

May 2, 2021

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

## **Living and Giving**

Why do we treasure nurturers among us like mothers and fathers, teachers, pastors, artists, poets and writers who stir up our minds? Because nurture keeps us alive and allows us to function. A baby dies without proper nourishment, and children can stop learning without watchful instruction.

Jesus, the true vine, gives us, his branches, two primary teachings about nurture. The first is that in order for the branches to stay alive they must draw daily nourishment from him. The second is to bear fruit and give away gifts of love as easily as we breathe. Living and giving are central to the Christian life; God's people live to give as they gather around water, word, bread, and wine.

To avoid becoming dead branches we cling to Jesus for life. This is the one who trampled death underfoot to give us life, and though death still whistles an alluring tune that none can resist, Christ rose from the dead to trump its rule and wrest us from its grip. We live daily in Christ's life and eternally in his resurrection.

Our joy each day is to complete the cycle of living and giving. As we lean on Jesus we produce much fruit and avoid the pruner's shears as they cut dead shoots. Because the Vine provides our very life, we are able to share our fruit freely with others. Giving away fruit completes the circle of life that Jesus pumps into us; sharing our works of love and faith is part of his new creation.

It is said that the dash on a tombstone represents a person's lifetime between birth and death. This short stroke can also symbolize the life of a Christian who depends on the Vine for sustenance and shares fruit with the poor, unloved, and downcast among us. A faithful branch receives life from the Vine--life that blossoms into loving action for the sake of the world.

**First St. John Lutheran Church**

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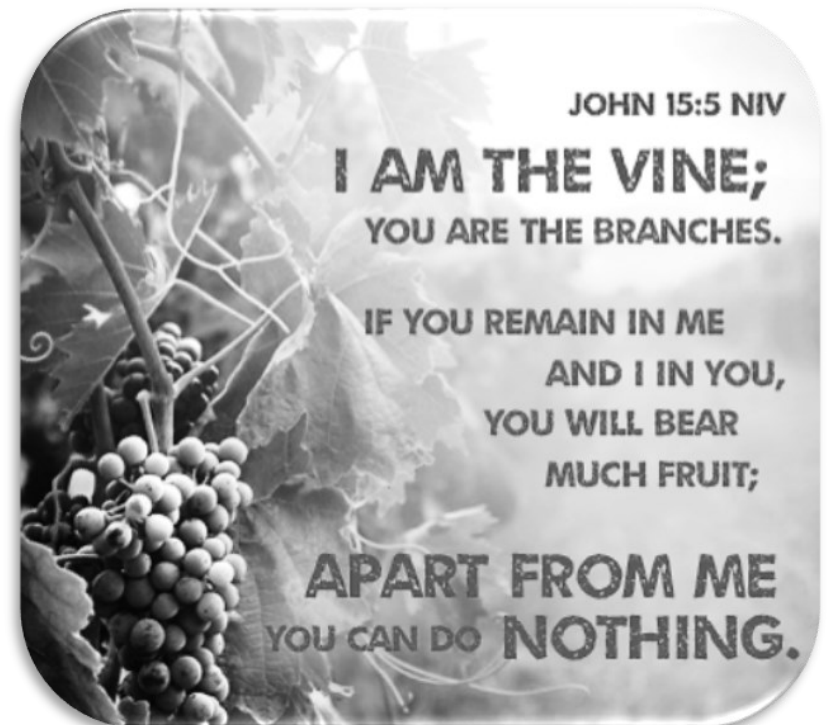
[www.firststjohn.com](http://www.firststjohn.com)

Rev. Jerald K. Rayl

Annette Slater - Music Director

Dr. Anthony Pattin - Organist

Toni Wilbarger - Secretary



**Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community**

**May 2, 2021 - 8:00 am**

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**Fifth Sunday of Easter**

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! Please review some of our guidelines below.

Masks must be worn. We have some available to take if you don't have one. Some are cloth masks and can be taken home to wash and reuse. There are also disposable masks.

Please do not congregate in the Narthex (entrance area) either as you arrive or leave.

To minimize direct contact, we will use the outside aisles only for entry and exit. The center aisle will be used for communion, special needs, or emergency exit.

Ushers will fill the pews from the front to the back of the church and dismiss from the back to the front. Please follow their directions. We are sorry everyone cannot have their usual seat.

**NOTE:** We can now sing the hymns and speak the congregational responses behind our masks. Annette Slater will lead the hymns. The service will be recorded and published to the website. We are now live streaming the service on our church website, [www.firststjohn.com](http://www.firststjohn.com)

Elders will wear gloves. You can get a bulletin at the check-in table when you walk in. Please do not leave your bulletin in the pew when you exit; take it home or put it in the recycling bin at the front door.

There is a small wooden church just to the right of the main door when you come in. It has a slot for your offering.

Restrooms are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take the left set of steps down. The ladies room is at one end of the hallway, and the men's room is at the other. Return to the Narthex using the opposite set of stairs. Please, one person only in the restroom area.

Diaper Changing: A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

Flowers: If you would like to sign up for flowers for a Sunday, please call the church office during the week to check on availability.

## ***Because He Lives***

Writer: Gloria Gaither, William J. Gaither

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God sent His son, they called Him Jesus.  
He came to love, heal and forgive.  
He lived and died to buy my pardon.  
An empty grave is there to prove my savior lives.

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.  
Because He lives, all fear is gone.  
Because I know, I know He holds the future  
And life is worth the living, just because He lives

How sweet to hold a newborn baby  
And feel the pride and joy He gives.  
But greater still the calm assurance  
This child can face uncertain days, because He lives

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow  
Because He lives, all fear is gone  
Because I know, I know He holds the future  
And life is worth the living, just because He lives.

And then one day, I'll cross the river.  
I'll fight life's final war with pain.  
And then, as death gives way to victory  
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He reigns.

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.  
Because He lives, all fear is gone.  
Because I know, I know He holds the future  
And life is worth the living, just because He lives.

I can face tomorrow  
Because He lives, all fear is gone.  
Because I know, I know He holds the future  
And life is worth the living, just because He lives.

***ORDER OF WORSHIP—8:00 am***

# Prelude Ringing of the Bell

Dr. Pattin

Opening     “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing!”     No. 385  
                              (led by Annette)

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## The Invocation

**P:** In the name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

## Thanksgiving for Baptism

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

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

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

P: Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ,  
let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

*Water is poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.*

P: We thank you, risen Christ,  
for these waters where you make us new,  
leading us from death to life, from tears to joy.  
We bless you, risen Christ, that your Spirit comes to us  
in the grace-filled waters of rebirth,  
like rains to our thirsting earth,  
like streams that revive our souls,  
like cups of cool water shared with strangers.  
Breathe your peace on your church when we hide in fear.  
Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness.  
Send us companions on our journey as we share your life.

**C: Make us one, risen Christ. Cleanse our hearts. Shower us with life.**

P: To you be given all praise, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

### Prayer of the Day

**P:** The peace of the Lord be with you all.

**C:** And also with you.



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 risen Christ invites us to this table. Come, eat and be satisfied.

### **The Communion** *(distribution will be continuous)*

*If you wish to receive apple juice instead of wine, place your hand over your shoulder as you approach the person distributing the wine.*

*"All baptized Christians, believing that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, bringing to us the gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, are welcome to gather at the Lord's table. Infants, children and others who have not been baptized are welcome to come to receive a blessing; please make an X with your arms across your chest."*

### **Communion Hymns** *(led by Annette)*

"One Bread, One Body"	No. 496
"Eat This Bread, Drink This Cup"	No. 492

*(After all have received communion, please stand.)*

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and sustain you in God's grace. Amen.

### **Prayer after Communion**

P: 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.

**C: Amen.**

### **Blessing**

P: 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.

**C: Amen.**

### **Dismissal**

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

<sup>17</sup>Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. <sup>18</sup>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. <sup>19</sup>We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup>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. <sup>21</sup>The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*(Please stand)*

### **Gospel Acclamation** *(led by Annette)*

*Alleluia. Lord to whom shall we go?  
 You have the words of eternal life.  
 Alleluia. Alleluia.*

### **Gospel Acclamation**

P: The Gospel according to St. John Chapter 15.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

### **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 would bear fruit, for apart from him, they could do nothing.*

[Jesus said:] <sup>1</sup>"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. <sup>2</sup>He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

### **Gospel Response**

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

*(Please be seated)*

SERMON

Sermon Hymn

*"Because He Lives"*

Pastor Rayl  
 (Lyrics on screen)  
*(led by Annette)*

(Please stand)

### Apostles' 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,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again 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.

### Pastoral Prayer

P: Hear us, O Lord,

**C: your mercy is great.**

**The Offering** *(As you exit, please place your offering in the wooden church in the Narthex if you have not already done so.)*

### Musical Offertory

Dr. Pattin

### Offering Prayer

P: God of love, you call us beloved children and welcome us to your table. Receive our lives and the gifts we offer. Abide with us and send us in service to a suffering world; for the sake of your beloved Child, Jesus Christ.

**C: Amen.**

### The Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

P: It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord; who on the tree of the cross gave salvation to all, that, where death began, there life might be restored, and that he, who by a tree once overcame, might by a tree be overcome. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



P: You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God. You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory. You so loved the world that you gave your only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. We give you thanks for his coming into the world to fulfill for us your holy will and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

P: In the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, 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.

P: 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 the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

**C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Amen.**

### The Lord's Prayer *(prayed by all)*

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.