

REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Serving Absecon - Galloway Township
Rev. Heidi Link – Pastor
Brian Conover - Music Director

Sunday, May 3rd, 2026
THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

*** THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

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

Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb! **Amen.**

Let us give thanks for the gifts of baptism.

Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister continues.

Merciful God, you are the one who was, who is, and who is to come. You lead us beside still waters. We thank you for the waters of creation: morning dew, gentle rain, roaring waves.

We thank you for the waters that nourish us (*local waters may be named*). Blessed are you.

You guide us to springs of the water of life.

Jesus Christ, you are the faithful witness who accompanies us on our journeys. We give you thanks for your life-giving death and resurrection. We praise you for joining us in joy and sorrow. Blessed are you.

You guide us to springs of the water of life.

Holy Spirit, you anoint our head with oil and our cup overflows. Break down barriers that divide us. Fill us with the breath of peace. Blessed are you.

You guide us to springs of the water of life.

Holy One, we thank you for the gifts and grace of baptism, and for making us a new creation. We join with saints and angels, giving you honor and praise, now and forever. **Amen.**

*** OPENING SONG**

Lord God, We Praise You



1 Lord God, we praise you, now the night is o - ver, ac - tive and
2 Mon - arch of all things, fit us for your man - sions; ban - ish our
3 All - ho - ly Fa - ther, Son, and e - qual Spir - it, Trin - i - ty



watch - ful, stand - ing here be - fore you; sing - ing, we of - fer
weak - ness, health and whole - ness send - ing; bring us to heav - en,
bless - ed, send us your sal - va - tion; yours is the glo - ry,

...song continues...

* - Congregation Stands (If for any reason you are unable to stand during the service, please remain seated.)



prayer and med - i - ta - tion; thus we a - dore you.
where your saints u - nit - ed joy with - out end - ing.
gleam - ing and re - sound - ing through all cre - a - tion.

Text: attr. Gregory I, 540–604; tr. composite
Music: CHRISTE SANCTORUM, Paris *Antiphoner*, 1681

SERVICE OF HOLY BAPTISM *(see insert)*

SPECIAL MUSIC “*You Are Mine*”

FIRST READING: Acts 7:55-60

⁵⁵ 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. ⁵⁶ “Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” ⁵⁷ But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. ⁵⁸ 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. ⁵⁹ While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ 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.

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

- ¹ In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame;
deliver me in your righteousness.
- ² **Incline your ear to me;**
make haste to deliver me.
- ³ Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe, for you are my crag and my stronghold;
for the sake of your name, lead me and guide me.
- ⁴ **Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me,**
for you are my tower of strength.
- ⁵ Into your hands I commend my spirit,
for you have redeemed me, O LORD, God of truth.
- ¹⁵ **My times are in your hand;**
rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.
- ¹⁶ Let your face shine up- on your servant;
save me in your steadfast love.”

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 2:2-10

2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. 4 Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God’s sight, and 5 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. 6 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.” 7 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,” 8 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. 9 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. 10 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.

*** SONG OF PRAISE**

I’m So Glad Jesus Lifted Me



1 I’m so glad I’m so glad
 2 Sa - tan had me bound, Je - sus lift - ed me. Sa - tan had me bound,
 3 When I was in trou - ble, When I was in trou - ble,



Je - sus lift - ed me. I’m so glad
 Sa - tan had me bound, Je - sus lift - ed me,
 When I was in trou - ble,



sing - ing glo - ry, hal - le - lu - jah! Je - sus lift - ed me.

Text: African American spiritual
 Music: JESUS LIFTED ME, African American spiritual

*** THE WORD OF GOD: John 14:1-14**

A reading from the Gospel of St. John.

14 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 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? 3 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. 4 And you know the way to the place where I am going.” 5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

8 Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” 9 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'? ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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. ¹² 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. ¹³ I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

CONGREGATIONAL SONG

I Need Thee Every Hour



1 I need thee ev - 'ry hour, most gra - cious Lord;
2 I need thee ev - 'ry hour, stay thou near by;
3 I need thee ev - 'ry hour, in joy or pain;
4 I need thee ev - 'ry hour, teach me thy will;
5 I need thee ev - 'ry hour, most Ho - ly One,



no ten - der voice like thine can peace af - ford.
temp - ta - tions lose their pow'r when thou art nigh.
come quick - ly and a - bide, or life is vain.
and thy rich prom - is - es in me ful - fill.
oh, make me thine in - deed, thou bless - ed Son.



I need thee, oh, I need thee, ev - 'ry hour I need thee;



oh, bless me now, my Sav - ior, I come to thee.

Text: Annie Sherwood Hawks, 1835–1918, stanzas.; Robert Lowry, 1826–1899, refrain
Music: LOWRY, Robert Lowry, 1826–1899

*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; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. 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. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He 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.

*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Trusting in the power of Christ's resurrection to heal and redeem our broken world, let us pray for the needs of all creation.

A brief silence.

God of glory, you have built your church on Christ the cornerstone. Inspire lay leaders, deacons, pastors, and bishops to proclaim forgiveness and your steadfast love to all whom they encounter. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God of majesty, you bring forth plants and animals, skies and seas, mountains and valleys. Protect all you have made from the ravages of pollution and climate disaster. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God of mercy, you intend governments and social service agencies to be instruments of peace and justice. Guide political leaders and organizations to be agents of compassion, and raise up advocates for those who seek refuge and assistance. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God of well-being, you soothe those in distress, console all who grieve, provide for any in need, and comfort those who are sick (*especially*). Instill caregivers with a sense of purpose to be your healing hands in this world. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God of community, you call us together as your people for mutual support and to witness to your love in the world. Make your presence known among those unable to attend worship today. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of eternal life, you have prepared dwelling places for your people, so that we are never separated from you. We give you thanks for the faithful departed who witnessed to your mighty acts in word and deed. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

God of resurrection power, use us and these prayers to proclaim the good news of new life to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Savior.

Amen.

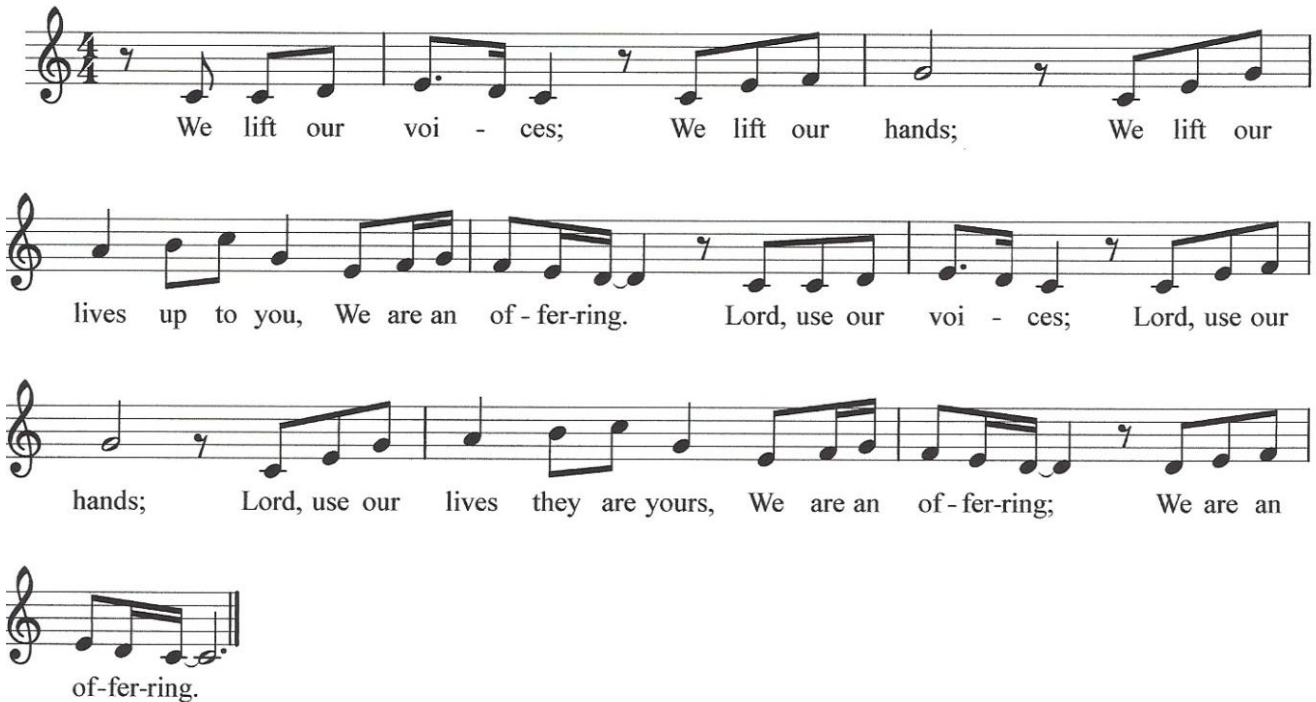
*** SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The Peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING / SPECIAL MUSIC “Be Thou My Vision”

* OFFERING SONG



We lift our voi - ces; We lift our hands; We lift our
lives up to you, We are an of - fer-ring. Lord, use our voi - ces; Lord, use our
hands; Lord, use our lives they are yours, We are an of - fer-ring; We are an
of-fer-ring.

* OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray: Merciful God, accept the fruits of our labor, gathered to give you glory. You have set a table before us, a glimpse of that great day when we will hunger and thirst no more. Nourish us with the body and blood of Jesus, that goodness and mercy may follow us and bless the world you love. In the name of Jesus, **Amen.**

* THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and salutary...*(Here the minister continues with the preface appropriate to the day or season, concluding:)* we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

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

*** WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

With Thanksgiving, we remember that in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to the disciples saying: " Take and eat; this is my body given for you. Do this in 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 in remembrance of me."

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim:

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. Amen.

*** THE 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

*** INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Come to the table of new life. Receive the risen Lord.

We come.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

(BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS who believe that the risen Christ is present in the Eucharist to forgive sin and renew life are invited to either come to the altar area for communion as directed or share at your pew. If you come forward, you will receive the elements. If you choose to receive at your seat, please remain there, kneel as you are able, and receive the elements using the communion packets available from the ushers. If there are other special needs, please speak to an usher.)

*** POST COMMUNION BLESSING**

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

*** POST COMMUNION HYMN**

Go, My Children, with My Blessing

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp). The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are: "Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, clos - er to me." The second staff continues the melody with the lyrics: "Grow in love and love by serv - ing, joy - ful and free." The third staff features a different melodic line, possibly for a second voice or instrument, with the lyrics: "Here my Spir - it's pow - er filled you, here his ten - der com - fort stilled you." The fourth staff returns to the first melody with the lyrics: "Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, joy - ful and free." The piece concludes with a double bar line.

*** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray: Holy One, through this meal you have made your home among us and are making all things new. Send us now to speak peace to anxious hearts, to love our enemies, and to bring your healing to the nations. In the name of Jesus, **Amen.**

*** BLESSING**

And now a blessing: God Almighty, who is the beginning and the end, Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the dead, and the Spirit, our advocate and peace, ✠ bless you now and forever.
Amen.

* CLOSING SONG

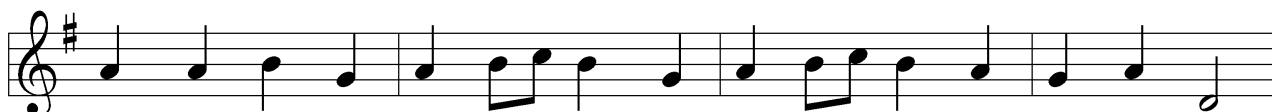
Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee



1 Joy - ful, joy - ful we a - dore thee, God of glo - ry, Lord of love!
2 All thy works with joy sur-round thee, earth and heav'n re - flect thy rays,
3 Thou art giv - ing and for - giv - ing, ev - er bless-ing, ev - er blest,



Hearts un - fold like flow'rs be - fore thee, prais-ing thee, their sun a - bove.
stars and an - gels sing a-round thee, cen - ter of un - bro - ken praise.
well-spring of the joy of liv - ing, o - cean-depth of hap - py rest!



Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness, drive the gloom of doubt a - way.
Field and for - est, vale and moun-tain, flow-'ry mead-ow, flash-ing sea,
Thou our Fa - ther, Christ our broth - er, all who live in love are thine;



Giv - er of im - mor - tal glad-ness, fill us with the light of day.
chant-ing bird, and flow - ing foun-tain call us to re - joice in thee.
teach us how to love each oth - er, lift us to the joy di - vine!

Text: Henry van Dyke, 1852–1933

Music: HYMN TO JOY, Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770–1827, adapt.

* SENDING

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Go in peace. Praise the Lord! Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

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