

# FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 5 & 6, 2012

## AS WE GATHER

Today's readings draw our attention to our Baptism and then to our Lord's command to love one another. Whenever we are able to produce such sweet fruit for God it is only because He has lavishly bestowed grace and forgiveness on us. He has pruned us as a faithful gardener would prune the vines of His vineyard. When and where God intervenes with His care, we bear much fruit and give Him the glory. Today we hear the words of Scripture in all of its blessed Law and Gospel. In response to His Word, we confess our sins, ready to receive His forgiveness for what is past and strengthened for future opportunities to love, to show mercy, and to forgive.

## WELCOME

## HANDSHAKES & HUGS

+ PREPARATION +

## OPENING HYMN #474

"Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen"

(Please rise)

**INVOCATION and VERSES** (*appointed Gradual, adapted from Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6*)

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

Pastor: Christ has risen from the dead.

**People: God the Father has crowned Him with glory and honor,**

Pastor: He has given Him dominion over the works of His hands;

**People: He has put all things under His feet.**

## CONFESSION and ABSOLUTION

Pastor: In today's Gospel we hear Jesus say, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you." *John 15:1-3* We became "branches" of Jesus the vine, like the Ethiopian in the reading from Acts, through our Baptism. The Holy Spirit has enabled us to hear the Word our Lord speaks. That Word is His forgiveness, which takes away our sins and makes us fruitful for His purposes. Without such mercy and grace we cannot live as branches of our life-giving Vine. Let us consider our need for such forgiveness and confess our sins. Lord Jesus Christ, living Vine,

**People: we confess that we have been too casual in our relationship to you. We have taken for granted your grace and mercy, poured out on us in Holy**

**Baptism. We have not appreciated the gravity of our sins, the sacrifice of your life for us, and the utter grace which you offer in your full and free forgiveness. We have not recognized our heavenly Father's pruning as the loving action it truly is. By your Holy Spirit, increase in us true devotion to your will and a desire to bear fruit worthy of your holy name. Forgive us, restore us, and set our feet on the path of true discipleship.**

Pastor: In the Epistle St. John wrote, "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. . . . By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit." *1 John 4:10, 13* As a called and ordained servant of 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.

**People: Amen.**

## KYRIE

page 152

Pastor: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

**People: (sing) Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

**People: (sing) Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

**People: (sing) Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

**People: (sing) Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

**People: (sing) Amen.**

## HYMN OF PRAISE #475 "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing" Stanzas 1 & 4

Good Christian friends, rejoice and sing! Now is the triumph of our King!

To all the world glad news we bring: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Your name we bless, O risen Lord, And sing today with one accord

The life laid down, the life restored: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

## COLLECT OF THE DAY

Pastor: John reminds us that "perfect love casts out fear." *1 John 4:18* Because of God's forgiving love, we are freed from fear and enabled to joyfully respond to our Lord's desire for us: "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples." *John 15:8* Let us pray. O God, you make the minds of your faithful to be of one will.

**People: 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;**

**Pastor:** through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

(Please be seated)

**+ SERVICE OF THE WORD +**

**FIRST READING Acts 8:26-40** (*Philip baptizes an Ethiopian.*) Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.” The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

**EPISTLE 1 John 4:1-21** (*God's love compels us to love.*) Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood. Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to

do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

**5:00 ANTHEM**

*“You Are Mine”*

(Please rise)

**HOLY GOSPEL John 15:1-8** (*Jesus is the vine; we are the branches.*) “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 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. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 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. “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. 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. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

(Please be seated)

**CHILDREN’S MESSAGE**

**SERMON HYMN**

**“There Is a Redeemer”**

**W & R #117**

There is a Redeemer Jesus, God’s own Son;  
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One.

**Refrain Thank you, O my Father, for giving us your Son,  
And leaving your Spirit till the work on earth is done.**

Jesus, my Redeemer, name above all names;  
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Hope for sinners slain. *Refrain*

When I stand in Glory, I will see his face;  
there I’ll serve my King forever in that holy place. *Refrain*

**SERMON**

**“Abide In Me”**

*John 15:1-8*

(Please rise)

**APOSTLES’ CREED** (*found on the back cover of hymnal*)

(Please be seated)

**OFFERINGS** As your offering is collected, please sign our attendance book located at the end of the pew. If you are a visitor, please leave your address and phone. After you are finished, please pass the book along to others in your pew, and return the book to the center aisle.

(Please rise)

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

Pastor: Gracious God, all good gifts come from you. We are grateful for your mercy, given through your beloved Son; and we ask you to keep each of us steadfast in faith throughout our lives.

**People: Lord, hear our prayer.**

Pastor: We ask your blessing on your church, imploring you to guide and bless this congregation; and we ask you to bless the ministry of Pastor Bender and to guide us as we serve you and one another,

**People: Lord, hear our prayer.**

Pastor: You sustain the world and your people. We ask your abiding care for those who face challenges of health: Ruth, Carol, Woody, Donald, Warren, Ray, Jerry, Joe, Kim and Samuel. We ask your comfort and consolation on the families and friends of those who have come home to you. We ask your comforting presence for your people everywhere who are troubled, oppressed, uncertain or afraid.

**People: Lord, hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Guide all leaders throughout the world, and protect the men and women who work for peace and safety, including: Steven, Eric, Eli, Jon, Ryan, Dan, Richard, and Josh.

**People: Lord, hear our prayer.**

Pastor: On this day, we join in thanksgiving with Rachelle, Jim and our entire St. Paul's family celebrating the Bender family's arrival and ask that you hear the prayers we hold in our hearts.

**People: Amen.**

**THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**+ SACRAMENT +**

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**THE PEACE OF THE LORD**

Pastor: The peace of the Lord + be with you always.

**People: Amen.**

**AGNUS DEI** (Sung to Tune: # 700 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling)

Lamb of God, our risen Savior, All our sins You take away.  
Lamb of God, by Your great favor, Lord, with mercy bless us today.  
Lamb of God, Your table setting Always let Your mercies come,  
And Your Holy Spirit sending, Give us peace till we reach our home.

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(Please be seated)

**DISTRIBUTION** Those guests who desire to commune who are members of another LCMS congregation may do so; if you are coming from another church background, please see the pastor or an elder first.

**HYMN #633 "At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing"**

**HYMN #687 "Thine Forever, God of Love"**

**HYMN #537 "Beautiful Savior"**

**COMMON DISMISSAL**

(Please rise)

**POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE #617 "O Lord, We Praise Thee"**

O Lord, we praise Thee, bless Thee, and adore Thee,  
In thanksgiving bow before Thee.

Thou with Thy body and Thy blood didst nourish

Our weak souls that they may flourish: O Lord, have mercy!

May Thy body, Lord, born of Mary, That our sins and sorrows did carry.

And Thy blood for us plead In all trial, fear, and need: O Lord, have mercy!

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**POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING**

Pastor: Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;

**People: for His steadfast love endures forever.** *Psalm 118:1*

Pastor: We give thanks, heavenly Father, that you have strengthened our faith through this Sacrament. Go with us now so that we may live out this day as fruitful branches of the Vine, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**BENEDICTION**

**People: Amen.**

**CLOSING HYMN #878**

**"Abide With Me"**

Preacher  
Lectors  
Acolytes  
Organist  
Music Coordinator  
Choir Director

Pastor Gregg Stanton  
Jim Adams, Frank Coogan, Marc Stefanic  
Dyllan Pekrul, Andrew Thoren, David Sarff  
Roger Gottschalk  
Kim Woller  
Nancy Hoelke