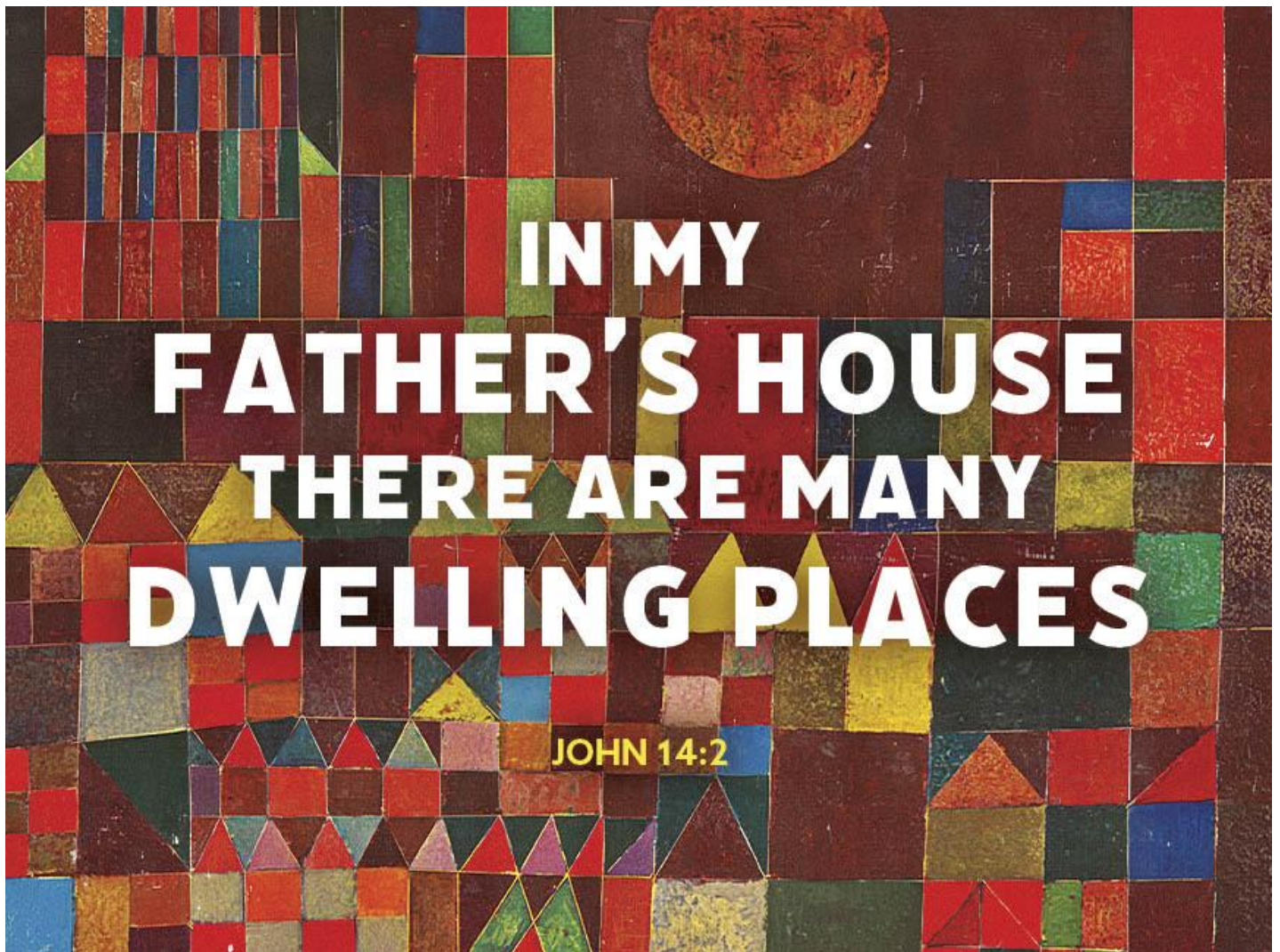


**First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
250 W. Decatur St.  
Decatur, Illinois  
(217) 423-7783**

**Website: [www.felcdecatur.org](http://www.felcdecatur.org)  
Email: [felc\\_decatur@outlook.com](mailto:felc_decatur@outlook.com)**

*We have a livestream option on our website!  
<https://felcdecatur.org/live>*



**May 3, 2026, at 9:30am  
Fifth Sunday of Easter  
HOLY COMMUNION**

*Come Experience God's Unlimited Grace, in a Most Welcoming Place*

## INTRODUCTION

*As we continue to celebrate the fifty days of Easter, today's gospel includes Jesus' promise that he goes to prepare a place for his followers in his Father's house. Our baptism commissions us to share Jesus' mission in the world. As 1 Peter reminds us, we are a holy people, called to proclaim the one who called us out of darkness into light. In words and deeds we bear witness to the risen Christ—our way, our truth, our life.*

## WELCOME

## PRELUDE

## GATHERING

## THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

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

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**C: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

P: Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne  
and to the Lamb!

**C: Amen.**

P: Let us give thanks for the gifts of baptism.

*Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister continues.*

P: Merciful God,

you are the one who was, who is, and who is to come.

You lead us beside still waters.

We thank you for the waters of creation:

morning dew, gentle rain, roaring waves.

We thank you for the waters that nourish us. Blessed are you.

**C: You guide us to springs of the water of life.**

P: Jesus Christ, you are the faithful witness  
who accompanies us on our journeys.

We give you thanks for your life-giving death and resurrection.

We praise you for joining us in joy and sorrow. Blessed are you.

**C: You guide us to springs of the water of life.**

P: Holy Spirit, you anoint our head with oil and our cup overflows.  
Break down barriers that divide us.  
Fill us with the breath of peace. Blessed are you.  
**C: You guide us to springs of the water of life.**

P: Holy One, we thank you for the gifts and grace of baptism,  
and for making us a new creation.  
We join with saints and angels, giving you honor and praise,  
now and forever.  
**C: Amen.**

**\*GATHERING SONG**      *“Christ is Made the Sure Foundation”*

**ELW #645**

**1 Christ is made the sure foundation,  
Christ, our head and cornerstone,  
chosen of the Lord and precious,  
binding all the church in one;  
holy Zion's help forever  
and our confidence alone.**

**2 To this temple, where we call you,  
come, O Lord of hosts, and stay;  
come, with all your lovingkindness,  
hear your people as they pray;  
and your fullest benediction  
shed within these walls today.**

**3 Here bestow on all your servants  
what they seek from you to gain;  
what they gain from you, forever  
with the blessed to retain;  
and hereafter in your glory  
evermore with you to reign.**

**4 Praise and honor to the Father,  
praise and honor to the Son,  
praise and honor to the Spirit,  
ever three and ever one:  
one in might and one in glory  
while unending ages run!**

## GREETING

ELW p. 138

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: **And also, with you.**

## \*HYMN OF PRAISE

*“This is the Feast”*

ELW p. 140-141

## \*PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray,

C: **Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his commandments, and to share his risen life with all the world, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## CHILDREN’S SERMON

### WORD

#### **First Reading: Acts 7:55-60**

*Stephen was one of the seven men chosen by the apostles to serve tables so that the apostles could be free to serve the word (Acts 6:1-6). Stephen does more than distribute food, however. For his preaching of God’s word, he becomes the first martyr of the faith.*

<sup>55</sup> Filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. <sup>56</sup> “Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” <sup>57</sup> But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. <sup>58</sup> Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him, and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. <sup>59</sup> While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” <sup>60</sup> Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

#### **Psalm 31:1-16**

<sup>1</sup> In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame;  
deliver me in your righteousness.

<sup>2</sup> **Incline your ear to me;  
make haste to deliver me.**

<sup>3</sup> 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.

- 4 **Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me,  
for you are my tower of strength.**
- 5 Into your hands I commend my spirit,  
for you have redeemed me, O LORD, God of truth.
- 15 **My times are in your hand;  
rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.**
- 16 Let your face shine upon your servant;  
save me in your steadfast love.”

**ANTHEM**

*“We Are the People of God”*

**John Carter**

**We Are the People of God**

MARY KAY BEALL  
Based on Colossians 3:12-17

CONGREGATIONAL PART

JOHN CARTER

REFRAIN:

We are the peo- ple of God; ————— He has loved us and  
cho- sen us for His own, We are the peo - ple of God; —  
— He has cho - sen us to be — His own.

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| CHOIR:         | REFRAIN  |
| CHOIR & CONG.: | REFRAIN  |
| CHOIR:         | Filled and clothed with His spirit...<br>Forgiving as He forgave...<br>Bound and blessed by His perfect love,<br>His everlasting love. |
| CHOIR & CONG.: | REFRAIN  |
| CHOIR:         | The peace of Christ is in us<br>For peace is our calling now.<br>Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs<br>We offer Him with joy.        |
| CHOIR & CONG.: | REFRAIN  |
| CHOIR:         | All we do in word and deed<br>We do in His holy name.<br>Giving thanks to God above<br>With glad and joyful hearts.                    |
| CHOIR & CONG.: | REFRAIN  |

## **Second Reading: 1 Peter 2:2-10**

*Christ is the cornerstone of God's saving work and the foundation of our lives. We are God's chosen, holy people who continuously celebrate and declare the mercy of God we experience through Jesus Christ.*

<sup>2</sup> Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation <sup>3</sup> if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

<sup>4</sup> Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and <sup>5</sup> like living stones let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For it stands in scripture:

“See, I am laying in Zion a stone,  
a cornerstone chosen and precious,  
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

<sup>7</sup> This honor, then, is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the very head of the corner,”

<sup>8</sup> and

“A stone that makes them stumble  
and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

<sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people,  
but now you are God's people;  
once you had not received mercy,  
but now you have received mercy.

A: The Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**\*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

*“Alleluia”*

**ELW p. 142**

P: The holy gospel according to John the 14<sup>th</sup> Chapter.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

## **Gospel: John 14:1-14**

*On the night that he is to be arrested, Jesus shares final words with his disciples. As the one through whom God is known, he promises to go before them and act on their behalf.*

Jesus said to the disciples: <sup>1</sup> “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. <sup>4</sup> And you know the way to the place where I am going.” <sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

<sup>8</sup> Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” <sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup> Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

<sup>11</sup> Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then believe because of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup> Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

**\*HYMN OF THE DAY**    *“Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds”*

**ELW #367**

**1 Now all the vault of heav'n resounds  
in praise of love that still abounds:  
"Christ has triumphed! He is living!"  
Sing, choirs of angels, loud and clear!  
Repeat their song of glory here:  
"Christ has triumphed! He is living!"  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

- 2 Eternal is the gift he brings,  
therefore our heart with rapture sings:  
"Christ has triumphed! He is living!"  
Now still he comes to give us life  
and by his presence stills all strife.  
"Christ has triumphed! He is living!"  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**
- 3 Oh, fill us, Lord, with dauntless love;  
set heart and will on things above  
that we conquer through your triumph;  
grant grace sufficient for life's day  
that by our lives we truly say:  
"Christ has triumphed! He is living!"  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**
- 4 Adoring praises now we bring  
and with the heav'nly blessed sing:  
"Christ has triumphed! Alleluia!"  
Be to the Father, and our Lord,  
to Spirit blest, most holy God,  
all the glory, never ending!  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

Text: Paul Z. Strodach, 1876-1947, alt.

Text © 1958 *Service Book and Hymnal*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

### **\*APOSTLES' CREED**

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
He ascended into heaven,  
He is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

**\*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: Trusting in the power of Christ's resurrection to heal and redeem our broken world, let us pray for the needs of all creation

*A brief silence*

A: God of glory, you have built your church on Christ the cornerstone. Inspire lay leaders, deacons, pastors, and bishops to proclaim forgiveness and your steadfast love to all whom they encounter. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: God of majesty, you bring forth plants and animals, skies and seas, mountains and valleys. Protect all you have made from the ravages of pollution and climate disaster. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: God of mercy, you intend governments and social service agencies to be instruments of peace and justice. Guide political leaders and organizations to be agents of compassion and raise up advocates for those who seek refuge and assistance. We pray for peace in the Middle East and Ukraine. Send wisdom to our leaders that they may strive for peace and justice in all the world. Guard and protect those serving in the armed forces.

Comfort the families who have lost loved ones in conflict. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: God of well-being, you soothe those in distress, console all who grieve, provide for any in need, and comfort those who are sick. Instill caregivers with a sense of purpose to be your healing hands in this world. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: God of community, you call us together as your people for mutual support and to witness to your love in the world. Make your presence known among those unable to attend worship today. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

A: God of eternal life, you have prepared dwelling places for your people, so that we are never separated from you. We give you thanks for the faithful departed who witnessed to your mighty acts in word and deed. Merciful God,

**C: receive our prayer.**

P: God of resurrection power, use us and these prayers to proclaim the good news of new life to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Savior.

**C: Amen.**

**\*PEACE**

## MEAL

### **OFFERING**

*(We thank you for your time, talent, and treasure toward ministry at FELC and beyond. Please place your donation in the offering basket at the back of church, or on-line at <https://felcdecatour.org/give>, or by mail.)*

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

P: Merciful God,

**C: accept the fruits of our labor, gathered to give you glory.**

**You have set a table before us, a glimpse of that great day when we will hunger and thirst no more.**

**Nourish us with the body and blood of Jesus, that goodness and mercy may follow us and bless the world you love.**

**In the name of Jesus, Amen.**

### **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

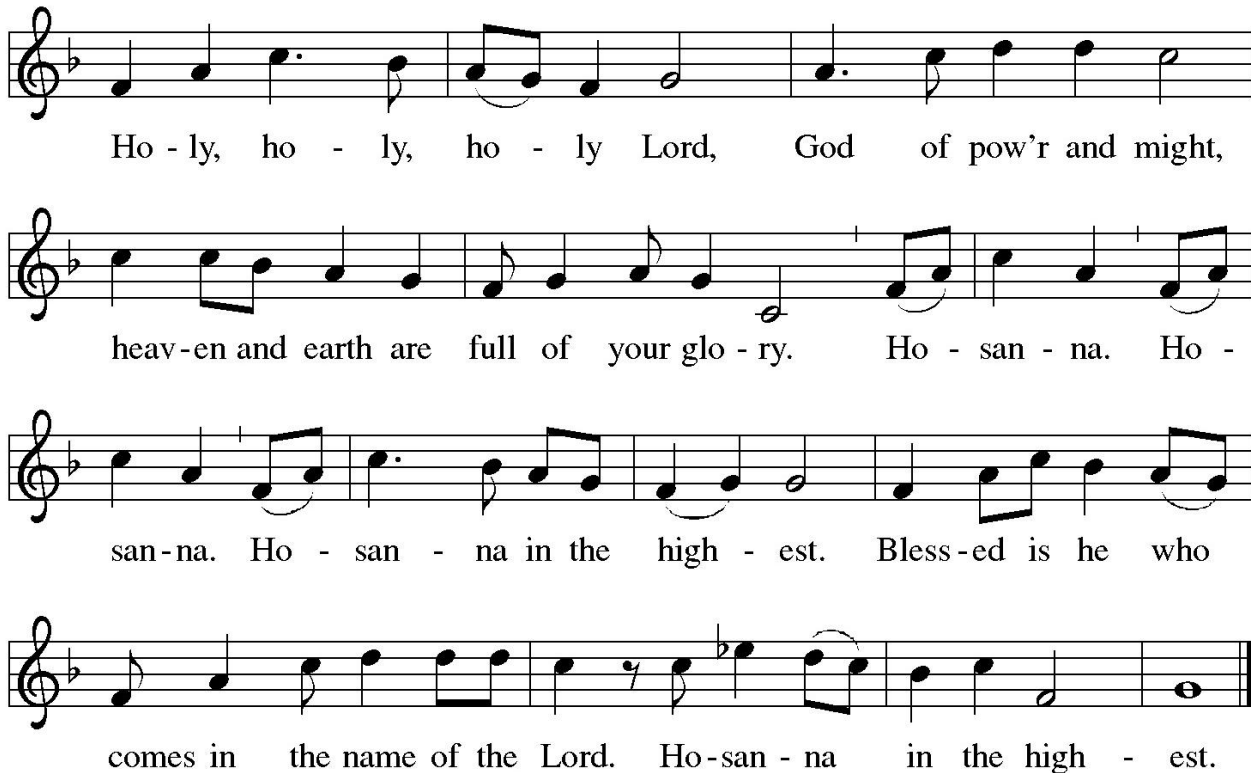
**C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P: 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,  
 with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim,  
 we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW p. 144



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
 heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
 san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who  
 comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: Holy God, mighty and merciful,  
 your people praise you, saying:  
 Your mercy endures forever.

**C: Your mercy endures forever.**

P: By your promise  
 you bound yourself to earth and all its creatures,  
 granting them life and calling them to flourish,  
 setting the sign of your bow in the clouds,  
 the colors of your love and faithfulness.  
 Your mercy endures forever.

**C: Your mercy endures forever.**

P: By your promise  
you bound yourself to your people of old,  
blessing them with family outnumbering the stars  
and calling them to be a blessing to others,  
showing them steadfast love in every generation  
and calling them to be a light to the nations.  
Your mercy endures forever.

**C: Your mercy endures forever.**

P: By your promise  
you joined us to Jesus, your Beloved,  
grafting us into your living Vine,  
and calling us to bear the fruit of your self-giving love.

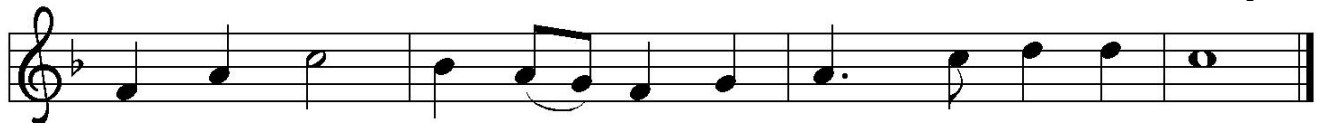
In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

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.

With this bread and cup  
we remember his life laid down and lifted up  
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**C:**

**ELW p. 145**



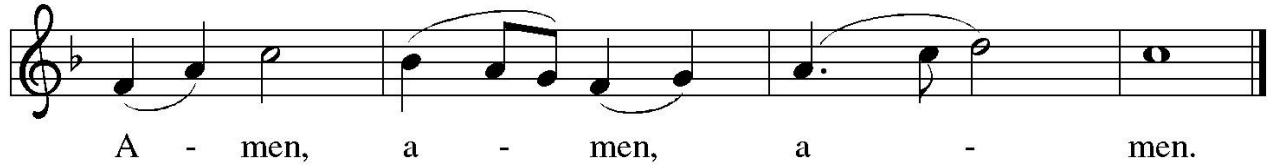
Christ has died. Christ is ris - en. Christ will come a - gain.

P: Send your Holy Spirit upon us  
and these gifts of bread and wine.  
Bless us to be a blessing.  
Make us a sign of your faithfulness.  
Send us to tend and cherish the earth  
and to serve the world with mercy and love.

With all the saints in light,  
 with the earth and all its creatures,  
 with sun and moon and stars,  
 we praise you, O God, through Christ Jesus,  
 in your Spirit, now and forever.

C:

ELW p. 145



**LORD'S PRAYER**

ELW p. 145

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

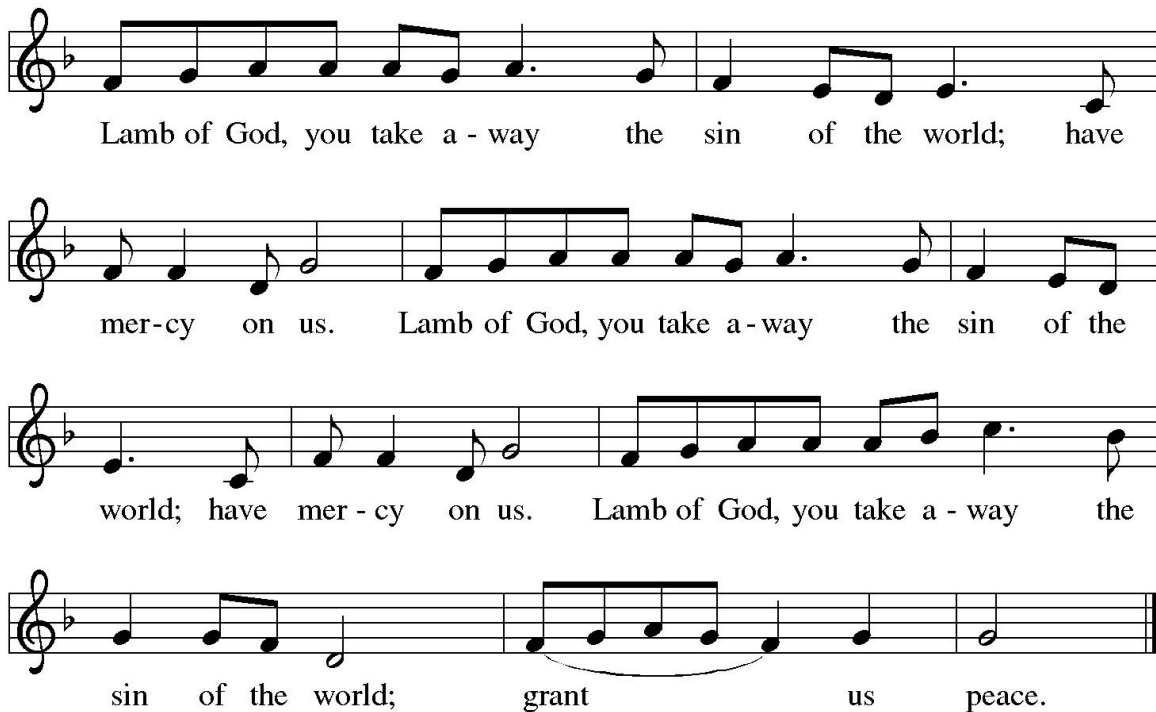
P: Come to the table of new life. Receive the risen Lord.

*At each worship service FELC celebrates communion around the altar rail using non-alcoholic sacramental wine so that all present may receive God's Grace in this sacrament. If anyone is unable to come to the altar, the Pastor and assistants will bring the sacrament to you. (If possible, please alert the Pastor or Assistant prior to Worship service if you want communion at your seat). If you are taking communion at the rail and feel less steady on your feet, feel free to come to the front of the communion rail rather than walking around toward the back.*

**COMMUNION**

*"Lamb of God"*

ELW p. 146



**\*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P: Holy One,

**C: through this meal you have made your home among us  
and are making all things new.**

**Send us now to speak peace to anxious hearts,  
to love our enemies, and to bring your healing to the nations.  
In the name of Jesus, Amen.**

**\*EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS**

P: In the name of God:

**C: We send you forth with Word and Sacrament to our homebound,  
that they may share with us in the communion of Christ's Body and Blood.  
We who are many are one body, because we all share one bread,  
one cup in Christ Jesus, Our Lord. Amen.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**SENDING**

**\*BLESSING**

P: God Almighty, who is the beginning and the end,  
Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the dead,  
and the Spirit, our advocate and peace,

✠ bless you now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**\*SENDING HYMN**

*"Alleluia Jesus is Risen "*

**ELW #377**

**1 Alleluia! Jesus is risen!  
Trumpets resounding in glorious light!  
Splendor, the Lamb, heaven forever!  
Oh, what a miracle God has in sight!**

*Refrain*

**Jesus is risen and we shall arise.  
Give God the glory! Alleluia!**

**2 Walking the way, Christ in the center  
telling the story to open our eyes;  
breaking our bread, giving us glory:  
Jesus our blessing, our constant surprise. *Refrain***

**3 Jesus the vine, we are the branches;  
life in the Spirit the fruit of the tree;  
heaven to earth, Christ to the people,  
gift of the future now flowing to me. *Refrain***

**4 Weeping, be gone; sorrow, be silent:  
death put asunder, and Easter is bright.  
Cherubim sing: O grave, be open!  
Clothe us in wonder, adorn us in light. *Refrain***

**5 City of God, Easter forever,  
golden Jerusalem, Jesus the Lamb,  
river of life, saints and archangels,  
sing with creation to God the I AM! *Refrain***

Text: Herbert F. Brokering, b. 1926  
Text © 1995 Augsburg Fortress.

### **\*DISMISSAL**

**A: Go in peace. Praise the Lord. Alleluia!!**

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **\*POSTLUDE**

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## *Prayer Requests*

Barb Ahlenius, Matt Andrews & Family, Tom Bilyeu, Leon Bolin,  
Peg Books, Jeanie Dennis, Darlene Ducharme, Bill Fitzgerrel,  
Dennis Gregory, Esther Gregory, Jan Lawson, Sharon Lindeman,  
RuthAnn & Don Ruby, Sebastian (Bass) Smallwood,  
Mary Ann Stolley, Ken Stolley, Rick Strine, Mary Wolf, Rudy Zucker Sr.

*If you'd like to add someone to the Prayer Request list, please contact Kay at the office.  
Prayer requests remain on the list for 3 weeks and can be extended longer at your request.*

## Participants

Presiding and Preaching	Minister Claire Vail
Assisting Minister	Marty Brilley
Slides	Jim Oettel
Organist/Bell Choir Director	Rick Strine
Interim Choir Director	Milton Scott
Technical Director	Mason Oliver
Audio/Visual	Abbey Jordan & Audio/Visual Team
Bell Ringer	Mike Reynolds
Greeter	Bruce & Tami Cannon
Check-In	Susan Martin & Marsha Corley
Acolyte	Gemma Berry
Communion Aide	
Money Counters	Jim & Judy Oettel and Carolyn & Gary Likins
Flowers	Gary & Nora Beck celebrating their 68 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary
Indoor Plant Watering	Carolyn Likins

## Announcements

- **Congregational Call Meeting Today.** A special congregational meeting will be held today, immediately following worship in the sanctuary. The purpose of this meeting is to vote on the call of a pastoral candidate and the loan vote associated with the call. The meeting agenda is the insert in your bulletin.
- **Today is AMELCA “First Fruits Sunday”.** Your donations are sincerely appreciated.
- Please join **Opus 24 and several members of our own church choir today, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at Central Christian Church** at 3:00pm for a wonderful afternoon of song. You won’t want to miss a set of music with combined area church and community choirs joining voices with Opus 24 and to sing along with a couple of treasured hymns and listen to a moving piece reminding us that we all share one faith, one hope, and one Lord.
- The AMELCA Team served 91 clients on Wednesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>.
- **We are in need of Greeters for June, July & August.** Please contact Karen Reynolds via email ([boga1028@yahoo.com](mailto:boga1028@yahoo.com)) or call (217-874-2013) if you are available to Greet on Sunday during those months.
- **Communion to our homebound members** is a blessing for all who participate. **We need to expand our volunteers** for this valuable ministry. It is a once a month visit to two or three members. Please let Minister Claire know if you are interested in joining in.