

A LIFE OF LOVE

Jesus modeled love and instructs us in love.

WORSHIP CELEBRATION

The Fifth Week of Easter

May 2, 2021

First Lutheran Church

Charlotte, Michigan

THE TRIUNE GOD WE WORSHIP AND TRUST

The Scriptures reveal that the only true God is the Triune God – Father, Son (Jesus), and Holy Spirit – three distinct persons in one divine being.

The Father has begotten the Son from eternity and the Son is begotten of the Father from eternity. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. All are eternal.

When God works or acts, the whole Godhead acts. Yet, the Bible ascribes the work of creation to the Father, the work of redemption to the Son, and the work of regeneration and sanctification to the Holy Spirit.

The other persons collaborate. This is important because there are not three gods but one God – one essence or substance – in three persons.

When we say in our creeds “I believe in God,” we are expressing our trust in the Triune God and His promises (as revealed in the Scriptures) and accepting as true all He teaches in the Holy Scriptures.

THE CHRIST CANDLE or THE PASCAL CANDLE

The Paschal Candle or Christ Candle beside the altar represents our Risen Christ. Jesus remained on the earth 40 days from His Resurrection to His Ascension, but His light still shines into the world today and in the lives of His people.

GOD'S WORD TO PONDER

Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Romans 5:1-2, 5

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

THE TRIUNE GOD HAS EXHIBITED HIS GRACE OUR GOD HAS Poured HIS SPIRIT INTO US

AN OPENING PRAYER OF INVITATION

OUR OPENING PRAISE – Psalm 145:1-13

Pastor: Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;
His greatness no one can fathom.

**All: I will exalt You, O sovereign God.
I will praise Your name day by day.
I will extol Your glorious authority forever and ever.**

Pastor: One generation will commend Your works to another;
they will tell of Your mighty acts.

**All: We will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty . . .
and think about Your eternal sovereignty.
We will tell of Your power in Your awesome works . . .
and proclaim Your great deeds.
We will celebrate Your abundant goodness . . .
and joyfully sing of Your righteousness.**

Pastor: The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.
The LORD is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made.

**All: All that You have made will worship You, O LORD;
We will tell of the glory of Your kingdom and speak of Your might,
so that all people will know of Your mighty acts . . .
and the glorious splendor of Your kingdom.**

Pastor: The LORD is faithful to all His promises . . .
and loving toward all He has made.

**All: Your kingdom is everlasting . . .
and Your dominion endures through all eternity.**

(sing) **All praise to You, who safe has kept
and has refreshed me while I slept.
Grant, Lord, when I from death shall wake,
that I may endless life partake.**

**Lord, I my vows to You renew;
disperse my sins as morning dew.
Guard my first thoughts of mind and will
and with Your light my spirit fill.**

**Direct, control, suggest this day
all I design or do or say
that all my pow'rs with all their might
in Your sole glory may unite.**

Public domain - LSB 868 - "Awake, My Soul" – stanzas 3-5

THE LORD HEARS OUR PRAYERS

THE PRAISE, THANKSGIVING, AND PETITIONS OF THE CONGREGATION

THE PRAYER OUR LORD TAUGHT

**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**

THE TRUE GOD TEACHES US HIS TRUTH

THE NEW TESTAMENT READING - Acts 10:34-38

(After Pentecost, Peter, having been invited to Joppa by a non-Jew, Cornelius, he began to speak.) "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism³⁵ but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.³⁷ You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached –³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around

doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

Pastor: Here the disciple Peter reminds us of the vast ministry of Jesus.

All: O God, fill us with awe as we ponder Jesus' life and ministry on earth.

THE GOSPEL READING - John 15:9-17

[Jesus said] "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other."

Pastor: These are some beautiful reminders from Jesus.

All: O Lord, help us remember what we are called to be: Friends of Yours.

Pastor: And help us remember what we are called to do.

All: We are called to be obedient and to bear fruit. Help us, Lord.

THE CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

A PRAYER IN SONG - **LSB 696** - "O God, My Faithful God" - stanzas 2, 4

THE MESSAGE FOR TODAY "A Life of Love"

Luke 12:13-15

Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." ¹⁴ Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" ¹⁵ Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

MESSAGE OUTLINE IN QUESTION FORM

1 What is the first of Jesus' two "truth grenades?"

- 2 What are some examples of greed?
- 3 Of what does this statement remind us? "I know what God is providing for my life, but I want more."
- 4 What is the second of Jesus' two "truth grenades"?
- 5 What is it that can truly make a person happy (or blest)?
- 6 How can a person's life be "rich toward God?"
- 7 In what ways should our love be like God's?
- 8 What some examples of loving God and others sacrificially, selflessly, unconditionally?

THE TRUE GOD HAS GIVEN HIS SPIRIT TO GIVE US FAITH, TO MAKE US HIS, AND TO ENABLE US TO LOVE LIKE HIM

A PRAYER FOR OUR APPLICATION OF THE MESSAGE TO OUR LIVES

A SONG OF FAITH - BoB 77 - "Grace Alone"

**Ev'ry promise we can make, ev'ry pray'r and step of faith,
ev'ry diff'rence we will make . . . is only by His grace.
Ev'ry mountain we will climb, ev'ry ray of hope we shine,
ev'ry blessing left behind . . . is only by His grace.**

**Grace alone which God supplies . . . strength unknown He will provide.
Christ in us, our Cornerstone, we will go forth in grace alone.**

Ev'ry soul we long to reach, ev'ry heart we hope to teach,
ev'rywhere we share His peace . . . is only by His grace.
Ev'ry loving word we say, ev'ry tear we wipe away,
ev'ry sorrow turned to praise . . . is only by His grace.

Grace alone which God supplies . . . strength unknown He will provide.
Christ in us, our Cornerstone, we will go forth in grace alone.

Grace alone which God supplies . . . strength unknown He will provide.
Christ in us, our Cornerstone, we will go forth in grace alone.
We will go forth in grace alone.

JESUS ASSURES US OF HIS SACRIFICE FOR US IN THE SACRAMENT

OUR CONFESSION OF SINS AND OF FAITH

Pastor: The word of God tells us: "He [Jesus] was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. ^{5:6} You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 4:25, 5:6-8)
Compelled by God's word and His Spirit in us, let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

**All: Merciful and gracious God, You withhold Your punishment
and give us what we do not deserve – grace.
We confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean.
We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed . . .
by what we have done . . . and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved You with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment.
Knowing that You have already forgiven us because of Jesus,
help us delight in doing Your will . . and walking in Your way . . .
to the glory of Your holy name. Amen**

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF FORGIVENESS

A PRAYER IN PREPARATION FOR RECEIVING THE LORD'S SUPPER

THE CONSECRATION OF THE ELEMENTS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, on the same night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way He also took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me."

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SACRAMENT

We will be distributing the Lord's Supper both at the altar rail and with continuous flow.

If you wish to commune at the altar rail, use one of the outside aisles.

An usher there will assist you.

If you wish to commune using continuous flow, come forward in the middle aisle on the baptismal font side. An usher will assist you there.

LSB 576 - "My Hope Is Built"

LSB 789 - "Praise and Thanksgiving"

A POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

THE SPIRIT WORKS IN US AND SEND US OUT

REFLECTIONS ON OUR LIVES AS GOD'S PEOPLE

In thankfulness and praise, may our lives and gifts give glory to God . . .
and spread the gospel message for the enlargement of His kingdom.

OUR CLOSING SONG OF PRAISE - **LSB 525** - "Crown Him with Many Crowns"
stanzas 1, 3

THE BLESSING

Silent Prayer
Announcements

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GOD'S BLESSINGS TO YOU

Go out with God – connected and firm in faith.
In response to His great love, live for Him.

A THOUGHT WORTH CONSIDERING

"A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education."

— *President Theodore Roosevelt*

PRAYER IDEAS

In your daily prayers, please include prayers . . .

PRAISING GOD as . . .

- as the one and only true God – the triune God, who has revealed himself in the Bible as three distinct persons in one divine being, i.e., Father, Son (Word, Jesus), and Holy Spirit
- a merciful and gracious Savior

THANKING GOD for . . .

- His plan of salvation for all mankind throughout history
- His mercy (withholding the punishment you deserve) and for His grace (giving you what you don't deserve – forgiveness and eternal life) out of His unfathomable gift of unmerited love).
- Jesus' love in giving Himself up for the church to make Her holy and radiant, without any blemish
- our congregational teachers, youth leaders, Bible class teachers
- those who volunteer their time, effort, and capabilities to serve God

CONFESSING TO GOD . . .

- your remorse that even though God loves you dearly, your trust, love, and obedience in return is weak. Seek His continued mercy.

ASKING GOD for . . .

- help in conforming every thought, word, deed, and attitude in your life to His will
- the ability to see the many people around you who do not yet trust in Jesus as their Savior . . . and to have a passion for their salvation
- our right choices in life -- always choosing God and His way
- our children and youth and adults, that all would grow in faith, in love, and in zeal for God . . . and would honestly desire to follow Him always
- the unity of the people of St. John and united focus on God's will as we make congregational decisions and minister in His name
- boldness in sharing the gospel of God with those around us
- great generosity among our members as we support our Synod's gospel outreach to the world

CREDITS

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