

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Holy Communion

9:00 a.m., April 28, 2024



Welcome to worship this morning!

We are glad you're here! Please know that **children** are welcome to remain in worship; they are also welcome to take a break in our "Kid's Korner" in the Gathering Space where the service audio is played through speakers. **Bathrooms** are located down the hall, past the church office. **Hymns** are printed in the red book (ELW) available in the pew rack.

All who desire the sacrament of Holy Communion are welcome; you may also come forward to receive a blessing. During the distribution of Holy Communion, ushers will direct the congregation forward to receive communion in a continuous line. The pastor will distribute communion wafers, which you may intinct (dip) into the red wine, or white grape juice, held by communion assistants. Please **do not sip** from the chalices. Gluten free wafers are also available. The pastor will deliver the sacrament to anyone unable to come forward. You may also use a pre-filled communion kit, available at the usher's table.

All are welcome!

PRELUDE

WELCOME

Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the wellspring of grace,
our Easter and our joy.

Amen.

Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Immersed in the promises of baptism,
let us give thanks for what God has done for us.
We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning
your voice thundered over the deep
and water became the essence of life.
Adam and Eve beheld Eden's verdant rivers.
The ark carried your creation through the flood into a new day.
Miriam led the dancing as your people passed through the sea
into freedom's land.

At the river your beloved Son was baptized by John
and anointed with the Holy Spirit.
By the baptism of Jesus' death and resurrection
you opened the floodgates of your reconciling love,
freeing us to live as Easter people.
Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

We rejoice with glad hearts,
giving all honor and praise to you,
through the risen Christ, our source of living water,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.
Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!
Amen.

OPENING HYMN: *Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds*

ELW 367

GREETING

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

THIS IS THE FEAST

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,



al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb



who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,



al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 2 Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and



strength, and hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his.

Cont. on next page

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia,
al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. 3 Sing with all the peo-ple of
God, and join in the hymn of all cre-a-tion: Bless-ing, hon-or,
glo-ry, and might be to God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A-men.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia,
al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. 4 For the Lamb who was
slain has be-gun his reign. Al-le-lu-ia.

Final refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God.
Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.**

The congregation may be seated.

FIRST READING: Acts 8:26-40

Led by the Spirit, Philip encounters an Ethiopian official who is returning to his African home after having been to Jerusalem to worship. Philip uses their encounter to proclaim the gospel to him. Upon coming to faith in Jesus, he is baptized by Philip.

A reading from the book of Acts:

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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: 1 John 4:7-21

We love God and others because God first loved us. We cannot say we love God, whom we have not seen, while hating fellow Christians, whom we regularly see. Love toward God is to be matched by love toward others because the essence of God is love.

A reading from the first epistle of John:

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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Verses may be sung by a leader. Then the alleluia is repeated.

Music: Fintan O'Carroll and Christopher Walker
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HOLY GOSPEL: John 15:1-8

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.

The Holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[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.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Pastor Brian Rajcok

HYMN OF THE DAY: Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen!

ELW 377

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Rejoicing that Jesus is risen, that love has triumphed over fear, that life is victorious over death, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news. I invite you to kneel or remain standing.

A brief silence.

Christ our Vine, we pray for the church around the world, for all ministers, and for the mission of the gospel. Keep all the newly baptized and confirmed in your care. Cleanse our hearts with your word and help us to abide in you always. Help us to stay rooted in you and nurture us so that we grow and bear good fruit in the world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Wonderful Creator, we pray for the well-being of the earth and of all created things. As we celebrate Earth Day, we pray for the wellbeing of our planet. Empower humanity to be a benefit, and not a detriment, to life on Earth. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God Who is Love, we pray for the nations and all those in authority: for local, state, and national leaders, for elected representatives at every level, and for international organizations, that justice and peace may reign. We pray especially for those suffering the terror of war, for those in Ukraine, Israel, Palestine, Gaza, and all other places where violence and war are ongoing. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Compassionate Savior, we pray for all those in need: for any experiencing homelessness or unemployment, for those fleeing from oppression or seeking asylum, and for all who are ill or suffering. Today we especially lift up the family of Barry Rudberg as they mourn his death. Comfort them with your peace and your promise of eternal life. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Welcoming God, we pray for this congregation: for the caring ministries of this faith community, for all who visit and minister to one another, for all who take communion to homes or care centers, and for all who seek to share your love with the world. We pray for visitors to our congregation that you bless them in their walk with you. We pray for the children and youth ministries of our congregation that you bless our Sunday School, Confirmation, and High School Youth programs. We thank you for the gift of young people here and ask that you equip us to share the good news of your love in ways that take root in their minds and hearts. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For what else shall we pray...? (Worshippers may raise other prayers, aloud or silently.)

Eternal Lord, we pray with thanksgiving for the saints who rest from their labors. Help us, like them, to bear much fruit and to become your disciples, and at the last, bring us to that heavenly banquet where all will feast together at your table. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, most merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abiding love; through Jesus Christ, our resurrected and living Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

The Peace of Christ be with you always.
The congregation may be seated.

And also with you.

OFFERING

At this time, ushers will pass the offering plate if you desire to give a financial gift. Donations may also be given online on our website (stmatthewavon.org), or mailed to the church. Thank you for your continued generosity and faithfulness!

OFFERTORY: *Christ is Risen! Shout Hosanna!*

ELW 383

DOXOLOGY

All rise as the gifts are brought forward.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

praise him, all creatures here below;

praise him above, ye heav'nly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

OFFERING PRAYER

Risen One,
you call us to believe and bear fruit.
May the gifts that we offer here
be signs of your abiding love manifesting in us.
Form us to be your witnesses in the world,
through Jesus Christ, our true vine. **Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you. **And** al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. **We lift** them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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.

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:

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
 comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.
 In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
 who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,
 who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
 we await his coming in glory.
 Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,
 and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,
 the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
 to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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

At this time, ushers will direct the congregation to approach the altar where you may kneel or stand. You will receive a communion wafer from the pastor, which you are invited to intinct (dip) into the red wine or white grape juice held by the communion assistant. Please do not sip from the chalices. You may also use a pre-filled communion kit in your seat or the pastor will deliver the sacrament to your seat.

The risen Christ is made known to us in the breaking of the bread.

Come and eat at God's table.

THE DISTRIBUTION

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMN: *Around You, O Lord Jesus*

ELW 468

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

May the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Shepherding God,
you have prepared a table before us
and nourished us with your love.
Send us forth from this banquet
to proclaim your goodness
and share the abundant mercy of Jesus,
our redeemer and friend. **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

The God of resurrection power, the Christ of unending joy,
and the Spirit of Easter hope ✠ bless you now and always. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN: *Now the Green Blade Rises*

ELW 379

DISMISSAL

Christ is risen! Go in peace. Share the good news! **Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

POSTLUDE

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Today's Altar Flowers are given by the Reichler family in loving memory of Linda Reichler.

RYAN HECKMAN MEET & GREET - ASSOCIATE PASTOR CALL PROCESS

TODAY will be a meet and greet with our current Director of Christian Education and Associate Pastor candidate Ryan Heckman.

MANY THANKS FOR TODAY'S VOLUNTEER WORSHIP LEADERS

Ushers: Tim Jarka, Bob Hoffman, & Kevin Reichler

Acolyte: Liam Westhaver

Lector: Anne Fenn

Assisting Minister & Communion Assistant: Roy Zurell

Live Stream: George Spoering

Altar Guild: Robin Lindquist & Anita Mielert

STAFF

Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Brian R. Rajcok – pastorbrian@stmatthewavon.org

Director of Music: Sarah Schiener-Redenz – music@stmatthewavon.org

Director of Christian Education: Ryan Heckman – education@stmatthewavon.org

Office Administrator: Paul Martin – office@stmatthewavon.org or (860) 673-3301

Sexton: Roy Zurell – contact the office

VISIT US ONLINE

Website: www.stmatthewavon.org

YouTube: @StMatthewAvon

Facebook: facebook.com/SaintMatthewLutheranChurch

Instagram: @stmatthewlutheranavon

THE WEEK AHEAD

Sunday	9:00 am: Sanctuary Worship w/ Holy Communion	10:20 am: Sunday School	10:20 am: Ryan Heckman Meet & Greet - A.P. Call
Tuesday	10:00 am: A.A.	6:00 pm: Marketing Committee Mtg.	
Wednesday	9:30 am & 5:15 pm: W.W	7:00 pm: O.A.	7:00 pm: Choir Rehearsal
Thursday	2:00 pm: Centering Prayer		
Sunday	9:00 am: Sanctuary Worship w/ Holy Communion	10:20 am Special Congregational Mtg.	5:00 pm: Confirmation Class

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, May 5 Following Worship Service

We will be having a special congregational meeting regarding the call of Ryan Heckman to the Associate Pastor's position at St. Matthew.

Music at Greenwood: HOT CAT JAZZ BAND

Saturday, May 18th, 4:00 p.m.

Hall of the Evangelists

The second concert in our 2024 season will feature a six-piece jazz band. Hot Cat will play in a range of styles, and this concert is sure to be entertaining for everyone! Following the one-hour program, stay for a reception of light appetizers. An offering will be received at the door (suggested donation: \$10 per person). Please plan to join us for this fun afternoon, and tell your friends! All are welcome.

SPEAKER EVENT: DR. EBEN ALEXANDER

Saturday, June 1st at 7:00 pm

St. Matthew booked New York Times bestselling author, Dr. Eben Alexander, to speak in our Hall of the Evangelists on Saturday, June 1st at 7:00 pm. **Registration will be required** with more details to come. Dr. Alexander will have a follow-up Q&A during Adult Forum on June 2nd that will be directly connected to the event the night prior, so you won't want to miss it!

THRIVENT ACTION GRANTS

This is a reminder for those who are eligible to receive \$250 Thrivent Action Grants. We do have some upcoming events that qualify for Grants, including the Church Picnic on June 9th, and the Eben Alexander Speaking Event on June 1st. If you'd like to use one of your Thrivent Action Grants for one of these events, or anything else in the future, please contact the office. Thank you!

St. Matthew Mission Statement:

St. Matthew Lutheran Church is a worshipping community called to proclaim God's love for all and to grow spiritually together. Challenged by Jesus' example, we strive to connect people of all ages, abilities, and needs, and to nurture them to be disciples of Christ. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we reach out to the wider community and welcome our neighbors to a life of worship, preaching, teaching, Christian care, service, and spiritual growth.

In Christ, We Are Digging Deep, Reaching Out, Changing Lives.