



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
[www.trinitylutheran.ca](http://www.trinitylutheran.ca)

May 5, 2024  
6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Easter

### **Announcements**

**Juice boxes** are still needed at Street Help Shelter. The Welcome Centre Shelter for Women needs granola bars, fruit rollup-type items and another snack item for snack packs for children at the centre. Please leave donated items on the table in the Narthex.

### **Coming Services**

**May 12** - Music Sunday. The Trinity Band and choir will help lead the congregation in song as part of the Mother's Day service. As well, Trinity musicians and singers will provide liturgical music during portions of the service, such as the offering and communion.

**May 15** - Pentecost Messy Church, 5 p.m. A mid-week session that includes a meal, activities and a devotional. All are welcome!

**June 16** – Healing & Belonging Service. This is an affirmation worship service to mark Pride Month. The service is intended to recognize the past wounds caused by the greater church on the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and to foster healing and belonging with the community. Assistant to the Bishop Adam Snook is scheduled to preach and assist at the service. A potluck follows the service.

### **We Remember in our Prayers**

**In Residence:** Cordelle, Dorothy, Katie, Margaret, Sharon, Vern.

**Members:** Bunny, Donna, Ed, Joan, Susan. Evelyn, Connie.

**Friends & Family:** Anna, Asdis, Audrey, Dot, Jean, Mary, Michelle, Randy, Roger, Rose, Frank, Tanya, Jeremy, Rachel

### **Introduction to the day**

*This Sunday's image of the life the risen Christ shares with us is the image of friendship. We are called to serve others as Jesus came to serve; but for John's gospel, the image of servanthood is too hierarchical, too distant, to capture the essence of life with Christ. Friendship captures the love, the joy, the deep mutuality of the relationship into which Christ invites us. The Greeks believed that true friends are willing to die for each other. This is the mutual love of Christian community commanded by Christ and enabled by the Spirit.*

Inshallah # 40 God welcomes all  
ELW # 641 All are welcome  
ELW # 383 Christ is risen! Shout  
Hosanna!  
ELW # 838 Beautiful Saviour

### Prayer of the day

O God, you have prepared for those who love you joys beyond understanding. Pour into our hearts such love for you that, loving you above all things, we may obtain your promises, which exceed all we can desire; through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**AMEN**

### First reading: Acts 10: 44-48

<sup>44</sup>While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. <sup>45</sup>The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, <sup>46</sup>for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, <sup>47</sup>“Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” <sup>48</sup>So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

### Psalm 98

<sup>1</sup>Sing a new song to the Lord, who has done <sup>1</sup> marvelous things,  
whose right hand and holy arm  
have <sup>1</sup> won the victory.

<sup>2</sup>**O Lord, you have made <sup>1</sup> known  
your victory,  
you have revealed your  
righteousness in the sight <sup>1</sup> of the  
nations.**

<sup>3</sup>You remember your steadfast love  
and faithfulness to the <sup>1</sup> house of Israel;  
all the ends of the earth have seen  
the victory <sup>1</sup> of our God.

<sup>4</sup>**Shout with joy to the Lord, <sup>1</sup> all you  
lands;  
lift up your voice, re- <sup>1</sup> joice, and  
sing.**

<sup>5</sup>Sing to the Lord <sup>1</sup> with the harp,  
with the harp and the <sup>1</sup> voice of  
song.

<sup>6</sup>**With trumpets and the sound <sup>1</sup> of  
the horn  
shout with joy before the <sup>1</sup> king,  
the Lord.**

<sup>7</sup>Let the sea roar, and <sup>1</sup> all that fills it,  
the world and those who <sup>1</sup> dwell  
therein.

<sup>8</sup>**Let the rivers <sup>1</sup> clap their hands,  
and let the hills ring out with joy  
before the Lord, who comes to <sup>1</sup> judge  
the earth.**

<sup>9</sup>The Lord will judge the <sup>1</sup> world with  
righteousness  
and the peo- <sup>1</sup> ples with equity.

## **Second reading: 1 John 5: 1-6**

<sup>1</sup>Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. <sup>2</sup>By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. <sup>3</sup>For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, <sup>4</sup>for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. <sup>5</sup>Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

<sup>6</sup>This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

## **Gospel: John 15: 9-17**

[Jesus said:] <sup>9</sup>“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup>I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

<sup>12</sup>“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup>No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. <sup>14</sup>You are my friends if you do

what I command you. <sup>15</sup>I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. <sup>16</sup>You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. <sup>17</sup>I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.”

## **Sermon**

### **Just love**

There are versions a picture of Jesus teaching a crowd on a hillside that you can find on the internet.

In the top frame of picture, Jesus gestures out to the crowd and issues the commandment to “love one another.”

In the middle frame of the picture, a member of the crowd comes forward to ask: “What about ....?”

Each version of the picture asks about a different group are targets for fundamentalists or for hypocritical Christians.

In the bottom frame of the picture, Jesus’ answer is “Yes ... even people who ask stupid questions.”

The picture seems like a pretty accurate response to the command from Jesus that we heard this morning.

Jesus says “love one another as I have loved you.”

Some people have a real problem understanding this commandment to love. Love ... freely offered and freely given ... is a foreign concept for them.

But such love is the focus of Jesus' farewell to the disciples as the cross looms before him.

They have had their meal together ... Jesus had modeled service to others by washing the disciples' feet ... he predicted Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial ... and promised that if they remain faithful, God will send an advocate to them.

Last week, we heard Jesus share the story about the relationship between vine and branches ... the vine ... and the branches. The branches are the disciples producing joyous and lasting fruit.

Love is the lasting fruit ... and remaining connected to Jesus ... and through him to God ... makes the yield possible and brings joy to life.

Jesus reminds the disciples ... to follow the commandment to love one another as he has loved them.

Jesus stresses that love between disciples ... between friends ... will be essential in the days to come. They will be hated and ridiculed for their faith. They will be hunted and killed for their beliefs ... for following a path that contradicts the values of the world.

Love ... their loving relationship with one another and with God ... will get them through the challenges that lay ahead. Abiding in Jesus will sustain them as a community.

Love creates a relationship between friends that is vastly different from the relationships forged in the world ... relationships based on finances or politics ... or status. Disciples practice the currency of love instead.

When Jesus calls the disciples "friends" in this morning's passage, he changes the nature of his relationship with disciples ... including the disciples that come centuries later.

It isn't a top-down relationship ... a master-servant relationship ... or a teacher-student relationship ... it is a relationship that flows sideways ... from Jesus ... to disciple ... to others ... and to still others. It is a reciprocal relationship where love flows back and forth.

It is a relationship of mutuality ... it is a relationship that lacks any sense of superiority ... it is a relationship where life in Christ means living in love ... in love with God ... with Jesus ... and with all who Jesus loves ... which ... if you recall ... is the world.

This means discipleship and missional service is done out of love for the world and that love carries outward from our actions. It means self-sacrifice for the sake of others.

Jesus tells the disciples that there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for a friend.

And later, Jesus lays down his life out of love ... and rises ... out of love for his friends.

And in that love ... we are able to live in joy.

And in that joy ... Jesus invites followers to go out secure in his presence and share this love with others. When we do this ... Jesus tells his friends ... his joy in them will be fulfilled.

One way to take this teaching from Jesus is that love for others means letting our old lives ... our old ways of living ... old ways of thinking ... old attitudes of superiority that may bring personal joy, but offer nothing to others.

Discipleship ... being a friend ... means letting such things go ... allowing them to fall away and die ... so that something fruitful can be produced. Letting new life take hold within us.

I came across a quote from a marriage counsellor earlier this week.

The counsellor said, "Love is a decision."

... love is a decision

You decide to pursue ... to practice ... to be in love. You make the decision to be in relationship ... to work on the relationship ... to change ... to sacrifice ... to work through the difficulties.

And when you do ... when you live a life in love and of love ... you live a life of joy and that flows from us to others.

For the disciples ... and for us ... the decision is do we accept Jesus' invitation of such a relationship? Do we decide to love one another as he loves us or do we save such love for only a select few?

And it's not as easy as just saying "yes."

Love ... being in relationship with others ... requires time and commitment.

It's not a one-off action ... say "I love you" and then fail to show up because our attention is drawn elsewhere ... or step forward to help someone in their distress and then are nowhere to be found down the road because we feel we've done our share.

That cheapens the grace we have received.

Love is continual ... we continually receive God's love and we are called to continually practice the love that Jesus modelled ... to sacrifice for one's friends ... to love those who leave us ... who betray us ... or who attack us ... to consider them friends ... to love them ... no matter what.

When we do this, we find ourselves in a forgiving love ... a restoring love ... an affirming love ... a reconciling love ... a love that must mark a faith community.

This is the love that comes from the branches connected through faith to the vine ... is a self-giving love that calls us to be open to relationships ... with others ... with strangers ... with those we find on the margins.

And when we practice this type of love, this is when we can experience the joy that such love carries with it ... a joy that marks the active gift of grace we have each received.

Lutheran scholar Karoline Lewis once wrote that: "Joy may very well be a feeling of grace, the emotion of grace, even the response to grace. Joy is that

indescribable sense when you find yourself experiencing abundant grace.”

We heard the psalmist call on the people to sing a new song to the Lord ... to give voice to joy.

To sing a song of love.

Through this self-giving love ... Jesus tells the disciples this morning ... there is joy in belonging ... joy in fellowship ... joy in an unburdened loving heart ... joy in friendship.

Grace ... love ... joy ... they are all fruits of the same vine. They are fruits of a new song ... a song of community ... a song of discipleship ... of friendship.

So, may we boldly give voice to our joy ... may we be bold in our love ... and may we be bold in each of our friendships.

**AMEN**

### **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**

### **Blessing**

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.

**AMEN**

