

WELCOMING WORD *This Sunday's image of how the risen Christ shares his life with us is the image of the vine. Christ the vine and we the branches are alive in each other, in the mystery of mutual abiding described in the gospel and the first letter of John. Baptism makes us a part of Christ's living and life-giving self and makes us alive with Christ's life. As the vine brings food to the branches, Christ feeds us at his table. We are sent out to bear fruit for the life of the world.*

CALL TO WORSHIP

- L: From you comes my praise in the great assembly;
- C: I will perform my vows in the sight of those who fear the LORD.**
- L: The poor shall eat and be satisfied,
- C: Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts live forever!**
- L: All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD;
- C: all the families of nations shall bow before God.**

OPENING HYMN # 551-Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Joyful, joyful we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love!
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before thee, praising thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; drive the gloom of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

All thy works with joy surround thee, earth and heav'n reflect thy rays.
Stars and angels sing around thee, center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountains, flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird, and flowing fountain, call us to rejoice in thee.

Thou art giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest,
Well-spring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our brother, all who lie in love are thine;
Teach us how to love each other; lift us to the joy divine!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

- L: Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, who is present, who gives life, who calls into existence the things that do not exist.
- C: Amen.**
- L: If you were to keep watch over sins, O Lord, who could stand? Yet with you is forgiveness, and so we confess.
- Silence is kept for reflection.*
- Gracious God,
- C: have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned away from you, knowingly and unknowingly. We have wandered from your resurrection life. We have strayed from your love for all people. Turn us back to you, O God. Give us new hearts and right spirits, that we may find what is pleasing to you and dwell in your house forever. Amen.**
- L: Receive good news: God turns to you in love. "I will put my spirit in you, and you shall live," says our God. All your sin is forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ, who is the free and abounding gift of God's grace for you. **Amen.**

INVOCATION

- P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- C: And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: O God,

C: **you give us your Son as the vine apart from whom we cannot live. Nourish our life in his resurrection, that we may bear the fruit of love and know the fullness of your joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

FIRST LESSON: Acts 8:26-40 ²⁶An angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) ²⁷So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." ³⁰So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³²Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. ³³In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth."

³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" ³⁸He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

SECOND LESSON: 1 John 4:7-21 ⁷Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. ¹⁷Love 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. ¹⁸There 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. ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰Those 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. ²¹The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

GOSPEL: John 15:1-8 [Jesus said:] ¹"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide 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. ⁵I 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. ⁶Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

MESSAGE Pastor John Twiton

HYMN # 315-Love Divine, All Loves Excelling. (vs. 1, 3)

Love divine, all loves excelling; joy of heav'n to earth come down!
Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure unbounded love thou art:
Visit us with thy salvation; enter ev'ry trembling heart.

Come, Almighty to deliver; let us all thy life receive.
Suddenly return, and never, never-more thy temple leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above.
Pray and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. 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.

OFFERTORY PRAYER 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. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

P: 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.

God of all fruitfulness, you abide in your church and your church abides in you. Cleanse us by your word and give yourself to the whole church on earth so that it bears fruit and witnesses to your love. Lord, in your mercy

C: Hear our prayer.

P: You have created the heavens and the earth. As we wonder at the beauty of creation, may we seek vital connections among all that depends on the earth for life. Lord, in your mercy

C: Hear our prayer.

P: You rule the nations with justice and love. Give the leaders of the earth assurance of your abiding presence, that they lead not by fear but with love for those they are called to serve. Lord, in your mercy

C: Hear our prayer.

P: You have loved us so that we can love others. We pray for all in need of your love: those who are poor, lowly, outcast, weak, or fearful. Provide for the needs of all (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

P: You gather us with all the saints by the power of your Spirit. With them, may our hearts live forever in your keeping. vigor as a people of faith. In the midst of challenges and opportunities, fill us anew with your Holy Spirit. Lord, in your mercy

C: Hear our prayer.

P: 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.

C: Amen.

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. 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.

BENEDICTION *May the blessing of God our creator, the love of Jesus Christ our redeemer, and the presence of the Holy Spirit the comforter, surround you and sustain you until we gather again. Amen.*

CLOSING HYMN: # 259-Lord Dismiss Us with Your Blessing (vs. 1, 2)

Lord, dismiss us with your blessing; fill our hearts with joy and peace.
Let us each, your love possessing, triumph in redeeming grace.
Oh, refresh us; oh, refresh us; trav'ling through this wilderness.

Thanks we give and adoration for your gospel's joyful sound.
May the fruits of your salvation in our hearts and lives abound.
Ever faithful, ever faithful to your truth may we be found.

**“I am
the
true
vine ...”**



ANNOUNCEMENTS

OUR SYMPATHIES & PRAYERS are with the family of **Dorothy Twiton** (Pastor John's aunt). Dorothy passed away on April 27.



Mary

Connie Peterson, Bonnie Bender, Ginger Quaderer (Diane Mueller's cousin), Norbert Haag (brother of Virgil Haag), Richard Schuhler (friend of Ron & Bonny Kellogg), Agnes Robertson (friend of Holly Thompson), Delores Bryant, Makenzee Smith, Shirley Thompson, Brock Howe, Dianne Haskins (friend of Char Smith), Brian Marshall (friend of Kim Kelliher), Krantz, Jeannie U'Ren, Ruth Ann Nemet, Mike Olson (Wendy Rasmussen's brother), Sally Gaard (friend of Margie Kahl), Irene Brufat, Connie Fausett (sister of Diane Twiton & Jean Bower), Bill Steinhauer, Harlan Oimoen, Peter Toniazzo, Grace Aavang

Our partner congregation IGLESIA EVANGÉLICA LUTERANA DIVINO SALVADOR (Divine Savior Lutheran Church) in Cataño, P.R



ELC 'COFFEE TIME' RESUMES Coffee Time will resume on Wednesdays at 10 am AND we will meet 'in person'. Please meet at ELC for time to gather and catch up with our church family.

YOUTH NEWS

GRADUATING SENIORS Please send your photos, and your plans for after graduation to brenda.martin@elcmthoreb.org by May 5th. This year, our Blanket Ceremony will be a private service for our seniors & their families on May 12th at 7 pm. We will share the ceremony & slideshow online on May 23rd.

YOUTH WEEKLY CLASSES:

- **SUNDAY SCHOOL** meets on Sundays at 9am on ZOOM. Outdoor Gathering on May 23rd, at 9:30am.
- **CONFIRMATION** meets May 5th at 7 pm. No Confirmation on May 12th. Outdoor Gathering on May 19th at 7pm.
- **PRE-CONFIRMATION** meets on Wednesday, May 5th and May 12th at 3:45 PM

2021 ELC SUMMER FUN (Save the dates)

- **VBS/DAY CAMP 2021 - JULY 12 - 15th 9:30 - 11:30 am** (Youth ages 3 - 5th grade)
ONLINE SIGN UP LINK: <https://forms.gle/3FCz1yfrYqQEcxph6> A time to be together outside in God's creation.
- **EXPLORER DAY AT SUGAR CREEK - July 26th, 9 am - 3 pm** (Children entering 1st - 5th grade in fall 2021) Email Brenda to sign up.
- **CONFIRMATION CAMP AT SUGAR CREEK - July 25 - 30th, (7th & 8th)** Register online at www.sugarcreekbiblecamp.org
- **GIVE/LOVE/SERVE (Service days) - New for 2021** - Middle - High school youth may join us on **Thursdays**, throughout the summer, to help in various local service opportunities. This provides us with helping our neighbors all summer, and allowing flexibility for our youths with their summer schedules. **REGISTER online:** (Link can be emailed as well) <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d4daea929a5ffc70-giveloveservice>

SUGAR CREEK "BACK IN THE SADDLE" Online Registrations are now available for Sugar Creek Bible Camp Summer programs. They have a variety of programs (new & favorites) listed on their website, <http://wp.sugarcreekbiblecamp.org>, for youth and families. Come and see in 2021!

BRATS IN THE LOT (At Miller's) - It is time for brats! Saturday, May 15th; 10 AM - 2 PM. Bake sale goodies as well. Come and enjoy the first brat/hot dog of the season! Thank you for supporting our youth!

STARLA'S SEASONINGS Youth Fundraiser for April 5th - May 2nd Starla's seasoning blends are as unique as their names and are sure to complement any event. These seasonings are made in Wisconsin, made with the finest quality ingredients. **TO ORDER:** Complete the **SIGN UP LINK** below OR order at church after the worship services (April 11, 18, 25) **ONLINE SIGN UP LINK:** <https://forms.gle/y5voPtvH5LqjCRVYA> Funds raised will go towards our youth summer trips, the ELCA Youth Gathering in 2022 and a mission trip.



DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF MAY 2, 2021

SHARE: What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?

READ: Read the following daily readings to deepen your understanding

Monday, Psalm 80, Prayer for Restoration

Tuesday, James, 3:17-18, The Wisdom from Above

Wednesday, John 14:18-31, The Promise of the Holy Spirit

Thursday, Psalm 98, Praise for God's Power and Love

Friday, Acts 10:34-43, Peter Preaches to the Gentiles

Saturday, Deuteronomy 32:44-47, Conclusion of Moses' Teaching

TALK: Consider some of these ideas: "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." *John 15:4. 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 bear fruit, for apart from him, they can do nothing.*

- Why do you think the Isaiah passage was so provocative for the Ethiopian eunuch? (Acts 8:32-33)
- Ponder the fruit you have borne. In what ways did abiding in Christ make fruit possible?
- How do you 'abide in Christ'? What keeps you connected to Jesus and the message of the gospel?

PRAY: O God, you give us your Son as the vine apart from whom we cannot live. Nourish our life in his resurrection, that we may bear the fruit of love and know the fullness of your joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESS: May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus.