 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
and grace my fears relieved;  
how precious did that grace appear  
the hour I first believed!
- 4 The Lord has promised good to me;  
his word my hope secures;  
he will my shield and portion be  
as long as life endures.
- 5 When we've been there ten thousand years,  
bright shining as the sun,  
we've no less days to sing God's praise  
than when we'd first begun.

Text: John Newton, 1725-1807, alt., sts. 1-4; anonymous, st. 5

*Please stand as you are able*

**\*BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION**

**\*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray.

**Life-giving God, in the mystery of Christ's resurrection you send light to conquer darkness, water to give new life, and the bread of life to nourish your people. Send us forth as witnesses to your Son's resurrection, that we may show your glory to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Amen.**

**SENDING**

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world*

**\*BLESSING**

May God who has brought us from death to life fill you with great joy. Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

**\*SENDING SONG: *Blessed Assurance***

**(ELW 638)**

1 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

***Refrain***

**This is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Savior, all the day long:  
this is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Savior all the day long.**

2 Perfect submission, perfect delight,  
visions of rapture now burst on my sight;  
angels descending bring from above  
echoes of mercy, whispers of love. ***Refrain***

3 Perfect submission, all is at rest;  
I in my Savior am happy and blest,  
watching and waiting, looking above, filled with his goodness, lost in his love. ***Refrain***

Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820-1915

With our virtual gathering, I invite each of you to wave and share a greeting with the group . . . like have a good week, peace, blessings, take care, see you next week, etc.

**\*DISMISSAL**

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

You are the body of Christ raised up for the world.

Go in peace. Share the good news.

**Thanks be to God.**

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## IN OUR PRAYERS

Joan Arvidson  
Colleen & Wilbur Burquest  
Kristy Fhyrie  
Mike Heiser  
Lorraine Truax  
Bruce Miller – father of Karin Wagner  
Randy Pederson -brother of Al Pederson  
Nicole Apodaca – friend of the Townsends  
Megan Sheen – niece of Linda Arvidson  
Bonnie - sister of Pastor Scott  
Cindy Rachuy – sister of Dawn Kreidler  
Roxanne Chamberlain

### **The families & friends of:**

Elsie Heiser  
Helen Townsend – mother of Mike &  
Jewel Townsend family  
Wally Skoglund  
Dean Swanson

## **This Week at Esther**

**Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> Fifth Sunday of Easter**

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Worship w/Communion both in person and by Zoom 552 542 497

**Tuesday, May 4<sup>th</sup>** 10 a.m. Coffee Hour on Zoom 552 542 497

**Wednesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>** 7:00 p.m. Church Council meeting

**Friday, May 7<sup>th</sup> – Friday, May 14<sup>th</sup>** Pastor Scott Away

**Sunday, May 9<sup>th</sup> Sixth Sunday of Easter**

Happy Mother's Day!

8:30 a.m. WELCA

9:00 a.m. Sunday School – last Sunday until fall

10:00 a.m. Worship

## News and Notes

### **Coffee Hour via Zoom**

**Tuesday May 4<sup>th</sup> at 10 am** . . . We'll gather via Zoom with your favorite beverage for fellowship and what Luther would call the mutual conversation and consolation of the saints. All are welcome. Please use the Sunday worship Log in: 552 542 497. We will meet through the month of May, and take a break for the summer months.

Council will meet on Wednesday at

**Pastor Scott** will be away Friday May 7<sup>th</sup> through Friday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, Pastor Kathryn Rothman will be providing coverage in case of a pastoral emergency and will be leading worship and preaching on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

Pastor Rothman's contact information (H) 320-762-1167 © 320-760-6437

**WELCA** will meet next Sunday at 8:30 a.m. all ladies of the congregation are invited and encouraged to attend. We will meet both in person and virtually.

### **Stewardship/Outreach Ministry for May**

The month of May will be when our church will show support both with prayers and financially for HABITAT FOR HUMANITY.

Habitat for Humanity is an ecumenical Christian Ministry building new homes and improving communities.

A representative will speak following the May 16<sup>th</sup> service. We will also include prayers for them each Sunday of May.

On Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, Jim & Linda Arvidson will be sharing their story after worship as part of "**Get To Know Your Neighbor**". We are looking for others to take a week. Please contact Jewel Townsend to sign up for your week of choice.