



The gospel for the third Sunday of Easter is always one in which the risen Christ shares food with the disciples, meals that are the Easter template for the meal we share each Sunday. In today's gospel, Jesus both shares the disciples' food and shows them the meaning of his suffering, death, and resurrection through the scriptures, the two main elements of our Sunday worship.

WELCOME MEMBERS, FRIENDS AND VISITORS.

- **IN-PARKING LOT WORSHIPERS**, please park in the first few spaces closest to Dock Street, and set your radio to **90.1 FM**. Bulletins and other handouts will be distributed after you have parked your car, and your offering will be gathered then as well. For Communion, please hold onto the wafers in plastic bags that you will have been given until the consecration and invitation to commune takes place later in the service. Pastor will try to lead part of the service from outside. Rest rooms are available in the church building.
- **IN-PERSON WORSHIPERS**, please park at the far side of the front lot, the back lot, or one of the handicap spaces. Bulletins and other handouts will be distributed after you enter the lobby, and your offering will be gathered at that time. Masks will be worn in the building, or outside when talking to others, and everyone needs to stay six feet away from people in other households. Because speaking and singing can spread the virus even when wearing masks, we will not speak the responses out loud or sing – the assisting minister will speak the responses in the service and a cantor will sing on our behalf.
- **VISITORS**, we welcome you! In this uncertain time of a pandemic, we believe that that grace-filled love of God made known in Jesus Christ, and proclaimed in scripture, prayer, and worship sustains us even now – and so we are glad that you are here with us, so that together, we all can receive the Good News of Jesus Christ, and then be strengthened in daily love for God and our neighbors.

HOLY COMMUNION

3rd Sunday in Easter – April 18th, 2021

Jerusalem Evangelical Lutheran Church

252 Dock Street, Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972

570-385-2657 * www.jerusalemmlutheran.com

FIND US ON FACEBOOK!

GATHERING

PRELUDES

Good Christian Friends Rejoice and Sing

arr. Karrin Ford

Come Ye Faithful Raise the Strain

Edwin Child

The bell rings calling us to worship.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

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

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation,
come to the help of your people,
turning us from our sin to live for you alone.
Give us the power of your Holy Spirit
that we may confess our sin,
receive your forgiveness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Most merciful God,
**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.

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.

Amen.

GATHERING

ENTRANCE HYMN

Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain

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- 1 Come, you faithful, raise the strain
of triumphant gladness!
God has brought forth Israel
into joy from sadness,
loosed from Pharaoh's bitter yoke
Jacob's sons and daughters;
led them with unmoistened foot
through the Red Sea waters.
- 2 'Tis the spring of souls today:
Christ has burst his prison,
and from three days' sleep in death
as a sun has risen.
All the winter of our sins,
long and dark, is flying
from the Light to whom we give
laud and praise undying.
- 3 Now the queen of seasons, bright
with the day of splendor,
with the royal feast of feasts
comes its joy to render;
comes to glad Jerusalem,
who with true affection
welcomes in unwearied strain
Jesus' resurrection!
- 4 Neither could the gates of death,
nor the tomb's dark portal,
nor the watchers, nor the seal
hold you as a mortal:
but today, among your own,
you appear, bestowing
your deep peace, which evermore
passes human knowing.
- 5 Alleluia! now we cry
to our Lord immortal,
who triumphant burst the bars
of the tomb's dark portal;
Alleluia! with the Son
God the Father praising;
Alleluia! yet again
to the Spirit raising.

Text: John of Damascus, c. 696-c. 754; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, alt.

GREETING

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other.

Jesus Christ is risen! **He is risen indeed!**

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

And also with you.

HYMN OF PRAISE



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.



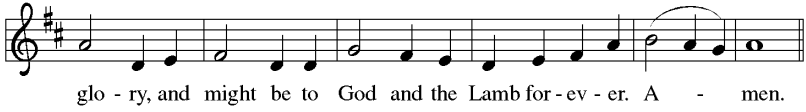
This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,



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,



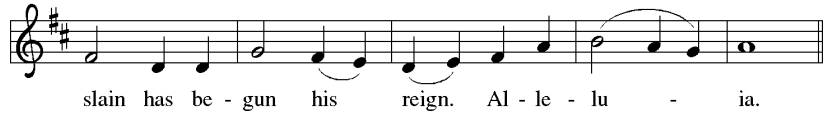
glo - ry, and might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.



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

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. **Amen.**

WORD

GOSEL

Luke 24: 13-48

The assembly inside stands for the gospel.

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in

Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" ¹⁹He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²²Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." ²⁵Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. ²⁸As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" ³³That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. ³⁶While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them 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.

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

ANTHEM*I Know That My Redeemer Lives*

from Handel's "Messiah"

Jenna Hutchings, soloist*A prerecorded anthem is available to view in Sunday's recorded service on our website, Facebook page, and YouTube Channel.***CHILDREN'S SERMON****Tanya Cartwright***A prerecorded children's sermon is available to view in Sunday's recorded service on our website, Facebook page, and YouTube Channel.***SERMON****Pastor David Rowe***Silence for reflection follows the sermon.***HYMN OF THE DAY***Day of Arising*

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The assembly inside stands. All proclaim the word of God in song.

- 1 Day of arising,
Christ on the roadway,
unknown companion walks with his own.
When they invite him,
as fades the first day,
and bread is broken, Christ is made known.
- 2 When we are walking,
doubtful and dreading,
blinded by sadness, slowness of heart,
yet Christ walks with us,
ever awaiting
our invitation: Stay, do not part.
- 3 Lo, I am with you,
Jesus has spoken.
This is Christ's promise, this is Christ's sign:
when the church gathers,
when bread is broken,
there Christ is with us in bread and wine.
- 4 Christ, our companion,
hope for the journey,
bread of compassion, open our eyes.
Grant us your vision,
set all hearts burning
that all creation with you may rise.

*Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953. Text © 1996 Susan Palo Cherwien, admin. Augsburg Fortress.***APOSTLES CREED***We confess our faith with the whole church using the ancient baptismal creed that summarizes the teaching of the scripture and the apostles.***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

As a local assembly of believers, we pray for the whole world and church, as well as our local congregation and neighborhood.

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.

Living God, in the midst of Easter joy we are still filled with questions and wondering. Open our hearts and minds as we encounter the scriptures, so that the church may embody repentance and forgiveness in the name of Jesus to all nations. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Creating God, you have fashioned the universe out of your love and delight. Heal your creation where it is in need of restoration, especially as humanity is ravaged by the coronavirus. Provide all the inhabitants of earth a peaceful and healthy home. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of all, the nations hunger and thirst for your righteousness. Many call on you for guidance and strength. Answer their hopes with the peace of Christ and give your lovingkindness to national, state, and local leaders. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Healing God, you hear the cries of those in need and answer them in their distress. Grant to those who are sick and suffering your compassion, and bring relief from the COVID pandemic, as we now raise before you all who are ill, depressed, anxious, or lonely.... Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Loving Parent, you have given us such love that we should be called the children of God. Reveal yourself to us so that we in this community of faith will become more and more like you in our mutual love and bold witness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of all times and ages, those who have died in you now see you as you are. We thank you for their lives among us. Assure us of the peace you have promised, that we may join them in everlasting life. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

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.

Amen.

PASSING THE PEACE

We greet each other with a nod or gesture of Christian fellowship from a distance, and we also invite you to text or email a word of peace to someone.

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The presiding minister invites the assembly to give thanks.

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

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord Our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

The presiding minister continues with the communion preface; then the cantor inside, and the assembly outside, responds with the "Holy, Holy, Holy".

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, God of power and might,

Heaven and Earth are full of your glory,

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who

comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

THANKSGIVING AND CONSECRATION

The thanksgiving concludes:

. . . For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

. . . To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever.

Amen, amen, amen.

...Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus 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.**

COMMUNION

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Communion wafers that have been distributed and now consecrated, are eaten.

The body of Christ given for you. **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

The body of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Wellspring of joy, through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts.

Satisfy the hunger still around us,

and send us as joyful witnesses,

that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

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. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG

Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia

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- 1 Christ has arisen, alleluia.
Rejoice and praise him, alleluia.
For our redeemer burst from the tomb,
even from death, dispelling its gloom.

Refrain

Let us sing praise to him with endless joy.
Death's fearful sting he has come to destroy.
Our sin forgiving, alleluia!
Jesus is living, alleluia!

- 2 For three long days the grave did its worst
until its strength by God was dispersed.
He who gives life did death undergo,
and in its conquest his might did show. *Refrain*
- 3 The angel said to them, "Do not fear.

You look for Jesus who is not here.
See for yourselves the tomb is all bare.
Only the graveclothes are lying there." *Refrain*

4 "Go spread the news: he's not in the grave.
He has arisen this world to save.
Jesus' redeeming labors are done.
Even the battle with sin is won." *Refrain*

5 Christ has arisen to set us free.
Alleluia, to him praises be.
Jesus is living! Let us all sing;
he reigns triumphant, heavenly king. *Refrain*

Text: Bernard Kyamanywa, b. 1938; tr. Howard S. Olson, b. 1922
Swahili text © 1968 Lutheran Theological College, Makumira, Tanzania, admin. Augsburg Fortress.
English text © 1977 Howard S. Olson, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

DISMISSAL

The assisting minister sends the assembly into mission.

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

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia! **Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

POSTLUDE

I Know That My Redeemer Lives

arr. Wilbur Held

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PRAYER LIST

Joyce Freed, Shirley Foose, Lee Miller, Joanna Sirianni Edwards, Ed Freed, Pauline Crawshaw, Karen Tropp, Diane Buffington, Jack Harnock, Marie Harnock, Keith Shoener, Tom Gerber, Kelly Carl, Cheryl Feeser, Leslie R., Mary Beth (Krater) Dinneen, Sam Huff, Stewart Haver, Sue Sigler, Donna Evans, Joan Heckrote, Robert Schwartz, Craig Bracken, Kenny Noecker, Nancy Reese, David Huff, Paul Calderone, Nicholas LaScala, Gail Kunkel, Lee Llewellyn, Dennis Heydt, Caroline Eister, Jeanette Stine, Christopher Payonk, Seth Ney, Renee Shade, Ben Moyer, Gaylene Ebling, Wally Foose, Craig Heffner, Jane Deibert, Judy Reihman, Tom Cook, Sylvia Edling, Joe Dewald, Ronald Bromwell, Carla Zelinsky, Lisa Weiser, Janest Yost, Anna Mae Berger, Madge Miller, Kathleen Kelleher, Melissa Focht, Jason Brown, Teagan Brown, Brenda Phillips, Family of Keith Ramsey, Cecelia Kacmar, Lois Pavelko, Edith Kriner, Melanie Hart, Janice Moore, Christie O'Dell, John Cooper, Florence Shay, Clarence Zweizig, Jayden Leiby, Melvin Rodriguez & family, Dorothy Moyer, Bruce Stees, JoAnn Baker Copley, Carlene Wenner, Christy Deaton Stocks, Maria Motto, Katharine Macnutt, Peter Spontak, Kim O'Donnell, Leslie Wagner, Mateo Thomas, Barry Heffner, Charlotte Moyer, Phyllis Trinca Czech, Ed Sirianni, Stephen Edwards, Lester Aungst III, Christa Miller, David

Griffiths, Stanley Daniels, Beryl Zulick, Jim Heisler, Cathy Covach-Hale, Carole Gehrig, Edith Kriner, Kathie Frantz

Those with Long-term health issues:

Bonnie Jean Foose, Michelle Ochenrider, Rich & Sandy Moyer, Ethan Yost, Elizabeth Taylor, Carol Landes, Maureen Moyer, Janice Barr, Donna Direnzo, Jim Musico, John Krater, Fawn Goodman, Bob Yanek, Rebecca Marshall, Sapphire Schaeffer, Mark Wyllie, Krysta Kolbe, Shirley Emrich, Mark Noecker, Anna Heffner, David Wise, Joan Stefichack, Bill Everly, Donna Leashefski, Florence Clemens, Sara Berger, Chuck Copley, Jeff Kamar, Mary Sewalt, Pat Thomas, Nathan Resch, Casey Watson, Linda Bonfiglio-Boyer, Gemma Geary

Those serving in the Armed Forces:

Major Michael Shay, Staff Sgt. Joseph Moyer, Senior Airman Matthew Nettles, Airman Jackie Nettles, 2nd LT Heather Strouse, Sgt. Travis D. Miller, Sgt. Anthony Cooper, Private 3rd Class Caleb Levan

WORSHIP LEADERS FOR TODAY

	8:00am	10:30am
Assisting Ministers	Mary Rowe	Linda Covert
Ushers	Don Nettles	Frank Mahoney
	Noah Hale	Jane Mahoney
Cantor(s)	Mary Rowe	Audrey Christ
Sound Board	Paul Boyer	Rick Heckrote
Video Recorder		Mary Rowe
Counters	Linda Collins, Deb Reed, & Marie Shay	

WORSHIP LEADERS FOR NEXT SUNDAY

	8:00am	10:30am
Assisting Ministers	Lou Messina	Rob Baessler
Ushers	Faith Batz	Don Boyer
	Bill Shay	Lloyd Wertz
Cantor(s)	Mary Rowe	Jim & Linda Covert
Sound Board	Melissa Boyer	Danika Kuhar
Video Recorder		Joanne Wertz
Counters	Lou Messina, Rob Baessler, & Janet Sattizahn	

THE FLOWERS IN THE ALTAR VASES are in celebration and memory of our parents, Shirley M. Lengel and MSG James C. Bromwell, by Ron, Kathy, and Jeff. We thank God, and praise Him for the time He gave us together.

THANK YOU TO TODAY'S CANTORS, Audrey Christ and Mary Rowe! Our online anthem is sent to us from Audrey's friend, Jenna Hutchings!

ALL CREATION SINGS, a supplement for our hymnal with additional hymns, many of which were written since our "red hymnal" was published, will soon be available. As we continue to treasure older hymns, global hymns, and newer hymns, we look forward to buying and using this supplement to enrich our worship. The cost is \$12.50 each, with orders due to us by June 1 (so that we can order at the introductory price, before the higher price goes into effect on

June 15). We need about 180 hymnals for our pews. Please use the hymnal envelopes to make your gift and indicate if it is a memorial, in honor of someone, or to the glory of God.

MINISTRY REPORTS FOR 2020 ARE TODAY! Even though last year the pandemic changed the shape of ministry, it is still important to celebrate what we were able to do in Christ's name in 2020 *despite* the pandemic.

SATURDAY APRIL 24TH from noon to 1 all confirmation age and young adults are welcome to join me outside on the labyrinth for a socially distanced pizza party. We will pray, catch up on each other's lives and discuss future events for Faith and Families Ministries. Please RSVP to Tanya by April 23rd.

APPRISE PROGRAM WITH DIAKON COMMUNITY SERVICES will be offering free Medicare guidance and assistance to the people of Schuylkill County. On April 28, the APPRISE Program will run a New to Medicare 101 Session at the Meadowbrook Center in Schuylkill Haven from 6:00-7:30. Unfortunately, many people who are turning 65 or eligible for Medicare do not understand their options, rights, and coverage. We would like to put an end to that by providing sessions throughout Schuylkill to help future Medicare beneficiaries understand their new insurance. To register please call 570-624-3026/ email at oravitzd@diakon.org.

BEAR CREEK MAY PLAY DAY is Saturday, May 1st from 10am -3pm. Enjoy boating, games campfire, arts and crafts, guided nature hikes. Camp store will be open. Event is free. Lunch will cost \$10 per person and is optional (hot dogs, hamburgers, veggie burgers, sides and drinks). You can pack your own lunch. They will follow all CDC guidelines and masks will be required. Registration is required if participating even if you are not eating lunch. Please see Tanya to register. Car caravan will meet in the parking lot at 8:30am.

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT will hold Baccalaureate by Zoom again this year, to reduce the risk of virus spread preventing any seniors from participating in graduation. The date selected was Sunday, May 23, at 4 PM.

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER EVENTS. Protect and enhance your marriage. Virtual and in-person events are scheduled. Scholarship funds are also available for those in need. Please visit www.GodLovesMarriage.org to sign up.

CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK:

TODAY	8:00am Worship
	9:15am Confirmation Class/Sunday School
	10:30am Worship
TUESDAY	1:00pm COIVD-19 Task Force Meeting (Via Zoom)
	6:00pm Child Care Committee Meeting (Via Zoom)
SATURDAY	12:00pm Faith & Families Pizza Lunch at the Labyrinth



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Earth Day statement from Bishop Eaton

O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

—Psalm 104:24

Throughout Scripture, God promises to restore God's people to health and wholeness, a promise that includes the renewal of all creation. This promise is depicted dramatically in the final pages of the book of Revelation as a grand vision of a new heaven and a new earth. The earth and its inhabitants are weary and uncertain, battered by plagues and death, wars and destruction. But God is still there, persistent and faithful. At the last, God reveals a renewed heaven and an earth permeated by the presence of God, transformed from pain to be a place of healing and wholeness for all things. The 2021 Earth Day theme, "Restore Our Earth," reminds us of this vision and the holy work God entrusts to us — of seeking the well-being of creation as inseparable from the wholeness of humankind.

In the past year the world received a jolt from its collision with the COVID-19 pandemic, which laid bare persistent racial disparities in health care access and outcomes in our nation. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) noted the disproportionate impact (increased hospitalizations and deaths) of the pandemic on some racial and ethnic minority groups. The CDC found that "inequities in the social determinants of health, such as poverty and healthcare access, affecting these groups are interrelated and influence a wide range of health and quality-of-life outcomes and risks."

The racial reckonings of 2020 illuminate how the legacies of slavery, the Doctrine of Discovery and colonization continue to diminish life for people and creation. The glaring inequities exposed through the pandemic are being intensified by the global impacts of climate change. The final 2020 update of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) found last year to be one of historical extremes. There were 22 separate billion-dollar weather and climate disasters across the United States, which shattered the previous annual record of 16 events in 2011 and 2017. All these disasters disproportionately affected people of color and the most vulnerable populations. We are one people and one earth in need of restoration.

Repenting the sin of racism and repenting our destruction of creation should happen together. Because God gave humans the vocation to be stewards of the earth, we proclaim that, for Christians, care of the earth is not an "environmental cause." Instead, it is central to our holy calling to treasure the earth and care for it as our home, fully integrating creation care into our love of God, neighbor and all in the environment. Recalling the good earth and our call to be stewards of creation in hope and faith, we know our recovery from the pall of 2020 will, in many ways, be a transition to a new way of life.

Dear church, we can "testify to the good news of God's grace" (Acts 20:24), which empowers us to move forward. We know that healing is possible — for the planet and for our communities. We are not too late. The time is now. To us, God is calling; through us, God wants to work a miracle; through our finite and inadequate efforts, God can and will bring about "a new heaven and a new earth." God provides us with diverse gifts as protectors and guardians of creation. We affirm, therefore, the many stewards of the land who have been and are conserving the good earth that the Lord has given us.

As stewards of creation, we have many ways to lovingly serve the earth:

- Explore and use ELCA Care for Creation resources, including video, study and action guides with information about the Creation Care Ambassadors initiative.
- Read the Lutherans Restoring Creation story "5 Ways to Celebrate Earth Day as Church Together but Apart."
- Accept the ELCA Young Adults No Plastics for Lent challenge this Easter season.
- Participate in a local cleanup (with appropriate distancing) if permitted by local authorities, or participate in the Earth Challenge 2020 citizen scientist initiative, focused on plastic pollution and clean air.
- Join with the ELCA's ecumenical partner Creation Justice Ministries in advocacy, education and prayer.
- Participate in Faith and Frontline Call to Action: Good Trouble for Justice on April 19, an ELCA-sponsored consultation focusing on climate migration, food security and just transition. This event brings together people of faith at this watershed moment and calls for the inclusion of the voices, ideas and expertise of the front line and faith communities alongside career politicians and others to address and implement climate solutions.

Envisioning a world that is just, sustainable and resilient, we, as Lutherans, heed God's call and take concrete steps to repair inequities and wealth divides locally, nationally and globally. A framework built on hope and connecting climate to economic and racial justice is essential to our reimagining of communities as resilient and inclusive, void of poverty and leaving no one behind.

In Christ,
The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Geranium Flowers for



P E N T E C O S T

Orders are being accepted for Red Geraniums for Pentecost Sunday, May 23rd. Cost per plant is \$4.25. All plants must be paid for through the Church. Please make checks out to Jerusalem Lutheran Church. Please fill out your order on this sheet. Orders and money due by Monday, May 10th. Thanks!

NAME _____

IN MEMORY OF _____

IN HONOR OF _____

NUMBER OF Plants _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____ (\$4.25 each)