



*Drawing by Jon Hlafter*

## The Lutheran Church of the Messiah

📍 407 Nassau Street, Princeton, NJ 08540

☎ (609) 924-3642

✉ [lcmprinceton@gmail.com](mailto:lcmprinceton@gmail.com)

🌐 [www.princetonlutheranchurch.org](http://www.princetonlutheranchurch.org)

♦ [www.facebook.com/MessiahChurchPrinceton](https://www.facebook.com/MessiahChurchPrinceton)

Martin K. Erhardt, *Pastor*

Janice Hofreiter, *Organist*

Paul C. Hofreiter, *Choir Director*

John Mark Goerss, D. Min., *Pastor Emeritus*

Fifth Sunday of Easter

April 28, 2024

**Prayer upon entering:** O God, form the minds of your faithful people into a single will. Make us love what you command and desire what you promise, that, amid all the challenges of this world, our hearts may be fixed where true joy is found; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

**Guests, welcome!** We are delighted you are with us for worship this morning. Please introduce yourself to Pastor Erhardt, sign our guest book next to the main doors, and let us know how we can serve you. Bibles are available on a shelf in the back of the nave. Kneelers and large-print bulletins are available from the ushers upon request. If you are seeking a church home, we invite you to join us here at Messiah.

**Worship** begins with the prelude and continues through the postlude. Once the prelude begins, please refrain from conversation. We use two hymnals: the green *Lutheran Book of Worship* (LBW) and the blue paperback *With One Voice* (wov). Hymn numbers below 600 are generally in LBW; above 600, in wov. The pastor's parts (spoken and sung) are designated "P:." Parts spoken or sung by the congregation are italicized, prefaced by "C:." The liturgy text and music are in the LBW on the pages noted in this service folder.

**Holy Communion:** Lutheran Christians celebrate a divine service of Word and sacrament in which God comes to us both in his proclaimed Word and in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We invite to commune at the Lord's table all baptized Christians who with contrite hearts trust God's word of forgiveness for their sins, acknowledge the presence of Jesus Christ both in the communion elements and in this gathered body of believers, and seek, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to follow Jesus and walk in newness of life. If this doesn't describe you, we invite you to come to the altar rail to receive a blessing instead of the communion elements. Indicate this by folding your arms across your chest at the rail. All are invited to bring their children forward for a blessing.

Individual cups are available in addition to the chalice (the common cup). The tray with individual cups includes wine on the outer edge and non-alcoholic grape juice in the center. Gluten-free wafers are also available upon request from the bread server at the communion rail. All are invited to bring their children forward for a blessing.

**Families with young children:** Welcome! We have children's activity backpacks in the back of the church for use during the service, as well as an unstaffed nursery on the stage downstairs. Feel free to ask an usher for help locating them. The stairs are at the back of the sanctuary.

## *Prelude*

### *Confession and Forgiveness*

P: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: *Amen*

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C: *But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

P: Let us, therefore, confess our sins to God.

*Please kneel or sit for silent reflection and confession.*

C: *Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean.*

*We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen*

P: Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: *Amen*

# Order of Holy Communion

## Setting II (LBW p. 78)

*Opening Hymn*      Love Divine, All Loves Excelling      LBW 315

*Apostolic Greeting*      *2 Corinthians 13:14*

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

C: *And also with you.*

*Kyrie*      *pp. 78-79*

P: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C: *Lord have mercy.*

P: For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C: *Lord, have mercy.*

P: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C: *Lord, have mercy.*

P: For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C: *Lord, have mercy.*

P: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C: *Amen*

## *Hymn of Praise*

pp. 81–82

P: This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia.

C: *Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God. Power and riches and wisdom and strength, and honor and blessing and glory are his. This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia. Sing with all the people of God and join in the hymn of all creation: Blessing and honor and glory and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen*

*This is the feast of victory for our God, for the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign. Alleluia. Alleluia.*

P: The Lord be with you.

C: *And also with you.*

## *Prayer of the Day*

P: Let us pray.

C: *Holy God, you have called us to follow in the way of your risen Son, and to care for those who are our companions, not only with words of comfort, but with acts of love. Guide us in the path of discipleship, so that, as you have blessed us, we may be a blessing for others. Amen*

Please be seated for the scripture readings printed on the last two pages of this service folder.

## *First Lesson*

*Acts 8:26-40*

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God.*

## *Psalm 22:24-30*

p. 225

## *Second Lesson*

*1 John 4:7-21*

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

*C: Thanks be to God.*

## *Choir Anthem*    I am the Vine

Music and setting: C. Harry Causey

Text from John 15: 5, 7

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you,  
You shall ask what you will, and it shall be done for you.

I am the vine, and you are the branches.

You shall ask what you will, and it shall be done for you.

I am the vine.

*Verse (please stand):*

*John 6:68 (p. 83)*

*C: Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.*

*Alleluia.*

P: The Holy Gospel according to John, the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter.

*C (sung): Glory to you, O Lord.*

## *Gospel Lesson*

*John 15:1-8*

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

*C (sung): Praise to you, O Christ.*

## *Children's Sermon*

*Sermon*            A Wilderness Road

*Creed (Nicene)*    *Spoken in unison*

*C: 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 God,  
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.*

(continued on the next page)

*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 of the People*

P: Rejoicing in our Lord's victory over death and the grave, let us call upon God our Father, for his help and deliverance.

After each prayer or petition,  
P: Lord, in your mercy,  
C: *hear our prayer.*

P: All this we ask, Father, in the name of Jesus our risen Savior, who has conquered death and the grave. Because He lives, we also shall live. Fill us with your Holy Spirit to spread this good news abroad as ambassadors of your present and coming kingdom.

C: *Amen*

### *The Sharing of the Peace*

*p. 86*

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: *And also with you.*

*Please exchange a greeting of peace with your neighbors, then be seated.*



## Gathering of Offerings

pp. 86–87

*As the offerings are brought forward, please stand and sing:*

*C: Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.*

*Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life. Gather the hopes and dreams of all; unite them with the prayers we offer. Grace our table with your presence, and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.*

P: Let us pray.

Merciful Father,

*C: we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us – our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

## The Great Thanksgiving

p. 88

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.*

P: It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, Holy Father, almighty and ever-living God. But chiefly we are bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of our Lord; for he is the true Passover Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin, who by his death has destroyed death, and by his 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:

## *Sanctus*

*p. 89*

*C: Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of power and might: Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.*

## *Eucharistic Prayer*

*pp. 89–91*

*P: Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father: Endless is your mercy and eternal your reign. You have filled all creation with light and life; heaven and earth are full of your glory. Through Abraham you promised to bless all nations. You rescued Israel, your chosen people. Through the prophets you renewed your promise; and, at this end of all the ages, you sent your Son, who in words and deeds proclaimed your kingdom and was obedient to your will, even to giving his life.*

*In the night in which he was betrayed, 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.*

*For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

*C: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.*

*P: Therefore, gracious Father, with this bread and cup we remember the life our Lord offered for us. And, believing the witness of his resurrection, we await his coming in power to share with us the great and promised feast.*

*C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*

P: Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, the spirit of our Lord and of his resurrection, that we who receive the Lord's body and blood may live to the praise of your glory and receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

C: *Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.*

P: Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place, and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

C (*sung, p.91*): *Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen*

### *The Lord's Prayer*

P: Taught by our Lord and trusting in His promises, we are bold to say:

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*

### *Agnus Dei: Lamb of God*

*p. 92*

C: *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.*

Once the pastor says, "Welcome to the table of the Lord," please sit.

Because Communion is important, please read and follow our Communion policy, printed on p. 2 of this service folder. Feel free to bring your hymnal and continue to sing. If you are not communing, you are invited to come forward to receive a blessing, but feel no pressure to do so. If you do come forward for a blessing (only), indicate this by folding your arms across your chest when you kneel at the altar rail. When the pastor dismisses you, please return to your seat by the center aisle. If you would like Communion brought to your seat, please raise your hand to alert the pastor.

*Communion Hymn*

Alleluia! Jesus is Risen

WOV 674

*After all have returned to their places, the pastor says: (please stand)*

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: *Amen*

*Post-Communion Canticle*

*pp. 92-93*

C: *Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell everyone what he has done. Let everyone who seeks the Lord rejoice and proudly bear his name. He recalls his promises and leads his people forth in joy with shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia. Alleluia.*

*Post-Communion Prayer*

*p. 94*

P: Let us pray.

We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would strengthen us, through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: *Amen*

## *Benediction*

*p. 94*

P: Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

*C: Amen*

## *Postlude*

### *Announcements*

P: Christ is risen!

*All: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!*

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### Thank you to today's Temple Servants

Acolyte

Jon Hlafter

Reader

Miranda Hempel

Ushers

Tom Fusco and Stephen Stys

Fellowship Host

Nancy Amidon

Chancel

Pastor Erhardt

Offering Counter

John Fischer

Livestream

Mark von Bargaen

**Thank you to Tom Jennings** for serving as our organist this morning. Janice plans to be back next Sunday.

This coming week

Wed	7:30 PM	Choir
Sat	9:30 AM	LWML Rally at Martin Luther Chapel, Pennsauken
Sun	9:00 AM	Christian Education
Sun	10:30 AM	Service of Word and Sacrament

Next Sunday

Acts 10:44-48 • Psalm 98 • 1 John 5:1-6 • John 15:9-17

Opening Hymn: Holy Spirit, Truth Divine (LBW 257)

Hymn of the Day: Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service (LBW 423)

Communion Hymns: For Perfect Love So Freely Spent (LBW 216)

O Bread of Life from Heaven (LBW 222)

**Adult Forum** meets at 9am each Sunday in the parish building library.

Please join us! Current series: *In the Wilderness: Numbers 9-29*

**Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) Rally**

Saturday, May 4, 9:30am – 2pm at Martin Luther Chapel in Pennsauken NJ

Women of Messiah are invited! More details on the flyer on the bulletin board by the Cedar Lane door.

**Voters Meeting: Sunday, May 12, at 12:15 PM**

Messiah members, please plan to attend this important meeting, at which we will elect church officers to serve in the following positions in the coming year: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and on the Board of Trustees and the Board of Social Ministry.

**Libby and Joseph Luigs welcomed Monica Elsa Luigs** on April 3 at 12:33pm.

If you'd like to make them a meal, a friend of theirs at Princeton Seminary has made a meal schedule for them at this link: [mealtrain.com/7zdrzn](https://mealtrain.com/7zdrzn). If you'd prefer to sign up on paper, there's a sign-up sheet on the back pew.

**Pastor Erhardt leads a monthly community book discussion:**

May 16: Three stories from *The Adventures of Tintin*, by Hergé

June 13: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, by Frederick Douglass

Discussions begin at 7:30 PM via Zoom. Please obtain and read the book before each discussion, and email Pastor Erhardt for a Zoom invitation.

**Available on the back pew:**

- (1) **New:** May/June 2024 edition of the *Messiah Messenger*
- (2) Meal sign-up sheet for the Luigs family
- (3) Portals of Prayer devotion booklets (April-June)
- (4) February - May 2024 Temple Servant schedule

## **Prayer Corner**

We remember in our prayers:

- The Stroebel family (grieving the recent death of Lewis's grandmother), Sheldon Mazelis (son-in-law of Joan Colliflower, for healing of a leg wound that will allow his back surgery to happen), Frank Castler (husband of a friend of Joan Colliflower, for successful surgery and patience in recuperation), Riley Samuel Mihulka, (born March 20 to Pastor Erhardt's cousin Abbie and her husband Sam – for successful recovery from heart surgery for Riley and calm nerves for his parents), Janice Hofreiter (for relief from migraine headaches and healing), Karin Bergesen (for relief from back pain and recovery following a recent fall and rehabilitation), Micha Livne (friend of the Gishlicks who is ill), Julia Majsztrik (for continued recovery from surgery and healthy growth, Carole Bleicher (friend of Carolyn Gishlick) and her sons-in-law Bob Atwood (diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer) and Mike Macceroni (preparing for heart surgery), Ted Alslev (son of Elda Alslev, to overcome his addiction to smoking), Mary Pickens (friend of Jon and Pat Hlafter, undergoing an experimental medical treatment), Sue Parisi (friend of Pat Hlafter, being treated for breast cancer), Peter Schulze (son of Lydia and Carl Schulze, friends of Miranda Hempel, Brad Bergmann, and Jenny Mills – for comfort, strength, and healing
- The people of Haiti, Ukraine, Israel, and the Gaza Strip

Prayer requests are generally printed in the Prayer Corner and included in the Sunday intercessory prayers for 4 weeks. If you would like us to keep someone there longer, we are happy to do that. Please call the church office or email [lcmprinceton@gmail.com](mailto:lcmprinceton@gmail.com) to let Pastor Erhardt know.



FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER  
April 28, 2024

Year B, Revised Common Lectionary

**First Lesson: Acts 8:26-40**

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, 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 snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

## **Second Lesson: 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. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. 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. 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. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. 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. 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. 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. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate a brother or sister are liars, for those who do not love a brother or sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

## **Gospel Lesson: John 15:1-8**

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