

The First Sunday after Pentecost

05-31-2026

Greg Fetzer, Pastor

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor Emeritus

PRELUDE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please stand, as you are able.

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

C **Amen**

P Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C **Amen**

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P Most merciful God,

C **we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. 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 In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for our sake God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ he gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen**

GATHERING HYMN [ELW#410 – “All Glory Be to God on High”](#)

P From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, grace and peace be with you all.

C And also with you.



A This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.



B Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow-er and rich-es and wis-dom and



strength, and hon-or and bless-ing and glo-ry are his.



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.



Sing with all the peo-ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre-a-tion: Bless-ing and hon-or and glo-ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A-men.



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be-gun his reign. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia.

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray. Lord God,
C **creator and ruler of the universe, you have entrusted the care of the earth to its peoples. Grant that your children, surrounded by signs of your presence, may live continually in Christ, praising you through him and with him, now and forever. Amen**

Please be seated.

PSALM 115:1-10

L ¹Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory;
because of your steadfast love and faithfulness.

C ²**Why should the nations say,
"Where then is their God?"**

L ³Our God is in heaven;
whatever God wills, God does.

C ⁴**Their idols are silver and gold,
the work of human hands.**

L ⁵They have mouths, but they cannot speak;
eyes they have, but they cannot see;

C ⁶**they have ears but they cannot hear;
noses, but they cannot smell;**

L ⁷they have hands, but they cannot feel; feet, but they cannot walk;
they make no sound with their throat.

C ⁸**Those who make them are like them,
and so are all who put their trust in them.**

L ⁹O Israel, trust in the Lord,
who is your help and your shield.

C ¹⁰**O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord,
who is your help and your shield.**

Please stand, as you are able.

JOHN 3:22-30

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

L The Holy Gospel according to John, the 6th chapter.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

L ²²After this Jesus and his disciples went into the region of Judea, and he spent some time there with them and baptized. ²³John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim because water was abundant there, and people kept coming and were being baptized. ²⁴(John, of course, had not yet been thrown into prison.)

²⁵Now a discussion about purification arose between John's disciples and a Jew. ²⁶They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing, and all are going to him." ²⁷John answered, "No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven. ²⁸You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Messiah, but I have been sent ahead of him.' ²⁹He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom who stands and hears him rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled. ³⁰He must increase, but I must decrease."

L The Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

HYMN OF THE DAY: [ELW#623 – “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me”](#)

SERMON: (Synopsis)

This morning's sermon reflected on John 3:22–30, where John the Baptist's disciples become anxious because people are beginning to go to Jesus instead of John. John's response is not jealousy or rivalry, but joy. He knows that he is not the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom. His calling is not to draw attention to himself, but to prepare the way, point to Christ, and rejoice when others hear Christ's voice.

John gives us a model for ministry, teaching, leadership, and Christian witness. It is tempting to want credit, control, or recognition for our work. But faithful witness means helping others enter the joy of God, even when that means stepping out of the center.

John's words, "He must increase, but I must decrease," are not words of defeat. They are words of fulfilled joy.

The church's calendar beautifully echoes this truth: after the feast of John the Baptist near midsummer, the days begin to shorten; after Christmas, the days begin to lengthen. John's light gives way to the greater light of Christ. Some lights are not meant to dominate the day. Some lights are given to announce that the day is coming.

Please stand, as you are able.

P Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

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.

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

L Gathered together by the Holy Spirit, let us pray for the church and the needs of the world.

A brief silence.

L Holy God, we are in awe of your creative work. Continue that work in your church, making us a new creation that proclaims your presence and love. God of grace,

C **hear our prayer.**

L Creator God, nature reveals your power and glory. Protect water sources, vegetation, and wildlife as reminders of who you are. God of grace,

C **hear our prayer.**

L Redeemer God, you call us to pray for those in authority. Guide our leaders to pursue the work of fostering peace and community. God of grace,

C **hear our prayer.**

L Sustaining God, you are mindful of your people in every circumstance. Heal those who are sick. Provide for all who hunger. Protect those in harm's way. Comfort any experiencing hardship. We pray for Barbara Ash, Heidi Brackbill, Rebecca Brennan, Lincoln Dippel, the Elshafei family, Jeff Fultz, Bob Hardy, Mark Hughes, Charlotte Leer, Wendy Neumann, Rick Newman, Peter Olsen, Claudia Schober, Nick Schuldes, Esther Trautwein, and Pastor Jack. God of grace,

C **hear our prayer.**

L For whom or what else shall we pray?

- *For peace and reconciliation among the nations, especially in Iran, Lebanon, Gaza, Mali, South Sudan, Ukraine, and Venezuela...*
- *For all immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers...*
- *For fair and compassionate immigration policies and enforcement...*
- *For LGBTQIA+ individuals and communities during this upcoming Pride month...*
- *For graduating students and all experiencing the transition of the school year into summer...*
- *For all those wounded and grieving after various events of death and destruction across the world: a coal mine explosion in China, a building collapse in the Philippines, a suicide bombing in Pakistan...*
- *For the safety of all evacuated in Garden Grove, California, due to a cracked chemical tank...*
- *For Muslims completing their Hajj pilgrimage this year, for their safety and spiritual welfare...*
- *For synods of the ELCA as they gather in their assemblies, that the Spirit would enliven and guide them...*

L Loving God, we give thanks for those who have died and claimed their baptismal promises. Strengthen us to live as they did in communion with you. God of grace,

C **hear our prayer.**

L Trusting you receive all our prayers, we commend our spoken and unspoken prayers to you, O God, through Jesus our Savior.

C **Amen**

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C **And also with you.**

OFFERING*: ([On-Line giving Link](#))

The Offering is received and is presented at the altar.



C Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of



bles-sing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be



fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u -



nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble with your



pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

P Let us pray. Merciful Father,

C we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us - ourselves, 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



P The Lord be with you. **C** And al - so with you.



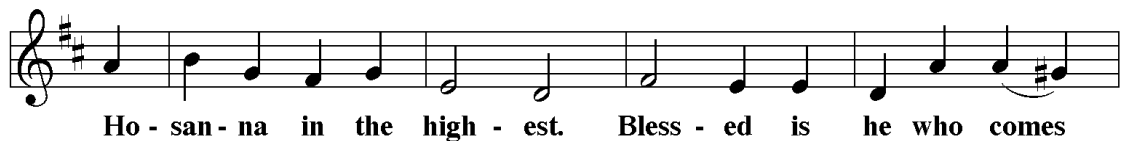
P Lift up your hearts. **C** We lift them to the Lord.



P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



The thanksgiving continues with the preface; the congregation responds:



P Holy God, our Maker, Redeemer, and Healer, in the harmonious world of your creation, the plants and animals, the seas and stars were whole and well in your praise. When sin had scarred the world, you sent your Son to heal our ills and to form us again into one.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his acts of healing, his body given up, and his victory over death, we await that day when all the peoples of the earth will come to the river to enjoy the tree of life. Send your Spirit upon us and this meal: as grains scattered on the hillside become one bread, so let your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth, that all may be fed with the Bread of life, your Son. Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

C Amen

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

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

P The gifts of God for the people of God. Come, for the table is now ready.

C **Thanks be to God.**

After all have communed, the following is sung:



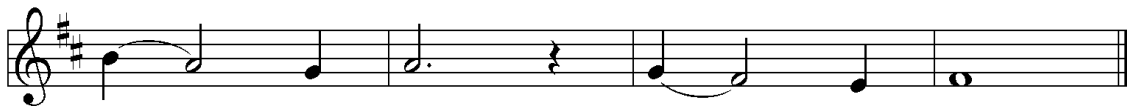
☐ **Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.**



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world;



grant us peace, grant us peace.

Please stand, as you are able.

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

C **Amen**



G Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let ev-'ry-one who seeks the Lord re-joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re-calls his prom-is-es and leads his peo-ple forth in joy



with shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

P Let us pray. Almighty God,

C you gave your Son both as a sacrifice for sin and a model of the godly life. Enable us to receive him always with thanksgiving, and to conform our lives to his; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

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

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

C Amen

SENDING HYMN: [ELW#856 – “How Great Thou Art”](#)

P Go in peace. Love and serve God and neighbor.

C Thanks be to God.

Announcements

- **Friday, June 5, 6 pm** – Family Game Night with Channing Memorial Church
- **Saturday, June 13, 10 am** – Outdoor Cleanup Day
- **Sunday, June 14, 9:30 am** – Outdoor Worship in the Neumann Chapel – bring a lawn chair
- **Sunday, July 12, 9:30 am** – Outdoor Worship in the Neumann Chapel – bring a lawn chair
- **Saturday, Aug 1, 6 pm** - Frederick Keys Baseball Game - Meet at 5:30 pm at the stadium
- **Sunday, Aug 9, 9:30 am** - Outdoor Worship in the Neumann Chapel – bring a lawn chair

*Offering to be sent to
Robert Brackbill
10274 Raleigh Tavern Lane

Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church

9122 Sybert Drive

Columbia Hills

Ellicott City, MD 21043

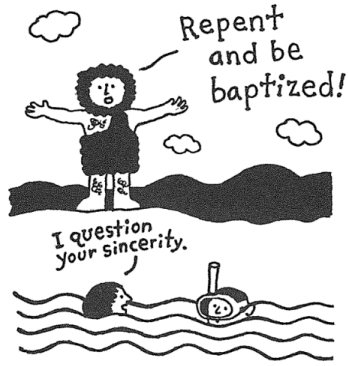
<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org>

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online giving with the link found after the offering designation or here: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291

(TENTATIVE) SUMMER READINGS PLAN

Dated	Text	Leader
May 31	John 3:22-30	Pastor Greg
June 7	John 5:19-29	Heidi and Bob
June 14	John 5:30-47	Julie and Dave
June 21	Genesis 28:10-17*	Ron
June 28	John 7:40-52	Pastor Greg
July 5	John 8:31-38	Heidi and Bob
July 12	John 8:39-47	Julie and Dave
July 19	John 8:48-59	Ron
July 26	John 10:31-42	Monica
Aug 2	John 11:46-57	Heidi and Bob
Aug 9	John 12:37-43	Julie and Dave
Aug 16	John 12:44-50	Ron
Aug 23	John 15:18-25	Monica
Aug 30	John 16:1-4a	Pastor Greg
Sep 6	John 16:16-33	Heidi and Bob
Sep 13	John 21:20-25	Julie and Bob

*Pastor Nancy Warner to preach



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