

April 28th, 2024

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.

Stand - **Invocation and Verses**

P In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Christ has risen from the dead.

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

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

C **He has put all things under His feet.**

Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen

LSB 474 sts. 1–5

SERVICE OF THE WORD

Sit - **First Reading**

Acts 8:26–40

²⁶Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. ²⁷And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." ³⁰So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³²Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. ³³In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." ³⁴And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" ³⁸And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. ³⁹And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

⁴⁰But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It

LSB 594

PSALM

Psalm 150

P Praise the Lord! Praise God

! ***Left side: in His sanctuary;***

P praise Him

@ ***Right side: in His mighty heavens!***

P Praise Him

! ***Left: for His mighty deeds;***

P praise Him

@ ***Right: according to His excellent greatness!***

P Praise Him

! ***Left: with trumpet sound;***

P praise Him

@ ***Right: with lute and harp!***

P Praise Him

! ***Left: with tambourine and dance;***

P praise Him

@ ***Right: with strings and pipe!***

P Praise Him

! ***Left: with sounding cymbals;***

P praise Him

@ ***Right: with loud clashing cymbals!***

P Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!

C **All: Praise the Lord!**

¹Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. ⁴Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. ⁵They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. ⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In 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. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Stand - Verse

P Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again;

C **death no longer has dominion over Him. Alleluia.**

P If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word,

C **and My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Alleluia.**

Holy Gospel

John 15:1–8

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 15th chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹[Jesus said:] "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.

²Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Confession and Absolution

P In today's Gospel we heard 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.

P Lord Jesus Christ, living Vine,

C **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.

P 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 T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

Collect of the Day

P 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*

P Let us pray. O God, You make the minds of Your faithful to be of one will.

C **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;**

P through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Creed—The Third Article

Sanctification

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

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers,

enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

Sit - O Jesus, King Most Wonderful

LSB 554

Sermon

Stand - Prayer of the Church

P Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. For missionaries and teachers, translators, and medical personnel who bring the Word of God to remote parts of the world, that God would guide them as He did Philip to use every opportunity to invite many people to the waters of Holy Baptism,

P Let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P Into Your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen.**

Offertory Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful

LSB 955

Offertory Prayer

P Let us pray. Accept, Lord our God, our tithes and offerings, symbols of all that You have graciously given us. Use them for Your purposes and guide us in our decisions as we seek to be godly stewards of the gifts You have entrusted to our care. We pray in the name of Him who gave Himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer (*As found in the back cover of the Hymnal*)

Benediction

P May God the Father, who in grace created you and all things; may God the T Son, who by His sacrifice made forgiveness available to you; may God the Holy Spirit, who worked faith in your hearts to be able to call Jesus Lord - bless you and keep you this day and always.

C **Amen.**

Sit - **Go, My Children, with My Blessing**

LSB 922

Dismissal

P Go in peace as you serve our risen Lord.

C **Thanks be to God!**