



He Lives and Calls Me to Live for Him

Sixth Sunday of Easter

GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | Seward, Nebraska

May 14, 2023

SERIES THEME: HE LIVES!

Life is full of either/or moments where you face an unavoidable choice between two alternatives. Some of those moments are relatively insignificant. Either I have the chicken, or I have the fish. Other times, they shape the course of your life. Either I accept this new job offer, or I keep my current job for the remainder of my career. Either I accept his marriage proposal, or.... Some either/or moments are bigger than others. Here is the biggest either/or of them all. Either Jesus is still dead, or Jesus rose. One might ask, "How does that either/or affect me?" Because Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and Savior from sin. He said the proof is that he would rise from the dead. "The Son of Man must suffer many things ... be killed and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31). Thus, if Jesus remains dead, he is both failure and fraud. However, if Jesus rose from the dead, he proves he is who he claimed to be—the Messiah. And he did what he came to do—save us. Either Jesus is still dead, or Jesus rose. That means, either Jesus is a complete waste of your time, or he is your only hope for salvation. If Jesus is still dead, it is completely logical that you should want nothing to do with him. If Jesus rose, it is only logical that he becomes the center and greatest priority of your life. Either Jesus is still dead, or Jesus rose. This season of Easter is a 50-day-long celebration of the fact that the Holy Spirit has answered that either/or for us. We believe this life-changing truth. Christ is risen! He lives! Throughout this season, we explore what that means.

THEME OF THE DAY: HE LIVES AND CALLS ME TO LIVE FOR HIM

"The LORD God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die'" (Genesis 2:16,17). In giving that command, God showed love to man by making it clear that it is lethal to live contrary to God's will. In giving that command, God provided man with the ability to demonstrate love for God—through obedience. True love involves obedience. Jesus did not simply say he loved his heavenly Father. He proved it by obeying his Father, even when that obedience meant dying on a cross for our sake. Love for God who lives in us leads us to a life of obedience. The God who lives in us calls us to live for him. It is as simple as that. Love for our risen Lord means obedience to his commands.

Worship Leader
Organist/Pianist

Pastor Justin Wilkens
Quinton Corwin

Acknowledgments

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www.wartburgproject.org

The Service, Setting One (page 154 in Christian Worship 21)

Hymn: 449 This Joyful Eastertide

Stand

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession

CW 154

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Lord, Have Mercy

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

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

Lord, have mercy.

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.

Lord, have mercy.

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

Lord, have mercy.

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

Amen.

Glory Be to God on High

CW 157



Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men.



We praise you, we bless you, we wor - ship you, we glorify you,



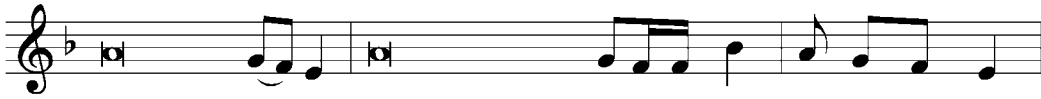
we give thanks to you, for your great glory, O Lord God, heav'n-ly King,



God the Fa-ther Al - mighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Je-sus Christ;



O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sin of the world;



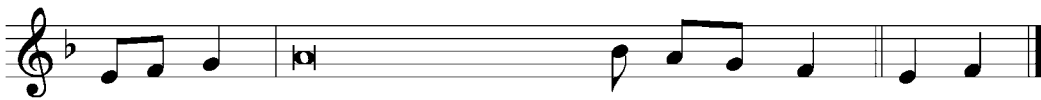
have mercy on us. You take away the sin of the world; re-ceive our prayer.



You sit at the right hand of God the Father; have mercy on us.



For you on-ly are holy; you on-ly are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the



Ho - ly Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

THE WORD

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

O God, you are the giver of everything good. Inspire us, your humble servants, to long for what is right and, through your gracious guidance, accomplish it to your glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Be seated

First Reading

Acts 17:22–31

To the people of Athens St. Paul proclaims that living as the offspring of the one true God means living a life of repentance and obedience.

²² Then Paul stood up in front of the council of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I see that you are very religious in every way. ²³ For as I was walking around and carefully observing your objects of worship, I even found an altar on which had been inscribed, ‘To an unknown god.’ Now what you worship as unknown—this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

²⁴ “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples made with hands. ²⁵ Neither is he served by human hands, as if he needed anything, since he himself gives all people life and breath and everything they have. ²⁶ From one man, he made every nation of mankind to live over the entire face of the earth. He determined the appointed times and the boundaries where they would live. ²⁷ He did this so they would seek God and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘Indeed, we are also his offspring.’

²⁹ “Therefore, since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by human skill and planning. ³⁰ Although God overlooked the times of ignorance, he is now commanding all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ because he has set a day on which he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man he appointed. He provided proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Second Reading

1 Peter 3:13–22

St. Peter teaches that love for God means obedience to his commands even if that obedience brings suffering into our lives.

¹³ Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should happen to suffer because of righteousness, you are blessed. Do not be afraid of what they fear, and do not be troubled. ¹⁵ But regard the Lord, the Christ, as holy in your hearts. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that is in you. ¹⁶ But speak with gentleness and respect, while maintaining a clear conscience, so that those who attack your good way of life in Christ may be put to shame because they slandered you as evildoers. ¹⁷ Indeed, it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil, ¹⁸ because Christ also suffered once for sins in our place, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in flesh but was made alive in spirit, ¹⁹ in which he also went and made an announcement to the spirits in prison. ²⁰ These spirits disobeyed long ago, when God’s patience

was waiting in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In this ark a few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. ²¹ And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the body but the guarantee of a good conscience before God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. ²² He went to heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

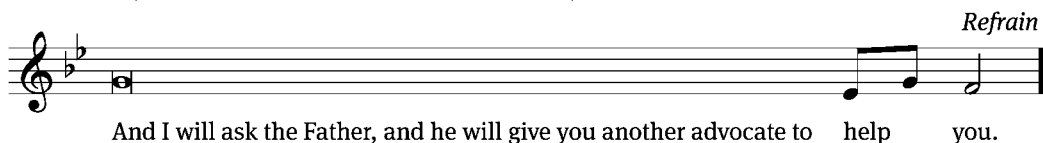
John 14:15,16



Refrain



Tone



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Gospel

John 14:15–21

Jesus explains that those who love him will obey his teaching. Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit who gives us the power to live for Christ.

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

¹⁵ "If you love me, hold on to my commands. ¹⁶ I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. ¹⁷ He is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive

because it does not see him or know him. You know him because he stays with you and will be in you.

¹⁸ "I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you. ¹⁹ In a little while the world will see me no longer, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹ The one who has my commands and holds on to them is the one who loves me. And the one who loves me will be loved by my Father. I too will love him and show myself to him."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Hymn of the Day: 557 Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice

sts. 1–4

Sermon

Stand

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 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.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son
is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy Christian 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.**

Be seated

Prayer of the Church

Brief intercessory prayers may be added in a fitting place.

Lord of life, fill our hearts with joy this Easter season, for you have risen and conquered the grave. Imprint the message of victory on our hearts and implant it in our minds. Through the good news of your resurrection renew our hope and revive our faith. Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

By baptizing us into your name, you have connected us to your death and rising. You have put our sin to death and have given us a new life. Enable us each day to think of ourselves as dead to sin and alive to you, so that we may walk in newness of life in all we do. Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

In this fallen world, death and sorrow surround us. Touch the hearts of those who grieve the loss of a Christian they love. Direct their eyes to your empty tomb and ease their pain by reminding them that their loved ones will one day rise again. Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Lord, many people grieve without hope. Let the message of resurrection reach them and awaken faith in their hearts. Use us as your instruments to bring the word of life to their souls and the message of hope to their hearts. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Stay by the side of all who are suffering. In your wise mercy, heal those who are sick, receiving treatment for illness, recovering from illness or surgery, or hurting in body or mind. [We pray especially for...*here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Remind them that your victory over death is a fact, and comfort them with your promise to raise them and give them and all believers new, glorified bodies like yours. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Risen Savior, feed our faith with the message of your resurrection. Come to us in your Word and in the feast of your Sacrament to sustain and strengthen us until we feast with you in eternal glory.

Amen.

Offering

Offering Hymn: 617 Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

THE SACRAMENT

Stand

Preface

CW 165

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who by his willing sacrifice on the cross took away the sins of the world and by his glorious resurrection restored everlasting life. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

Holy, Holy, Holy

CW 167



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of heav - en - ly hosts:
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na, ho -
san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he,
bless - ed is he, bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks to you, O God, through your dear Son, Jesus Christ, whom you sent to be our Savior, our Redeemer, and the messenger of your grace. Through him you made all things; in him you are well pleased. He is the incarnate Word, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of

the Virgin Mary. To fulfill your promises, he stretched out his hands on the cross and released from eternal death all who believe in you.

As we remember Jesus' death and resurrection, we thank you that you have gathered us together to receive your Son's body and blood. Send us your Spirit, unite us as one, and strengthen our faith so that we may praise you in your Son, Jesus Christ. Through him, we glorify and honor you, O God our Father, with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Lord's Prayer

**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.**

Words of Institution

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my + body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my + blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
Amen.

O Christ, Lamb of God

CW 169

O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world;
have mer-cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God,
you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world;
grant us your peace. A - men.

Be seated

Distribution

Close Communion We ask that only those who have previously spoken to our pastor or are members in good standing of this or another WELS or ELS congregation come to Holy Communion today. Our practice of Close Communion (which has been the practice of the Christian Church throughout the ages) is in no way trying to judge anyone's faith. What we are trying to do is follow the Bible's clear teaching (1 Corinthians 11) to first study God's Word together. As we do so, we can share with/review with you what the Lord's Supper is all about. You, then, also have an opportunity to examine what we believe and teach before you come to the Lord's Supper and make a public profession that you agree with what we teach.

Distribution Hymn: 670 I Come, O Savior, to Your Table

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this saving gift. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

Amen.

Hymn: 606 Alleluia! Sing to Jesus

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: 8:00 AM Bible Study, 8:45 AM Worship and Communion, 9:45 AM Fellowship and Sunday School

Thursday: 6:30 PM Joint Ascension Service at Bethel

Sunday: 8:00 AM Bible Study, 8:45 AM Worship, 9:45 AM Fellowship and Sunday School

New Church Directory

Over the course of these next weeks (April 9th-May 14th) please find a time following a worship service to have Becky Wilkens take your picture for our new church directory.

Trinity Lutheran Association Meeting

Trinity's association meeting will be on June 18th at 6:00 PM.

Picture for Pastor Marc and Elaine Frey's retirement

The Frey family is asking for members at Grace and Bethel to share any pictures that you may have of Marc and Elaine Frey during their 16 years of serving here in Nebraska. Please get pictures to Andrew Frey by June 18th.

CONNECTION CARDS: Visitors or members with changes in contact information, please fill out a connection card online at www.graceseward.org on the member connect tab or scan this code.



Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/gracelutheranseward



Personal assisted listening devices are available.

Given to the Lord: Attendance: Sunday Bible Class 12, Sunday School 4, Worship 40 in person, Facebook Reached 84, Audio/YouTube 15. Offerings: Home 4,310.00, WELS 360.00, NELHS 100.00, Trinity 525.00 **To God be the glory!**

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