

First St. John Lutheran Church

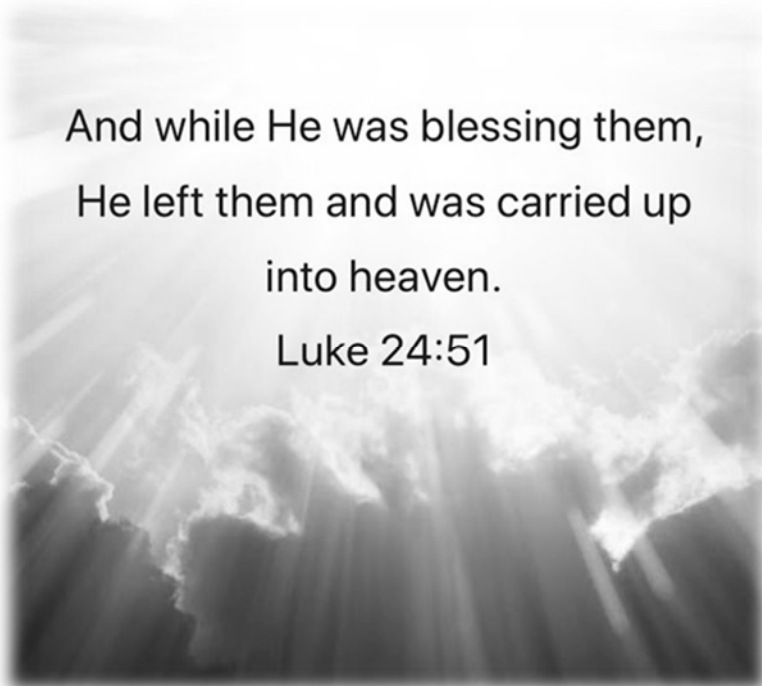
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419-691-7222

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www.firststjohn.com

Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor

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



And while He was blessing them,
He left them and was carried up
into heaven.
Luke 24:51

May 21, 2023

Ascension of Our Lord

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	J.A.M. Kids Sunday School
9:15 am	Adult Bible Study
10:30 am	Late Worship

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

SMILE! YOUR ON CAMERA: Please remember you may be on camera during the livestream and the recording of the service.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Please remember to silence your cell phone before church begins. Thanks!

Adult Sunday School meets at 9:15 am in the lounge. Come join in a lively and inspirational discussion of the day's lessons.

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

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.

Called through faith; Gathered in worship; Serving the community

May 21, 2023 - 10:30 am

ORDER OF WORSHIP—10:30 am

Prelude Dr. Pattin

Ring of the Bell (Please Stand)

Opening Hymn “A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing!” No.393

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

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(Silence for reflection and self-examination.)

P: Most merciful God,

C: we confess that we are in bondage 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: Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, 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

Sharing of the Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us share the peace of the Lord.

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:

“Lord I Lift Your Name on High” No. 857

***“Lord I lift your name on high;
Lord I love to sing your praises,
I’m so glad you’re in my life,
I’m so glad you came to save us.
You came from heaven to earth to show the way.
From the earth to the cross, my debt to pay,
From the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky;
Lord, I lift your name on high.”***

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, your only Son was taken into the heavens and in your presence intercedes for us. Receive us and our prayers for all the world, and in the end bring everything into your glory, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

(Please be seated)

Announcements

Introduction

In today’s readings the risen Christ ascends into heaven and his followers are assured that the Spirit will empower them to be witnesses throughout the earth. The disciples were told to not gaze up into heaven to look for Jesus (Acts 1:11); we find his presence among us as we proclaim the word and share the Easter feast. We too long for the Spirit to enliven our faith and invigorate our mission.

FIRST READING: Acts 1:1-11

Before he is lifted into heaven, Jesus promises the disciples’ missionary work will spread out from Jerusalem to all the world. His words provide an outline of the book of Acts.

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning² until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had

chosen. ³After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Reader: Word of God, Word of life.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 47

God has gone up with a shout. (Ps. 47:5)

Clap your hands, all you peoples;
shout to God with loud songs of joy.

**²For the LORD, the Most High, is awesome,
a great king over all the earth.**

³He subdued peoples under us
and nations under our feet.

**⁴He chose our heritage for us,
the pride of Jacob whom he loves.**

⁵God has gone up with a shout,
the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

**⁶Sing praises to God, sing praises;
sing praises to our King, sing praises.**

⁷For God is the king of all the earth;
sing praises with a psalm.

**⁸God is king over the nations;
God sits on his holy throne.**

⁹The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth belong to God; he is highly exalted.

SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:15-23

After giving thanks for the faith of the Ephesians, Paul prays they might also see the power of God, who in the ascension has now enthroned Christ as head of the church, his body.

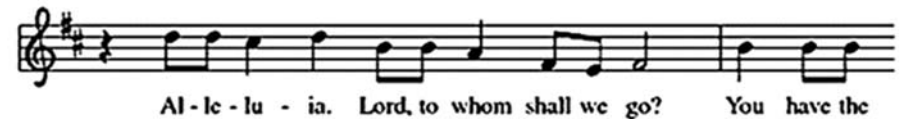
I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, ¹⁸so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. ²⁰God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. ²²And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Reader: Word of God. Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand)

Gospel Acclamation



Gospel Announcement

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

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Luke 24:44-53

At the time of his ascension, Jesus leaves the disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit and an instruction that they should await the Spirit's descent.

[Jesus said to the eleven and those with 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,⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.⁴⁹ And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

⁵⁰Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them.⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven.⁵² And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy;⁵³ and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

Gospel Response

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

SERMON

Pastor Rayl

Sermon Hymn "Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing"

No.389

AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

Please turn to the bulletin insert, then follow along the liturgy as printed, responding as indicated. Thank you.)

Pastoral Prayer *(Each petition concludes with this response)*

P: Hear us O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

(Please be seated)

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:

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

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



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 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.

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 "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"

No. 836

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Risen One.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Dr. Pattin

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PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

ELDERS

Ted Hagedorn, Jeff Smith

READER

Bob Haar

ACOLYTES

Kyle King
Venessa Miller

* * * * *

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
MEMBERS OF OUR
CONFIRMATION CLASS of 2023**

*THESE YOUNG FOLKS HAVE COMPLETED THEIR TWO YEARS
OF CATECHISM INSTRUCTION AND ARE READY TO AFFIRM
THEIR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST AND TAKE ON MORE
PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR LIFE OF
DISCIPLESHIP.*

Jordan Brianne Cummerow
Daughter of Brian and Jodi
Cummerow

Mckenna Alexis Cummerow
Daughter of Brian and Jodi
Cummerow

Cam James Schumaker
Son of Brian and Angie Schumaker

Mason Michael Schweizer
Son of Mike and Traci Schweizer

Aubrey Marie Swartz
Daughter of Brian and Michelle
Swartz



**FIRST ST. JOHN
LUTHERAN
CHURCH**
Confirmation

**LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER FOR
GRADUATE RECOGNITION
SUNDAY
June 11, 2023**



We will publicly acknowledge all our graduates from high school and college at our worship service on Sunday, June 11th. Please plan on having your graduate attend this service as all graduates will be recognized. If you know of a graduate, please complete this form and drop it in the offering plate, mail it to the church office, or fax this page to 419-691-7220 by Tuesday, June 6th.

NAME OF GRADUATE

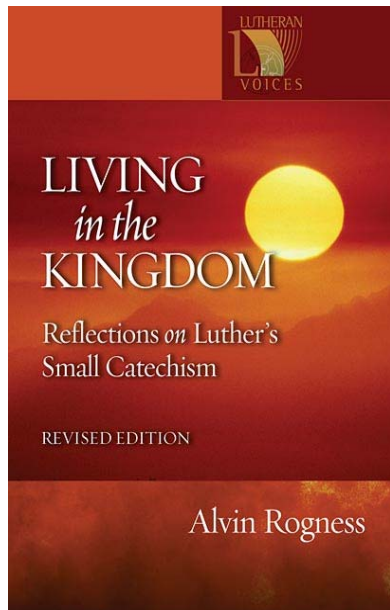
GRADUATED FROM

DEGREE EARNED

NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

FUTURE PLANS (SCHOOL, WORK, ETC.):

YES, WE PLAN TO BE AT THE SERVICE _____



COMING IN JUNE

A very special Bible study will be presented each Sunday starting on June 4th., 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).

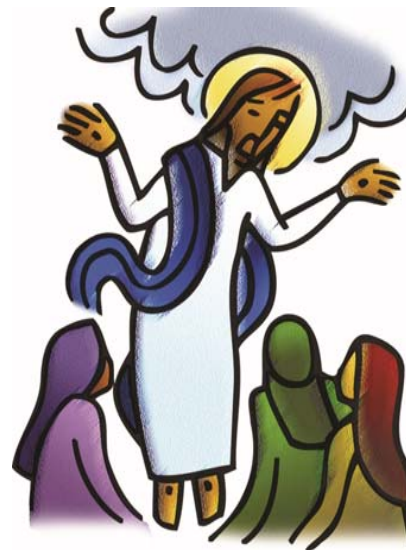
Morning type refreshments will be served, (bagels, donuts, rolls, coffee, juice, etc.) Watch for details in the newsletter and future bulletin announcements.

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.)

Here is a selection for the first chapter from the book.

“You are a remarkable person, because God enrolls you in the greatest family on earth, the holy Christian church. In this great company God comforts you, guides you, and strengthens you. When death is done with you, god puts you on your feet again in another and more wonderful part of his vast empire. You belong to God, as a daughter or son,. God wants you forever.”



We often cast our eyes upward to look for God. When we are feeling lonely or misunderstood, we raise our hands to ask why, or shake our fists in gestures of prayer, anguish, or praise. While the scriptures promise that God is king of all the earth, sitting on his holy throne (Psalm 47), we need not only look up for God’s action in our lives. Our ascended Lord lives in the heavens, but Jesus does not leave his disciples—or us—to

fumble while he naps in the clouds. Before he ascends, Jesus promises that we are clothed with the Holy Spirit’s power, witnesses “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“Why do you stand looking up toward heaven?” the two men in white robes asked the witnesses remaining after Jesus ascended. Why do we stand still in our lives? Is it that we just saw God (Look! Up there! Did you see?), so we expect God to arrive in the same way again? Can God be that expected and predictable? This story of Jesus ascending to the heavens after his time with us on earth gives us mixed feelings: we know he’s returning to where he belongs—out of this world full of brokenness and sin to holiness and glory. Still, our longing is intense: Lord, we want to see you! How will we know it is you when you come again?

Ascension Day could be explained as the cynical “I’m outta here” of a God weary of us self-centered, broken humans, but that explanation would be short-sighted because it leaves out the important stop on the cross. Instead, Jesus’ departure is accompanied with the promise of the Spirit’s presence remaining among us. We look up to the skies for help, then return our gaze to those among us in need of our care, to the body of Christ and the wind of the Spirit among the baptized, preparing for the time when Jesus comes again to gather us in.



MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY: Join us on **Monday, May 29, 8:00 a.m.** for be a brief Memorial Day Service of Remembrance. **We will begin in the church sanctuary at 8:00 am** then move to our Cemetery. Members of the Dunberger Post will be participating in the ceremony. Also, Doug Sweeny from Wreaths Across America will be our guest speaker.

PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY



Please purchase full size items.

- | | | |
|----------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| dish soap | shampoo, child | disposable razors |
| paper towel | laundry soap | toothbrush, adult |
| toilet paper | fabric softener sheets | toothpaste, adult |
| tissues | body lotion | sanitary pads |
| deodorant | body soap | band aids |
| shampoo, adult | | |

This is a list of the items that will provide a month's worth of hygiene supplies to families or individuals in our neighborhood to help them stay clean and healthy. We always welcome any donations from our congregation members.

If you would like to donate items, please donate only full size products as sample sizes will not last a month. If you would prefer a Pantry volunteer to do the shopping for you, we welcome monetary donations. Please make out checks to First St. John Lutheran Church and write Personal Needs Pantry on the memo line.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2023 - Online registration is open via First St. John facebook page and/or this link <https://forms.gle/HQ5MS8HSuS28824m7> Please share with family & friends!

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May 21, 2023

ASCENSTION OF OUR LORD

Why the Ascension Matters

Excerpted from *Christianity Today*, 8/20/13

The ascension had a profound impact on the disciples. Up to the moment Jesus ascended to heaven, the disciples seemed to be puzzled, trying to figure it all out. But after the ascension, they worshiped Him. They went back to Jerusalem with great joy. They maintained a regular presence in the temple—worshiping God.

At first, the disciples' reaction to Jesus' ascension may catch us off guard. Jesus had just "left them." And yet they were happy—filled with joy. Why this reaction? After all, when Jesus told them earlier that He would soon leave them, they were deeply disturbed.

Thus, He encouraged them by teaching them about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He kept them from the brink of utter despair by saying that they were not losing Him, but that He would be with them in a different way through His Spirit.

The ascension of Jesus produced joy because the disciples realized what amazing benefits would come to them when Jesus returned to the Father. When Jesus ascended, all the promises regarding the Spirit's ministry to the disciples were about to be fulfilled. The disciples accepted His ascension, for they had accepted Jesus' word about the promised One to come. Their doubts and fears were gone. They were convinced of who He was. They knew that He died to forgive them of their sins. They knew He was alive from the dead. In His resurrection, they had hope in victory over death.

Joy, hope, and mission are three consistent responses of the disciples to Christ's resurrection and ascension. In light of these two great events, we see the disciples transformed and mobilized to follow Jesus on His mission. And we can go forward with hope and joy because the King of the universe promises He will never leave or forsake us. If we want to experience greater transformation and the joy of following Jesus on mission, we should build our confidence on the finished and sufficient work of Jesus Christ