

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Holy Communion

9:00 a.m., April 21, 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: *Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain*

ELW 363

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 Lord Christ, good shepherd of the sheep, you seek the lost and guide us into your fold. Feed us, and we shall be satisfied; heal us, and we shall be whole. Make us one with you, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The congregation may be seated.

FIRST READING: Psalm 23

We will now read Psalm 23 responsively:

¹The Lord is my shepherd;

I shall not want.

²**He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:**

he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³He restoreth my soul:

he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴**Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:**

for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:**

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Pastor Brian

SECOND READING: 1 John 3:16-24

Jesus' death on our behalf is the clearest demonstration of divine love. This is the very love we share with others, not just through our words but especially through our deeds. In sharing such love we fulfill God's commandments.

A reading from the first epistle of John:

¹⁶We know love by this, that [Jesus Christ] laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. ¹⁷How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

¹⁸Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. ¹⁹And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him ²⁰whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; ²²and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

²³And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

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 10:11-18

In language that recalls the twenty-third psalm, Jesus describes himself as the shepherd who cares for his sheep. He is willing to die for them, and he is able to overcome death for them.

The Holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] ¹¹“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Pastor Brian Rajcok

HYMN OF THE DAY: *Christ the Lord Is Risen Today; Alleluia!*

ELW 369

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.

Shepherding God, gather your church whenever we wander from you and one another. Empower our church in ministries around the world to worship and serve alongside global companions as equal partners and coworkers in the gospel. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Nurturing God, preserve the health of biomes and ecosystems. Inspire scientists, researchers, conservation organizations, and all people entrusted with the task of caring for creation, that we may be better stewards of the world around us. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, lead nations and communities to share resources, cooperate in solving conflicts, and listen to the wisdom of Indigenous peoples. Help all those with power to share it and to use such power for good. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, protect the very young and the very old, those living without housing, victims of domestic abuse, and all who live with chronic illness or compromised immune systems. Guide communities to actively care for people who are vulnerable. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, help this and all communities of faith to listen for your voice. Call us away from things that distract us from following you. Invite us to more deeply love and serve people who are lonely, isolated, and on the margins. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

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

Living God, we give thanks for our ancestors in faith. Strengthen us to share the good news in our own day. 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.

And also with you.

The congregation may be seated.

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, who knows all his sheep* Charles Wood, text by Richard Baxter

Christ, who knows all his sheep
Will all in safety keep.
He will not lose one soul,
Nor ever fail us;
Nor we the promised goal,
Whate'er assail us.

Lord Jesus, take this spirit:
We trust thy love and merit:
Take home this wand'ring sheep,
For thou hast sought it,
This soul in safety keep,
For thou hast bought it.

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.**

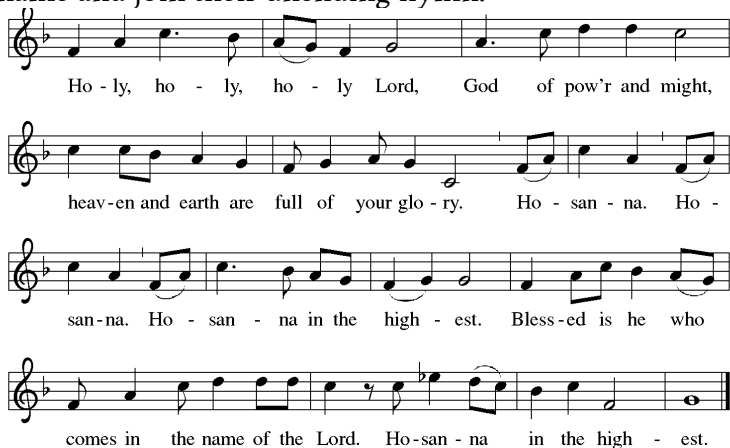
HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.
Lift up your hearts.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

And also with you.
We lift them to the Lord.
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.

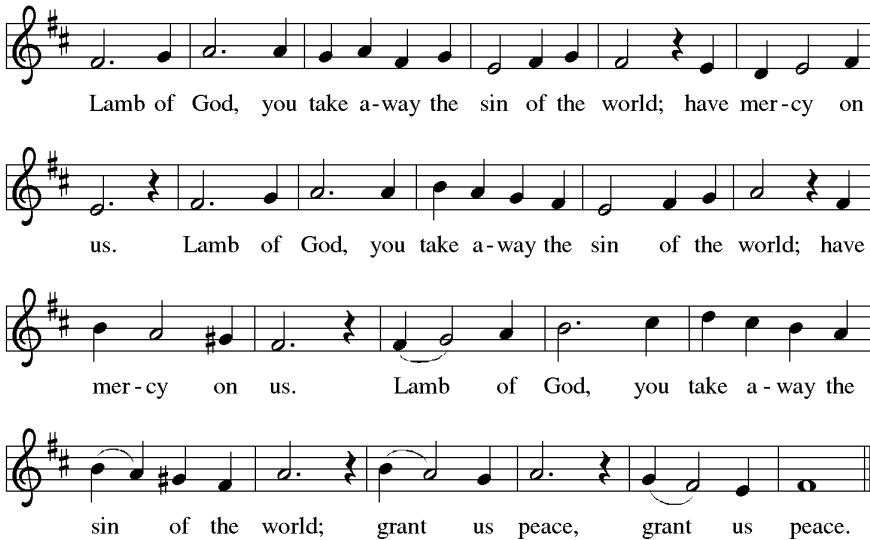
Come and eat at God's table.

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: *The King of Love My Shepherd Is*

ELW 502

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: *This Joyful Eastertide*



1. This joy - ful Eas - ter - tide, a - way with sin and sor -
 2. My flesh in hope shall rest and for a sea - son slum -
 3. Death's flood has lost its chill since Je - sus crossed the riv -



- row! My love, the Cru - ci - fied, has sprung to life this
 - ber till horns from east to west shall wake the dead in
 - er. Lov - er of souls, from ill my pass - ing soul de -



mor - - - row.
 num - - - ber.
 liv - - - er.



Had Christ, who once was slain, not burst his three-day pris - on, our



faith had been in vain. But now has Christ a - ris - en, a -



ris - en, a - ris - en, a - ris - - - en.

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 for the glory of God!

CHURCH COUNCIL Q&A - ASSOCIATE PASTOR CALL PROCESS

TODAY will be a Q&A with the Church Council regarding the process, financial impacts, and job description for the Associate Pastor's position.

MANY THANKS FOR TODAY'S VOLUNTEER WORSHIP LEADERS

Ushers: Tim Jarka, Doreen O'Leary, & Kevin Reichler

Acolyte: Lindsay Bender

Lector: Jane Hanson

Assisting Minister & Communion Assistant: Rick Hanson

Live Stream:

Altar Guild: Kathy Alsgaard & Ellen Ericson

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](https://www.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: Church Council Q&A - A.P. Call	3:00 pm: Earth Day Extravaganza
Tuesday	10:00 am: A.A.		6:00 pm: Worship & Music 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 Meet & Greet - A.P. Call	10:20 am: Sunday School	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.

After today's Q&A, our next event will be a Meet & Greet with Ryan on Sunday, April 28th. All three events will occur following worship service.

Music at Greenwood: SAVE THE DATE!

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

Hot Cat Jazz Band

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.

EARTH DAY EXTRAVAGANZA

TODAY, April 21 from 3:00 - 5:00 pm

Our Greater Hartford Conference is planning an earth day gathering event to be held at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Hartford, THIS afternoon April 21, 3:00-5:00 P.M. followed by a potluck provided by participating congregations featuring foods that are the least impactful on the environment.