

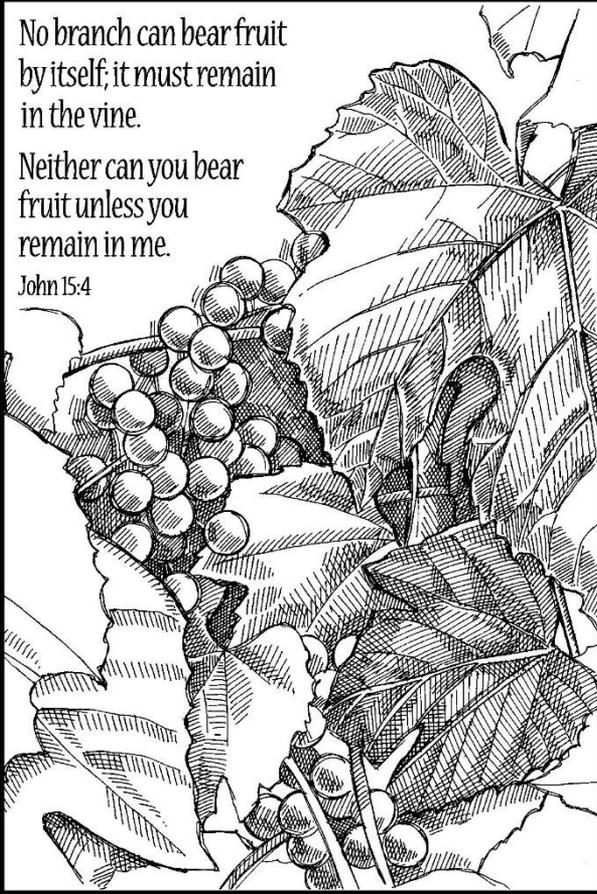
Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE

No branch can bear fruit
by itself; it must remain
in the vine.

Neither can you bear
fruit unless you
remain in me.

John 15:4



✠ Holy Communion ✠

Fifth Sunday of Easter

April 28, 2024

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



This Sunday's image of how the risen Christ shares his life with us is the image of the vine. Christ the vine and we the branches are alive in each other, in the mystery of mutual abiding described in the gospel and the first letter of John. Baptism makes us a part of Christ's living and life-giving self and makes us alive with Christ's life. As the vine brings food to the branches, Christ feeds us at his table. We are sent out to bear fruit for the life of the world.

GATHERING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Stand

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

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

C: Amen.

P: Look, here is water!

C: **Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

P: 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.
In a desert pool the Ethiopian official
entered your boundless baptismal life.

P: Look, here is water!

C: **Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

P: 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.

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.

C: Amen.

P: Look, here is water!

C: Here is our water of life! Alleluia!

GATHERING HYMN

Hallelujah! Jesus Lives!.....LBW 147

APOSTOLIC GREETING

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

C: He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

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

C: And also with you.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE



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



C Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow-er and rich-es and wis-dom and



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



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



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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

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.

C: Amen.

Sit



WORD**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: A Reading from 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.”

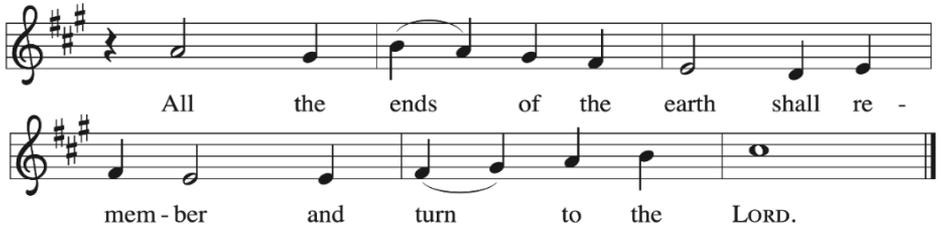
³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” ³⁵Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the 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.

A: The word of the Lord.

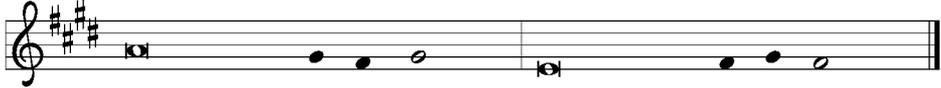
C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 22:25-31

The cantor sings the refrain; the congregation repeats it.



Sung responsively between the cantor and congregation.



- 25 From you comes my praise in the | great assembly;
I will perform my vows in the sight of those who | fear the LORD.
- 26 **The poor shall eat | and be satisfied,
Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your
hearts | live forever!**
- 27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn | to the LORD;
all the families of nations shall bow | before God.
- 28 **For dominion belongs | to the LORD,
who rules o- | ver the nations. R**
- 29 Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow | down in worship;
all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel
be- | fore the LORD.
- 30 **Their descendants shall | serve the LORD,
whom they shall proclaim to genera- | tions to come.**
- 31 They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people | yet unborn,
saying to them, "The | LORD has acted!" **R**



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: A Reading from First 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.

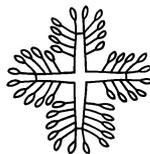
¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶So we have known and believe 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.

A: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Stand



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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

Cantor: I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit.

C: Repeat the Alleluias

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.

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

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said: ¹“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. 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.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

SERMON **Pastor Amme**

Stand

HYMN OF THE DAY

We Know That Christ Is Raised **LBW 189**

SERVICE OF HOLY BAPTISM

P: In Holy Baptism our gracious heavenly Father liberates us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are born children of a fallen humanity; in the waters of Baptism we are reborn children of God and inheritors of eternal life. By water and the Holy Spirit, we are made members of the Church which is the body of Christ. As we live with him and with his people, we grow in faith, love, and obedience to the will of God.

The pastor addresses the parents.

Bentley James Marlin Place is presented to receive the sacrament of Holy Baptism.

In Christian love you have presented Bentley for Holy Baptism. You should, therefore, faithfully bring him to the services of God's house, and teach him the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. As he grows in years, you should place in his hands the Holy Scriptures and provide for his instruction in the Christian faith, that, living in the covenant of his Baptism and in communion with the Church, he may lead a godly life until the day of Jesus Christ.

P: Do you promise to fulfill these obligations?

R: I do.

Water is poured into the font.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

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

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

P: Almighty, everlasting God, we give you thanks and praise for our risen Lord, your beloved Son, Jesus Christ who said to his disciples, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Hear our prayer and grant to Bentley, now to be baptized, the fullness of your grace, that he may grow to know your steadfast love and, in thanksgiving, to offer that same gracious love to all whom he meets on his journey in life. Grant this through Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen**

P: I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the Church, the faith in which we baptize.

P: Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the devil, and all his empty promises?

R: I do.

Stand

P: Do you believe in God the Father?

C: **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

P: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

C: **I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

P: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

C: **I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen**

Sit

P: Bentley James Marlin,
I baptize you in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

Laying both hands on the head of the newly baptized, the pastor prays:

P: Let us pray,

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we give you thanks for freeing your sons and daughters from the power of sin and for raising them up to a new life through this holy sacrament. Pour your Holy Spirit upon Bentley James Marlin: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence.

C: Amen

The pastor marks the sign of the cross with oil on the forehead of the baptized. As the sign of the cross is made, the pastor says:

P: Bentley James Marlin, child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.

The child is wrapped with the baptismal garment.

P: Bentley James Marlin, baptized into Christ, you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ and prepared with us to celebrate his great high feast.

The pastor presents a candle, lit from the paschal candle, to the baptized, and says:

P: Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

P: O God, the giver of all life, look with kindness upon the father and mother of this child. Let them ever rejoice in the gift you have given them. Make them teachers and examples of righteousness for their child. Strengthen them in their own Baptism so they may share eternally with their child the salvation you have given them, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen

Stand. The pastor and the baptismal group face the congregation.

P: Through Baptism God has made this new brother a member of the priesthood we all share in Christ Jesus, that we may proclaim the praise of God and bear his creative and redeeming Word to all the world.

C: We welcome you into the Lord's family. We receive you as a fellow member of the body of Christ, a child of the same heavenly Father, and a worker with us in the kingdom of God.

Presentation of the Faith Chest

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A brief silence is held after the introduction.

P: Rejoicing that Jesus is risen and love has triumphed over fear, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news.

After each petition:

P: God of grace,

C: **hear our prayer.**

The prayers conclude:

P: 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.

C: **Amen**

PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

The pastor and congregation greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Peace be with you. R: Peace be with you

Sit

MEAL

OFFERING

The Offering is received as the Lord's table is prepared.

ANTHEM

Amazing Grace/Kum Ba Yah* **Beery and Musser*

Stand

OFFERTORY

As the gifts are presented, the Offertory is sung

C: **Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;**

Praise God, all creatures here below:

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God, the source of all our gifts!

Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!

Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

OFFERING PRAYER**A**: Let us pray:**C**: Risen One,

you call us to believe and bear fruit.

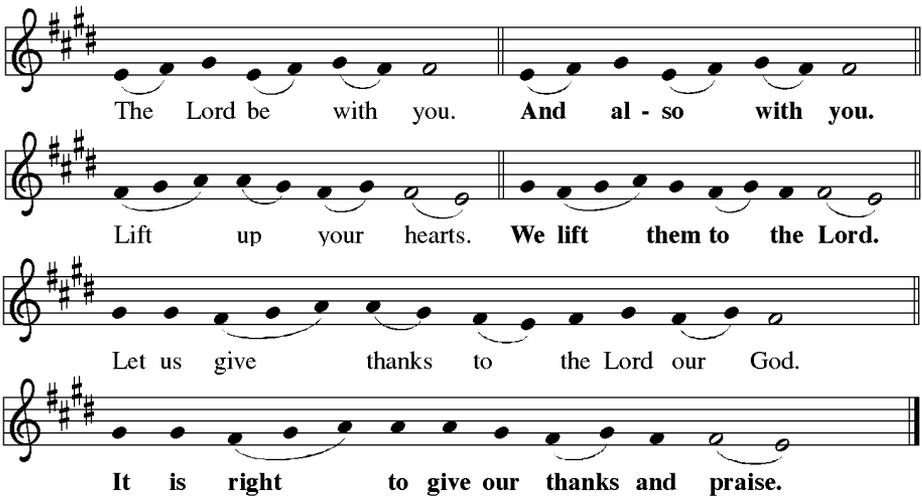
May the gifts that we offer here

be signs of your abiding love.

Form us to be your witnesses in the world,

through Jesus Christ, our true vine.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING


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

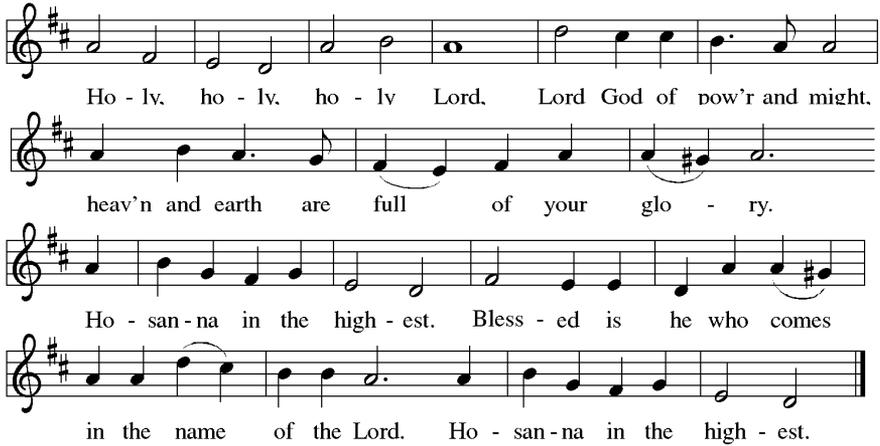
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places offer 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, Lord God of pow'r and might,
 heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
 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.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

P: 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.

C: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

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

P: The risen Christ is made known to us
 in the breaking of the bread.
 Come and eat at God's table.

C: Thanks be to God.

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
 sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Sit

COMMUNION

All baptized believers are invited to this holy meal. Those not communing are invited for a blessing. Please follow the instructions of the ushers to gather at the altar table. As the ministers give the bread and wine, they say these words to each communicant:

**The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.
 The communicant may say: Amen**

COMMUNION HYMN

Where Charity and Love PrevailLBW 126

Stand

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

A: Let us pray:

A: 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.

C: Amen

SENDING

BLESSING

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

C: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

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

C: Amen

SENDING HYMN

Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds.....LBW 143

DISMISSAL

A: Alleluia! Go in peace. Rejoice and be glad.

C: Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

POSTLUDE

SERVICE ASSISTANTS

Ushers: Charles Luppert, Rhonda Koch, Larry and Donna Britton, Sylvia McCarty, Larry Solomon; **Lay Assistant:** Carol Waltz;
Communion Assistant: Rhonda Koch; **Acolyte:** Owen Sherman;
Altar Guild: Vicki Bair, Doris Butt; **Greeters/Communion**
Presenters: Paul Weaver, Jean Weaver; **Cantor:** Janet Stroble;
Flower Delivery: Marilyn Winter

IN BLESSED MEMORY

The Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Harold C. Kropp by his wife, Martha, and family.

The Basket of Flowers is given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of the anniversary of David and Martha Larson, May 3rd, by their son Mike, daughter-in-law Dianne and family.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to Messiah Church! It is our joy to have you worship with us. If you are visiting, please make yourself known and leave your name & information to a congregation member. *We hope to see you again.*

Today we welcome into the Body of Christ through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, Bentley James Marlin Place, son of Hailey Stuart and James Place. We promise to keep him in our prayers, asking God's guidance as they raise their son in our Christian faith.

Tuesday, April 30th at 6:00 pm the annual **Mother's Day Dinner** will take place in Shaheen Hall.

Please join us on Wednesday evenings for Bible Study and fellowship at 7:00 p.m.

"Sew-A-Sack" Event Rescheduled: Our next group sewing session will now be held on **Wednesday, May 1, 9 a.m.-???** We will take a break at noon for a pizza lunch, and then continue sewing for a bit longer. **Call Sally Congdon at 570-547-6193 or Kathy Wither at 570-651-2802 for more information.**

The votes are in! On Sunday, April 21 at Sunday worship, every voting member was given a ballot to hand in during the offering, but we never were able to let everyone know how it turned out. There were 67 votes to sell 131 Southern Avenue and 27 votes to demolish the property. Since the majority was to sell the property, we will now move forward with it.

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH
REV. A. BRUCE AMME, PRESIDING AND PREACHING
JARED GIST, ORGANIST

324 South Howard Street | South Williamsport, PA 17702
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Fed by God, Nourished by Christ

Imagine a nursing baby at its mother's breast—what a blissful picture of love, joy, peace, and contentment! This image can help us understand who we are as God's beloved children and how tenderly God cares for us. God's grace is unconditional, just as a mother's milk flows to an infant without anything to do with deserving. In today's gospel reading, the vine-and-branches metaphor is another image of how intimately connected Jesus is with us and how crucial it is that we, the branches, hold on to him as our vine.

"Apart from me," says Jesus, "you can do nothing." Apart from its vine, a branch can do nothing—cannot live long, cannot produce grapes, cannot nourish people and animals. Apart from its mother or another devoted caregiver, a newborn can do nothing—cannot feed itself, cannot become or stay healthy, cannot grow and bear the fruit of life and love for others. Apart from God's love and care, which Christians know in Jesus, the whole web of humanity fails to thrive.

A nursing mother sets her face and does whatever is needed—two or three times a night at first, even through mastitis, weariness, and boredom—to feed and impart life to her little one. Jesus' face is set toward the cross as he shares farewell counsel with his disciples. He, too, is ready and determined to do whatever it takes—even dying on a cross—to sustain the vineyard-world with abundant life.

The imagery of vine and branches, juxtaposed with that of God breastfeeding her babies, comes alive when we celebrate the Eucharist. At the table, Jesus feeds us with his own body and blood, pouring life and nourishment into us. We are called to abide in him forever—an invitation to grace-filled, permanent relationship. In Jesus the true vine, we his branches enjoy a continual flow of grace, mercy, and love. In turn, we are energized to bear the fruit of his love, joy, and peace for the world.

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