

**ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**May 5, 2024—9:45 AM**

**Sixth Sunday of Easter—Faith, Hope, and Love**

**Blessing of High School Seniors and First Communion Celebration**

*We Proclaim and Practice Christ's Love*



**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Jesus loves you.

**Thanks be to God!**

Jesus loves you.

**Thanks be to God!**

Jesus loves you.

**Thanks be to God!**

We gather for worship in the name of Jesus, who loves us extravagantly.

**Jesus loves me, this I know. Let us praise his name together. Amen.**

**OPENING SONG *Jesus Loves Me***

Vs. 1: Jesus loves me! this I know,  
for the Bible tells me so;  
little ones to him belong,  
they are weak, but he is strong.

*Refrain:* Yes, Jesus loves me, yes, Jesus loves me,  
yes, Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so.

Vs. 2: Jesus loves me! he who died  
heaven's gates to open wide;  
he will wash away my sin,  
let his little child come in. *Refrain*

Vs. 3: Jesus loves me! he will stay  
close beside me all the way;  
when at last I come to die,  
he will take me home on high. *Refrain*

## **GREETING**

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

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.**

## **OPENING LITANY (based on 1 Corinthians 13)**

If I speak in the most eloquent or angelic voice, but do not have love, I am nothing.

**And now faith, hope, and love abide and the greatest of these is love.**

If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, "Jump," and it jumps, but I don't love, I am nothing.

**And now faith, hope, and love abide and the greatest of these is love.**

If I give away everything I own, but do not have love, I gain nothing

**And now faith, hope, and love abide and the greatest of these is love.**

Love never gives up, cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have.

**God, help us to love one another the way you have loved us.**

Let us love in word, in action, in truth, and in grace.

**Beloved, let us love one another. Amen.**

## **SONG 10,000 Reasons**

Chorus: Bless the Lord O my soul O my soul  
Worship His holy name  
Sing like never before O my soul  
I'll worship Your holy name

Verse 1: The sun comes up it's a new day dawning  
It's time to sing Your song again  
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me  
Let me be singing when the evening comes *Chorus*

Verse 2: You're rich in love and You're slow to anger  
Your name is great and Your heart is kind  
For all Your goodness I will keep on singing  
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find *Chorus*

Verse 3: And on that day when my strength is failing  
The end draws near and my time has come  
Still my soul will sing Your praise unending  
Ten thousand years and then forevermore *Chorus*

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

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

Let us pray: **God of love, in Christ Jesus, you have set for us an example of what it means to love one another. By loving us, you teach us to love. Draw us back to your example again and again, that we might live with one another in mutual service, and carry your love into the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

### **READING: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13**

<sup>1</sup>If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

<sup>4</sup>Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant <sup>5</sup>or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup>it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. <sup>7</sup>It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

<sup>8</sup>Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. <sup>9</sup>For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; <sup>10</sup>but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. <sup>11</sup>When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. <sup>12</sup>For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. <sup>13</sup>And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### **SONG *Forever Reign***

Verse 1: You are good You are good When there's nothing good in me  
You are love You are love On display for all to see  
You are light You are light When the darkness closes in  
You are hope You are hope You have covered all my sin

Verse 2: You are peace You are peace When my fear is crippling  
You are true You are true Even in my wandering  
You are joy You are joy You're the reason that I sing  
You are life You are life In You death has lost its sting

Chorus: (Oh) I'm running to Your arms  
I'm running to Your arms  
The riches of Your love will always be enough  
Nothing compares to Your embrace  
Light of the world forever reign

Verse 3: You are more You are more Than my words will ever say  
You are Lord You are Lord All creation will proclaim  
You are here You are here In Your presence I'm made whole  
You are God You are God Of all else I'm letting go *Chorus*

(Bridge): My heart will sing no other Name  
Jesus Jesus *Repeat*  
*Chorus*

### **SERMON**

## SONG *Borning Cry*

#732

Vs. 1 "I was there to hear your borning cry, I'll be there when you are old.

I rejoiced the day you were baptized to see your life unfold.

I was there when you were but a child, with a faith to suit you well;  
in a blaze of light you wandered off to find where demons dwell."

Vs. 2 "When you heard the wonder of the Word I was there to cheer you on;  
you were raised to praise the living Lord, to whom you now belong.

If you find someone to share your time and you join your hearts as one,  
I'll be there to make your verses rhyme from dusk till rising sun."

Vs. 3 "In the middle ages of your life, not too old, no longer young,  
I'll be there to guide you through the night, complete what I've begun.

When the evening gently closes in and you shut your weary eyes,  
I'll be there as I have always been, with just one more surprise."

Vs. 4 "I was there to hear your borning cry, I'll be there when you are old.

I rejoiced the day you were baptized to see your life unfold."

## BLESSING OF GRADUATES

Dear friends: life presents us with various significant milestones that set the stage for the next phase in our journey. Graduation from high school is one of these milestones. Today we wish to honor those who are moving through this time of accomplishment, transition, and change, and to show them that we, their community of faith, stand with them and support them.

*Jeremiah 29:11-13* At this time of celebration and transition, hear these words from holy scripture: "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me."

Dear seniors: It gives us joy to celebrate with you that you have reached this milestone in your life. As fellow members of this community of faith we rejoice with you and want you to know of our pride and excitement as you move from this accomplishment into the next phase of your life. We also want you to know that wherever you go and whatever you do, you are going forward with our prayers for God's continued guidance, power, protection, and strength.

Members and friends of St. James, will you promise to keep these graduates and their families in your thoughts and prayers as they go forth into the future? **We will.**

As their home congregation, will you promise to support them, take an interest in their future, and welcome them whenever they return to St. James? **We will.**

Will you promise to faithfully pray for these young people, placing their futures into God's loving hands as they make their choices? **We will.**

*Prayer:* O Lord Jesus Christ, when you welcomed the children your invitation included each one of us. Your guiding hand has continually been upon these seniors. You have sustained them. You have shared in their laughter and wiped away their tears. In times of confusion you have offered

direction. In times of sorrow you have offered hope. In times of doubt your Holy Spirit has lifted them up. Grant, O Savior, to each of them the knowledge of your continued presence as they go forth into the future. Bless them and keep them. Guide their steps. Hold them in the hollow of your hand. Bless them and keep them now and forever. **Amen.**

Gracious God, you bless your servants with many achievements. We give thanks especially today for the milestones that these students have attained. As they begin new phases of their lives, may they know your love in all the experiences they have.

Bless the parents of these students, who have raised their children and nourished them in faith.

Give them strength in your holy presence, and give them many joyful reunions with their children, those who are leaving home to go far away, and those staying close by. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Blessing:

Go out into the world in peace; be of good courage;

hold fast to what is good; return no one evil for evil;

strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;

help the suffering; honor all people;

love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And may God's blessing follow you all as you find new journeys to travel.

May you walk safely along the pathways of your dreams.

May God's gentle hand guide the decisions you will make.

And may hope be a light within you that you carry into each new day. **Amen.**

**SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

**OFFERING**

**SPECIAL MUSIC** *Build Your Kingdom Here*

**Logan Johanns**

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

**OFFERING PRAYER:** Loving God, you demonstrate your love for us by providing for our needs. We return these gifts to you as a sign of our love for you, for one another, and for all of your beautiful creation. Use them for the good of all that you have made. **Amen.**

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**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.**

**PRAYER FOR FIRST COMMUNION**

Today is a special day for Kason, Lincoln, and Zane who are joining us at communion this

morning for the first time. They have learned how in sharing the bread and wine of Holy Communion we remember Jesus' death and his rising to life again on that first Easter Day, and how eating the bread and drinking the wine makes us one with him and brings us closer to each other. They have expressed their desire to join us as we gather around the Lord's Table, and so they are invited to participate today. We welcome you to the Lord's Table. We thank God for you and rejoice in your being among us. And we pray that you will remain faithful to Christ and to his holy Church, finding joy and strength in his body and blood, the signs of his love for the world.

Let us pray: We thank you, gracious Father, for those who come to their first communion, and for their parents, grandparents, sponsors, and friends who have loved them, cared for them, taught them, and set them a good example. Bless them as they come to the table of your blessed Son by showing them your love and by giving them joy in your salvation. Keep them faithful to the covenant of their Baptism, and bring them to that great feast which today we are privileged to taste. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION:** Jesus who is patient and kind invites you to the feast of love in his name. Come and feast in the presence of our savior.

#### **DISTRIBUTION**

*Communion will be served at the altar today. Ushers will direct you forward. First communion participants and their families will come forward to the altar first. Children are using glasses they made for this special occasion. After all of them have communed, the rest of the congregation will come forward. Grape juice is available in the middle of the tray in pre-filled cups, which also include a wafer. Gluten-Free wafers are available upon request.*

**SPECIAL MUSIC** *Oceans*

**Grace Weaver**

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**Life-giving God, in the mystery of Christ's resurrection you send light to conquer darkness, water to give new life, and the bread of life to nourish your people. Send us forth as witnesses to your Son's resurrection, that we may show your glory to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Amen.**

#### **BLESSING** *From 1 Corinthians 13:12-13 (Msg Translation)*

We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us!

**But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that promise: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.**

Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit bless you on the journey. **Amen.**

#### **CLOSING SONG:** *And All the People Said Amen*

You are not alone if you are lonely  
When you feel afraid you're not the only

We are all the same in need of mercy  
To be forgiven and be free. It's all you got to lean on  
But thank God it's all you need

CHORUS: And all the people said amen whoa  
And all the people said amen  
Give thanks to the Lord for His love never ends  
And all the people said amen

If you're rich or poor well it don't matter  
Weak or strong you know love is what we're after  
We're all broken but we're all in this together  
God knows we stumble and fall And He so loved the world  
He sent His son to save us all (CHORUS)

Blessed are the poor in spirit who are torn apart  
Blessed are the persecuted and the pure in heart  
Blessed are the people hungry for another start  
For theirs is the kingdom the kingdom of God (CHORUS)

#### **DISMISSAL**

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

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Next Week**

**Tuesday, May 7th: Do-Days 9 am**

**Wednesday, May 8th: Men's Breakfast 7 am, Church Clean-up Day; Confirmation at 6:30,  
Choir 7 pm**

**SAVE THE DATE; Monday, May 13th**

**The Movie: "1946: The Mistranslation That Shifted Culture", Will be shown at the Mason  
City Community theatre. There will be a panel discussion following the movie. This event is**

**free and open to**

**Containers from donations to the Easter Breakfast and Spring Luncheon can be found in the kitchen. Please claim yours!**

**Thrivent T-Shirts: We have a large supply of t-shirts. Please stop in the gym and grab one (or more). They are sorted by size**

**May clean up will be Wednesday, May 8th at 5:30 pm.**

**The rain date will be Wednesday, May 15th. There will be pizza, sandwiches, chips to fuel you up. We will be cleaning up outside and getting our property looking good!**

**Muffins with Mom: Join us next Sunday in the gym from 9 to 9:45 for crafts, muffins, a photo booth, and fellowship as we celebrate Mother's Day. The whole congregation is invited to attend.**

**Graduate Recognition Today! We will recognize our graduating seniors at second service. Please Join us between services for cake and fellowship in the Fireside room.**