

ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

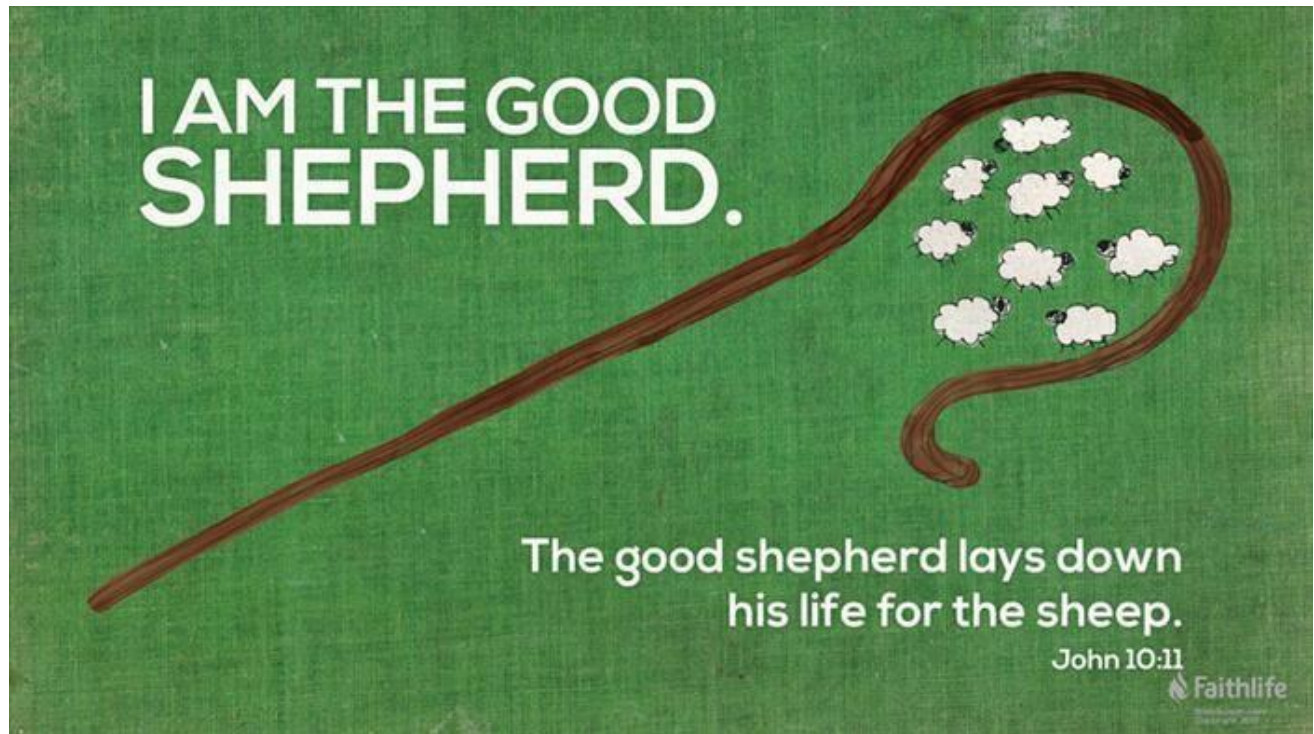
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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Website: www.stmarkwb.org



The Third Sunday of Easter (Misericordias Domini)

4 May A✠D 2025

Divine Service, Setting I

✝ Welcome in the name of Jesus! ✝

Today we observe the Third Sunday of Easter. On this day, as we continue our Easter celebration, we consider how Jesus, risen from the dead, stands by our side as our Good Shepherd. Indeed, on the cross He laid down his life to save us from the enemy. And now, having taken life back up again, He lives to defend us, to care for us, and to provide for all our needs. As Christians, we can be sure: We are not alone; our Good Shepherd is with us.

If you are a VISITOR here, we'd like to offer you our warmest welcome! We pray that your experience among us is blessed, and that you depart filled with God's peace and life.

Also, toward the end of our service today we will be celebrating Holy Communion, in which we will eat and drink Jesus' body and blood, under bread and wine, for the forgiveness of our sins (Matthew 26:26-28). Therefore, we ask that you would please see the statement titled "On the Sacrament of Holy Communion," printed below, which describes our beliefs and practices regarding this sacred gift.

O Lord, my creator, redeemer, and comforter, as
I come to worship You in spirit and in truth,
I humbly pray that You would open my heart to
the preaching of Your Word so that I may
repent of my sins, believe in Jesus Christ as my
only Savior, and grow in grace and holiness.
Hear me for the sake of His name. Amen.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION: We believe that when we receive Holy Communion together, we are publicly declaring both our unity in Christ and our agreement in doctrine (1 Cor. 10:16-17; 1 Cor. 1:10). We also believe that if we receive this sacrament in unbelief, we risk God's judgment (1 Cor. 11:27-30).

Therefore, communion at this altar is reserved for those who believe and confess the teachings of our church body, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Those who have not been formally instructed in our teachings should wait to commune until completing a course of instruction with us.

If you are a VISITOR and would like to commune with us today, please speak with the pastor before the service. If you will not be communing, you are welcome to kneel at the altar with your arms folded across your chest to receive a blessing, or you may simply remain in your pew.

Confession and Absolution

Stand

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

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

C Amen.

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Kneel/Stand

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Stand

Hymn of Invocation: 475 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice and Sing!



1 Good Chris-tian friends, re-joice and sing! Now is the tri-umph
2 The Lord of life is ris'n this day; Bring flow'rs of song to
3 Praise we in songs of vic-to-ry That love, that life which
4 Your name we bless, O ris-en Lord, And sing to-day with



of our King! To all the world glad news we bring:
strew His way; Let all the world re-joice and say:
can-not die, And sing with hearts up-lift-ed high:
one ac-cord The life laid down, the life re-stored:



Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia!
Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia!
Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia!
Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia!

Text: Cyril A. Alington, 1872–1955, alt. Tune: Melchior Vulpus, c. 1570–1615

Text: © 1958, renewed 1986 Hymns Ancient and Modern Ltd., admin. Hope Publishing Co. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110002763 Tune: Public domain

Service of the Word

Introit (*spoken responsively*)

Psalm 33:1, 18–20; antiphon: vv. 5b, 6a

P The earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD. Alleluia.
By the word of the LORD the heavens were made. Alleluia.

P Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous!
Praise befits the upright.

C Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear
him, on those who hope in his steadfast love,

P that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them
alive in famine.

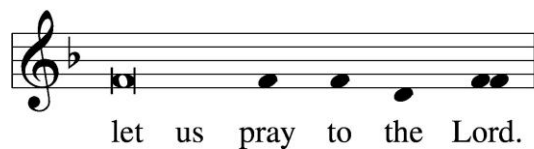
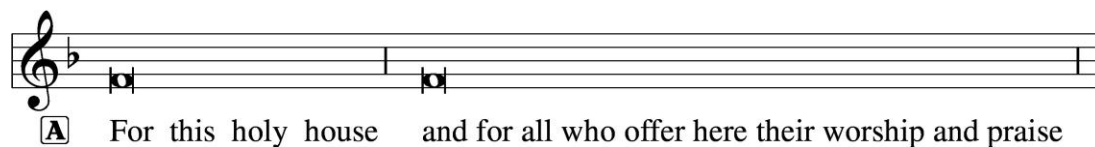
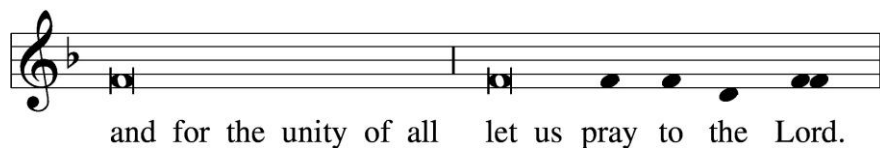
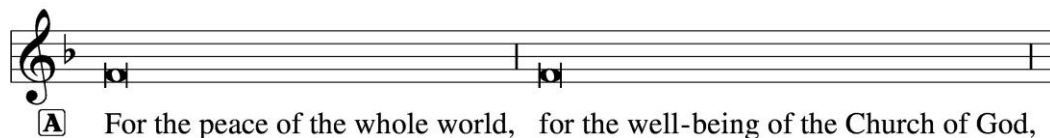
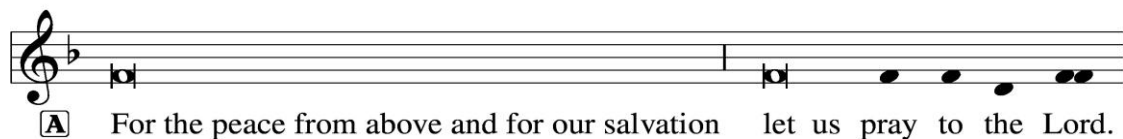
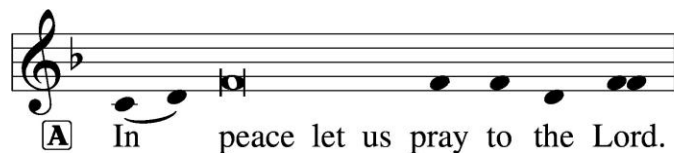
C Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our
shield.

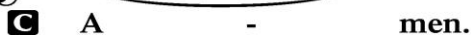
All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P The earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD. Alleluia.
By the word of the LORD the heavens were made. Alleluia.

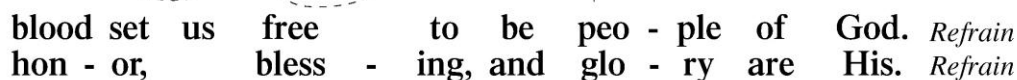
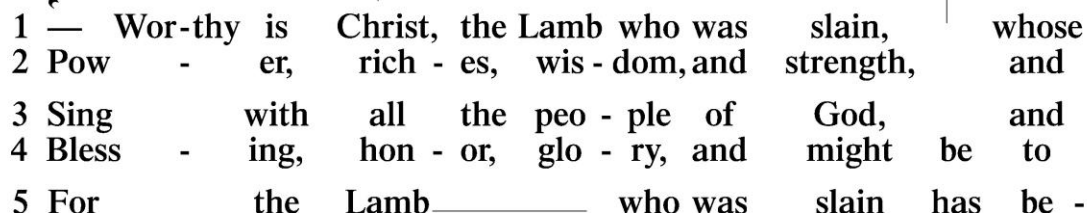
Kyrie

Mark 10:47



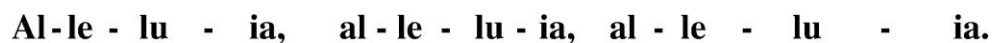


Refrain



join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: *Stanza 4*
 God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men. *Refrain*

gun His reign. Al - le - lu - ia. *Final Refrain*



Salutation and Collect of the Day



P The Lord be with you.



C And al - so with you.

P Let us pray.

O God, through the humiliation of Your Son You raised up the fallen world. Grant to Your faithful people, rescued from the peril of everlasting death, perpetual gladness and eternal joys; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



C A - men.

Sit

Old Testament Reading

Ezekiel 34:11–16

¹¹“For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. ¹²As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. ¹⁴I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. ¹⁶I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse (spoken responsively)

Luke 24:35b; John 10:14

During the Sundays of Easter, the Gradual is omitted and the Verse is expanded.

- P** Alleluia. [The Lord] was known to them in the breaking of the bread. Alleluia.
- C** **I am the good shepherd.**
I know my own and my own know me. Alleluia.

Epistle

1 Peter 2:21–25

²¹For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²²He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Stand

Alleluia

John 6:68

C Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Holy Gospel

John 10:11–16

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

C Glo - ry to You, O Lord.

¹¹[Jesus said:] “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing 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. ¹⁶And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.



C Praise to You, O Christ.

Sit

Hymn of the Day: 710 The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want



1 The Lord's my shep - herd, I'll not want; He makes me
2 My soul He doth re - store a - gain And me to
3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, Yet will I
4 My ta - ble Thou hast fur - nish - ed In pres - ence
5 Good - ness and mer - cy all my life Shall sure - ly



down to lie In pas - tures green; He
walk doth make With - in the paths of
fear no ill; For Thou art with me,
of my foes; My head Thou dost with
fol - low me; And in God's house for -



lead - eth me The qui - et wa - ters by.
righ - teous - ness, E'en for His own name's sake.
and Thy rod And staff me com - fort still.
oil a - noint, And my cup o - ver - flows.
ev - er - more My dwell - ing place shall be.

Text: The Psalms of David in Meeter, 1650, Edinburgh Tune: William Gardiner, 1770–1853
Text and tune: Public domain

Sermon

Stand

Nicene Creed

C I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life ✝ of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Church

P In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P That the Lord would accomplish His holy purpose in calling many joyfully to know His redemption, and that we, as the people of God, would live lives of service as a kingdom of priests in accordance with God's holy will, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the pastors of the Church, that they would feed the flock of Christ with His Word, seek His scattered sheep and bind up their injured hearts, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the erring, that the scattered may be found and restored; that God's holy people may be preserved; and that all may be gathered to Christ, the true Shepherd, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For all baptized Christians, that we whose sins have been crucified in Christ's body on the tree would bring forth the fruit of holy lives by His continual grace, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the gift of good government, that as the Paschal Lamb has wrought peace between man and God, so He would grant peace and good days also to our citizens and between the nations of the world; and that we and all our neighbors may lead quiet lives in godly contentment, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For [_____ *and*] all who wait on the mercy of God, that God would watch over them and deliver them in their hour of need, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the Church gathered around the altar of Christ, that our Shepherd would feed our faith with His body and blood and keep us in the rich pasture of His Church, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P O Lord, out of Your fatherly goodness You have remembered us poor, miserable sinners and given Your beloved Son to be our Shepherd — not only to nourish us by His Word, but also to defend us from sin, death and the devil. Grant us Your Holy Spirit, that even as this Shepherd knows us and helps in every affliction, we also may know Him, trust Him, seek help and comfort in Him, heartily obey His voice, and obtain eternal salvation; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Sit

Offering

During the Offering, we ask that you please sign a black attendance book located in your pew.

Stand

Offertory

Psalm 116:12–13, 17–19

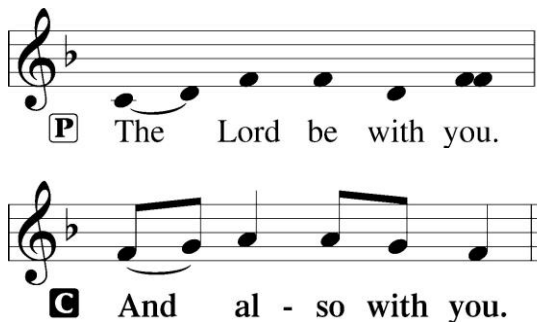


C What shall I ren-der to the Lord for all His ben-e-fits to
me? I will of - fer the sac-ri-fice of thanks-giv - ing and will
call on the name of the Lord. I will take the cup of sal-
va - tion and will call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my
vows to the Lord now in the pres-ence of all His peo-ple, in the
courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Je - ru - sa - lem.

Service of the Sacrament

Preface

2 Timothy 4:22; [Colossians 3:1]; [Psalm 136]



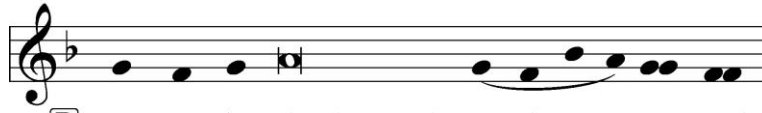
P The Lord be with you.
C And al - so with you.



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 salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God. And most especially are we bound to praise You on this day for the glorious resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ, the very Paschal Lamb, who was sacrificed for us and bore the sins of the world. By His dying He has destroyed death, and by His rising again He has restored to us everlasting life. Therefore with Mary Magdalene, Peter and John, and with all the witnesses of the resurrection, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Sanctus

Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 21:9



C 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.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

LSB 161

- P** Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9–13

- P** Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C 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.

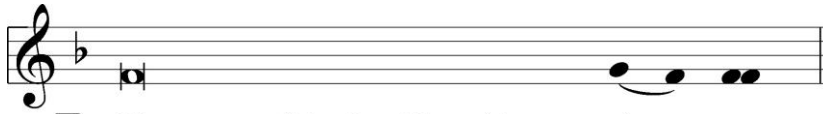
The Words of Our Lord

- P** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Pax Domini

John 20:19



P The peace of the Lord be with you al - ways.



C A - men.

Agnus Dei

John 1:29



C 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.

Sit

Distribution

Visitors – Please see the note on the inside front of this service folder regarding our Holy Communion policy.

Distribution Hymn: 735 Have No Fear, Little Flock



1 Have no fear, lit - tle flock; Have no fear, lit - tle
2 Have good cheer, lit - tle flock; Have good cheer, lit - tle
3 Praise the Lord high a - bove; Praise the Lord high a -
4 Thank - ful hearts raise to God; Thank - ful hearts raise to

flock, For the Fa - ther has cho - sen To
flock, For the Fa - ther will keep you In
bove, For He stoops down to heal you, Up -
God, For He stays close be - side you, In

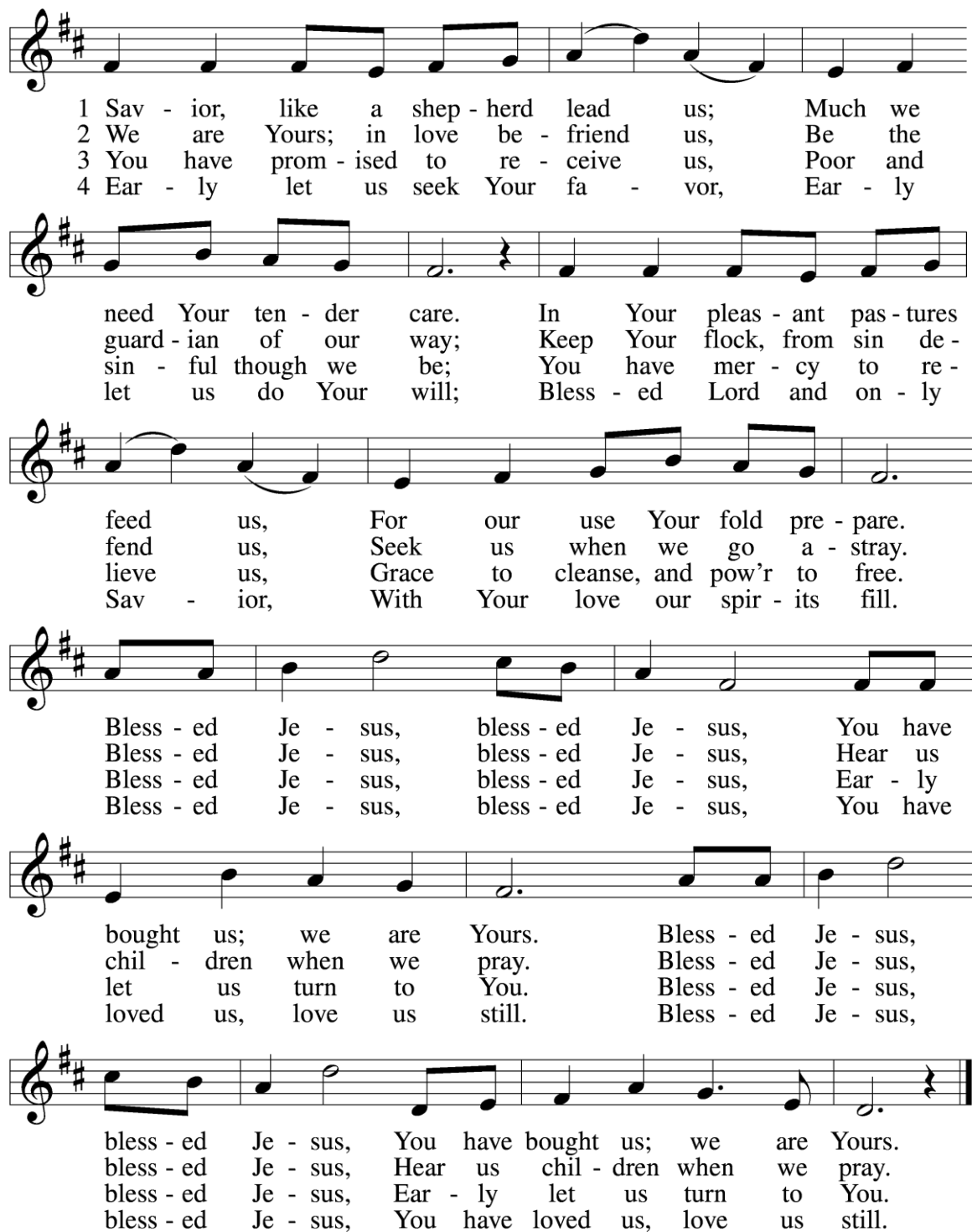
give you the King - dom; Have no fear, lit - tle flock!
His love for - ev - er; Have good cheer, lit - tle flock!
lift and re - store you; Praise the Lord high a - bove!
all things works with you; Thank - ful hearts raise to God!

Text (sts. 2–4): Marjorie A. Jillson, 1931–2010

Text (st. 1) and tune: Heinz Werner Zimmermann, 1930–2022

Text and tune: © 1973 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110002763

Distribution Hymn: 711 Savior, Like A Shepherd Lead Us



1 Sav - ior, like a shep - herd lead us; Much we
 2 We are Yours; in love be - friend us, Be the
 3 You have prom - ised to re - ceive us, Poor and
 4 Ear - ly let us seek Your fa - vor, Ear - ly

need Your ten - der care. In Your pleas - ant pas - tures
 guard - ian of our way; Keep Your flock, from sin de -
 sin - ful though we be; You have mer - cy to re -
 let us do Your will; Bless - ed Lord and on - ly

feed us, For our use Your fold pre - pare.
 fend us, Seek us when we go a - stray.
 lieve us, Grace to cleanse, and pow'r to free.
 Sav - ior, With Your love our spir - its fill.

Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, You have
 Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, Hear us
 Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, Ear - ly
 Bless - ed Je - sus, bless - ed Je - sus, You have

bought us; we are Yours. Bless - ed Je - sus,
 chil - dren when we pray. Bless - ed Je - sus,
 let us turn to You. Bless - ed Je - sus,
 loved us, love us still. Bless - ed Je - sus,

bless - ed Je - sus, You have bought us; we are Yours.
 bless - ed Je - sus, Hear us chil - dren when we pray.
 bless - ed Je - sus, Ear - ly let us turn to You.
 bless - ed Je - sus, You have loved us, love us still.

Text: Hymns for the Young, 1836, 4th ed., London, alt. Tune: William B. Bradbury, 1816-68
 Text and tune: Public domain

Thank the Lord

[Psalm 105:1–3, 42–43]; [1 Chronicles 16:8–10]



C Thank the Lord and sing His praise; tell ev-'ry-one what He has done.



Let all who seek the Lord re - jice and proud-ly bear His name.



He re-calls His prom-is - es and leads His peo-ple forth in joy



with shouts of thanks-giv-ing. Al-le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia.

Post-Communion Collect

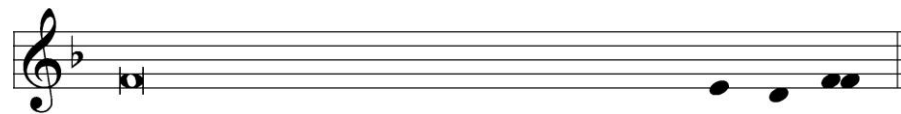
P Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Benediction

Numbers 6:24–26



P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you
and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.



C A - men.

Closing Hymn: 740 I Am Jesus' Little Lamb



The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'I Am Jesus' Little Lamb'. It consists of four staves of music, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is simple and repetitive, with a final double bar line at the end of the fourth staff. The lyrics are written below the staves, with three verses of text aligned with the musical lines.

1 I am Je - sus' lit - tle lamb, Ev - er glad at
2 Day by day, at home, a - way, Je - sus is my
3 Who so hap - py as I am, E - ven now the

heart I am; For my Shep - herd gent - ly guides me,
staff and stay. When I hun - ger, Je - sus feeds me,
Shep - herd's lamb? And when my short life is end - ed,

Knows my need and well pro - vides me, Loves me ev - 'ry
In - to pleas - ant pas - tures leads me; When I thirst, He
By His an - gel host at - tend - ed, He shall fold me

day the same, E - ven calls me by my name.
bids me go Where the qui - et wa - ters flow.
to His breast, There with - in His arms to rest.

Text: Henrietta L. von Hayn, 1724-82; tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941

Tune: Choral-Buch . . . Brüder-Gemeinen, 1784, Leipzig Text and tune: Public domain

Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting One from Lutheran Service Book

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THIS WEEK'S CHURCH CALENDAR

Sun. 5/4 The Third Sunday after Easter
Pastor Terry Nelson, Presiding

- **Divine Service 9:30 a.m.**
- **Adult Bible Class 10:45 a.m.**

Thur. 5/8 Quilting Bee 10:00 a.m.

Sun. 5/11 The Fourth Sunday after Easter
Mother's Day
Pastor Rod Zwonitzer, Presiding

- **Divine Service 9:30 a.m.**
- **Adult Bible Class 10:45 a.m.**

TODAY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADULT BIBLE STUDY will be held at 10:45 am in the fellowship hall which is located in the lower level. Members and non - members are invited to attend.

QUILTING BEE is currently meeting on Thursday mornings at 10 am. Anyone interested in joining and have questions please reach out to Leslie Oehring. She will be able to answer any questions you may have; or just show up.

TOILETRY/HYGIENE DONATIONS FOR THE OPEN DOOR OUTREACH CENTER – We continue to receive hygiene & toiletry products year around for the Open Door Outreach Center in Waterford. The Open Door is a non-profit organization that assists needy families in the Lakes Area. They are ALWAYS in need of toiletry and hygiene items, so **if you can provide any of these throughout the year, it would be appreciated.**

WE CONTINUE TO COLLECT used postage stamps for Wycliffe Bible Translation Ministries, and used eyeglasses for MOST Ministries in the two plastic bins on the shelves at the bottom of the sanctuary stairs. Wycliffe sells the stamps to stamp collectors and then uses the proceeds to fund Bible translation projects throughout the world. MOST Ministries repairs/refurbishes used eyeglasses and distributes them via eyeglass clinics to the needy around the world. If you donate postage stamps, please be sure to leave ¼” of the envelope paper around the stamp so that the stamp isn't damaged. Thank you.

Enough

by David Davis, President, LCMS Michigan District

Blog 4/24/2025

There are not enough pastors. There are not enough teachers. There are not enough volunteers.

Small congregations. Stagnant congregations. Closing congregations.

The promise remains. *“I will build my Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18b ESV).*

There are at least three things we should take notice of in this short verse. First, the work of building the Church is the work of Jesus and He will accomplish it. Jesus, seated at the right hand of the Father, works through the power of His Spirit by His Word to draw people into the Christian faith. We should believe this to be true. Jesus will build His Church.

Second, He is intent on building His Church. Not your congregation. Not our denomination. His Church. Certainly, congregational life is God’s plan for Christian living. The partnership that happens within a denomination is a great resource. But the end work of Jesus is building His Church, the Holy Christian Church, the one people of God.

Third, He says the gates of hell or Hades cannot prevail against it. Commentators have interesting insights into this phrase, what it refers to. But for our purposes let us simply understand it as an argument of the greater to the lesser. If nothing as great as the gates of hell can prevail against Jesus and the building up of His Church, then it doesn’t sound like something lesser (culture, the government, alternative religions) can either.

All of this is to say that we do have enough to go about our work and life together in our local congregations, the District, the Synod, and beyond. We have Jesus’ power. We have His goal. We have His assurance.

So, let’s be at it, doing what we can with what He has given us at this time. Remember the miracle of the five loaves and the two fish? *“... bring them here to me” (Matthew 14: 18 ESV).* Instead of being concerned with what we don’t

have enough of, let’s bring what we do have and put it in Jesus’ hands. Let’s love one another. We have enough for that. Let’s love our neighbors. We have enough for that. Let’s proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom. We have enough for that too.

Yes, from one point of view we wish we had more for the Church and her congregations than what we have at hand. But let’s come together and make the most of the opportunity that we do have with the resources we have. Specifically, consider the following:

- Begin one new community outreach initiative with your neighborhood with what you have. The key thing you have, by the way, is proximity.
- Love one another within your congregation. Build community with those who are already there.
- Share resources with other neighboring congregations. Share pastors, other church workers, volunteers. Remember, Jesus is at work to build His Church, which is not the same as your congregation.
- Be open to closing your congregation if resources would be better utilized by another congregation.

- Don't be closed to opening a new congregation. If a new one thrives, even at "the expense" of yours, we celebrate a victory for the Church.
- And pray. As you seek to be faithful over what God has given you for ministry, pray to the Father to send more workers into the harvest as Jesus instructed. This is indeed a time for the Church and her congregations not to wring their hands in anxiety but to fold them in prayer.

We desire to build healthy congregations. And God has given each of them enough to be so. He has given us His Son. He has given us His Word. He has given us His Spirit. He has given us His promise. He has given us to each other. He has given us enough resources to do what He calls us to do: join in the work of Jesus as He builds His Church in the face of even the worst adversary.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

LCMS Stewardship Ministry – lcms.org/stewardship

Stewardship Thoughts – May 2025

Stewardship in the Body of Christ

Baseball season is upon us. The southern images of spring training give way to the pageantry of Opening Day. On that day, the hopes and dreams of every major league team, player and fan focus on doing whatever it takes to get to the Fall Classic, the World Series. Baseball is a secular way that so many of us confess that hope "springs" eternal.

With all of this in mind, baseball can also teach us a new perspective about stewardship. Think about the game itself. Baseball is a team sport. The home team faces off against the visitors. Yet while it is a team game, there are repetitive, individual confrontations that take place within the game. The baseball game cannot start without the individual pitcher against the hitter. Once the batted ball is in play, the battle is between the ability of the fielder against the speed of the baserunner. Once there is a runner on base, an attempt to steal a base pits the runner against the catcher. A base hit into the outfield pits the outfielder against a runner trying to score.

Baseball is a team game with many smaller units at play. Without all those smaller units working together and achieving their tasks, the team will lose.

Romans 12 puts our stewardship of the Gospel in a similar setting. The church is certainly described as a team, if you will.

Verse 3: *"For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned."* This is where the Body of Christ is really seen as a team. No one member of the baseball team can win the game by themselves. In the same way, no one part of the Body of Christ can accomplish stewardship of the Gospel alone. The pastor cannot. The congregational chair cannot. The lead soprano in the choir cannot. But each of these individuals have been added to the local congregation to be built into a team that can win the victory with Jesus.

Verses 4–5: *“For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”* In baseball, the pitcher pitches. The catcher catches. The hitter hits. When a pitcher attempts to hit, the result is usually not very pretty. Catchers often do not excel at running the bases. The hitter usually does not do well when they are sent to the mound to pitch. Every member of the Body of Christ has a unique set of abilities and functions. Not everyone preaches. Not everyone leads. Not everyone sings well. Yet when the congregation assembles together as a team, it can succeed in ways unattainable by the individual.

Verses 6–8: *“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”* Each member of the team has a role to play. Abilities and opportunities are entrusted to the individual members of the Body of Christ to be used for the ultimate purpose of stewarding the Gospel for the glory of God and the benefit of the neighbor. The one preaching is no more or less important than the others. The one serving or the one teaching, the leader or the merciful one — all are equally important in the faithful stewardship of all that the Lord has entrusted to the Body of Christ. All this stewardship is for the sake of the other!

A baseball team can have five All-Star pitchers but cannot win if the hitters do not hit. The best lineup in the league will struggle if the pitchers cannot get anyone on the other team out. Pitchers need the defense behind them to play well. Coaches need to lead well. When they all work together, you have a winning baseball team. When the Body of Christ has all its members faithfully stewarding the unique individual talents that have been entrusted to them, the victory goes to Jesus! This is the goal of faithful stewardship! It is all about Jesus!



SERVING THE LORD WITH GLADNESS THIS MORNING

Presiding Minister	Pastor Terry Nelson
Altar Guild	TBD
Elder on Duty	Darryl Swainson
Greeter(s)	Jennie & Karen Kaufman
Offering Counters	TBD
Organists	Rob Wheeler
Usher	Matt Maier



SERVING THE LORD WITH GLADNESS NEXT WEEK

Presiding Minister	Pastor Rod Zwonitzer
Altar Guild	TBD
Elder on Duty	None
Greeter(s)	Cathy Fitzgerald
Offering Counters	TBD
Organists	Rob Wheeler
Usher	Tom Kaufman