

**Fifth Sunday of Easter**  
April 27-28, 2024  
**Red Letter – BEING Challenge**

**PRELUDE, BELLS, WELCOME**

**“God Himself Is Present” LSB 907**

- 1 God Himself is present:  
Let us now adore Him  
And with awe appear before Him.  
God is in His temple;  
All within keep silence;  
Humbly kneel in deepest rev’rence.  
He alone  
On His throne  
Is our God and Savior;  
Praise His name forever!
  
- 2 God Himself is present:  
Hear the harps resounding;  
See the hosts the throne surrounding.  
“Holy, holy, holy!”  
Hear the hymn ascending,  
Songs of saints and angels blending.  
Bow Your ear  
To us here:  
Hear, O Christ, the praises  
That Your Church now raises.
  
- 3 Fount of ev’ry blessing,  
Purify my spirit,  
Trusting only in Your merit.  
Like the holy angels,  
Worshiping before You,  
May I ceaselessly adore You.  
Let Your will  
Ever still  
Rule Your Church terrestrial  
As the hosts celestial.

Text: Gerhard Tersteegen, 1697–1769, abr.; tr. Frederick W. Foster, 1760–1835, alt.; tr. John Miller, 1756–90, alt. Text and music: Public domain

**Invocation**

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

**Opening Sentences**

*Psalm 66:1–4, 8–9; 40:5*

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

- P Say to God, “How awesome are Your deeds!  
C **All the earth worships You and sings praises to You; they sing praises to Your name.”**

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 You have multiplied, O LORD my God, Your wondrous deeds and Your thoughts toward us; none can compare with You!  
C **I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told.**

### Confession and Absolution

P Humble yourselves then before God, confess your sins to Him, and implore His forgiveness.  
C **O almighty God, most merciful Father, I, a repentant sinner, confess to You all my sins and iniquities with which I have offended You. By nature, I am a sinful creature. In thought, word, and deed I have continually transgressed Your law. For this I justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of the sufferings and death of Your Son, Jesus Christ, be gracious and merciful to me, a penitent and contrite being. Forgive me all my sins and grant me the power of Your Holy Spirit that I may amend my sinful life and bear fruit in keeping with true repentance.**

P God be gracious to you and strengthen your faith.  
C **Amen.**

P As you believe, so let it be. As a called and ordained servant 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.**

### WORD

### Kyrie

*LSB 186*

C **Lord, have mercy upon us.  
Christ, have mercy upon us.  
Lord, have mercy upon us.**

### Salutation

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

### Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray.  
Risen and ascended Lord, You are the vine and we are the branches. Apart from You there is no life. By Baptism You have grafted us into Your gracious life. Cause Your Word to abide in us and make us fruitful to the glory of Your Father, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
C **Amen.**

### First Reading

*Acts 8:26–40*

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road--the desert road--that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza."

So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians.

This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you

are reading?" Philip asked.

"How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth."

The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?"

Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.

Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea. (NIV)

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

### Epistle

*1 John 4:1–11*

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them.

We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us.

This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (NIV)

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

### Holy Gospel

*John 15:1–8*

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

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

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. (NIV)

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

## Creed

*The Second Article*

P As we celebrate the risen Christ in this season of Easter, let us speak together the words of the Apostles' Creed regarding our Savior, who is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.

C **I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

P What does this mean?

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

## Children's Message

### “In Holy Conversation” LSB 772

- 1 In holy conversation  
We speak to God in prayer,  
And at His invitation  
Our deepest thoughts we share.  
We come, His will obeying,  
As children bringing needs;  
And to support our praying,  
His Spirit intercedes.
- 2 These holy conversations  
Begin in childlike ways;  
We bring our supplications  
And words of thanks and praise.  
With care our Father listens  
To ev'ry thought expressed,  
Then answers our petitions  
In ways He knows are best.
- 3 As holy conversation,  
In silence or by word,  
In ev'ry situation  
Through Jesus, we are heard.  
So let us pray securely,  
Expressing hopes and fears  
With confidence that surely  
Our Father ever hears.

## Sermon – Red Letter – BEING Challenge – *Seek Solitude*

### Offering

*[During the Offering, Meditate upon Matthew 6:33 and John 15:5]*

#### **Matthew 6:33**

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.  
(NIV)

#### **John 15:5**

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (NIV)

### Recognition of High School Graduates & Prayer of Blessing (Sunday)

#### **Prayer of the Church**

P Friends in Christ, I urge you all to lift up your hearts to God and pray with me as Christ our Lord has taught us and freely promised to hear us.

God, our Father in heaven, look with mercy on us, Your needy children on earth, and grant us grace that Your holy name be hallowed by us and all the world through the pure and true teaching of Your Word and the fervent love shown forth in our lives. Graciously turn from us all false doctrine and evil living whereby Your precious name is blasphemed and profaned. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P May Your kingdom come to us and expand. Bring all transgressors and those who are blinded and bound in the devil's kingdom to know Jesus Christ, Your Son, by faith that the number of Christians may be increased. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Strengthen us by Your Spirit according to Your will, both in life and in death, in the midst of both good and evil things, that our own wills may be crucified daily and sacrificed to Your good and gracious will. Into Your merciful hands we commend [name(s)] and all who are in need, praying for them at all times: Thy will be done. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Grant us our daily bread, preserve us from greed and selfish cares, and help us trust in You to provide for all our needs. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Forgive us our sins as we also forgive those who sin against us so that our hearts may be at peace and may rejoice in a good conscience before You, and that no sin may ever frighten or alarm us. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Lead us not into temptation, O Lord, but help us by Your Spirit to subdue our flesh, to turn from the world and its ways, and to overcome the devil with all his wiles. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P And lastly, O heavenly Father, deliver us from all evil of both body and soul, now and forever. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P We trust, O Lord, in Your great mercy to hear and answer us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
C **Amen.**

### Lord's Prayer

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.**

### 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 T give you peace.  
C **Amen.**

### “Sing Praise to God, the Highest Good” LSB 819

- 1 Sing praise to God, the highest good,  
The author of creation,  
The God of love who understood  
Our need for His salvation.  
With healing balm our souls He fills  
And ev'ry faithless murmur stills:  
To God all praise and glory!
- 2 What God's almighty pow'r has made,  
In mercy He is keeping.  
By morning glow or evening shade  
His eye is never sleeping.  
Within the kingdom of His might  
All things are just and good and right:  
To God all praise and glory!
- 3 We sought the Lord in our distress;  
O God, in mercy hear us.  
Our Savior saw our helplessness  
And came with peace to cheer us.  
For this we thank and praise the Lord,  
Who is by one and all adored:  
To God all praise and glory!

4 He never shall forsake His flock,  
His chosen generation;  
He is their refuge and their rock,  
Their peace and their salvation.  
As with a mother's tender hand,  
He leads His own, His chosen band:  
To God all praise and glory!

5 All who confess Christ's holy name,  
Give God the praise and glory.  
Let all who know His pow'r proclaim  
Aloud the wondrous story.  
Cast ev'ry idol from its throne,  
For God is God, and He alone:  
To God all praise and glory!

Text: Johann Jacob Schütz, 1640–90; (sts. 1–3, 5): tr. Frances E. Cox, 1812–97, adapt.; (st. 4): tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, adapt.

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