

## Ascension / Last Sunday of Easter – May 16, 2021

Gracious God, you have gathered us in this congregation, enlightened our hearts, and given us a share of the immeasurable greatness of your power. We give you thanks for 68 years of ministry in this place—for those who founded this congregation and for your presence and guidance throughout. Increase in us the spirit of faith and love, and make our fellowship an example to all. Help us love one another, be reconciled where we are divided, and share the riches of your grace with our neighbors. Hear us, O God...

God of all, in raising Christ from the dead, you put your great power to work in the world. Raise us and all who have died in the faith with Christ. We remember with thanksgiving the saints in our lives and in our community. Thank you for their gifts among us, for their faithful witness. Hear us, O God...

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.**

### LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:  
**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

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 SONG**     *“The Lord Now Sends Us Forth”*     #538

### EASTER PROCLAMATION AND DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Christ is risen. **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Go in peace. Share the good news. **Thanks be to God.**

### THE GREETING

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

### THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the minister begins.*

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.

*Water may be poured into the font as the minister gives thanks.*

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.**

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, **your only Son was taken into the heavens and in your presence intercedes for us. Receive us and our prayers for the world, and in the end bring everything into your glory, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG**     *“You Are Holy”*     #525

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

**Acts 1:1-11** – [Luke writes:] <sup>1</sup>In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning <sup>2</sup>until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. <sup>3</sup>After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup>While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; <sup>5</sup>for John baptized with water, but you

will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

<sup>6</sup>So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup>He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” <sup>9</sup>When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup>While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. <sup>11</sup>They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

**Ephesians 1:15-23** – <sup>15</sup>I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason <sup>16</sup>I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. <sup>17</sup>I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, <sup>18</sup>so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, <sup>19</sup>and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. <sup>20</sup>God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. <sup>22</sup>And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, <sup>23</sup>which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

**Luke 24:44-53** – <sup>44</sup>[Jesus said to the eleven and those with them,] “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” <sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, <sup>46</sup>and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup>and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup>And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

<sup>50</sup>Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. <sup>51</sup>While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. <sup>52</sup>And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; <sup>53</sup>and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

## SERMON

### SPECIAL MUSIC

Susan Lappin

### NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

### THE PRAYERS

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.*

Creator God, you have fashioned a habitat for all your creatures and you fill the earth with your glory. Give rain where it is needed and rescue those inundated by floods. Mend what we have torn in the fabric of creation and replenish and nourish your world. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Sovereign God, you rule the world with justice and mercy. Keep our leaders, our military, and our nation in your care. Make our leaders humble in their relationships with others nations and grant them good judgment in their decisions, that all people may flourish and live in peace. Hear us, O God....

Tender God, you heal those who are sick and bind up the brokenhearted. You know the needs of those suffering... for whom we pray this day: *the family and friends of Joan Anderson and Gene Fenske; Cheri, Ginny, Sue & Gene, Jerry, Earle, Marge, Bev, Howard, Howard Jr., Ruth, Angela, Joan, Sue, Jean Anne, Rick, Melissa, Kendra, Kathy, Laurie, Mark, Rita, Loretta, and those we name now...*). Bring them comfort and healing. Hear us, O God...