

Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 4-5, 2024

Red Letter – BEING Challenge – *Choose Church*

HYMN “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing” LSB 686

- 1 Come, Thou Fount of ev’ry blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.
While the hope of endless glory
Fills my heart with joy and love,
Teach me ever to adore Thee;
May I still Thy goodness prove.

- 2 Here I raise my Ebenezer,
Hither by Thy help I’ve come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wand’ring from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.

- 3 Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I’m constrained to be;
Let that grace now like a fetter
Bind my wand’ring heart to Thee:
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;
Prone to leave the God I love.
Here’s my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

- 4 Oh, that day when freed from sinning,
I shall see Thy lovely face;
Clothed then in the blood-washed linen,
How I’ll sing Thy wondrous grace!
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry;
Take my ransom’d soul away;
Send Thine angels soon to carry
Me to realms of endless day.

Text: Robert Robinson, 1735–90, alt. Music: Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second, Harrisburg, 1813 Text and music: Public domain

INVOCATION

- P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

- P Jesus spoke to His disciples very directly, as we hear in the Gospel appointed for this day: “Abide in My love.” As we, abiding as Easter people, gather for the worship of our risen Lord, we share in the love that He entrusted to His disciples. We remain in a divine love that is ours not only to keep, but to share both now and in eternity. We look forward to the celebration of Christ’s ascension and all that it means for us, now and for eternity.

OPENING SENTENCES

Psalm 146:1–2, 5, 10

P Praise the LORD!

C **Praise the LORD, O my soul!**

P I will praise the LORD as long as I live;

C **I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.**

P Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,

C **whose hope is in the LORD his God.**

P The LORD will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations.

C **Praise the LORD!**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P Let us now confess our sin to God, our merciful Father.

C **Gracious God, in heartfelt repentance we admit and confess our sinfulness. We are sin-stained people by nature. Each day we have sinned and done things we ought not to have done and have not done that which we are to have been doing as Your servants. We have not seen people in the loving way that You see them. We have not always been ready to care and quick to help. We do indeed deserve Your punishment in this life and for eternity. Trusting in Your mercy, we come to You for forgiveness. Our trust is in the merits of Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Have mercy on us, O God. Abide with us and grant us forgiveness of all our sins. By the power of the Holy Spirit at work within our hearts and lives, lead us into ways that reflect Your goodness and love.**

P God is loving and merciful. He sees us with loving eyes and graciously hears our supplications. By the command of our Lord and as His called and ordained servant, I forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

INTROIT

Psalm 66:1–2, 8–9, 20; antiphon: v. 16

P Come and hear, all you who fear God,
and I will tell what He has done for my soul.

C **Shout for joy to God, all the earth;
sing the glory of His name; give to Him glorious praise!**

P Bless our God, O peoples;
let the sound of His praise be heard,

C **who has kept our soul among the living
and has not let our feet slip.**

P Blessed be God,
because He has not rejected my prayer or removed His steadfast love from me!

C **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 Come and hear, all you who fear God,
and I will tell what He has done for my soul.

SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.
C **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.
Lord Jesus Christ, while we were still in our sins You chose us, laid down Your life for us, and called us friends. By Your great love for us, inspire us to love one another that we may abide in Your grace and may bear fruit according to Your promise; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Acts 10:34–48

Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached--how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days. (NIV)

L This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

EPISTLE

1 John 5:1–8

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. This is the one who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. (NIV)

L This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

HOLY GOSPEL

John 15:9–17

- P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the fifteenth chapter.
C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.
If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.
I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.
My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.
Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.
You are my friends if you do what I command.
I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.
You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.
This is my command: Love each other. (NIV)

- P This is the Gospel of the Lord.
C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

CREED

The Third Article

- P The First Reading today tells how the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to Gentiles as well as to Jews—which includes all the peoples of the world. Sharing words of faith confessed around the world, we speak together the words of the Apostles' Creed regarding the Third Person of the Holy Trinity and then express our confession of its meaning in the Small Catechism words of Martin Luther.
C **I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**
P What does this mean?
C **I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.**

In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.

On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

HYMN "In Christ There Is No East or West" LSB 653

- 1 In Christ there is no east or west,
In Him no south or north,
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth.

- 2 With God there is no tribe or race;
 In Him we all are one.
 He loves us as His children through
 Our faith in His dear Son.
- 3 So, brothers, sisters, praise His name
 Who died to set us free
 From sin, division, hate, and shame,
 From spite and enmity!
- 4 Join hands, disciples of the faith,
 Whate'er your race may be;
 Who serves my Father as His child
 Is surely kin to me.
- 5 In Christ now meet both east and west;
 In Him meet south and north.
 All Christian souls are one in Him
 Throughout the whole wide earth.

Text (sts. 1, 4–5): John Oxenham, 1852–1941, alt.; (st. 2): Mark A. Jeske, 1952; (st. 3): Michael A. Perry, 1942–96

Music: African American spiritual; adapt. Harry T. Burleigh, 1866-1949

Text (sts. 1, 4–5) and music: Public domain

Text (st. 2): © 1993 Mark A. Jeske; (st. 3): © 1982 The Jubilate Group, admin. Hope Publishing Co.

Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110003888

SERMON Red Letter – BEING Challenge – Choose Church

Text: Hebrews 10:24-25

OFFERING

HYMN “Thine Forever, God of Love” LSB 687

- 1 Thine forever, God of love!
 Hear us from Thy throne above;
 Thine forever may we be
 Here and in eternity!
- 2 Thine forever! Oh, how blest
 They who find in Thee their rest!
 Savior, guardian, heav'nly friend,
 O defend us to the end!
- 3 Thine forever, Lord of Life!
 Shield us through our earthly strife.
 Thou, the life, the truth, the way,
 Guide us to the realms of day.
- 4 Thine forever! Shepherd, keep
 These Thy frail and trembling sheep;
 Safe alone beneath Thy care,
 Let us all Thy goodness share.

5 Thine forever! Thou our guide,
All our wants by Thee supplied,
All our sins by Thee forgiv'n;
Lead us, Lord, from earth to heav'n.

Text: Mary F. Maude, 1819–1913

Tune: Justin H. Knecht, 1752-1817; setting: The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941

Text: Public domain

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

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

We thank God for the Christian Church and pray that God's people may live confidently and would joyfully share the message of salvation in word and deed. Gathered by the Holy Spirit, we pray that we may be blessed with all grace and give evidence of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Lord, be with us and bless us. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **Hear our prayer.**

P We pray for our families, our neighborhoods, and our communities. We ask the blessing of our bountiful God on all those who share in our Christian fellowship and join with us in worship. Also, we pray for all who are part of the household of faith, whose presence here this day supports and strengthens us. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **Hear our prayer.**

P We also pray for those with special concerns and needs this day: those who are hospitalized or homebound, those who are grieving at this time, the unemployed and underemployed, the chronically ill, and all those whose needs are known to us, [*especially . . .*]. Lord, grant that we may bring Your blessing to situations of need in all places. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **Hear our prayer.**

P Most merciful God, we thank You for all those faithful people whose words and actions have guided us in the past, especially remembering those no longer with us on earth, who now share in Your eternal presence awaiting the resurrection. By the working of Your Holy Spirit, direct us to walk Your servant way throughout our lives, seeing each person through Your loving eyes, until that day when we stand forever in Your glorious presence in heaven.

C **Amen.**

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

P The Christian Church today celebrates the final service before one of the greatest of all the church festivals, the Ascension of Our Lord, which occurs this coming Thursday. We rejoice that our Lord has gone to be at the right hand of the Father in heaven—and yet we wish that He would still be physically here on earth as He once was. We share the feeling of the disciples from the road to Emmaus who, after enjoying fellowship with the Lord at the table of their home, urged Him to abide with them. We now are invited to His table - a foretaste of the feast to come.

PREFACE

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.**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

P Blessed are You, O Lord of heaven and earth. We bless You now for sending Your Son Jesus Christ to give us assurance of Your fatherly care, knowing that all of our days are spent in God's sight. Directed by Your Holy Spirit and reflecting Your limitless love toward us, grant that we abide in Christ's love, awaiting the fulfilled promise of eternal life in Your heavenly kingdom, where saints and angels gather around Your throne in glory everlasting.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My + body, which is given for you. Do this 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 covenant in My + blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

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 O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

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.**

PAX DOMINI

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C **Amen.**

AGNUS DEI

**Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.**

- 1 The Church’s one foundation
Is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the Word.
From heav’n He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.
- 2 Elect from ev’ry nation,
Yet one o’er all the earth;
Her charter of salvation:
One Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses
With ev’ry grace endued.
- 3 Though with a scornful wonder
The world sees her oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed,
Yet saints their watch are keeping;
Their cry goes up, “How long?”
And soon the night of weeping
Shall be the morn of song.
- 4 Through toil and tribulation
And tumult of her war
She waits the consummation
Of peace forevermore
Till with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.
- 5 Yet she on earth has union
With God, the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won.
O blessèd heav’nly chorus!
Lord, save us by Your grace
That we, like saints before us,
May see You face to face.

Text: Samuel J. Stone, 1839–1900, alt.

Tune: Samuel S. Wesley, 1810-76

Text and music: Public domain

HYMN “Built on the Rock” LSB 645

- 1 Built on the Rock the Church shall stand
Even when steeples are falling.
Crumbled have spires in ev’ry land;
Bells still are chiming and calling,
Calling the young and old to rest,
But above all the souls distressed,
Longing for rest everlasting.

- 2 Surely in temples made with hands
God, the Most High, is not dwelling;
High above earth His temple stands,
All earthly temples excelling.
Yet He who dwells in heav’n above
Chooses to live with us in love,
Making our bodies His temple.

- 3 We are God’s house of living stones,
Built for His own habitation.
He through baptismal grace us owns
Heirs of His wondrous salvation.
Were we but two His name to tell,
Yet He would deign with us to dwell
With all His grace and His favor.

- 4 Here stands the font before our eyes,
Telling how God has received us.
The altar recalls Christ’s sacrifice
And what His Supper here gives us.
Here sound the Scriptures that proclaim
Christ yesterday, today, the same,
And evermore, our Redeemer.

- 5 Grant, then, O God, Your will be done,
That, when the church bells are ringing,
Many in saving faith may come
Where Christ His message is bringing:
“I know My own; My own know Me.
You, not the world, My face shall see.
My peace I leave with you. Amen.”

Text: Nikolai Fredrik Severin Grundtvig, 1783–1872, abr.; tr. Carl Döving, 1867–1937, alt.

Tune: Ludvig M. Lindeman, 1812-87; setting: The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941

Text and music: Public domain

HYMN “Jesus Lives! The Victory’s Won” LSB 490

- 1 Jesus lives! The vict’ry’s won!
Death no longer can appall me;
Jesus lives! Death’s reign is done!
From the grave will Christ recall me.
Brighter scenes will then commence;
This shall be my confidence.

- 2 Jesus lives! To Him the throne
 High above all things is given.
 I shall go where He is gone,
 Live and reign with Him in heaven.
 God is faithful; doubtings, hence!
 This shall be my confidence.
- 3 Jesus lives! For me He died,
 Hence will I, to Jesus living,
 Pure in heart and act abide,
 Praise to Him and glory giving.
 All I need God will dispense;
 This shall be my confidence.
- 4 Jesus lives! I know full well
 Nothing me from Him shall sever.
 Neither death nor pow'rs of hell
 Part me now from Christ forever.
 God will be my sure defense;
 This shall be my confidence.
- 5 Jesus lives! And now is death
 But the gate of life immortal;
 This shall calm my trembling breath
 When I pass its gloomy portal.
 Faith shall cry, as fails each sense:
 Jesus is my confidence!

Text: Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, 1715–69; tr. Frances E. Cox, 1812–97, alt.

Tune: Johann Cruger, 1598-1662; setting: The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941

Text and music: Public domain

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

P Let us pray.

Almighty and ever-living God, we bless You for having fed us with the body and blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Help us by Your Holy Spirit that we may abide in the fellowship of the Christian Church and together with all the saints do the good works that You desire us to do, reflecting Your amazing love for us. This we ask through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

C **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

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 **Amen.**

HYMN “Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus” LSB 660

- 1 Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
Ye soldiers of the cross.
Lift high His royal banner;
It must not suffer loss.
From vict’ry unto vict’ry
His army He shall lead
Till ev’ry foe is vanquished,
And Christ is Lord indeed.

- 2 Stand up, stand up for Jesus;
The trumpet call obey;
Stand forth in mighty conflict
In this His glorious day.
Let all His faithful serve Him
Against unnumbered foes;
Let courage rise with danger
And strength to strength oppose.

- 3 Stand up, stand up for Jesus;
Stand in His strength alone.
The arm of flesh will fail you,
Ye dare not trust your own.
Put on the Gospel armor;
Each piece put on with prayer.
Where duty calls or danger,
Be never wanting there.

- 4 Stand up, stand up for Jesus;
The strife will not be long;
This day the din of battle,
The next the victor’s song.
The soldiers, overcoming,
Their crown of life shall see
And with the King of Glory
Shall reign eternally.

Text: George Duffield, Jr., 1818–88, alt.

Tune: George J. Webb, 1803-87; setting: Service Book and Hymnal, 1958

Text and music: Public domain

Creative Worship for the Lutheran Parish, Series B, Quarter 2.

Copyright © 2023 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Acknowledgments

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Created by Lutheran Service Builder © 2024 Concordia Publishing House.