



Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 2, 2021

Welcome to St. John

St. John Lutheran Church 1802 Skippack Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422

www.stjohnbluebell.org www.facebook.com/stjohnbluebell

Nursery School website: www.stjohnsns.com

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Our Council Members are listed on our website.

Celebrating 252 years of mission and ministry, 1769-2021.



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

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Order for Worship

Prelude ~ "If Ye Love Me"

Quartet

If ye love me, keep my commandments
and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter,
that he may abide with you forever, e'en the spirit of truth.

Text: John 14:15-17

Music: Thomas Tallis (1505-1585)

Thanksgiving for Baptism

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

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

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

P: Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ,
let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.

P: 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 your 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.

C: **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn ~ “We Know that Christ is Raised”



1 We know that Christ is raised and dies no more.
2 We share by wa - ter in his sav - ing death.
3 The Fa - ther's splen - dor clothes the Son with life.
4 A new cre - a - tion comes to life and grows



Em - braced by death, he broke its fear - ful hold,
Re - born, we share with him an Eas - ter life,
The Spir - it's fis - sion shakes the church of God.
as Christ's new bod - y takes on flesh and blood.



and our de - spair he turned to blaz - ing joy.
as liv - ing mem - bers of our Sav - ior Christ.
Bap - tized, we live with God the Three in One.
The u - ni - verse re - stored and whole will sing:



Hal - le - lu - jah!

Text: John B. Geyer, b. 1932
Music: ENGELBERG, Charles V. Stanford, 1852–1924
Text © John B. Geyer.

Greeting

P: The grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

Hymn of Praise ~ This Is the Feast

Refrain
Assisting minister



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.

All



1 Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow-er and rich-es and wis-dom and



strength, and hon-or and bless-ing and glo-ry are his.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.



2 Sing with all the peo-ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre-a-tion: Bless-ing and hon-or and glo-ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A-men.

Final refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be-gun his reign. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia.

Prayer of the Day

- P: O God, you give us your Son as the vine apart from whom we cannot live. Nourish our life in his resurrection, that we may bear the fruit of love and know the fullness of your joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C: **Amen.**

Children's Message

Word

First Reading: Acts 8:26-40

- A: An angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) So, he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So, Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth."

The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, 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 snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

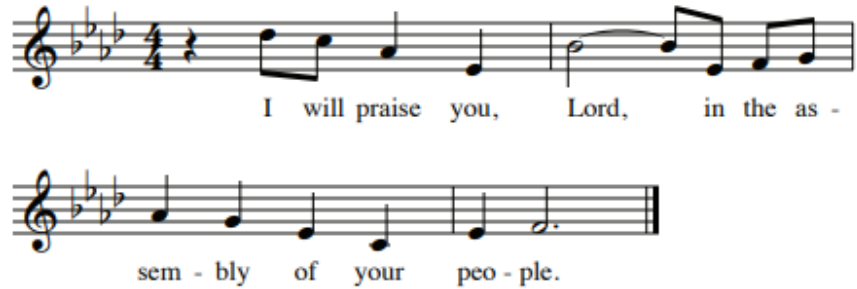
Word of God, word of life.

- C: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 22

Refrain (Choir, then ALL)

Psalm 22 Paul Tate



I will praise you, Lord, in the as -
sem - bly of your peo - ple.

The English translation of the Psalm Response from the *Lectionary for Mass*
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My vows I will pay before those who fear him.
The poor shall eat and shall have their fill.
They shall praise the Lord, those who see him.
May their hearts live on forever and ever.

Refrain

All the earth shall remember and return to the Lord,
all families of the nations worship before him.
They shall worship him, all the mighty of the earth;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust.

Refrain

And my soul shall live for him, my descendants serve him.
They shall tell of the Lord to generations yet to come,
declare his saving justice to peoples yet unborn:
“These are the things the Lord has done.”

Refrain

Gospel: John 15:1-8

P: The Holy Gospel according to John.

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

P: Jesus said: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine,

neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”

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

Sermon

Pastor Rachel Manke

Hymn of the Day ~ “O Blessed Spring ”



1 O bless - ed spring, where word and sign em - brace us
 2 Through sum - mer heat of youth - ful years, un - cer - tain
 3 When au - tumn cools and youth is cold, when limbs their
 4 As win - ter comes, as win - ters must, we breathe our
 5 Christ, ho - ly Vine, Christ, liv - ing Tree, be praised for



in - to Christ the Vine: here Christ en - joins each one to
 faith, re - bel - lious tears, sus - tained by Christ's in - fus - ing
 heav - y har - vest hold, then through us, warm, the Christ will
 last, re - turn to dust; still held in Christ, our souls take
 this blest mys - ter - y: that word and wa - ter thus re -



be a branch of this life - giv - ing Tree.
 rain, the boughs will shout for joy a - gain.
 move with gifts of beau - ty, wis - dom, love.
 wing and trust the prom - ise of the spring.
 vive and join us to your Tree of Life.

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953
 Music: BERGLUND, Robert Buckley Farlee, b. 1950
 Text © 1993 Susan Palo Cherwien, admin. Augsburg Fortress.
 Music © 1993 Robert Buckley Farlee, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

Apostles' Creed

P: *Together, let us confess our faith:*

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

A: Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

A brief silence.

A: God of all fruitfulness, you abide in your church and your church abides in you. Cleanse us by your word and give yourself to the whole church on earth so that it bears fruit and witnesses to your love. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

A: You have created the heavens and the earth. As we wonder at the beauty of creation, may we seek vital connections among all that depends on the earth for life. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

A: You rule the nations with justice and love. Give the leaders of the earth assurance of your abiding presence, that they lead not by fear but with love for those they are called to serve. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

A: You have loved us so that we can love others. We pray for all in need of your love: those who are poor, lowly, outcast, weak, or fearful. Provide for the needs of all *especially*, Monika, Thomas, Eleanor, Joe, Barry, Jean, Alethia, Martyne, Kate, Ed, Maria, Cheryl, Susan, John, Jenny, Scott, John, Eric, Tom, Jack, Jon, Sue, Lauren, Bill, Dylan, Randy, Dorothy, Judy, Gerry, Hadley, Robert, Abby, Laura, and Donna. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

A: You gather us with all the saints by the power of your Spirit (*especially with Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria and those we name before you*). With them, may our hearts live forever in your keeping. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

A: In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

Peace

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

Anthem~ "Jesus Christ the Apple Tree"

Quartet

The tree of life my soul hath seen, laden with fruit and always green:
the trees of nature fruitless be, compared with Christ, the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive, it keeps my dying faith alive:
which makes my soul in haste to be with Jesus Christ, the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel: by faith I know but ne'er can tell,
the glory which I now can see, 'tis found in Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought, and pleasure dearly I have bought:
I missed of all; but now I see, 'tis found in Christ, the apple tree.

Text: Anonymous, *18th century*
based on Song of Solomon 2:3

Music: Mark Patterson

Presentation of Tithes and Offerings

During our time away, we will not be passing the offering plates. We are grateful for all who are able to continue their support of St. John. There are three ways to share tithes and offerings:

1. Simply giving - You can arrange for a regular gift (weekly, monthly, quarterly) to be deducted from a bank account. Please contact Marcie Godby, our bookkeeper, to arrange for this (stjohn1802bookkeeper@gmail.com).

2. You may go to St. John's website, <https://www.stjohnbluebell.org/>, and under "Quick Links" hit the "Online Giving and Donations" button.

3. You may put your offering envelope (checks are preferred) in another stamped envelope and mail it to St. John: 1802 Skippack Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422 (Attn: Marcie).

Take a moment and reflect on the gifts we have received – even in these difficult days.

Voluntary~ “The Dove’s Murmur”

Michael Burkhardt

Offertory Hymn~ “Like the Murmur of the Dove’s Song”



1 Like the mur - mur of the dove's song, like the chal - lenge of her
2 To the mem - bers of Christ's bod - y, to the branch - es of the
3 With the heal - ing of di - vi - sion, with the cease - less voice of



flight, like the vig - or of the wind's rush, like the
vine, to the church in faith as - sem - bled, to our
prayer, with the pow'r to love and wit - ness, with the



new flame's ea - ger might: come, Ho - ly Spir - it, come.
midst as gift and sign: come, Ho - ly Spir - it, come.
peace be - yond com - pare: come, Ho - ly Spir - it, come.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944

Music: BRIDEGROOM, Peter Cutts, b. 1937

Text © 1982 Hope Publishing Company.

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Offertory Prayer

P: God of love,
you call us beloved children and welcome us to your table.
Receive our lives and the gifts we offer.
Abide with us and send us in service to a suffering world;
for the sake of your beloved Child, Jesus Christ.

C: **Amen.**

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.**

Benediction

P: May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom
to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus.
The God of life,
Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

Sending Hymn~ "Alleluia! Jesus is Risen"



1 Al - le - lu - ia! Je - sus is ris - en!

3 Je - sus the vine, we are the branch - es;

5 Cit - y of God, Eas - ter for - ev - er,



Trum - pets re - sound - ing in glo - ri - ous light!

life in the Spir - it the fruit of the tree;

gold - en Je - ru - sa - lem, Je - sus the Lamb,



Splen - dor, the Lamb, heav - en for - ev - er!

heav - en to earth, Christ to the peo - ple,

riv - er of life, saints and arch - an - gels,



Oh, what a mir - a - cle God has in sight!

gift of the fu - ture now flow - ing to me.

sing with cre - a - tion to God the I AM!



Je - sus is ris - en and we shall a - rise.



Give God the glo - ry! Al - le - lu - ia!

Dismissal

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen.
C: **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**
P: Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!
C: **Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

Postlude~ *“Alleluia! Jesus is Risen”*

Wayne L. Wold

Additional music links:

“Jesus Christ is Risen Today”

<https://youtu.be/p2HSkIHBHxw>

“Christ is the Vine”

https://youtu.be/70OpG2et2_Y

“I Sat Down Under His Shadow ”

https://youtu.be/2J_UGb59jSc

Assisting with Worship

Pastor

Director of Music

Lector

Quartet

Pastor Rachel Manke

Lawrence Baker

Carol Weidler

Deborah Swider, Maja Lisa Fritzhuspen,
Kurt Klinger-Wilensky, Jonathan Oehler

Announcements

-**Sunday Coffee Hour** via Zoom will take place this morning at 10 a.m. The Zoom link will be on our website.

Kathy Erdman Memorial Update- Kathy Erdman's family will have a memorial for her this Sunday at a neighboring church (making use of their tent). Since Covid causes some limits on attendance numbers they are unable to put out an open invitation to attend in person. However, the family intends to record the service so that it may be shared with the St. John community. Our prayers continue for peace for the family and thanksgiving for Kathy's life and witness.

Outdoor Services - Save the dates! We'll be back in the Praise Lot for outdoor worship on May 9 and May 23 at 10 a.m.

Show Off Your Skills- Are you strong? Do you like picking things up and putting them down? Great! We are looking to form a regular team of helping hands to setup our outdoor worship services this summer. With enough hands it's easy work. Arrive an hour/half hour before worship to help and scope out a great seat for the service. Contact Pastor to let her know you want IN!

Prayer List Updates- It is a gift that we are able to pray in community for our own and our loved ones. We are looking to update our prayer list to make sure it's consistent with current needs. If you have a loved one on the prayer list right now and wish for them to remain so, please contact Sue in the office. Otherwise, in the next week or two we will remove what seem to be older requests. As always, you can have us add new concerns. Please contact Sue with the name of the person (first and last, please be sure they are ok with being listed) and what we are praying for. If you include contact info our faithful card-senders would be able to send cheer in an envelope as well.

-Acme/Giant Gift Cards for Seminary would be another great way to support the pantry for perishable goods. You can mail cards or drop off cards/cash to the office. Tuesday and Thursdays are the best days to come by the church office between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

This week's letter is from Megan Kiefski who served as St John's delegate to our SEPA Synod Assembly.

Members of St. John,

This past Saturday the Southeastern Pennsylvania ELCA Synod held it's annual assembly. In a normal year, this is a 2-day event full of voting, presentations, resolutions and a general review of all the important parts and idiosyncrasies that go into keeping SEPA a thriving part of the national ELCA community. It is also, in a normal year, a wonderful time to connect with others in congregations from all over the area. As we all are so very aware, this was not a normal year. Last year's assembly was initially postponed, and ultimately cancelled, due to the ongoing pandemic. When it became obvious that an in-person assembly would not be possible in 2021, the decision was made to use a platform that we have all become so intimately acquainted with, ZOOM. The assembly programming was cut down to its bare bones. Voting on Synod and national council representatives, approval of budgets for both last year and this current year, and adoption of new resolutions were on the agenda, Time to socialize and network with other attendees had to be cut out in favor of completing all of the business of the year.

As a group we voted to approve a resolution addressing racism, particularly against Asian American and Pacific Islanders. As Rev. Gwendolyn King quoted from the resolution, "Racism is an assault on the Gospel of Jesus Christ which calls us to be one". The resolution reaffirmed SEPA Synod's commitment to support and love all of our brothers and sisters in Christ, no matter the color of their skin or ethnic background.

Video presentations from the many groups that are supported by the monetary offerings of the whole synod were also shown. These short videos are available in the SEPA YouTube page under the 2021 Assembly playlist. We heard from Ken Crest, Liberty Lutheran, Seafarers International, Sanctuary Village, and Bear Creek camp. For anyone interested, the videos are quite short and are a good reminder of the good that our offerings are doing in our local and greater community. The entire broadcast of the assembly is available there as well.

In the end, what normally takes two days to complete was whittled down to about 7 hours. Budgets were passed and elections were held. We can move through 2021 confident that our synod leadership is faithfully working to continue to lift up our community in a way both acknowledges the grace bestowed upon us and gives praise and thanks for that gift.

Megan Kiefski

