

*St. Stephen Lutheran Church*  
*April 11, 2021*  
*2nd Sunday of Easter*

\*Congregation is invited to stand as able

The Easter season is a week of weeks, seven Sundays when we play in the mystery of Christ's presence, mostly through the glorious Gospel of John. Today we gather with the disciples on the first Easter, and Jesus breathes the Spirit on us. With Thomas we ask for a sign, and Jesus offers us his wounded self in the broken bread. From frightened individuals we are transformed into a community of open doors, peace, forgiveness, and material sharing such that no one among us is in need.

**Prelude**

*"Prelude in C Major"*

attributed to Johann Sebastian Bach

**Gathering**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**\*Thanksgiving for Baptism**

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**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.  
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.  
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.**

**\*Gathering Hymn**

“Christ is Risen, Alleluia”

Hymn#382 vs. 1,2,4

- 1 Christ is risen! Alleluia!  
Risen our victorious head!  
Sing his praises! Alleluia!  
Christ is risen from the dead!  
Gratefully our hearts adore him  
as his light once more appears;  
bowing down in joy before him,  
rising up from griefs and tears.

*Refrain*

Christ is risen! Alleluia!  
Risen our victorious head!  
Sing his praises! Alleluia!  
Christ is risen from the dead!

- 2 Christ is risen! All the sadness  
of our Lenten fast is o'er;  
through the open gates of gladness  
he returns to life once more;  
death and hell before him bending  
see him rise, the victor now,  
angels on his steps attending,  
glory round his wounded brow. *Refrain*

- 4 Christ is risen! Henceforth never  
death or hell shall us enthrall.  
We are Christ's, in him forever  
we have triumphed over all.  
All the doubting and dejection  
of our trembling hearts have ceased;  
hail the day of resurrection!  
Let us rise and keep the feast. *Refrain*

Text: John S. B. Monsell, 1811-1875, alt.

**\*Apostolic Greeting**

The boundless grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God, and the light of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

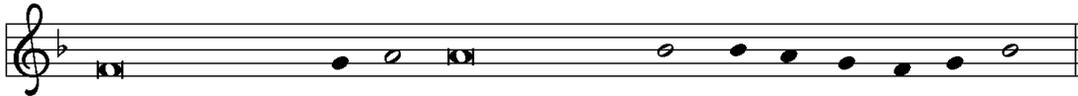
**\*Kyrie**



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal-vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



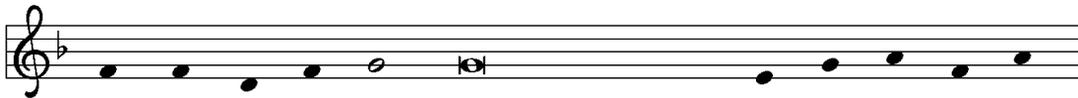
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of



God, and for the uni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



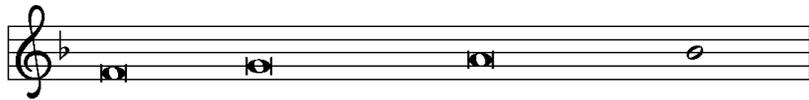
For this ho - ly house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and



praise, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gracious Lord.



A - men.

**\*Canticle of Praise**

*Refrain*



Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace



to God's peo-ple on earth. Glo-ry to God in the



high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



1 Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al - mighty God and Fa-ther,



we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.

*Refrain*



Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace



to God's peo-ple on earth. Glo-ry to God in the



high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



2 Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God,



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world:



have mer - cy on us; you are seat - ed at the right



hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



*Refrain*  
Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace



to God's peo-ple on earth. Glo-ry to God in the



high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



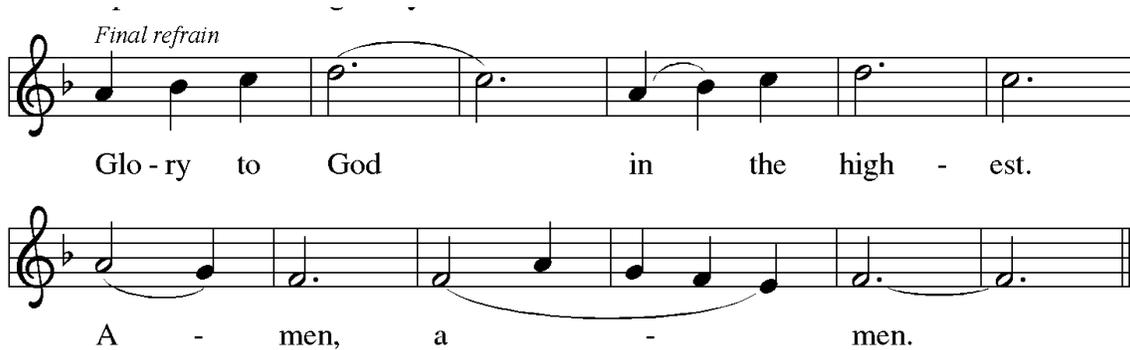
3 For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord, you a -



lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly



Spir - it, in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther.



### \*Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Almighty God, with joy we celebrate the day of our Lord's resurrection. By the grace of Christ among us, enable us to show the power of the resurrection in all that we say and do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **Word**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

### The First Lesson

**Acts 4:32-35**

*While the apostles testified to others about the resurrection of Jesus, the early Christian community shared what they owned or sold their possessions to help their fellow believers who were in need.*

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles, the 4th chapter

<sup>32</sup>Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. <sup>33</sup>With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup>There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. <sup>35</sup>They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

### Psalm

**Psalm 133**

<sup>1</sup>How good and how pleas- | ant it is,  
when kindred live togeth- | er in unity!

<sup>2</sup>**It is like fine oil upon the head, flowing down up- | on the beard,  
upon the beard of Aaron, flowing down upon the collar | of his robe.**

<sup>3</sup>It is like the dew of Hermon flowing down upon the | hills of Zion.  
For there the LORD has commanded the blessing: life for- | evermore.

## The Second Lesson

1 John 1:1--2:2

*The opening of this letter serves as a reality check. The reality of God is light, but our confessed reality has been sin. God cleanses us from our sinful reality through Christ's death so that we live in fellowship with Christ and walk in God's light.*

A reading from St. John's first letter, the 1st and 2nd chapters.

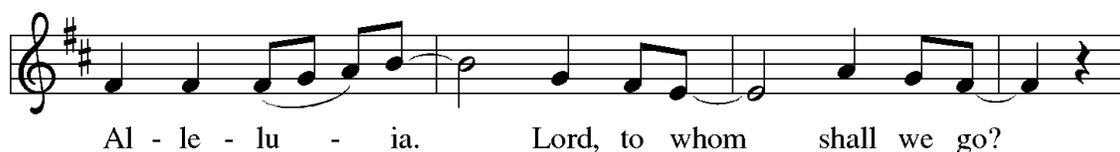
<sup>1</sup>We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—<sup>2</sup>this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—<sup>3</sup>we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

<sup>5</sup>This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup>If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; <sup>7</sup>but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. <sup>8</sup>If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup>If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

<sup>2:1</sup>My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; <sup>2</sup>and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

### Gospel Acclamation



### Gospel Reading

John 20:19-31

*The story of Easter continues as the risen Jesus appears to his disciples. His words to Thomas offer a blessing to all who entrust themselves in faith to the risen Lord.*

A reading from the Gospel according to St. John, the 20th chapter.

**Glory to You o Lord.**

<sup>19</sup>When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>20</sup>After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." <sup>22</sup>When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

<sup>24</sup>But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

<sup>26</sup>A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>27</sup>Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." <sup>28</sup>Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup>Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

<sup>30</sup>Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup>But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to You o Christ.**

**Sermon**

The Reverend Matthew Best

**\*Hymn of the Day**

*"O Sons and Daughters, Let us Sing"*

Hymn#386 vs. 5-8

- 5 When Thomas first the tidings heard,  
that they had seen the risen Lord,  
he doubted the disciples' word.  
Alleluia!
- 6 "My piercèd side, O Thomas, see,  
and look upon my hands, my feet;  
not faithless, but believing be."  
Alleluia!
- 7 No longer Thomas then denied;  
he saw the feet, the hands, the side;  
"You are my Lord and God!" he cried.  
Alleluia!
- 8 How blest are they who have not seen,  
and yet whose faith has constant been,  
for they eternal life shall win.  
Alleluia!

Text: attr. Jean Tisserand, d. 1494; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, alt.  
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## Affirmation of Baptism

We are here this morning to welcome these new members, Pat and Sandy, into the community which is St. Stephen Lutheran Church. We are not a building, but the gathered family of God. We are siblings in Christ, given this new identity through our baptism into Jesus' death and resurrection. Today we welcome you as members of this family in the larger body of Christ.

And so we ask, do you desire to join the membership of St. Stephen Lutheran Church? If so please answer: "We do."

*Pat and Sandy: We do*

I ask those gathered, whether in person or online, to join in confessing our faith.

Do you believe in God the Father?

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

Pastor: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**All: 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.**

Pastor: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

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

Pastor:

Having together confessed our faith in the Triune God, we now welcome Pat and Sandy into the family of this congregation and into the ministry of the church. As active followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to spread his Good News, to grow in discipleship, to worship with the faith community of St. Stephen, and to serve our neighbors. We encourage you to accept that call through your involvement in this church.

**Congregation:**

**We welcome you as children of God, growing closer to God and each other through worship and learning, laughing and playing.**

**We welcome you as fellow workers in God's kingdom, inviting you to grow with us in our faith, reaching out to others with the Good News of Jesus Christ.**

**We welcome you as active participants in the arts: singing, ringing, playing, painting, quilting and baking as your talents and interests lead you.**

**We welcome you as siblings in Christ, and thank God for this unique opportunity to serve God and one another. May the God to whom we belong equip us for every good work that we do together in his name.**

*Pat and Sandy: We welcome and accept your invitation and commit ourselves to using our time and talents for the good of the congregation. We will strive to live lives worthy of the title "Christian" and will work with you to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.*

Pastor:

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, as you called James and John, Simon and Andrew to fish for people, so you have called us to serve you with our own talents, treasure, and resources. We thank you for bringing Pat and Sandy to be a part of St. Stephen Lutheran Church. You have told us that wherever two or more are gathered in your name, there you are with them. Help us, we pray, to see and feel that presence and that others may come to know you through their interactions with us. Amen.

**\*Prayers of the Church**

*Congregational response after each petition:*

AM: ...Hear us, O God,. **C: 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.*

You shower your church with grace, O God. Unite the whole church on earth, so that with one heart it testifies to the resurrection of Jesus Christ with power and love. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You proclaim the blessing of life forevermore. Like dew upon the mountains, refresh your creation. Restore waters, cleanse the air, and provide revitalizing moisture to parched land. Give your whole creation the promise of new life. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You direct the nations, O God. Guide all in authority, that they shepherd their peoples in the ways of your love. Defeat in us our impulse to war. Bestow the peace of Christ upon those in authority and breathe upon them the Holy Spirit. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You place within the heart of the church a spirit of sharing. Give us the power of your generous Spirit, that we provide for the needs of others. Announce your peace to those who are lonely, hurting, suffering, or afraid. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You give us fellowship with one another in this faith community. Shine the light of the risen Christ in our life together, so that we live in love for one another and our joy may be complete. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You share the gift of eternal life. In thanksgiving and remembrance, we recall the lives and gifts of those who now live in endless joy. Unite us with them in resurrection hope. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

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.**

**\*Peace**

P: The Peace of Christ be with you always.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Let us show a sign of that peace!

**Offering**

The offering, whether in person or through digital means, is an act of worship. Worship, at its core, is a reverent love and devotion accorded to God. We give because God loves us first, and we are called to love God and neighbor as a result. The offering is one way we show our love of God.

To assist you in this act of worship, there are several ways to make your offering: Go to [www.StStephenLC.org](http://www.StStephenLC.org) and scroll to the bottom of the page, and click **DONATE**.

Text your offering dollar amount to 717-685-6947. Text "help" for options.

Use Engage from your smart phone or Internet connected device at <https://engage.suran.com/sslc/> or QR code below:



Set up regular electronic offerings by contacting Kevin, our office manager, at 717-766- 2168, Monday through Thursday from 9am – 2pm, or by email at [office@StStephenLC.org](mailto:office@StStephenLC.org) to get set up.

Mail in your check, made payable to St. Stephen Lutheran Church. Our address is 30 W. Main St., PO Box 266, New Kingstown, PA 17072.

The offerings are used to carry out the ministry of the church, to share the Good News, to provide pastoral care, to worship as a community, and to create an environment where Jesus encounters people and their lives are transformed. All of these things continue to take place. Thank you for your generosity.

**\*Offertory Prayer**

Let us pray. 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. **Amen**

## Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

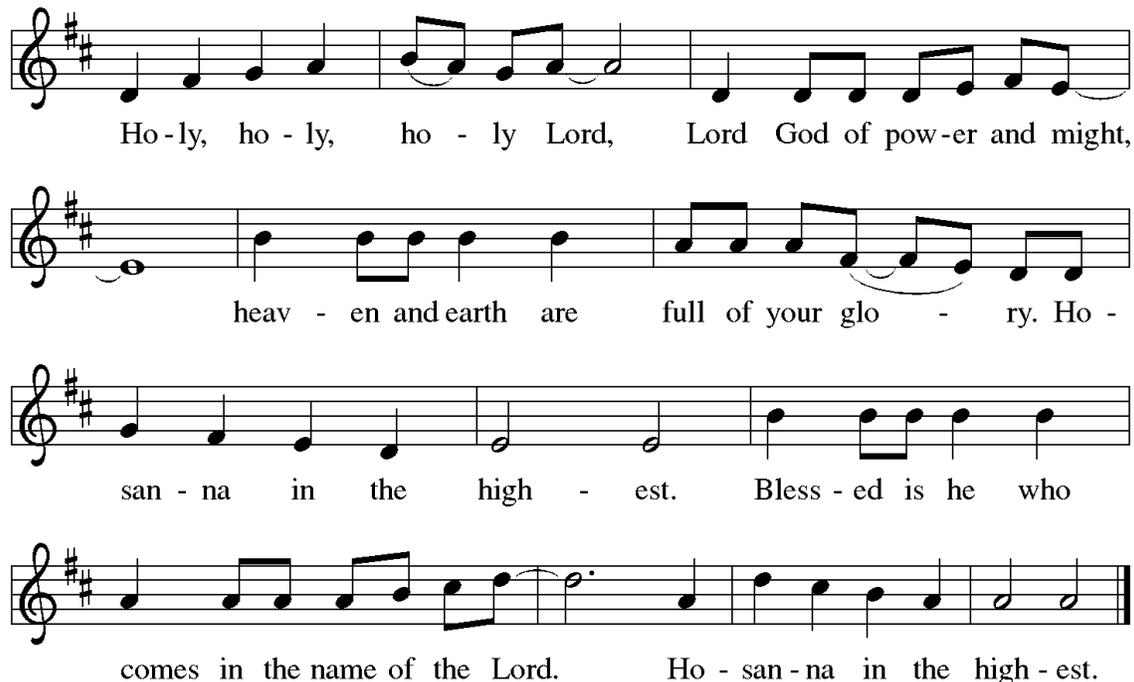
### \*The Great Thanksgiving

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

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:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow - er and might,  
heav - en 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.

Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age. Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.

Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.  
Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.  
Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey.  
Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one.  
Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.  
Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

In the night in which he was handed over, 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.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread. Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world. Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

With your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures, with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever. **Amen.**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**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**

The risen Christ invites us to this table.

**Come, eat, and be satisfied.**

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 mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Music: *Bread of Life*, Jeremy Young, b. 1948  
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**\*Post Communion Prayer**

Let us pray. 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.

**Amen.**

**Sending**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**\*Blessing**

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 Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

**\*Sending Hymn**

*“Rise, O Church, Like Christ Arisen”*

Hymn#548 vs. 1-3

- 1 Rise, O church, like Christ arisen,  
from this meal of love and grace;  
may we through such love envision  
whose we are, and whose, our praise.  
Alleluia, alleluia;  
God, the wonder of our days.

2 Rise, transformed, and choose to follow  
after Christ, though wounded, whole;  
broken, shared, our lives are hallowed  
to release and to console.  
Alleluia, alleluia;  
Christ, our present, past, and goal.

3 Rise, remember well the future  
God has called us to receive;  
present by God's loving nurture,  
Spirited then let us live.  
Alleluia, alleluia;  
Spirit, grace by whom we live.

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953

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**\*Dismissal**

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

You are the body of Christ raised up for the world. Go in peace. Share the good news.

**Thanks be to God. We Will**

**Postlude**

*"Hosanna to the King"*

by Gene Clarke

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