

SAINT MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Connecting with God, One Another, and Our Neighbors.

5800 Backlick Road ~ Springfield, VA 22150 ~ 703-451-4331

www.stmarks-elca.org info@stmarks-elca.org



ORDER OF WORSHIP

THE SEASON OF EASTER, THE GREAT FIFTY DAYS

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER, APRIL 14, 2024

Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW), Setting Three

The St. Mark's Vision & Mission Statements

Vision: *Called by God into community with our neighbors, nation, and world, St. Mark's is one Lutheran parish with many cultural voices and room for everyone to be at home.*

Mission: *Founded in faith, growing in grace, we are called to love and serve God, one another, and the world.*

GATHERING

PRELUDE (9:30-9:45)

Works of Oldroyd, Rheinberger, and Mendelssohn

WELCOME

P Alleluia, Christ is risen! **C He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

CHORAL ALLELUIA (*Congregation stand to face the rear entrance of the church*)

“Alleluia Canon” ~ Wolfgang A. Mozart

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P In the name of the Father +, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **C Amen.**

P Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **C Amen.**

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P Most merciful God,

C we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. 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. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

INTROIT *(Sung by the congregation)*

Be not a-fraid, sing out for joy! Christ is ris-en, al-le - lu - ia!

Be not a-fraid, sing out for joy! Christ is ris-en, al-le - lu - ia!

Text: Matthew 28:5; Taizé Community

Music: BE NOT AFRAID, Jacques Berthier, 1923–1994

Text and music © Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent, 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358.

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- 1 (Cantor) "These are the words that I spoke to you while I | was still with you." // Then He opened their minds to under - | stand the scriptures.

Repeat *Be Not Afraid*

- 2 (Cantor) This is the day that the | Lord has made; // let us rejoice and be | glad in it.

Repeat *Be Not Afraid*

GATHERING HYMN, "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today!" ELW #373

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, alt.

Music: ORIENTIS PARTIBUS, Pierre de Corbeil, d. 1222, arr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*

Arr. © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

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1 "Christ the Lord is ris'n to - day!" All on earth with an - gels say;
 2 Love's re - deem - ing work is done, fought the fight, the bat - tle won.
 3 Vain the stone, the watch, the seal; Christ has burst the gates of hell.
 4 Lives a - gain our glo - rious king! Where, O death, is now your sting?

raise your joys and tri - umphs high; sing, O heav'ns; and earth, re - ply.
 Lo! The sun's e - clipse is o'er. Lo! He sets in blood no more.
 Death in vain for - bids his rise; Christ has o - pened par - a - dise.
 Once he died our souls to save; where your vic - to - ry, O grave?

5 Hail the Lord of earth and heav'n!
 Praise to thee by both be giv'n.
 Thee we greet triumphant now;
 hail, the resurrection, thou!

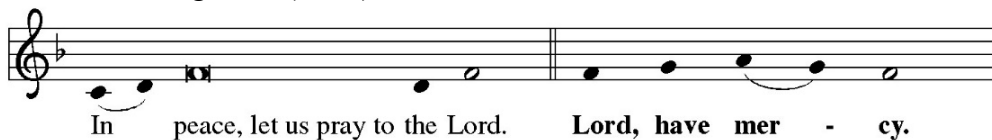
6 King of glory, soul of bliss,
 everlasting life is this:
 thee to know, thy pow'r to prove,
 thus to sing, and thus to love!

GREETING

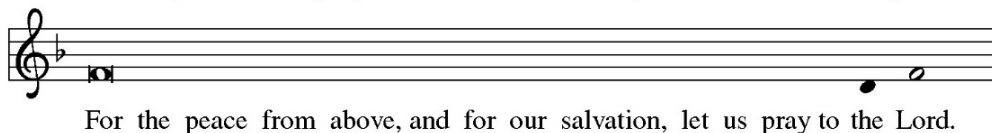
P Alleluia, Christ is risen! **C He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **C And also with you.**

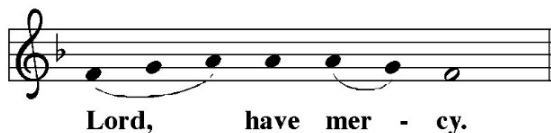
KYRIE, ELW Page 138 (S138)



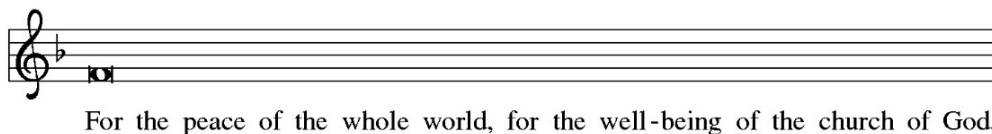
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



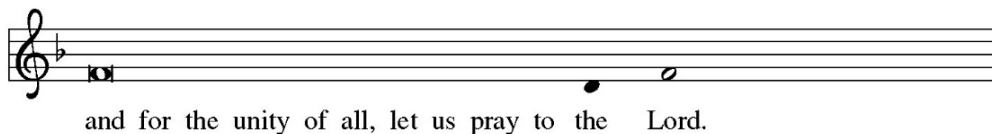
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



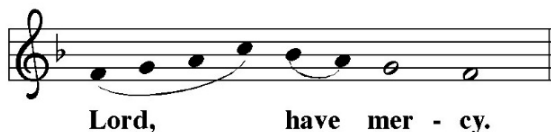
Lord, have mer - cy.



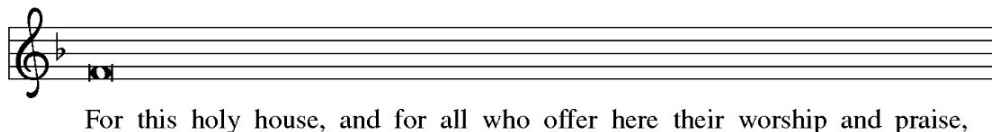
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



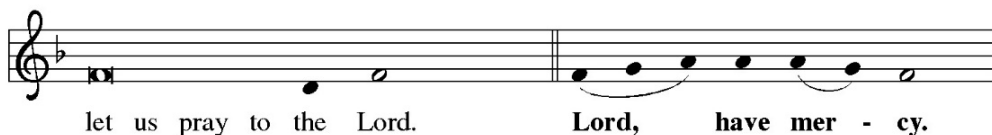
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



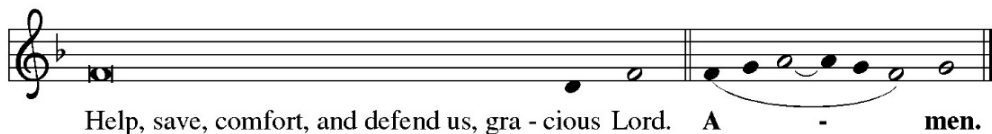
Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**

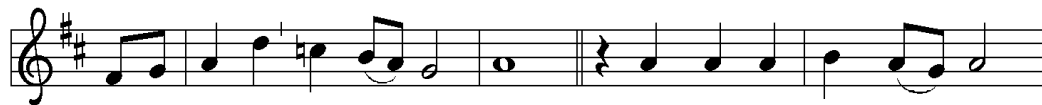


Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **A - men.**

CANTICLE OF PRAISE, All: Refrain Women: 1 & 3 Men: 2 & 4



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



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb



who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.



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



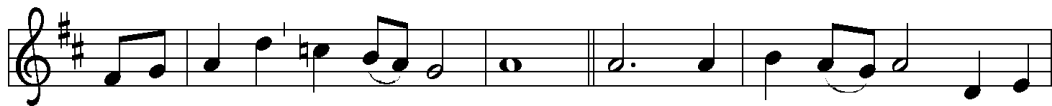
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 2 Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and



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



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



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of



God, and join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon - or,

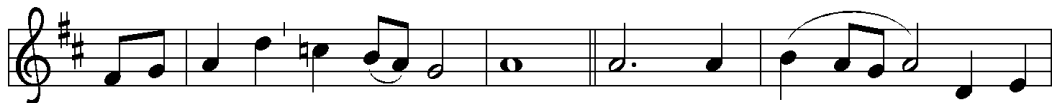


glo - ry, and might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Refrain



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



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 4 For the Lamb who was



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

Final refrain



This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you. **C And also with you.**

P Let us pray. Holy and righteous God, you are the author of life, and you adopt us to be your children. Fill us with your words of life, that we may live as witnesses to the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C Amen**

WORD

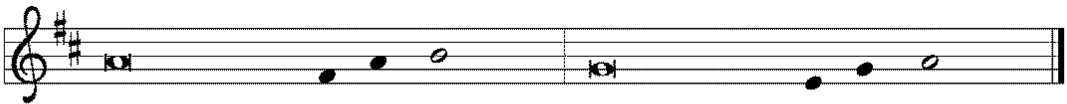
FIRST LESSON, *Acts 3:12-19*

¹²[Peter] addressed the people, “You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk?”¹³The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. ¹⁴But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, ¹⁵and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. ¹⁶And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

¹⁷”And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. ¹⁹Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.”

A The word of the Lord. **C Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 4



Psalm tone reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year C* © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.
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¹**Answer me when I call, O God, defender | of my cause;
you set me free when I was in distress; have mercy on me and | hear my prayer.**
²”You mortals, how long will you dishon- | or my glory;
how long will you love illusions and seek | after lies?”
³**Know that the LORD does wonders | for the faithful;
the LORD will hear me | when I call.**

⁴Tremble, then, and | do not sin;
speak to your heart in silence up- | on your bed.

⁵**Offer the appointed | sacrifices,
and put your trust | in the LORD.**

⁶Many are saying, “Who will show us | any good?”
Let the light of your face shine upon | us, O LORD.

⁷**You have put gladness | in my heart,
more than when grain and | wine abound.**

⁸In peace, I will lie | down and sleep;
for you alone, O LORD, make me | rest secure.

SECOND LESSON, *1 John 3:1-7*

¹See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. ³And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

⁴Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. ⁷Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

A The word of the Lord. **C Thanks be to God.**


GOSPEL ACCLAMATION, “Christ is Arisen” ELW #372

Text: German hymn, c. 1100; tr. Martin L. Seltz, 1909–1967
Music: J. Klug, *Geistliche Lieder*, 1543
Text © 1969 Concordia Publishing House

CHRIST IST ERSTANDEN
PM



1 Christ is a - ris - en from the grave's dark pris - on. So let our joy rise



full and free; Christ our com-fort true will be. Al - le - lu - ia!



2 Were Christ not a - ris - en, then death were still our



pris - on. Now, with him to life re - stored, we praise



the Fa - ther of our Lord. Al - le - lu - ia!



3 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,



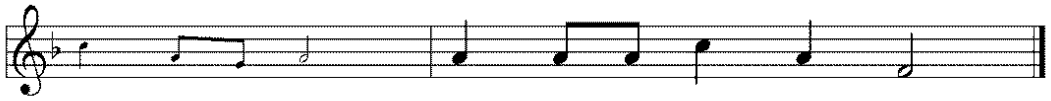
al - le - lu - ia! So let our joy rise full and free;



Christ our com - fort true will be. Al - le - lu - ia!

GOSPEL

P The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 24th chapter.

C  **G** Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

^{36b}Jesus himself stood among [the disciples] and said to them, “Peace be with you.” ³⁷They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” ⁴⁰And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate in their presence.

⁴⁴Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things.”

After the reading:

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C  **G** Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON, YVETTE MOY

HYMN OF THE DAY, "Day of Arising" ELW #374



1 Day of a - ris - ing, Christ on the road - way,
 2 When we are walk - ing, doubt - ful and dread - ing,
 3 Lo, I am with you, Je - sus has spo - ken.
 4 Christ, our com - pan - ion, hope for the jour - ney,



un - known com - pan - ion walks with his own.
 blind - ed by sad - ness, slow - ness of heart,
 This is Christ's prom - ise, this is Christ's sign:
 bread of com - pas - sion, o - pen our eyes.



When they in - vite him, as fades the first day,
 yet Christ walks with us, ev - er a - wait - ing
 when the church gath - ers, when bread is bro - ken,
 Grant us your vi - sion, set all hearts burn - ing



and bread is bro - ken, Christ is made known.
 our in - vi - ta - tion: Stay, do not part.
 there Christ is with us in bread and wine.
 that all cre - a - tion with you may rise.

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953
 Music: RAABE, Carl F. Schalk, b. 1929
 Text © 1996 Susan Palo Cherwien, admin. Augsburg Fortress.
 Music © 1999 Augsburg Fortress.

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APOSTLE'S CREED

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

P Let us pray for the church, the world, and for all people according to their needs.

Each petition ends:

A Let us pray to the Lord. **C Lord have mercy.**

P Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **C Amen.**

MEAL

THE PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always. **C And also with you.**

Please share the peace with one another at home or on Facebook.

OFFERING, NOTE: If you are worshipping online this morning, offerings may be made through Vanco or mailed to the church office. We appreciate your continued faithfulness and support of God's work at and through St. Mark's.

<https://www.stmarks-elca.org/vanco-donations>

or mail checks to: **St. Mark's Lutheran Church**

5800 Backlick Road, Springfield, VA 22150

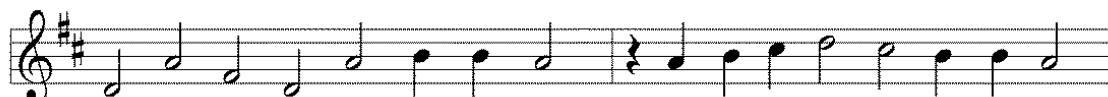
MUSIC AS THE OFFERINGS ARE MADE

“Christ ist erstanden!” (from *Faust*) ~ Wolfgang von Goethe / Franz Schubert

*Christ ist erstanden!
Freude dem Sterblichen,
den die verderblichen, schleichenden, erblichen Mängel umvanden.*

Christ is arisen!
Joy be to mortals!
Pain and indignity, scorn and malignity:
Their work is ended.


MUSIC AS THE OFFERING IS PRESENTED, He is Arisen! Glorious Word!



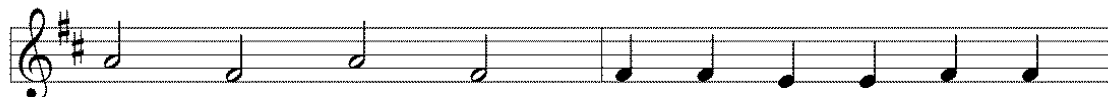
He is a - ris - en! Glo - rious Word! Now rec - on - ciled is God, my Lord;




the gates of heav'n are o - pen. My Je - sus rose tri - um - phant - ly,



and Sa - tan's ar - rows bro - ken lie, de - stroyed hell's fierc - est weap - on.



Oh, hear, what cheer! Christ vic - to - rious, ris - ing



glo - rious, life is giv - ing. He was dead, but now is liv - ing!

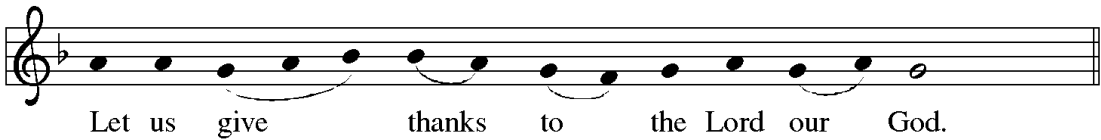
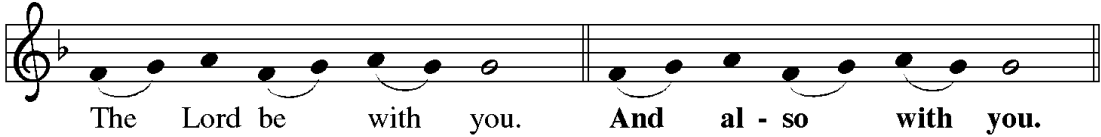
Text: Birgitte K. Boye, 1742–1824; tr. George T. Rygh, 1860–1942, alt.
Music: WIE SCHÖN LEUCHTET, Philipp Nicolai, 1556–1608

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A Let us pray. Blessed are you, O God, ruler of heaven and earth. Day by day you shower us with blessings. As you have raised us to new life in Christ, give us glad and generous hearts, ready to praise you and to respond to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

c Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING



P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy ... and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
 heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
 san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
 comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

In the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: take and eat; this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying; This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

THE 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.**

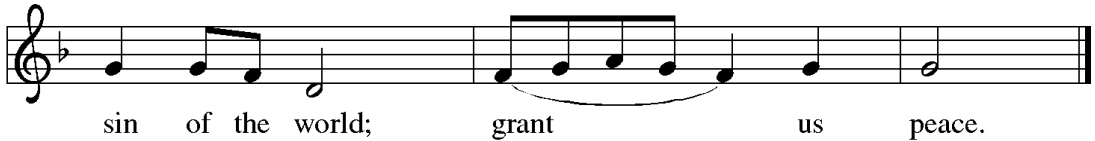
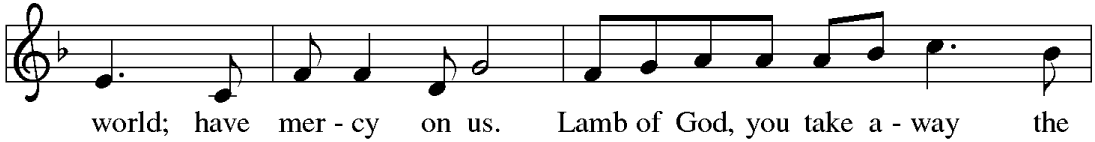
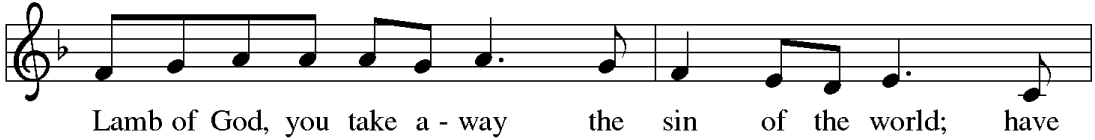
INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P The Holy Spirit makes for us this bread and wine the precious body and blood of Christ our Lord that we might partake of the tree of life and live.

P The gifts of God for the people of God.

C Amen! Amen! Thanks be to God!

LAMB OF GOD



MUSIC AS THE SACRAMENT IS ADMINISTERED

“Christ is Arisen” ~ Johann Sebastian Bach, arr. Paul Christiansen

Yea, Christ is arisen
from the grave's dark prison.
We all rejoice triumphantly,
for through His death He made men free.
Lord have mercy.

All our hopes were ended,
had Jesus not ascended.
From death He rose triumphantly.
For this, Lord Jesus, we worship Thee.
Lord have mercy.

Hallelujah!

SONG AFTER COMMUNION, “Hymn, O Jesus, Blessed Lord” ELW #541

1 O Je - sus, bless - ed Lord, to you my heart - felt
 2 Break forth, my soul, in joy and say: What wealth has

thanks and praise are due; you have so lov - ing - ly be - stowed
 come to me to - day! My Sav - ior dwells with - in my soul

on me your bod - y and your blood.
 and makes my wound - ed spir - it whole!

The musical score is written for two voices (Soprano and Bass) and piano accompaniment. It features a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The melody is primarily composed of quarter and eighth notes, with some rests. The piano accompaniment consists of block chords and simple rhythmic patterns. The lyrics are printed below the vocal staves, with some words hyphenated across lines. The score concludes with a double bar line.

Text: Thomas H. Kingo, 1634–1703; tr. Arthur J. Mason, 1851–1928, alt.
 Music: UD GÅR DU'NU PÅ LIVETS VEJ, Carl Nielsen, 1865–1931

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A O God, our life, our strength, our food, we give you thanks for sustaining us with the body and blood of your Son. By your Holy Spirit, enliven us to be His body in the world, that more and more we will give you praise and serve your earth and its many peoples, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **C Amen.**

SENDING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our “Watch and Pray” Prayer

O lover of all humanity, open our hearts and minds to your divine counsel and guide us in discerning your direction and mission for your St. Mark’s congregation. We pray in service to you, O risen Christ, together with your everlasting Father and life-giving Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

BLESSING

P The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. In the name of the Father, + and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

c **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN, “I Know That My Redeemer Lives!” ELW #619

Text: Samuel Medley, 1738–1799, alt.

Music: DUKE STREET, attr. John Hatton, d. 1793

Stanzas 1-4, 7 and 8

1 I know that my Re - deem - er lives! What com - fort
 2 He lives tri - um - phant from the grave; he lives e -
 3 He lives to grant me rich sup - ply; he lives to
 4 He lives to si - lence all my fears; he lives to

this sweet sen - tence gives! He lives, he lives, who
 ter - nal - ly to save; he lives ex - alt - ed,
 guide me with his eye; he lives to com - fort
 wipe a - way my tears; he lives to calm my

once was dead; he lives, my ev - er - liv - ing head!
 throned a - bove; he lives to rule his church in love.
 me when faint; he lives to hear my soul's com - plaint.
 trou - bled heart; he lives all bless - ings to im - part.

5 He lives to bless me with his love;
 he lives to plead for me above;
 he lives my hungry soul to feed;
 he lives to help in time of need.

7 He lives and grants me daily breath;
 he lives, and I shall conquer death;
 he lives my mansion to prepare;
 he lives to bring me safely there.

6 He lives, my kind, wise, heav'nly friend;
 he lives and loves me to the end;
 he lives, and while he lives, I'll sing;
 he lives, my prophet, priest, and king!

8 He lives, all glory to his name!
 He lives, my Savior, still the same;
 what joy this blest assurance gives:
 I know that my Redeemer lives!

CHORAL ALLELUIAS

“Alleluia!” ~ Melchior Vulpius

DISMISSAL

P Alleluia! Christ is risen!

c He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

A Alleluia! Go in peace! Share the Good News!

c Thanks be to God! Alleluia!

POSTLUDE

“Choral Song” ~ Samuel Sebastian Wesley

ABOUT THE COVER,

“I believe in ... the resurrection of the body” (Apostles' Creed, Third Article). We are all subject to the laws of physics. So was Jesus. He, with us, was and is a physical being. The mystery of the Incarnation is central to our faith and worship, the truth that God became “flesh and bone” to die for our sins and to be raised again for our justification.

The physical things of worship which surround us as we sing and pray and look and listen communicate the love of God to us, that we in turn may share that love with each other and the wider world. No more poignantly is this expressed than in the holy Meal. The great and gracious spiritual gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation transmitted in the Sacrament are given by means of the very common and simple physical elements of bread and wine. The physical eating and drinking are, according to Luther, the chief thing in the Sacrament next to the word of God (see “The Sacrament of the Altar,” Luther's *Small Catechism*, ELW page 1166). At Jesus' invitation, we physically rise and come to the table to receive the gift, His very Presence. Bread and wine, body and blood, are consumed, and we, collectively His body, are nourished spiritually, and, really, physically. We, the Church, are a living organism, who receive our life from our Creator-Redeemer-Sanctifier, Body and Blood given and shed “for you.”

Keep in mind, we are receiving the living, not a dead, Christ in the Sacrament. He said to His disciples, “Take, eat, this is my body, given for you” and “take, drink, this is my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins” while He was very much alive, on the night before his crucifixion, the first evening of Passover.

And He is alive again, the One who was crucified, dead, and buried, and, today, risen from the dead.

It may be helpful to think of our Holy Communion as a *continuation* of the Last Supper, not a mere *repetition* of it, an extension of Jesus' action at table flowing down even to us and to all, throughout the whole world and to this present day. As the pastor proclaims the Words of Institution (what Luther called the gospel in a nutshell) over the bread and wine, we are, in a sense, transported to that Upper Room and are at once in the presence of our Savior to receive at Jesus' own hand (by way of the pastor) the gift of Himself. What comfort, joy, and peace! The Church participates in and celebrates this service of Communion in churches all around the world every day! And the gift never runs out, and like the feeding of the multitudes in Jesus' day, there is plenty left over. The loaves abound, the cup runs over.

In today's Gospel, a flesh and blood Jesus—not a ghost!—appears to his astonished and frightened disciples. He, the Resurrection and the Life, greets them with peace and shows them his wounded hands and feet. “Touch me,” He says (a ghost has no substance) and asks for something to eat (a ghost has no need for food).

The detail from our Ascension Window (last window on the right, above the pulpit), as pictured on the bulletin cover, shows the nail print in Jesus' right hand, which is open in a gesture of offering. His hand is contrasted against His blood-red cloak, symbol of His humanity and His bloody sacrifice on the Cross, and the bright azure of the sky, which is receiving Him in glory. We read in Scripture that, on the 40th day (of Easter), He bodily ascended into heaven where He is seated—His physical, uncorrupted, incorruptible body, wounds and all—at the right hand of the Father, where He intercedes for us and prepares for us a place.

Thinking back to the first three centuries of the Church, when most of its activities were clandestine because Christianity was illegal, the physicality of the Church was apparent only in the believers themselves. There were no church buildings. Christians worshiped in secret. So their several bodies, gathered together as one body, to eat and drink the body and blood of Jesus and be nourished on His holy words, was their life and worship. They themselves, united with their Lord and living Head, Jesus Christ, were the visible Church, not made of stone and timber but of flesh and blood, “living stones,” many of whom were killed for their faith, their names filling up the martyrologies of the nascent Church.

Recently, the Church celebrated the Feast of the Annunciation, commemorating the announcement to Mary by the Angel Gabriel that she would become the mother of God's Son, Jesus, Emmanuel, the Incarnate Word. The date of this feast is March 25; however, in 2024, this date fell during Holy Week, the days of which take precedence over any other festival. In much of Christendom, Easter Week likewise does not permit other festivals to be celebrated. The festival is then transferred to the first open day thereafter. So, in the Lutheran Church, the Annunciation was transferred to the first open date after Easter, April 1 (see "Christ in Our Home"). In the Episcopal Church, this festival was moved to April 8, the Monday after Easter Week. Both the Prayer of the Day and the Second Reading are noteworthy, as the Incarnation is tied so tightly to the Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, yes, and even Pentecost. Which means, the Incarnation is tied to our very life as sinful human beings who walk the face of this earth as we make our journey, in the body, or, to use a biblical phrase, in our earthly tent, towards our heavenly home, towards that building eternal in the heavens, the city that has foundations, seen from afar even by Abraham. Here is the Prayer of the Day, really a prayer for any season: *Pour your grace into our hearts, O God, that we who have known the Incarnation of your Son, Jesus Christ, announced by an angel, may by his Cross and Passion be brought to the glory of his Resurrection; for he lives and reigns ...* (ELW, page 55). And, from the Epistle: *... when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me. ... Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God.' ... And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.* (for the entire reading, see Hebrews 10:4-10)

So we are here this morning to get physical and to worship "in the beauty of holiness," a phrase applicable to both the holy things around us and also our inner holiness of attitude and behavior. To quote the beloved hymn: "For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's delight, for the mystic harmony linking sense to sound and sight: Christ, our God, to you we raise this our sacrifice of praise." (ELW #879). C. A. Michaelsen