

Wisconsin Rapids Moravian Church

310 First Avenue South 715-423-0180 www.wrmoravian.org

“Sharing Christ, Serving People”

Sunday, May 2, 2021

5th Sunday of Easter

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP – Psalm 22:27-28

L: All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.

C: **For dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations.**

HYMN

Sing Praise to God

(pg. 15)

Sing praise to God who reigns above, the God of all creation,
the God of pow’r, the God of love, the God of our salvation;
with healing balm my soul he fills, and ev’ry faithless murmur stills. To God all praise and glory!

The Lord is never far away, but through all grief distressing,
an ever-present help and stay, our peace, and joy, and blessing,
as with a mother’s tender hand, he leads his own, his chosen band. To God all praise and glory!

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH PASTORAL PRAYER

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 25: 14-30

¹⁴“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ ²¹His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ ²³His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ ²⁶But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

⁶The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.

This is my Father's world, and to my list'ning ears
 all nature sings and round me rings the music of the spheres.
 This is my Father's world; I rest me in the thought
 of rocks and trees, of skies and seas – his hand the wonders wrought.

This is our Father's world: O let us not forget
 that though wrong is often strong, God is the ruler yet.
 He trusts us with his world, to keep it clean and fair –
 All earth and trees, all skies and seas, all creatures ev'ry where.

This is my Father's world: he shines in all that's fair;
 in rustling grass I hear him pass – he speaks to me ev'ry where.
 This is my Father's world: why should my heart be sad?
 The Lord is King, let heaven ring! God reigns; let earth be glad.

REFLECTION

OFFERTORY PRAYER

LITURGY OF STEWARDSHIP

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God, creator of all things visible and invisible, powerful beyond measure, good beyond all understanding.

God's steadfast love endures forever.

Tune: ABBOT'S LEIGH

#463 (vs 1)

God is love, let heav'n adore him; God is love, let earth rejoice;
 let creation sing before him and exalt him with one voice.
 God who laid the earth's foundation, God who spread the heav'ns above,
 God who breathes through all creation: God is love, eternal love.

Lord, our God, you bring forth and nourish every living being.

We lift up our hearts to you.

We assemble here celebrating the joys of human life, shared one with the other. We recall the ministry of Jesus, crucified and raised up for our salvation, still present among us through the mystery of the Holy Spirit.

We praise you for new life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Confessing that we have strayed from your holy will, we humbly acknowledge our sins before you.

Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned in many ways, times, and places. We have mishandled this good earth entrusted to our care, and we have misused our personal gifts, hurting both ourselves and others. Forgive our false pride which hides our negligence, and forgive our careless acts which destroy your handiwork. In your mercy correct our faults and restore us to responsible, compassionate living.

Silent confession

Hear and know that the Lord is good. God forgives those who are contrite in heart. Live in peace, for God's steadfast love endures forever.

Let us taste and see that the Lord is good. Let us be grateful for all that God has provided.

Inspire us, God of mercy, to be thankful for what we have received.

Let our lives resound with the wonder and beauty of all that God has been creating from the beginning. As caretakers of creation, may we learn anew to enjoy the land, preserve the water, respect all living creatures, and meditate upon the grandeur of open sky and sea.

Teach us, God of creation, to walk the earth with gratitude and wisdom.

Let our eyes be opened to the needs of all people, especially the poor.

Move us, God of justice, to share what we have and to be just and merciful in our nation and the world.

Let us hear God's call to the urgent tasks of our time: studies to pursue, projects to begin, communities to build, individuals to support, damages to restore.

Use us, God of the covenant -- use our time, our talent, our treasure.

Tune: ANGEL'S STORY

#603 (vs 1)

O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end; be now and ever near me, my master and my friend.

I shall not fear the battle if you are by my side, nor wander from the pathway if you will be my guide.

Our Creator God calls us to become the servant body of Christ, ministering to the world, and grants us the blessings of membership in the holy, universal church.

We thank you for our place in the church.

The Spirit of the Lord fills this house. God delights in its beauty, and sings through the music of the faithful. God speaks by the reading and proclamation of the word, stirs in the waters of baptism, nourishes through the gifts of bread and wine. God hears the prayers of the people and rejoices in our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

We thank you for your presence and power among us.

The Lord gathers us into the fellowship of this congregation. Here we share our spiritual gifts and employ them to build up the body. Some of us teach and proclaim, some shepherd and heal, some lead and administer, some serve, prophesy, and evangelize. All of us dwell in God's love, and all pray for one another in the peace of Jesus Christ our Lord.

We offer our gifts to honor your holy name and to strengthen one another in faith.

God calls us to commit our financial resources to the building of the kingdom, to tithe, and to give generously of our wealth in proportion to the blessings we have received.

Search our hearts and try our ways that we might give to your glory, O God.

Jesus leads us onward in the high mission of the church. We proclaim the gospel to all nations by word and deed, that people everywhere may find new life in God.

We hear your call. We pledge the best of our labors that your glory may be known in all the earth.

Let us now rise to serve God. Let us renew our commitment to Christ's call for servanthood, obedience, and sacrifice to establish a world of justice, prosperity, and peace.

We rise as one to love and serve the Lord!

TUNE: TOULON

(pg. TEXT: Albert F. Bayly (1901-1984). © 1988 by Oxford University Press

Lord of all good, our gifts we bring t you; use them your holy purpose to fulfill;
tokens of love and pledges brought anew, that our whole life is offered to your will.

CCLI #2275978

NEWS OF THE CHURCH ALIVE

BENEDICTION

May the words of our lips and the meditations of our hearts –

May the deeds of our hands and the action of our lives –

Be pleasing in your sight, O God our Creator.

Through Christ our Lord, and the Holy Spirit,

On God of all, world without end.

Amen!

Hymns reprinted or adapted from the 1995 Moravian Book of Worship with the permission of the Interprovincial Board of Communication, Moravian Church in America.

© 1995 IBOC. www.moravian.org; e-mail: pubs@mcnp.org. All rights reserved.

The New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. <http://nrsvbibles.org>

WATCHWORD FOR THE WEEK

Jesus says, "Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me."

John 15:4

Prayer Concerns & Announcements

For Daily Prayer

Patty Beyer, Bonnie Irwin, Darla Knobeck Labarge, Jennie Ferkey, Peggy Hanneman,

Jan Baker's daughter (Natalie), the Kelnhofer family, Gloria Reisinger, Jeff Abbott

Nursing/Assisted Living Residents: Ethelmae Schulz, Dorothy Langsdorf, Ella Scholze, Mary Lou Eklund,
Mavis Newman, Joyce Buss

At home: Marlene Young, Dick Schoechert, Gloria Papineau, Paul & Marie Knipple

Servicemen: Paul & David Eklund, Mason Fellowes

The frontline people who are caring for those who have Covid-19

Those who have lost loved ones to or are battling Covid-19

Our brothers and sisters affected by natural disasters

Peace for our country

Announcement

The May Joyful Noise offering will go to Jeremiah's Crossing.

Giving Thankfully

Our congregation is still offering its ministry in this new context, but cannot do so without your support. We ask that you prayerfully consider supporting our congregation's ministry.

Offerings can be made in these ways:

1. Mail in your offering
2. Drop off your offering at the church
3. Give electronically – through your bank or by going to mmfa.info, clicking the "Giving Portal" link and choosing our congregation.

"I Am the True Vine"

I have always thought of the Gospel of John as the "I Am" Gospel. I Am is a figure in Jesus' speech many times. As Jesus tries to help people understand God and heaven, he uses examples from agriculture that they would understand. In today's lesson, Jesus is the true vine. Vines or vineyards are symbols for Israel, so when Jesus says he is the true vine, he is saying he is the true Israelite, the one in covenant with God. God is the vine grower and trims off any branches that do not bear fruit, and prunes those that do bear fruit so that they bear more fruit.

One of the advantages of living in eastern Pennsylvania is several vineyards in the area. They all give tours and explain the process of producing wine, including care of the vines. At last, a story that I can fully relate to. Jesus, the true vine, tells us to "abide" in him; to stay with or dwell in the love of Jesus. This provides us the new covenant with God. We are the branches of the vine; without the vine we can do nothing. Our abiding with Jesus and Jesus' abiding with us make all good fruit possible. Jesus as the vine is the conduit between God and humankind.

Jesus tells us that we can ask God for anything in the name of Jesus, and God will give it to us. How do we explain unanswered prayer? I believe that God does answer prayer, in God's own time and manner. God is not Santa Claus; God provides us with what we need, but not always what we want. I confess that I sometime get a case of the "I wants" and soon understand that this is a symptom of the world talking, not the believer. When asking for something in Jesus' name, be thoughtful, mindful, and grateful in the process. Abide in Jesus and allow him to abide in you. Think of the things of heaven.

Martha E. Griffis, Central Moravian Church, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

The Moravian Church

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 2, 2021

