



CONNECTED TO THE VINE

The Fifth Sunday of Easter

GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | Seward, Nebraska

May 2, 2021

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

We are pleased that you have chosen to worship the Lord with us today. Large print hymnals and personal assisted listening devices are available on request. The service can be heard throughout the building so that you can participate even if you have to take your child out for a while. Restrooms are in the hall between the chapel and fellowship area. If you have any questions please feel free to ask an usher.

CONNECTION CARDS: Visitors or members with changes in contact information, please fill out a connection card online at www.gracesewar.org the member connect tab, or scan this code.



SERVICE NOTES FOR THIS SUNDAY

Worship Materials

The order of service and the hymns for today are printed for you in this folder. They are also in "Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal" which is in the hymnal rack on the back of each pew. Watching the theme and passage on the screen may help you prepare for worship.

SERVING IN WORSHIP

Presiding Minister
Pianist

Pastor Mark A. Haefner
Cori Humann

COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

The Holy Bible, Evangelical Heritage Version® (EHV®) copyright © 2017 The Wartburg Project. All rights reserved.
www.wartburgproject.org All rights reserved

Service of the Word © 1993 Northwestern Publishing House. All rights reserved, reprinted under OneLicense.net A-713578 print and podcast license.

Cover: www.corissanelsonart.org

SERVICE OF THE WORD

This service offers the congregation a form of worship that focuses on the proclamation of God's Word. Believers respond to this divine gift with prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.

OPENING HYMN

Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty | 255

- 1 Open now thy gates of beauty; Zion, let me enter there,
Where my soul in joyful duty Waits for him who answers prayer.
Oh, how blessed is this place, Filled with solace, light, and grace!
- 2 Gracious God, I come before thee; Come thou also unto me.
Where we find thee and adore thee, There a heav'n on earth must be.
To my heart, oh, enter thou; Let it be thy temple now!
- 3 Here thy praise is gladly chanted; Here thy seed is duly sown.
Let my soul, where it is planted, Bring forth precious sheaves alone,
So that all I hear may be Fruitful unto life in me.
- 4 Thou my faith increase and quicken; Let me keep thy gift divine,
Howso'er temptations thicken; May thy Word still o'er me shine
As my guiding star through life, As my comfort in all strife.
- 5 Speak, O God, and I will hear thee; Let thy will be done indeed.
May I undisturbed draw near thee While thou dost thy people feed.
Here of life the fountain flows; Here is balm for all our woes.

INVOCATION

please stand

M The grace of our Lord (+) Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C **And also with you.**

CONFESSION

M We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

- C **Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

ABSOLUTION

- M God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

- C **Amen.**

- M In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

C: Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Bless - ed are
 they who take ref - uge in him. Your Word, O Lord, is e -
 ter - nal; it stands firm in the heav -
 ens. Your faith - ful - ness con - tin - ues for -
 ev - er. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.
 Bless - ed are they who take ref - uge in him.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

M Let us pray.

O God, you form the minds of your faithful people into a single will. Make us love what you command and desire what you promise, that among the many changes of this world, our hearts may ever yearn for the lasting joys of heaven; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



The Word

FIRST LESSON

Acts 16:11-15

¹¹After we put out to sea from Troas, we sailed straight to Samothrace, and the next day to Neapolis. ¹²From there we went to Philippi, which is a leading city in that part of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We stayed in this city for a number of days.

¹³On the Sabbath day we went outside the city gate alongside the river, where we thought there was a place of prayer. We sat down and began to talk to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴A woman named Lydia, who worshipped God, was listening. She was a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira. The Lord opened her heart to pay close attention to what Paul was saying. ¹⁵When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, "If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us. (EHV)

M The Word of the Lord

C **Thanks be to God!**

PSALM

The Man Is Ever Blest | **475**

1 The man is ever blest Who shuns the sinners' ways,
Among their counsels never stands, Nor takes the scorners' place,

2 But makes the law of God His study and delight
Amid the labors of the day And watches of the night.

3 He like a tree shall thrive With waters near the root.
Fresh as the leaf his name shall live; His works are heav'nly fruit.

4 Not so the wicked man! He no such blessing finds.
His hopes shall flee like empty chaff Before the driving winds.

5 How will he bear to stand Before that judgment seat
Where all the saints at Christ's right hand In full assembly meet?

6 God knows and he approves The way the righteous go,
But sinners and their works shall meet A dreadful overthrow.

SECOND LESSON

1 John 3:18-24

¹⁸Dear children, let us love not only with word or with our tongue, but also in action and truth.

¹⁹This is how we know that we are of the truth and how we will set our hearts at rest in his presence: ²⁰If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God. ²²We also receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commands and do what is pleasing in his sight. ²³This then is his command: that we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and that we love one another just as he commanded us. ²⁴The one who keeps his commands remains in God and God in him. This is how we know that he remains in us: We know it from the Spirit, whom he has given to us. (EHV)

M The Word of the Lord

C Thanks be to God!

VERSE OF THE DAY

M Alleluia. Alleluia. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia. I am the way, the truth, and the life, says the Lord. Alleluia.

**♪ You are the truth; your Word alone True wisdom can impart.
You only can inform the mind And purify the heart.**

CW 356

**You are the life; the empty tomb Proclaims your conqu'ring arm,
And those who put their trust in you Not death nor hell shall harm.**

GOSPEL

John 15:1-8

please stand

[M] The Gospel according to John chapter 15.

¹I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ²Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he is going to cut off. And he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, so that it will bear more fruit.

³You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in me, and I am going to remain in you. A branch cannot bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Likewise, you cannot bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵I am the Vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him is the one who bears much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers. Such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this: that you continue to bear much fruit and prove to be my disciples. (EHV)

[M] This is the Gospel of the Lord.



be seated

HYMN OF THE DAY

Christ, the Word of God Incarnate | **CWS 750**

1 Christ, the Word of God incarnate, Lord and Son of Abraham;
Christ, the radiance of the Father, Perfect God, the great I Am;
Christ, the Light, you shine unvanquished, Light and life you bring to all;
Light our path with your own presence, Grant us grace to heed your call.

2 Christ, the living bread from heaven, Food for body, food for soul;
Christ, the manna, daily given, Nourish, strengthen, make us whole.
Feed us with the food of heaven, Foretaste of the feast to be;
Quench our thirst with living water Springing up eternally.

3 Christ, the shoot that springs triumphant From the stump of Jesse's tree;
Christ, true vine, you nurture branches To bear fruit abundantly.
Graft us into you, O Savior; Prune our hearts so we remain
Fruitful branches in your vineyard Till eternal life we gain.

4 Christ, our good and faithful Shepherd, Watching all your lambs and sheep;
Christ, the gate that guards the sheepfold, Never-failing vigil keep.
When we stray, Good Shepherd, seek us, Find us, lift us, bear us home;
Lamb of God, our Shepherd, keep us; Let us hear your voice alone.

5 Christ, the way that leads unailing To the Father's home on high;
Christ, the truth that frees the captive; Christ, the life that cannot die.
Mediator to the Father, Sacrifice and Great High Priest:
Lead us to your heav'nly mansions, There to share your wedding feast.

6 Christ, the Alpha and Omega; Christ, the firstborn from the dead;
Christ, the life and resurrection; Christ, the Church's glorious head:
Praise and thanks and adoration And unending worship be
To the Father and the Spirit And to you eternally.

This inventive hymn is replete with scriptural titles and illustrations that describe the person and work of Christ from the beginning to end.

SERMON

please stand

APOSTLES' CREED

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.

From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

OFFERING PRESENTATION OF OUR GIFTS TO THE LORD.

On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income. 1 Corinthians 16:2 (NIV)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

[M] Heavenly Father, You have grafted us onto the vine of Your Son. Prune us and cut off from us all sin and dead works, that we may always draw life from Your Son.

[C] Enable us to produce the fruits of faith and good works.

[M] Lord God, Your only Son came in the flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. Protect us from all false teaching and the spirit of the Antichrist, that we may always confess Christ to be our only true God.

[C] Keep us always connected to Him, the true Vine.

[M] Father and Teacher of all truth, guide teachers and students in Your Word, that they may increase in understanding, faith and love for Christ.

[C] Help us always trust in him as the Lamb led to the slaughter in our place and risen from the dead.

[M] Almighty God, give health and guidance to our president and all in authority, that they may serve honorably and in accord with Your good order.

[C] Grant that more Christians would be willing to serve in positions of authority where they can influence others by letting their light shine.

[M] Merciful God, You hear and answer Your children in their hour of need. Grant that they would bear their crosses with faith, ever looking to You.

☐ **Help them fix their hearts on Jesus where true joy is found.**

☐ Heavenly Father, You are gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Hear and answer our prayers for the sake of Jesus Christ, and Your saints shall bless You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

☐ **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.**

be seated

HYMN

From Eternity, O God | **461 V. 1-4**

1 From eternity, O God, In your Son you did elect me.
Therefore, Father, on life's road Graciously to heav'n direct me;
Send to me your Holy Spirit That his gifts I may inherit.

2 Born alive but dead in sin, Lost to all good things by nature,
I was found and changed within And became a newborn creature.
Sinful flesh works ruination, But the Spirit works salvation.

3 Drive away the gloomy night Of my darkened mind's reflection.
Quench all thoughts that are not right; Hold my reason in subjection.
For your truth may I be yearning, Heav'nly wisdom ever learning.

4 As a branch upon a vine, In my blessed Lord implant me;
Ever of my head divine To remain a member grant me.
Oh, let him, my Lord and Savior, Be my life and love forever!

PRAYER

M O Lord God, our heavenly Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep us strong in your grace and truth, protect and comfort us in all temptation, and bestow on us your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



BLESSING

M The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and ✠ give you peace.



CLOSING HYMN

Son of God, Eternal Savior | 492

1 Son of God, eternal Savior, Source of life and truth and grace,
Word made flesh, whose birth among us, Honors all our human race,
You our head, who, throned in glory, For your own will ever plead:
Fill us with your love and pity; Heal our wrongs and help our need.

2 Come, O Christ, and reign among us, King of love and Prince of Peace;
Hush the storm of strife and passion; Bid its cruel discords cease.
By your patient years of toiling, By your silent hours of pain,
Quench our fevered thirst for pleasure; Stem our selfish greed for gain.

3 Bind us all as one together In your Church's sacred fold,
Weak and healthy, poor and wealthy, Sad and joyful, young and old.
Is there want or pain or sorrow? Make us all the burden share.
Are there spirits crushed and broken? Teach us, Lord, to soothe their care.

4 As you, Lord, have lived for others, So may we for others live.
Freely have your gifts been granted; Freely may your servants give.
Yours the gold and yours the silver, Yours the wealth of land and sea;
We but stewards of your bounty Held in solemn trust will be.

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: 8:00 AM Bible Class, 8:45 AM Worship, 9:45 AM Sunday School

Monday: 6:30 PM Catechism Online

Saturday: 8:30 AM Men's Bible Fellowship at Utica Auditorium

Sunday: 8:00 AM Bible Class; 8:45 AM Worship with Communion; 9:45 AM Sunday School

In our prayers:



Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GraceLutheranSeward



Personal assisted listening devices are available.

Given to the Lord: Attendance: Worship 36, Facebook Live 4, engagements , Audio/Slides , Bible Class 10, Sunday School . Offerings: Home 995.19, WELS 280.00, NELHS 20.19, Trinity 850.00, NELHS Debt 150.00. **To God be the glory!**

746 Pinewood Ave., Seward, NE | graceseward.org | 402-641-4685