



Drawing by Jon Hlafter

The Lutheran Church of the Messiah

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Martin K. Erhardt, *Pastor*

Janice Hofreiter, *Organist*

Paul C. Hofreiter, *Choir Director*

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

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 3, 2026

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. 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). Gluten-free wafers and grape juice are also available upon request from the 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 Christ is Arisen (Christ ist Erstanden) arr. Douglas Franks

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 By All Your Saints in Warfare LBW 177 (vv. 1, 7, 4, 3)

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: *Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. By your Holy Spirit, lead us in that way, that truth, and that life, proclaiming the mighty acts of you who have called us out of darkness into your marvelous light. Amen*

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

First Lesson

Acts 7:55-60

Reader: The Word of the Lord. C: *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

pp. 229-230

Second Lesson

1 Peter 2:2-10

Reader: The Word of the Lord. C: *Thanks be to God.*

Choir Anthem

Bought With A Price

Natalie Sleeth

based on Micah 6:8 and 1 Cor. 6:20

You were blessed by the Word, born of the Spirit, called by the Power divine.
You were led by the light, washed with the water, marked by a sacred sign.
You are part of the chosen people, You are children of Abraham.
You were bought with a price, spared by a sorrow, saved by the blood of the Lamb!

Refrain:

So what, then does God require of you? Nothing in truth you cannot do.
This, this alone your whole life through, but to walk in the way of the Lord!

You were claimed by a cross, graced by a glory, loved by the Lord on high.
You were fed by the faith, filled from the fountain, destined to testify!
You are part of the chosen people, You are children of Abraham.
You were bought with a price, spared by a sorrow, saved by the blood of the Lamb!

You were blessed by the Holy Spirit, called by the Power divine;
Washed with the living water, marked by a sign.
You are part of the chosen people, children of Abraham,
Redeemed by a sacrifice and saved by the Lamb! *Refrain*

You were claimed by a cross, graced by a glory, loved by the Lord on high.
You were fed by the faith, filled from the fountain, destined to testify!
You are part of the chosen people, You are children of Abraham.
You were bought with a price, spared by a sorrow, saved by the blood of the Lamb!

Bought with the price of a sacrifice, and saved by the blood of the Lamb!

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 14th chapter.

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

Gospel Lesson

John 14:1-14

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Please be seated.

Children's Sermon

Sermon

Growing into Salvation

Hymn of the Day

Church of God, Elect and Glorious

LSB 646

(words below; Tune: Abbot's Leigh)

1 Church of God, elect and glorious, holy nation, chosen race,
called as God's own special people, royal priests and heirs of grace;
know the purpose of your calling, show to all his mighty deeds,
tell of love that knows no limits, grace that meets all human needs.

2 God has called you out of darkness into his most marv'ulous light,
brought his truth to life within you, turned your blindness into sight.
Let your light so shine around you that God's name is glorified
and all find fresh hope and purpose in Christ Jesus crucified.

(continued on the next page)

3 Once you were an alien people, strangers to God's heart of love,
but he brought you home in mercy, citizens of heav'n above.
Let his love flow out to others, let them feel the Father's care,
that they too may know his welcome and his countless blessings share.

4 Church of God, elect and holy, be the people he intends,
strong in faith and swift to answer each command your master sends.
Royal priests, fulfill your calling through your sacrifice and prayer;
give your lives in joyful service sing his praise, his love declare.

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.*

(continued on the next page)

*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 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 Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life LBW 513

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*

Closing Hymn

Christ Is Arisen

LBW 136

Benediction

p. 94

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

C: *Amen*

Postlude God is Here! (Abbot's Leigh) arr. Benjamin M. Culli
Announcements

P: Christ is risen! C: *He is risen indeed! Alleluia!*

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Thank you to today's Temple Servants

Acolytes	Jon Hlafter
Reader	Marion Zukas
Ushers	Hans and Veronika Henkes
Fellowship Host	Laura Bennett with Elizabeth and Julia
Chancel	Louise Cooper
Offering Counter	Robert Engel
Livestream	Mark von Bergen

This coming week

Wed	7:30 PM	Choir
Sun	9:00 AM	Adult Forum
Sun	10:30 AM	Service of Word and Sacrament

Next Sunday

Acts 17:22-31 • Psalm 66:8-20 • 1 Peter 3:13-22 • John 14:15-21

Opening Hymn: My Soul, Now Praise Your Maker (LBW 519)

Hymn of the Day: Built on a Rock (LBW 365)

Communion Hymn: Come Down, O Love Divine (LBW 508)

Adult Forum meets Sundays at 9am in the parish building library.

Current Topic: *Meditations on the Cross and Resurrection, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

Xuxu Song and Hyunsung Yun invite the people of Messiah to their wedding at Messiah on Saturday, May 30, at 2:30pm. Refreshments in the fellowship hall to follow. If you plan to attend, RSVP to Xuxu at her email address in the church directory by May 15.

Messiah's May Voters Meeting will be after worship on Sunday, May 17.

Available on the back pew:

- (1) **New:** May/June 2026 edition of the *Messiah Messenger*
- (2) Portals of Prayer devotion booklets (April-June)
- (3) February – May 2026 Temple Servant schedule

Prayer Corner

We remember in our prayers:

- The family of Abraham Abed (classmate of Veronika Henkes and Elizabeth Majsztrik, mourning his death in a bike/car collision on April 26), the Wendel family (grieving Ed's recent death), the family of Don Meyer (grieving the recent death of his mother), Lynne Olszewksi (sister of Patty Hlafter, recently diagnosed with macular degeneration), Lou and Mary Romolo (following Mary's move into hospice care), Sharon Wilchar (friend of Patricia Wolf who is very ill), Karin Bergesen (in rehab, recovering from a bone broken by a fall), Joan Colliflower (at home, recovering from knee surgery), Fred Dignon (Greg's father, recovering from surgery after a stroke and fall), Peter Hempel (brother of Miranda Hempel, recovering from surgery), Micha Livne (friend of the Gishlicks who is ill), 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), and Jenny Mills – for comfort, strength, and healing



PROF INSIGHTS

FACULTY-LED WORKSHOP SERIES

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

The Apostolic Fathers

June 1-3 at St. Peter Lutheran Church
Hopewell Township, NJ

Our presenter is Rev. Dr. Joel Elowsky, Professor of Historical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

This event is designed for pastors, other church workers and interested laypeople.



Workshop Description

A study of the primary literature of the Apostolic Fathers with application to the life of the church today. Study will be primarily focused on the texts themselves with attention also given to issues of authorship, dating, the integrity of the text and the occasion for the writing, as well to major theological, ecclesiological and social issues that the writings address such as martyrdom, church order, orthodoxy and heresy, early Christian ritual, etc.

COST UPDATE: The fee for this workshop is \$160. Registration is now open at www.csl.edu/workshop-series, and should be made no later than 14 days before the beginning of each workshop.

To register contact Concordia Seminary Continuing Education at 314-505-7286 or ce@csl.edu
For local information about this event contact Pastor Jon Dunbar at pastor@stpeternj.org

First Lesson: Acts 7:55-60

But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him, and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died.

Second Lesson: 1 Peter 2:2-10

Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God’s sight, and like living stones let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture: “See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” This honor, then, is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner,” and “A stone that makes them stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Gospel Lesson: John 14:1-14

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then believe because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

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