

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church & Elementary School
Our Mission: Learn God's Truth, Share Spirit's Healing, Follow Jesus' Ways.
Fifth Sunday of EASTER, April 28, 2024
Virtual Prayer and Preaching Worship



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**The CHURCH'S GATHERING**

**CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS**

*We make the sign of the cross, which was marked on us at baptism.*  
We bless the holy Trinity, † one God, the wellspring of grace,  
our Easter and our joy. **Amen**

In hope, we seek reconciliation and renewal in Jesus' resurrection life.  
*Silence for prayer and reflection.* To you, O God, **all hearts are open, to you all desires known. We come to you, confessing our sins. Forgive us in your mercy, and remember us in your love. Show us your ways; teach us your paths; and lead us in justice and truth, for the sake of your goodness in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen**

By water and the Holy Spirit God gives you a new birth, and through the death and resurrection of † Jesus Christ, God forgives you all your sins. The God of mercy and might strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life. **Amen**

**GREETING and PRAYER of the DAY**

P: The grace of our Savior Jesus, **who rose from the dead,**  
the love of God, **who brings hope to a broken world,**  
and the fellowship of Spirit, **who awakens our hearts to life,**  
are always with you. **And also with you.**

We join in prayer. *A brief silence.* 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. **Amen.**

**GOD'S WORD**

**FIRST READING: Acts 8:26-40** *Contemporary English Version*  
*Led by the Spirit, Philip encounters an Ethiopian official who is returning to his African home after having been to Jerusalem to worship. Philip uses their encounter to proclaim the gospel to him. Upon coming to faith in Jesus, he is baptized by Philip.*

This is a reading from the Acts of the Apostles, the 8th chapter.  
The Lord's angel said to Philip, "About noon go south along the desert road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza." So Philip left.

An important Ethiopian official happened to be going along that road in his chariot. He was the chief treasurer for Candace, the Queen of Ethiopia. The official had gone to Jerusalem to worship and was now on his way home. He was sitting in his chariot, reading the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Spirit told Philip to catch up with the chariot. Philip ran up close and heard the man reading aloud from the book of Isaiah. Philip asked him, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

The official answered, "How can I understand unless someone helps me?" He then invited Philip to come up and sit beside him.

The man was reading the passage that said, "He was led like a sheep on its way to be killed.

He was silent as a lamb whose wool is being cut off, and he did not say a word.

He was treated like a nobody and did not receive a fair trial.

How can he have children, if his life is snatched away?"

The official said to Philip, "Tell me, was the prophet talking about himself or about someone else?" So Philip began at this place in the Scriptures and explained the good news about Jesus.

As they were going along the road, they came to a place where there was some water. The official said, "Look! Here is some water. Why can't I be baptized?" He ordered the chariot to stop. Then they both went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

After they had come out of the water, the Lord's Spirit took Philip away. The official never saw him again, but he was very happy as he went on his way. Philip later appeared in Azotus. He went from town to town, all the way to Caesarea, telling people about Jesus.

This is Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.

## **SECOND READING: 1 John 4:7-21**

*We love God and others because God first loved us. We cannot say we love God, whom we have not seen, while hating fellow Christians, whom we regularly see. Love toward God is to be matched by love toward others because the essence of God is love.*

This is a reading from John's first letter to the believers, the 4th chapter.

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and God's love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in Jesus and he in us, because God has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as Jesus is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because God first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from God is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

This is Holy Wisdom, God's Holy Word.

**HOLY GOSPEL: John 15:1-8**

*On the night of his arrest, Jesus taught his disciples about the relationship they would have with him. Those who abide in his word and love bear fruit, for apart from him, they can do nothing.*

**This is the Holy Gospel of the Resurrection of Christ,  
as the Word was given to John, the 15th chapter.**

Jesus said: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. God removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit God 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."

This is the Good News of Christ's Victory.

**\*HYMN of the DAY: # 367 "Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds"**

- 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.  
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**MESSAGE:**        **ABIDE**                    *silence for reflection follows*

**The CHURCH PRAYS**

**PRAYERS of the PEOPLE**

Rejoicing that Jesus is risen and love has triumphed over fear, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news. *A brief silence.*

We pray for the church around the world, for all ministers, and for the mission of the gospel. Keep all the newly baptized and confirmed in your care. Cleanse our hearts with your word and help us to abide in you always.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For the well-being of the earth and of all created things: for rivers and lakes, streams and estuaries, melting glaciers and polluted waters. Renew the face of the earth and shower us with your goodness.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For the nations and all those in authority: for local, state, and national leaders, for elected representatives at every level, and for international organizations, that justice and peace may reign. Be with all those the oppressed by war and civil strife: Ukraine, Gaza and Israel, Yemen and Myanmar.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For all those in need: for any experiencing homelessness or unemployment, for those fleeing from oppression or seeking asylum, and for all who are ill or suffering from COVID, flu, or cancer, heart or respiratory disease, diabetes or other disabilities.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For this congregation: for the caring ministries of this faith community, for all who visit and minister to one another, for all who take communion to homes or care centers, and for all who seek to share your love with the world.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

P: We especially pray for John, Genevieve, Greg, Louisa, our at-home worshippers, ...

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

With thanksgiving for the saints who rest from their labors. Help us, like them, to bear much fruit and to become your disciples, and at the last, bring us to that heavenly banquet where all will feast together at your table.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, most merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abiding love; through Jesus Christ, our resurrected and living Lord. **Amen.**

### **MISSION PRAYER**

Holy God, hear our prayer. *A brief silence.* Risen One, you call us to believe and bear fruit. May the gifts and service that we offer be signs of your abiding love. Form us to be your witnesses in the world, through Jesus Christ, our true vine. **Amen**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

We pray that we may do God's will, as Jesus has 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**

### **SPIRIT'S SENDING**

#### **BLESSING**

Alleluia! Christ is risen! **Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

The God of resurrection power, the Christ of unending joy,  
and the Spirit of Easter hope bless † you now and always. **Amen**

#### **PEACE**

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

*Please greet your household and friends online with Peace.*

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At the time of this writing, please keep the following in your prayers: ELCA Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Synod Bishop Bill Gohl, those hospitalized or at home recuperating, and our at-home worshippers.

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Today's Altar Flowers are Given to the Glory of God

In Honor of Pr. Lans.

In Loving Memory of Frank Alkire's April 27th birthday.
Given by Doris Alkire.

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*Today's Worship Folders are Given to the Glory of God*

In Honor of Mae Bast's May 1<sup>st</sup> birthday.  
Given by the Volz family.

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Attendance for April 21, 2024: 39

Learning, Serving, & Fellowship Opportunities

Prayer Group: PRAYERS UPHOLD us in times of trouble. PRAYERS STRENGTHEN us when needed. PRAYERS COMFORT us, always. PRAYERS are better than prescriptions! JOIN US! Receive YOUR share of SPIRITUAL VITAMINS on Wednesday, May 1st at 11 am. in Grace Chapel (lower level, elevator accessible). If you're unable to join us, you can submit a confidential prayer request through one of the prayer containers located in the school and church lobbies.

Ice Cream Social: Sunday, May 12th after the 10:15 am. worship, hosted by St. Peter's PACE. Celebrate Mother's Day with this yummy get-together in the hall.

Pentecost Geraniums: Order forms for geraniums are located on the "Welcome" table in the back of the church or by calling the church office. Forms and payment are due to the church office by Sunday, May 5th.

Sponsorship Available: Bulletins for 5/5 (contact the church office). Altar flowers for 10:15 am. on May 19 and 26 (contact Nancy Barnes).

PayPal Donations: You can now make donations on-line through PayPal! Login to your PayPal account and search for our tag: @Spl367 or St. Peter's Lutheran Church and Christian Day School.

"Matilda, the Musical" is being presented by Concordia Prep School's Theater Department on Thursday, April 25th (dinner & show is \$45/person; dinner at 6:30 pm. and show at 7 pm.), Friday & Saturday April 26th & 27th at 7 pm., and Sunday, April 28th at 2 pm. Tickets for 4/25 (show only) and 4/26-28 are \$15 for adults and \$10 for students and senior citizens. To purchase tickets, go to concordiaprepschool.org and search *Matilda*, or contact the school at 410-825-2323.

Grab Bag Bingo: Saturday, April 27 at Prince of Peace (8212 Philadelphia Rd., 21237). There will be an assortment of prizes. Cost is \$15 for 20 games. Doors open at 5 pm., games begin at 6 pm. Contact the church office at 410-866-8766 for more information.

SPES Food Collection: Our last food collection will be on Wednesday, May 1st before our chapel service. Christus Victor Lutheran Church has been very grateful for your generosity to their food pantry, "Victor's Vittles". We would also like to thank Rachel McPherson for delivering the food each month. If you have non-perishable food items for Victor's Vittles, please bring them to the church by Sunday, May 5th.

Flea Market: Saturday, May 4th at St. Michael (9534 Belair Rd., 21236) from 8 am.-12 pm. (rain date 5/11). Spaces are available for \$20 (size is 10x18). Contact Linda at 410-852-7826.

Baskets, Bags & More Bingo: Saturday, May 4th. Doors open at 6 pm., games begin at 7 pm. St. John’s (Parkville) is hosting, but event will be at St. Ursula Auditorium (8900 Harford Rd., 21234). Tickets are \$20/person in advance or \$25 at the door. Refreshments will be available for purchase. Contact Tony at 443-474-2727 or the church office at 410-665-1234.

Purse Bingo: Sunday, May 5th at St. Luke Lutheran (7001 Harford Rd., 21234). Doors open at 12 noon, games begin at 1 pm. Cost is \$25/person in advance or \$30 at the door. Refreshments will be available for sale. BYO wine or beer. Contact Kim at 443-415-5824 or the church office at 410-444-5171 for information. Cashapp and Venmo accepted.

Community Yard Sale: Saturday, June 1st from 8 am.-1 pm. at St. John’s, Parkville (8808 Harford Rd., 21234). Spaces are \$20 for 1 and \$30 for 2 (bring your own table and chair) and must be reserved by 5/28. Space is approximately size of 2 parking spaces. Contact Chris Hills at 410-952-4920 or cr_hills@yahoo.com. Vendors may not sell food as St. John’s will have a concession stand.

For every NEW regular deposit account opened at Eastern Savings Bank (Fullerton branch only) St. Peter’s Lutheran Church receives \$5! Visit the Fullerton branch at 4113 Wholesale Club Drive, Suite 130 or go to EasternSavingsBank.com.

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***News from St. Peter’s Elementary School***

“Open Enrollment” for the 2024-25 school year continues. Contact the office at 410-665-4521 if you have questions, want to schedule a tour, or to register. Referrals are always welcome!

Our weekly chapel services are every Wednesday at 9:15 am. Parents and families are always welcome to join us!

Teacher Appreciation Week is May 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>. Please consider sending a note of thanks or encouragement to our faithful and hard-working teachers.