

Augustana

where Lutherans and Anglicans worship together

EASTER 5, May 2, 2021

Welcome to Augustana – where Lutherans and Anglicans worship together. I would like to acknowledge we gather on Treaty six territory and the homeland of many people of the Metis Nation. You are welcome to worship with us. We aim to share the unconditional love of God with people of all genders, orientations, abilities, ages, colours, cultures, or ethnicities. This is a work in progress and you are welcome to join us on our way.

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

ALL: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ, let us give thanks for the gift of baptism. We thank you, risen Christ, for these waters where you make us new, leading us from death to life, from tears to joy. 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.

ALL: 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. AMEN.

HYMN: Glory to God in the Highest # 164

Leader: Glory to God, glory to God, glory in the highest!

ALL: Glory to God, glory to God, glory in the highest!

Leader: To God be glory forever!

ALL: To God be glory forever!

Leader: Alleluia! Amen!

ALL: Alleluia! Amen! X7

CHILDREN'S TIME

- Vine and branches ... the trunk and the branches.
- Branch ... planted grow? No it needs to be attached to the tree to grow... to live.
- Jesus said, "Stay connected to me ... keep your faith connected to me so it lives."
- Jesus is the trunk of our family tree ... the family of God tree.

Prayer: O God, you give us Jesus the vine – the trunk of the tree. We cannot live away from that tree trunk so keep us connected so we may be fed and watered and able to bear the fruit of your love. **Amen.**

Scripture reading: 1 John 4:7-21

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹ God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the

world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In 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. ¹¹ Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

¹³ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶ So 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. ¹⁷ Love 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. ¹⁸ There 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. ¹⁹ We love^[a] because he first loved us. ²⁰ Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters,^[b] are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister^[c] whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. ²¹ The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters^[d] also.

Word of God, Word of life **Thanks be to God**

ALLELUIA

Alleluia. Lord to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia

Alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel - The Holy Gospel according to the Gospel of John 15:1-8 Glory to you O Lord

15 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ² He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes^[a] to make it bear more fruit. ³ You have already been cleansed^[b] by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide 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. ⁵ I 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. ⁶ Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and

The Gospel of our Lord: **Praise to you, O Christ**

Meditation –

Last Fall I did a lot of pruning. I trimmed and hauled branches out to the compost depot. Soon, as things start to grow I'll see if it paid off. I'm not worried. I think it is going to look great soon.

I think that because of past experience: at the first parish we lived in our yard had a number of trees and bushes that had were out of control. To the south of the house was a huge bushy tree, mostly a dead tree, that someone told me was a Russian Olive tree. The church trustees were going to take it out, but I asked for a reprieve and I got out my cutting tools and removed all the dead wood ... There wasn't much left, but what was left looked OK and it was spared. Actually, what was left looked lovely, the leaves were a silvery green and it seemed to be encouraged by the pruning and it grew quickly and provided wonderful shade in the summer and was full of birds all year long. It was a perfect tree for little kids to climb. People often commented on how beautiful it was. This was encouraging so I tackled the two evergreens in front of the house that were growing crooked and spindly. They looked ugly and during the winter they kept us in the dark. So I got out my cutting tools again and went at them. At one point the church council chairperson asked me what I had against those poor trees, why was I cutting them up so bad. He was just teasing – he would have just chopped them down. But it's true I did chop them down pretty drastically and at first it looked like a bad haircut, but after a while they looked good. We lived in that village for 7 years and watched them grow back in a pleasing shape. The last time we were back for a visit, they looked GREAT. All that chopping paid off.

But that's plants ...I feel a little different when I read Jesus' words about pruning people. It seems like harsh words

It seems hard to reconcile our understanding of God's love freely given love with this idea of vs. pruning people. How can both exist at the same time. But somehow they do. I am not entirely sure how, but in some way that is beyond my understanding God encompasses both open armed welcome and love and also judgement and purification.

Burning to purify (old testament image). After my knee replacement surgery Martha asked, "What did they do with the old parts of you that they removed?" her sisters: "EWWWW, Martha stop it!". But it was a good question. They burn those old bits. So part of me has been thrown into the fiery pit. I'm doing much better without those diseased bits of bone.

So what if God could take some of the other parts of me that are diseased: the nasty, hateful parts of me? Would I not like them gone? The self-seeking parts of me ... wouldn't I be better off without them. I should throw out my arms and exclaim take it all, burn it up I'm not sure if I have the courage for that, so maybe just a bit at a time. Fear helps me to cling to those things that I know, even when they are diseased or bad for me.

BUT Perfect love casts out fear.

We can face the pruning, the burning because we know that God's love is secure ... God's perfect love casts out fear

Is it difficult ... yes ... you bet & Are we aren't done yet No. like lifelong learning there is also lifelong pruning. The gardener prunes so that the tree bears fruit and thrives.

Bearing fruit and thriving in our lives is learning to love others as God loves us.

Prayer: God of love, your perfect love casts out all our fears. Help us to live out your call. Help us to continue to grow and learn how to love in both word and deed. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the word of love made real. Amen.

Hymn Choir Anthem "Love One Another"

Prayers

Let us join hearts and voices together in prayer. Each short prayer will end with the words, "hear us, O God" and you can make the prayer your own by responding "Your mercy is great." Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

A brief silence.

God of all fruitfulness, you abide in your church and your church abides in you. Cleanse us by your word and give yourself to the whole church on earth so that it bears fruit and witnesses to your love. We pray for the clergy and people of the Missionary Area of Moosonee along with their Bishop Anne Germond and Assisting Bishop Fred Hiltz. And for the congregations and leadership of the Winnipeg South Area of the Manitoba-Northwestern Ontario Synod. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

You have created the heavens and the earth. As we wonder at the beauty of creation, may we seek vital connections among all that depends on the earth for life. Show us how to live in a way that respects your creation. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

You rule the nations with justice and love. Give the leaders of the earth assurance of your abiding presence, that they lead not by fear but with love for those they are called to serve. We pray especially for Premier Scott Moe, Mayor Charlie Clark, and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Saquib Shahab. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

You have loved us so that we can love others. We pray for all in need of your love: those who are poor, lowly, outcast, weak, or fearful. Provide for the needs of all especially those who are incarcerated and for refugees seeking a safe haven. We give thanks that the Iqbal family have been granted refugee status. Hold them and the Alhamad Wahid family in your love. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

You hear the cries of those in need and answer them in their distress. Be close to the hearts of the lonely. Grant to those who are sick and suffering your compassion and nurse them back to health and wholeness, especially: Katherine, Paul and family, Angie, Tewodros and family, Earl, Audrey, Orville and Carol, Bruce, Marie, Gloria, Anna Marie, Marcus, Brodie, Karin, Anthony, Robert, Curtis, Linda, Marci, Gayle, Evelyn, Lisa, Danielle, Shelby, Alice, Deanna, Ron, Marlene, Mildred, Minnie, Louise, Lyssa, Karen, and all those we name aloud or in the silence of our hearts*(a pause to offer time to name others).*

Give them courage and peace in the face of illness and grief. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

You restore us to wholeness. Help our community in our life together and give us vigor as a people of faith. Guide us in the midst of the challenges of Covid 19. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You hold us securely in your loving hands. We remember especially Elsie Stephan and Edna Soule. Comfort their families and assure all your children of the peace you have promised, that we may join them in everlasting life. Hear us, O God . . . **Your mercy is great.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Pastor Marilyn: knowing that God loves us as a mother and father we pray in the words Jesus taught us:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever. AMEN.

Easter Blessing & Dismissal

May the one who brought forth Jesus from the dead raise you to new life, fill you with hope, and turn your mourning into dancing. Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Christ is risen, just as he said. Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

Hymn "As Rain from the Clouds" # 508

As rain from the clouds will your word come to earth,
as snow from the heavens refreshing the land.

Then soften our soil that the good seed may grow
and ripen rich fruit to return to your hand.

We praise you, our God, for the dew of your word;
we thank you, good gard'ner, for your tender toil.

We bless you, best farmer, for hundredfold yield,
for harvest of grace in our once-barren soil.

As grain that is scattered your word has been sown
on rocks and on roadways, in good earth and sand.
Make fertile our soil that the good seed may grow
and ripen rich fruit to return to your hand.

We praise you, our God, for the seed of your word;
we thank you, good gard'ner for your tender toil.
We bless you, best farmer, for hundredfold yield,
for harvest of grace in our once barren soil.

As rays of the sun shall your word light the world,
awaking and warming and healing our land.
Then shine in our hearts that the good seed may grow
and ripen rich fruit to return to your hand.
We praise you, our God, for the light of your word;
we thank you, good gard'ner, for your tender toil.
We bless you, best farmer, for hundredfold yield,
for harvest of grace in our once barren soil.

THANK YOU'S

Worship Assistant: Ruth Zuk

Musicians: Deborah Buck, Augustana St. Timothy Choir

Technicians: Gregory Fowlie-Neufeld, Bryan Tastad