

**St. Paul Lutheran Church**

**Pontiac, IL**

**April 25, 2021**

**Fourth Sunday of Easter**

**We gather to worship, reach out, and serve the Lord.**

**Welcome**

Welcome to St. Paul Lutheran Church. Whether you have worshipped with us many times, or this is your first time, there is a place for you here. Your presence among us is a gift.

God’s Peace be with you.

**Introduction to the day**

**Introduction**

The image of the good shepherd shows us how the risen Christ brings us to life. It is the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep, one of mutual knowledge and love, that gives the shepherd authority. The shepherd’s willingness to lay down his life for the sheep shows his love. First John illustrates what it means to lay down our lives for one another by the example of sharing our wealth with any sibling in need.

**Prelude**

**GATHERING**

### Thanksgiving for Baptism

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

L: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**A: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

L: Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ, Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

*Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister gives thanks.*

We thank you, risen Christ,

**We thank you, risen Christ,**

for these waters where you make us new,

Leading us from death to life, from tears to joy.

We bless you, risen Christ,

**We bless you, risen Christ**

that your Spirit comes to us

In the grace-filled waters of rebirth,

Like rains to our thirsting earth,

Like streams that revive our souls,

Like cups of cool water shared with strangers.

Breathe your peace on your church when we hide in fear.

Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness.

Send us companions on our journey as we share your life.

Make us one, risen Christ.

**Make us one, risen Christ.**

Cleanse our hearts.

Shower us with life.

To you be given all praise,

With the Holy Spirit,

In the glory of God,

Now and forever. Let the church say Amen.

**A: Amen.**

**Greeting**

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the

Holy Spirit be with you all**.**

**A: And also with you.**

**Prayer of the Day**

L: 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.

**A: Amen**.

**Children’s Message (following the message children are invited to go to Children’s Chapel)**

**WORD**

**First Reading –** **Acts 4: 5-12**

L: A reading from Acts.

L: 5The next day [the] rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, 6with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. 7When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” 8Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, 9if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, 10let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. 11This Jesus is  
 ‘the stone that was rejected by you, the builders;  
  it has become the cornerstone.’  
12There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.”

L:Word of God, word of life.

A**: Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm Reading- Psalm 23**

L: A reading from Psalm.

The Lord is my shepherd;  
  I shall not be in want.  
 2**The Lord makes me lie down in green pastures**  
  **and leads me beside still waters.**  
 3You restore my soul, O Lord,  
  and guide me along right pathways for your name’s sake.  
 4**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;**  
  **for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**  
 5You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
  you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running 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 forever.**

L: Holy Wisdom. Holy word.

**A: Thanks be to God.**

**Second Reading – 1 John 3: 16-24**

L: A reading from 1 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.

L: Word of God, word of life.

**A: Thanks be to God.**

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*Please rise as you are able for the reading of the Holy Gospel.*

**Gospel Acclamation**

(spoken responsively)

L: Alleluia. Jesus says, I am the good shepherd.

**A: I know my own and my own know me. Alleluia.**

**Gospel–John 10: 11-18**

L: The Holy Gospel according to John.

**A: 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.”

L: The gospel of the Lord.

**A: Praise to you, O, Christ.**

**Sermon Pastor Mathew Berger**

**Hymn of the Day We Plow the Fields and Scatter ELW 681**

**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**

Throughout our prayers, each petition ends “Hear us, O God.”. The congregation is invited to respond, **“Your mercy is great.”**

**Sharing the Peace**

L: The peace of Christ be with you always.

**A: And also with you.**

*You are invited to share a sign of God’s peace with your neighbors by saying or typing, “Peace be with you.”*

**MEAL**

**Offering**

*Offerings can be placed in the offering box at the back of the sanctuary, made by mail or online. You can send a check to St. Paul Lutheran Church 210 Deerfield Rd Pontiac, IL 61764 or give online at* [*stpaulpontiac.org*](http://www.stpaulpontiac.org/)

**Offertory Music Psalm 23**

**Offering Prayer**

L: God of Love,

you call us beloved children and welcome us to your table.

Receive our lives and the gifts we offer.

Abide with us and send us in service to a suffering world;

for the sake of your beloved Child, Jesus Christ.

**A: Amen.**

**Great Thanksgiving**

L: The Lord be with you.

**A: And also with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts.

**A: We lift them to the Lord.**

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**A: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

**Preface**

L: 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 saying

**A: Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

**Lord God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory**

**Hosanna in the highest,**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Thanksgiving at the Table**

L: Holy, living, and loving God,

we praise you for creating the heavens and the earth.

We bless you for bringing Noah and his family through the waters of the flood,

for freeing your people Israel from the bonds of slavery,

and for sending your Son to be our Redeemer.

We give you thanks for Jesus

who, living among us,

healed the sick,

fed the hungry,

and with a love stronger than death,

gave his life for others.

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 life-giving death and glorious resurrection,

we await your promised life for all this dying world.

Breathe your Spirit on us and on this bread and cup:

carry us in your arms from death to life,

that we may live as your people,

clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,

Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,

in your holy Church,

both now and forever, and all God’s people said...

**Amen.**

**Lord's Prayer**

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

**A: 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**

L: The risen Christ invites us to this table. Come, eat and be satisfied.

**Communion Music Come to the Altar Elevation Worship**

**Prayer After Communion**

*a blessing is given, a prayer follows*

L: Wellspring of joy,

through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts.

Satisfy the hunger still around us,

and send us as joyful witnesses,

that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**A: Amen.**

**Announcements**

**SENDING**

**Rogation Blessing**

L: Friends in Christ: The Earth itself raises up a joyful “Alleluia!,” as God brings resurrection life once again to our soil and farmlands. Today we give thanks to Go, seek God’s blessing upon our farmers and farmlands, and we ask that God would make us all faithful stewards of creation.

L: A Reading from Psalm 104:

Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, you are very great!

You are clothed with majesty and splendor.

From your dwelling on high, you water the mountains;

the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your works.

You make grass grow for the cattle, and plants to serve humankind;

that they may bring forth food from the earth,

People go forth to their work

and to their labor until the evening.

All of earth’s creatures look to you

to give them their food in due season.

You give it to them; they gather it;

you open your hand, and they are filled with good things.

Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, you are very great!

**Prayer for Seeds**

L: Creating God, you have given seed to the sower and bread to the people. Nourish, protect, and bless the seeds which your people have sown in hope. By your loving and bountiful giving, may they bring forth their fruit in due season. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Prayer for Soil**

L: Giver of life, we give you thanks that in the richness of the soil, nature awakens to your call of spring. We praise you for the smell of freshly tilled earth, the beauty of a cleanly cut furrow, and a well-plowed field. We ask that you help us to be good stewards of this land. In the name of the one who gives us new life, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Prayer for Water/Rain**

L: Sustaining God, we receive the fruits of the earth from you. We give you thanks for the smell of the earth after rain, for its welcome cooling, and its necessary hydration for the land. We ask that the rain come as often as it is needed so that the crops may flourish and the coming harvest be indeed bountiful Amen.

**Prayer for Farmers**

L: For those who with their hands till the ground to provide for human needs.

**A: We give you thanks, O God.**

L: For those who spend long hours of difficult labor at planting and harvest...

**A: We give you thanks, O God.**

L: For the machines, made by human hands, which till the ground and transport its fruit…

**A: We give you thanks, O God.**

Nurturing God, surround all farmers with your constant presence during this new season of planting. Guide them as they sow the seeds of your good earth, fill them with the joy of caring for your creation, and give them rest amid long days. **Amen.**

*All are invited to extend one or both hands out to the seeds in a sign of blessing.*

L: Holy God, bless now our farms and farmers. May those who labor in your creation find joy and dignity in their work, and strength and safety in their days. Bless the weeks and months to come with favorable weather, and bring us at last to an abundant harvest. Make us faithful stewards of all these gifts, that they may be signs of your everlasting love. To you be all glory and honor through your Son, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

**Blessing**

L: May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom

to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus.

The God of life,

Father, ☩ Son, and the Holy Spirit,

bless you now and forever.

**A: Amen.**

**Sending Hymn For the Fruit of All Creation ELW 679**

**Dismissal**

L: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**A: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

L: Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

**A: Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

**Postlude**

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Thank you to all those who contributed to today’s service: Worship Slides: Julie Mehlberg, Lector: Judy Sykes, Ushers: Tom Harms, Musician: Sandy Erickson, Livestream: Louis Kehinde, Sound: John Mehlberg