

May 7, 2023

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

I Am the Way

On the one hand, the scriptures imagine God as light, life, and truth so bright that we could not look upon it all and live. On the other hand, the scriptures show us Jesus, a real human being who is sometimes tired, thirsty, hungry, angry, and sad. He is also passionate about God's rule of the world and about bringing healing of all kinds to the people he meets.

Imagine a friendship with someone who does not believe in God but who respects your beliefs and wants to hear more about them. Where would you begin? How would you describe a future shaped by justice and life when there is so much injustice and death in the world?

Christians trying to explain their beliefs often find themselves telling stories about Jesus. He healed people, sometimes even when they didn't ask for help. He called a tax collector out of a tree and invited himself to dinner at the tax collector's house! He made powerful people angry; he lifted up the lowly. He was faithful to such things even when it cost him his life, so he knew about injustice and death from the inside. In the end, God did not abandon him but raised him up to life again. As Christians tell stories like these, it becomes clear that Jesus is the way God has made God's own self known to us.

Ask a Christian what they believe about God, and sooner or later they will probably begin to tell you things they know about Jesus. That is just how we think. Jesus has made God known (John 1:18). He is the way we know God. He is the truth of God's passionate, healing connection to the world. He is the life, God's "No!" to destruction and corruption in every form and God's "Yes!" to all that God has made.

First St. John Lutheran Church

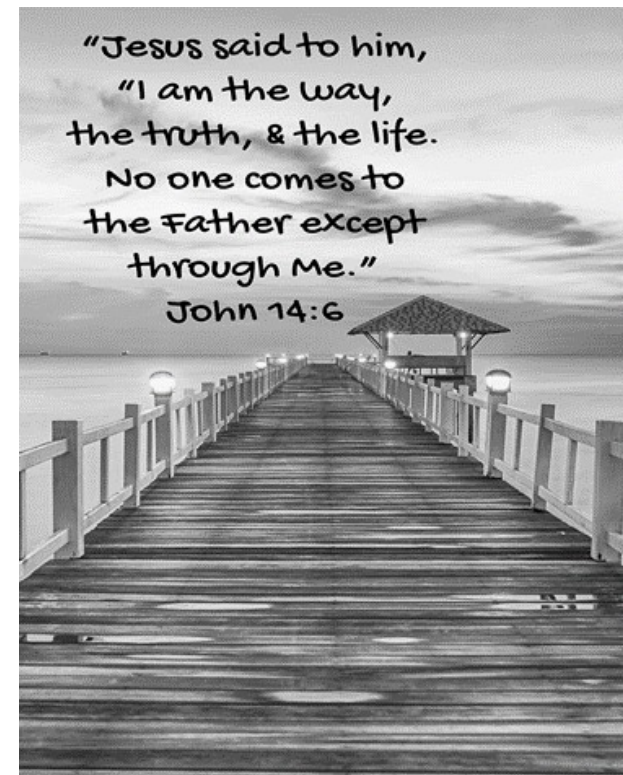
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Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor

Dr. Anthony Pattin - Church Musician
Cheri Sergent, Bell Choir, Director
Jacob Kelly - Youth & Family Minister



Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community

May 7, 2023 - 10:30 am

May 14, 2023

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Welcome to First St. John Lutheran Church! We offer two services with Sunday School for youth and adults and catechism between the services. Our regular Sunday schedule is:

8:00 am	Early Worship
9:15 am	Sunday School / 1st Year Catechism
9:15 am	Adult Bible Study
10:30 am	Late Worship
11:30 am	2nd Year Catechism every other Sunday

Livestream and Recorded Worship: We livestream the service on our church website at www.firststjohn.com. Also, the service will be recorded and published to the website.

Adult Sunday School meets at 9:15 am in the lounge.

Children ages 3 through 5th grade will meet at 9:15 am for Sunday School in the basement of the church (the JAM Room!).

Catechism Classes: First year class will be held from 9:15 to 10:15 am each Sunday. Second year class will meet every other Sunday from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm.

Nursery is in the church basement and is currently unstaffed; you are welcome to sit with your child. A diaper changing table is available in the ladies restroom in the basement of the church.

Restrooms are in the church basement. Go to the Narthex (lobby) and take either set of steps to the basement hallway. The ladies room is at one end, and the men's room is at the other.

Flowers: If you would like to sign up for altar flowers, there is a book in the lounge. Or, you can call the church office during the week to check on availability.

Memorials: If you wish to give a memorial in honor or memory of a loved one, you may mail it in or pick up a memorial card in the church office.

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

Dick Haar, Darold Henninger

READER

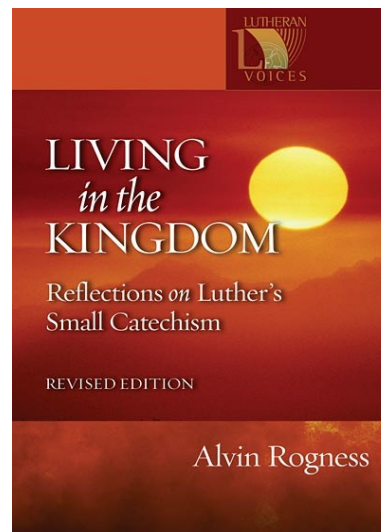
Lisa Anderson

ACOLYTES

Kyle King, Kaylee King

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COMING IN JUNE



A very special Bible study will be presented each Sunday starting in June, following the worship service at 10:30 am.

Join Pastor Rayl as together we discuss how the teachings of the Bible and the church help us meet the often perplexing problems of life? The book, "Living in the Kingdom will be our resource (cost

\$14.99 from Augsburg Fortress Press, also available for Kindle from Amazon).

Morning type refreshments will be served, (bagels, donuts, rolls, coffee, juice, etc.) Watch for details in the newsletter and future bulletin announcements.

This will be a great opportunity to grow and strengthen your faith and spiritual life, while having some of your big and small questions of faith addressed and hopefully answered.

(Interested in membership at First St. John Lutheran? This is your pathway.)

welcome to gather at the Lord's table.

Infant 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 if you are not receiving the bread and wine."

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

(After all have received communion, please stand.)

P: Now may the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's grace.

C: Amen.

Prayer after Communion

P: Let us pray. Gracious God, in you we live and move and have our being. With your word and this meal of grace, you have nourished our life together. Strengthen us to show our love and serve the world in Jesus' name.

C: Amen.

* * * **HOORAY FOR MOTHER'S DAY** * * *

Blessing

P: The God of all, who raised † Jesus from the dead, bless you by the power of the Holy Spirit to live in the new creation..

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn "Now Thank We All Our God" No. 839

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Risen One.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Dr. Pattin

ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am

Prelude

Dr. Pattin

Ringling of the Bell (Please Stand)

Opening Hymn "Love Divine All Loves Excelling" No.631

Thanksgiving for Baptism

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

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, by whose hand we are given new birth, by whose speaking we are given new life.

C: Amen.

P: Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are welcomed, restored, and supported as citizens of the new creation.

(Water is poured into the font as the presiding minister continues.)

P: Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism. Holy God, holy and merciful, holy and mighty, you are the river of life, you are the everlasting wellspring. In mercy and might you have freed us from death and raised us with Jesus, the firstborn of the dead.

P: In baptismal waters our old life is washed away, and in them we are born anew.

P: Glory to you for oceans and lakes, for rivers and streams. Honor to you for waters that wash us clean, quench our thirst, and nurture both crops and creatures. Praise to you for the life-giving water of baptism, the outpouring of the Spirit of the new creation.

C: Wash away our sin and all that separates us from you. Empower our witness to your resurrection. Strengthen our resolve in seeking justice for all.

P: Satisfy the world's need through this living water. Where drought dries the earth, bring refreshment. Where despair prevails, grant hope. Where chaos reigns, bring peace. We ask this through Christ, who with you and the Spirit reigns forever.

C: Amen.

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us share the peace of the Lord.

Sharing of the Peace

The congregation may greet one another by shaking hands, fist bumping, or any other form of greeting with the words, "Peace be with you."

We conclude the sharing of the peace by singing:

"Jesus Christ is Risen Today" No. 365, v. 1, & 2

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God, you hold together all things in heaven and on earth. In your great mercy receive the prayers of all your children, and give to all the world the Spirit of your truth and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

(Please be seated)

J.A.M. Children Singing

Announcements

Introduction

Jesus does not abandon his followers. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus comes to abide with his disciples of every generation. As Pentecost draws near, we are reminded that the risen Christ dwells in us as the Spirit of truth. We receive this Spirit in baptism and pray that in our gathering around the Lord's table the Spirit will transform us to be the body of the risen Christ in the world

FIRST READING: Acts 17:22-31

In Athens, Paul faces the challenge of proclaiming the gospel to Greeks who know nothing of either Jewish or Christian tradition. He proclaims the "unknown god" whom they worship is the true Lord of heaven and earth who will judge the world with justice through Jesus, whom God has raised from the dead.

Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. ²³For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. ²⁶From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, ²⁷so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him--

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 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.

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.

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

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

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

C: Amen.

P: Remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

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.

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: Come and know Christ, broken and poured out for you.

C: We come at our Lord's command.

The Communion *(distribution will be continuous)*

"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

The Offering

Offertory Music

Dr. Anthony Patton

Offering Prayer

P: Our generous heavenly Father, all good gifts come from you and from these riches we bring this offering. Help us to use it for the furtherance of your purpose in this place, and for the benefit of those in need, through our resurrected and living Lord, 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 our 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, almighty and merciful God, for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin; who in dying has destroyed death, and in rising has brought us to eternal life.

P: And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



though indeed he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.'

²⁹Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals.

³⁰While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

Reader: Word of God. Word of life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 66:8-20

Let the sound of his praise be heard. (Ps. 66:8)

Bless our God, O peoples;
let the sound of his praise be heard,
⁹**who has kept us among the living
and has not let our feet slip.**

¹⁰For you, O God, have tested us;
you have tried us as silver is tried.

¹¹**You brought us into the net;
you laid burdens on our backs;**

¹²you let people ride over our heads;
we went through fire and through water;
yet you have brought us out to a spacious place.

¹³**I will come into your house with burnt offerings;
I will pay you my vows,**

¹⁴those that my lips uttered
and my mouth promised when I was in trouble.

¹⁵**I will offer to you burnt offerings of fattened calves,
with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams;
I will make an offering of bulls and goats.**

¹⁶Come and hear, all you who fear God,
and I will tell what he has done for me.

¹⁷**I cried aloud to him,
and he was extolled with my tongue.**

¹⁸If I had cherished iniquity in my heart,
the Lord would not have listened.

¹⁹**But truly God has listened;
he has heard the words of my prayer.**

²⁰Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer
or removed his steadfast love from me.

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 3:13-22

Peter calls Christians, who may be overwhelmed by the challenges of living and working in a non-Christian world, to use their way of life and their words to witness to

the power of Easter manifested to them through baptism.

Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? ¹⁴But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, ¹⁵but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; ¹⁶yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. ¹⁸For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God.

He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, ²⁰who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. ²¹And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you--not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Reader: Word of God. Word of life.

C: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand)

Gospel Acclamation

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Gospel Announcement

P: The Gospel according to St. John Chapter 14.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: John 14:15-21

John is concerned for the faith of disciples who no longer have Jesus with them physically. Jesus promises they will receive the Spirit and that he will continue to reveal himself to those who love him.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] "If you love me, you will keep my

commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. ¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

¹⁸"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

SERMON

Pastor Rayl

Sermon Hymn "We Know That Christ Is Raised"

No.449

(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 *(Each petition concludes with this response)*

P: O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

(Please be seated)