

## As We Gather

Grapes, grapevines, and vineyards are used as illustrations by Jesus as He teaches the people. As those who have been grafted as branches into Christ the Vine through Holy Baptism, we seek ways to strengthen that connection as the Holy Spirit works in and through us. Today our faith is nourished and joy is restored by His Word and Divine Gifts.

## Welcome & Announcements

9:30 am

- P** The Lord be with you.
- P** Alleluia! Christ is risen!

- G** **And also with you.**
- G** **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

## Call to Worship

(based on Psalm 126)

- P** God's Word calls us to a joyful celebration of the Savior, but sometimes joy is lacking.

### **G Restore us with joy, O God.**

- P** When our delight is overshadowed by worry and fear,

### **G When relationships are painful and hurt results,**

- P** When problems loom large and solutions are elusive,

### **G Restore us, O God.**

- P** When busyness and activity crowd out what is meaningful and important,

### **G When life feels tedious, and the waiting drags on,**

- P** When disappointments mount and disillusionment descends,

### **G Restore us, O God.**

- P** Joy to the world! Our Savior has come!

### **G Restore to us, O God, the joy of your salvation! Amen.**

- P** We pray ... O God, You make the minds of Your faithful to be of one will.

### **G Enable us to love what You have commanded and desire what You promise, that among the many changes of this world our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found;**

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

### **G Amen.**

## 475 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing

LSB 475

- 1 Good Christian friends, rejoice and sing! Now is the triumph of our King!  
To all the world glad news we bring: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**
- 2 The Lord of life is ris'n this day; Bring flow'rs of song to strew His way;  
Let all the world rejoice and say: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**
- 3 Praise we in songs of victory That love, that life which cannot die,  
And sing with hearts uplifted high: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**
- 4 Your name we bless, O risen Lord, And sing today with one accord  
The life laid down, the life restored: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

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## Confession & Forgiveness

- P** Confession has two parts, as explained in the Small Catechism.

### **G First, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, spoken by the pastor as from God Himself, not doubting, but firmly believing that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.**

- P** Let us confess our sins to God our Father.

### **G O Lord, our God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and impure. Our thoughts, words, and actions have betrayed Your relationship with us. You have not always been of first importance in our lives.**

**We have not kept Your commands to love You and love our neighbor. Merciful Lord, for the sake of Your Son, our risen Savior, we humbly seek Your forgiveness. Renew us, so we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways, to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

**P** Jesus says, "I am the vine; you are the branches." Whoever abides in Him by faith receives forgiveness, life, and salvation. In the name of Christ and by His authority, I announce to you that all your sins are forgiven, in the name of the Father, and of the  $\text{†}$  Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (*Matt 18:15-20; John 20:19-23*)

**G** Amen.

### 803 Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

LSB 803

- 1 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.**
- 2 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 mountain, Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,  
Chanting bird, and flowing fountain Call us to rejoice in Thee.**
- △ 3 Thou art giving and forgiving, Ever blessing, ever blest,  
Wellspring of the joy of living, Ocean-depth of happy rest!  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Fountainhead of love divine:  
Joyful, we Thy heav'n inherit! Joyful, we by grace are Thine!**

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### First Reading: Acts 8:26-40

CSB

<sup>26</sup> An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip: "Get up and go south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is the desert road.) <sup>27</sup> So he got up and went. There was an Ethiopian man, a eunuch and high official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to worship in Jerusalem <sup>28</sup> and was sitting in his chariot on his way home, reading the prophet Isaiah aloud.

<sup>29</sup> The Spirit told Philip, "Go and join that chariot."

<sup>30</sup> When Philip ran up to it, he heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you're reading?"

<sup>31</sup> "How can I," he said, "unless someone guides me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. <sup>32</sup> Now the Scripture passage he was reading was this:

"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb is silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth.

<sup>33</sup> In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who will describe his generation? For his life is taken from the earth."

<sup>34</sup> The eunuch said to Philip, "I ask you, who is the prophet saying this about—himself or someone else?" <sup>35</sup> Philip proceeded to tell him the good news about Jesus, beginning with that Scripture.

<sup>36</sup> As they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The eunuch said, "Look, there's water. What would keep me from being baptized?" <sup>38</sup> So he ordered the chariot to stop, and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. <sup>39</sup> When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him any longer but went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup> Philip appeared in Azotus, and he was traveling and preaching the gospel in all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

**L** This is the Word of the Lord.

**G** Thanks be to God.

### Epistle: 1 John 4:1-21

CSB

<sup>1</sup> Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

<sup>2</sup>This is how you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, <sup>3</sup>but every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming; even now it is already in the world.

<sup>4</sup>You are from God, little children, and you have conquered them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. <sup>5</sup>They are from the world. Therefore what they say is from the world, and the world listens to them. <sup>6</sup>We are from God. Anyone who knows God listens to us; anyone who is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception.

<sup>7</sup>Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup>God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup>Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another. <sup>12</sup>No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God remains in us and his love is made complete in us. <sup>13</sup>This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup>And we have seen and we testify that the Father has sent his Son as the world's Savior. <sup>15</sup>Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God—God remains in him and he in God. <sup>16</sup>And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him. <sup>17</sup>In this, love is made complete with us so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because as he is, so also are we in this world. <sup>18</sup>There is no fear in love; instead, perfect love drives out fear, because fear involves punishment. So the one who fears is not complete in love. <sup>19</sup>We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup>If anyone says, "I love God," and yet hates his brother or sister, he is a liar. For the person who does not love his brother or sister whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. <sup>21</sup>And we have this command from him: The one who loves God must also love his brother and sister.

**L** This is the Word of the Lord.

**G** **Thanks be to God.**

## Children's Message

### 474 Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen

LSB 474 v. 1-3

#### 1 Alleluia! Jesus is risen!

**Trumpets resounding in glorious light!  
Splendor, the Lamb, Heaven forever!  
Oh, what a miracle God has in sight!**

**Refrain: Jesus is risen and we shall arise:  
Give God the glory! Alleluia!**

#### 2 Walking the way, Christ in the center

**Telling the story to open our eyes;  
Breaking our bread, Giving us glory:  
Jesus our blessing, our constant surprise. Refrain**

#### 3 Jesus the vine, We are the branches;

**Life in the Spirit the fruit of the tree;  
Heaven to earth, Christ to the people,  
Gift of the future now flowing to me. Refrain**

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## Alleluia Verse

John 14:23

**P** Alleluia! Jesus said: "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching.

**G** My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." Alleluia!

**Holy Gospel: John 15:1-8**

CSB

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the fifteenth chapter.

**G** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup> Every branch in me that does not produce fruit he removes, and he prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>7</sup> If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples.

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**G** **Praise to You, O Christ.**

**Sermon: "The Joy of Laughter" (Psalm 126:1-3)**

*Rev. Dr. Frank Graves*

**Profession of Faith: Creed-Second Article**

**P** As we celebrate the risen Christ this Easter season, we now speak together the words of the Apostles' Creed regarding our Savior, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.

**G** **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 sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**P** What does this mean?

**G** **I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord; who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death; that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness; just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.**

474 Alleluia! Jesus is Risen!

LSB 474 v. 4-5

4 **Weeping, be gone; Sorrow, be silent:  
Death put asunder, and Easter is bright.  
Cherubim sing: "O grave, be open!"  
Clothe us in wonder, adorn us in light.**

**Refrain: Jesus is risen and we shall arise:  
Give God the glory! Alleluia!**

5 **City of God, Easter forever,  
Golden Jerusalem, Jesus the Lamb,  
River of life, Saints and archangels,  
Sing with creation to God the I AM! Refrain**

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**Prayers of the Church**

*(adapt as needed)*

**P** Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

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 and produce the fruits of faith and good works. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C** **hear our prayer.**

**P** 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 and remain faithful to Him. Lord, in Your mercy, **C** **hear our prayer.**

**P** Father and Teacher of all truth, guide all students in Your Word, that they may increase in understanding, faith and love for Christ, the Lamb led to the slaughter in our place and risen from the dead. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C** **hear our prayer.**

**P** 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. Lord, in Your mercy, **C** **hear our prayer.**

**P** Merciful God, You hear and answer Your children in their hour of need. Hear our prayers for those we name before you today, both aloud and in the quiet of our hearts [*especially* \_\_\_\_\_] Grant that they would bear their crosses with faith, ever looking to You, and so fix their hearts where true joy is found. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C** **hear our prayer.**

**P** Into Your hands, heavenly Father, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who has taught us to pray:

### Lord's Prayer

### Benediction

**P** The grace of our Lord ✠ Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C** **Amen.**

### Offering *(“Each one should give what they have decided in their heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:7)*

*The offering is provided for those who have been led to support the Lord's work through Mt. Calvary. Give cheerfully, as the Holy Spirit guides you. You're invited to Give Online at [www.mclc908.org/cms/generous-giving/](http://www.mclc908.org/cms/generous-giving/), or use electronic "Bill Pay" from your Bank to send a donation, or mail your offering to Mount Calvary, 908 W. Oak St., Greenville, MI 48838. Please contact the church office to let us know of your worship participation online. If you do not currently have a church home, you're invited to become a part of the Lord's family here at Mt. Calvary.*

*Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership in POINTING the Way!*

### Reflection on Psalm 126

(video)

*(This time is used to prepare for the service of Holy Communion; practice healthy hygiene.)*

## Service of Holy Communion

### Preparation

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** **And also with you.**

**P** Lift up your hearts.

**C** **We lift them to the Lord.**

**P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C** **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

**P** It is truly good, right, and proper that we should give thanks to You, Lord, our God, for You have shown mercy to all in Christ our Redeemer, the Vine divine. Receive our thanks that as branches of the Vine, we are created to bear fruit. Unite our praises with those of all the faithful who are connected to Christ and join them with the unending praise of the angels and archangels and all the company of heaven ...

## Words of Our Lord

### Proclamation of Christ

- P** As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.
- C Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**
- P** Welcome to the Lord's Table.

*Holy Communion is distributed in a walk-through manner, beginning on the right (east) side of the sanctuary.*

### Song: Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)

LSB 163

## Distribution

### SongTrack: Exceeding Joy (by Hillsong)

(video)

### Communion Dismissal

Psalm 118:1

- P** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart ☩ in peace.
- C Amen.**
- P** Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!
- C His love endures forever.**

### Song: Thank the Lord

LSB 164

### Post-Communion Thanksgiving

- P** We pray ... Holy Father, we ask You now, by this blessed food and drink, to deliver Your Church from every evil, to teach it to love You perfectly, and to make it truly one, even as this bread was made from many grains of wheat to become the carrier of the body of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and the wine was drawn from the fruitfulness of many grapes. Grant that we ever abide in the Word, Christ Himself, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.
- C Amen.**
- P** Go in peace as you serve the Lord, and POINT the Way.
- C Thanks be to God!**

*Please join us for CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP and refreshments in the Fellowship Hall.*

+ **ENTER TO WORSHIP** + **EXIT TO WITNESS** +

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