



THE ORDER OF THE DIVINE SERVICE
THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
MAY 2, 2021 – 9:30 AM

A warm welcome to all worshipping with Resurrection Lutheran Church today. In May of 2020, we celebrated forty-two years of ministry. Celebrating our Savior's love continues today in the faithful gathering of God's people, whether we are together in God's house or as you watch online from the comfort of your home.

LESSONS AND LITURGY TODAY

As branches are to the vine, so are we to Christ. We are not alone, nor can we exist alone; it is only in connection with Christ that life flows to us and through us. It is only in Christ that we see who we are meant to be and what fruit we are meant to bear. Easter teaches us a brand-new meaning to Christ's Promise to abide in us. Not even death can keep Him from living within His people by Baptism and faith. In order to sustain His Life in us, we are called to remain in Him, to stay connected to the Vine so that we branches may bear the good fruit of His Kingdom.

Today we rejoice with the young women and men of our congregation who publicly confirm the vows made at their Baptism. We affirm them in their confession, even as we recall our own commitment to walk with our Lord. May God's Holy Spirit guide each of us as we daily give testimony of our faith; and as we resolve to grow in our knowledge of God and His Will for our lives.

WELCOME TO THE LORD'S TABLE

The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated at this worship service.

All who are baptized in the name of the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and who affirm the following are welcome to come forward to receive it:

- I am a fallen and sinful person in need of God's forgiveness;
- The Sacrament is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine instituted by Christ Himself for us to eat and to drink;
- In the Sacrament, everyone who believes the words "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins," receives forgiveness of sins, life and salvation.

At Resurrection Lutheran Church, children who are baptized as infants are instructed so that they may receive Holy Communion understanding what it is we are looking for, and why we are coming. Newcomers to Resurrection Lutheran Church receive the opportunity for in-depth catechetical

instruction. If you and/or your children of any age are not prepared to receive the Lord's Supper with this same statement of faith, you are requested to refrain from receiving Holy Communion at this time.

❖ Denotes times when the congregation is invited to stand.

The congregation is encouraged to quietly and prayerfully prepare for worship during the prelude.

PRELUDE

Entrata Esultante – H. Morris

Heavenly Handbells

GREETING

❖ INVOCATION

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the Name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Alleluia! Christ is risen!

C **He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

P Christ being raised from the dead will never die again;

C **Death no longer has dominion over Him.** (*Romans 6:9*)

P Christ has risen from the dead

C **God the Father has crowned Him with glory and honor.**

P He has given Him dominion over the works of His Hands;

C **He has put all things under His Feet.** (*Matthew 28:7, Hebrews 2:7*)

❖ HYMN

Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen

LSB 474, vs. 1-3, 5

1. Alleluia! Jesus is risen! Trumpets resounding in glorious light!

Splendor, the Lamb, Heaven forever!

Oh, what a miracle God has in sight!

Refrain

Jesus is risen and we shall arise: Give God the glory! Alleluia!

**2. Walking the way, Christ in the center Telling the story to open our eyes;
Breaking our bread, Giving us glory:**

Jesus our blessing, our constant surprise. Refrain

**3. Jesus the vine, We are the branches; Life in the Spirit the fruit of the tree;
Heaven to earth, Christ to the people,**

Gift of the future now flowing to me. Refrain

**5. City of God, Easter forever, Golden Jerusalem, Jesus the Lamb,
River of life, Saints and archangels,**

Sing with creation to God the I AM! Refrain

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CONFESSION OF SINS AND GOOD NEWS OF FORGIVENESS

P If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

C **The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.**

P Jesus said, "I Am the Vine; you are the branches.

C **If you remain in Me and I in you,**

P you will bear much fruit;

C **apart from Me you can do nothing.**

P O most Merciful God,

C **we confess to You that, even though we are in Christ, we often live as if we were not. Sin dwells in us like blight. We fail to bear fruit; and we deserve none of Your Blessings.**

C **Father, remove our sin, as a vinedresser prunes the vine; that we may bear fruit in keeping with repentance, for the Sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake
forgives you all your sins.
As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive
you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

P May He who began this good work within you bring it to completion on the day of
our Lord Jesus Christ.
C **Amen.**

❖ **HYMN OF PRAISE** **LSB 155**
This is the Feast – arr. R. Hillert

Refrain

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

**1. Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,
Whose blood set us free to be people of God. Refrain**

**2. Power, riches, wisdom and strength
And honor and blessing and glory are His. Refrain**

**3. Sing with all the people of God,
And join in the hymn of all creation:**

**4. Blessing, honor, glory and might
Be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen. Refrain**

**5. For the Lamb who was slain
Has begun His reign. Alleluia. Refrain**

❖ **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

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

P Let us pray.

O God, You make the minds of your faithful to be of one will.

C Grant that we may love what You have commanded and desire what You promise, that among the many changes of this world our hearts may remain where true joys are found; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Acts 8:26-40

(Philip brings the Easter Gospel to an Ethiopian and baptizes him into new life in Christ.)

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip,
"Go south to the road---the desert road---
that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza."
So he started out, and on his way he met
an Ethiopian eunuch, an important
official in charge of all the treasury of
Candace, queen of the Ethiopians.
This man had gone to Jerusalem to
worship and on his way home was sitting
in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah
the prophet.
The Spirit told Philip,
"Go to that chariot and stay near it."
Then Philip ran up to the chariot and
heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet.
Philip asked, "Do you understand what
you are reading?"
He said, "How can I, unless someone
explains it to me?"
So he invited Philip to come up and sit
with him.
The eunuch was reading this passage of
Scripture:

*"He was led like a sheep to the
slaughter;
and as a lamb before the shearer is
silent, so He did not open His Mouth.*

*In His humiliation He was deprived of
justice.*

*Who can speak of His descendants?
For His Life was taken from the
earth."*

The eunuch asked Philip,
"Tell me, please, who is the prophet
talking about, himself or someone else?"
Then Philip began with that very passage
of Scripture and told him the Good News
about Jesus.
As they traveled along the road, they came
to some water and the eunuch said,
"Look, here is water.
Why shouldn't I be baptized?"
And he gave orders to stop the chariot.
Then both Philip and the eunuch went
down into the water and Philip baptized
him.
When they came up out of the water, the
Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip
away, and the eunuch did not see him
again, but went on his way rejoicing.
Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and
traveled about, preaching the Gospel in all
the towns until he reached Caesarea.

A This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

EPISTLE

1 John 4:1-21

(True faith is found in believers who acknowledge Jesus and live in Him, who listen to His Word, and who love one another.)

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God.

This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One Who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them.

We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us.

This is how we recognize the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of falsehood.

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.

Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is Love.

This is how God showed His Love among us: He sent His One and Only Son into the world that we might live through Him.

This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His Love is made complete in us.

We know that we live in Him and He in us; because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world.

If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is Love.

Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the Day of Judgment, because in this world we are like Him.

There is no fear in love.

But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment.

The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

We love because He first loved us.

If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar.

For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, Whom he has not seen.

And He has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

❖ ALLELUIA VERSE

LSB 156



❖ HOLY GOSPEL

John 15:1-8

(Jesus is the True Vine Who alone gives life to the branches so they may bear the good fruit which lasts.)

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the fifteenth chapter.

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

"I Am the True Vine,
and My Father is the Gardener.
He cuts off every branch in Me that bears
no fruit, while every branch that does bear
fruit He prunes,
so that it will be even more fruitful.
You are already clean because of the word
I have spoken to you.
Remain in Me, and I will remain in you.
No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must
remain in the vine.
Neither can you bear fruit unless you
remain in Me.
"I Am the Vine; you are the branches.

If a man remains in Me and I in him, he
will bear much fruit; apart from Me you
can do nothing.
If anyone does not remain in Me,
he is like a branch that is thrown away and
withers; such branches are picked up,
thrown into the fire and burned.
If you remain in Me and My Words
remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and
it will be given you.
This is to My Father's Glory,
that you bear much fruit,
showing yourselves to be My disciples.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.
C Praise to You, Lord Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY

O Blessed Spring

LSB 595

1. O blessed spring, where Word and sign Embrace us into Christ the Vine:
Here Christ enjoins each one to be A branch of this life-giving Tree.
2. Through summer heat of youthful years, Uncertain faith, rebellious tears,
Sustained by Christ's infusing rain, The boughs will shout for joy again.
3. When autumn cools and youth is cold, When limbs their heavy harvest hold,
Then through us, warm, the Christ will move With gifts of beauty, wisdom, love.
4. As winter comes, as winters must, We breathe our last, return to dust;
Still held in Christ, our souls take wing And trust the promise of the spring.
5. Christ, holy Vine, Christ, living Tree, Be praised for this blest mystery:
That Word and water thus revive And join us to Your Tree of Life.

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SERMON

Love Perfected, Love Lived Out

Pastor. Jonathan Blanke

1 John 4:1-21

(For an outline of the sermon, see page 20 of this worship folder)

RITE OF CONFIRMATION

Confirmation marks the completion of our congregation's confirmation instruction, a period of passing on to our children the Christian faith as confessed in the teachings of the Lutheran Church. Those who have completed this program were made members of the church in Baptism. Confirmation includes a public profession of the faith into which the candidates were baptized, thus underscoring God's action in their Baptism.

P Dear brothers and sisters, at the Baptism of these young men and women, their parents and sponsors promised to provide for their spiritual growth and training. Today we give thanks to God for the work, which parents have done to prepare

their children for faithful living. We also thank God for the work parents will continue to do as they teach and model the Christian faith for these young men and women.

C **Thanks to You, O Lord, for the faithful work of parents.**

P These young people have been instructed in the Christian faith and desire to make public affirmation of their Baptism. We rejoice that they now desire to do this and assume greater responsibility in the life of our Christian community and its mission in the world.

P In Holy Baptism our Lord Jesus Christ received you and made you members of His Church. In the community of God's people, you have learned from His Word God's Loving Purpose for you and all creation. You have been nourished at His Holy Table and called to be witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Now therefore, I ask you:

Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the devil, and all his empty promises?

R ***I do.***

P Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

R ***Yes, I believe.***

P Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead?

R ***Yes, I believe.***

P Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting?

R ***Yes, I believe.***

P Do you hold all the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures to be the inspired Word of God?

R ***I do.***

P Do you confess the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, drawn from the Scriptures, as you have learned to know it from the Small Catechism, to be faithful and true?

R *I do.*

P Do you intend to hear the Word of God and receive the Lord's Supper faithfully?

R *I do, by the Grace of God.*

P Do you intend to live according to the Word of God, and in faith, word, and deed to remain true to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

R *I do, by the Grace of God.*

P Do you intend to continue steadfast in this confession and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?

R *I do, by the Grace of God.*

P We rejoice with thankful hearts that you have been baptized and have received the teaching of the Lord. You have confessed the faith and been absolved of your sins. As you continue to hear the Lord's Word and receive His blessed Sacrament, He who has begun a good work in you will bring it to completion at the Day of Jesus Christ.

C **Amen.**

P Let us pray.

Gracious Lord, through water and the Spirit You have made these young people Your own. You forgave them all their sins and brought them to newness of life.

P Continue to strengthen them with the Holy Spirit, and daily increase in them Your Gifts of Grace: the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and respect of the Lord, the Spirit of the joy of Your Presence; through Jesus Christ Your Son, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

GENERAL BLESSING:

Parents, family members, and/or sponsors of the catechumens will join their children at the altar and read their child's confirmation verse. As the pastor gives the following blessing, parents, family members, and/or sponsors of the catechumens may put their hands on their child's shoulder or head.

P (Name), the Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has given you the new birth of water and the Holy Spirit and has forgiven you all your sins, strengthen you with His Grace to Life Everlasting.

R *(Each catechumen answers)* **Amen.**

The presiding minister exchanges the peace of the Lord with each of them. They exchange the peace with one another and other members of the congregation.

❖ GREETING OF PEACE

All are invited to greet one another in the name of the Lord, saying, “Peace be with you,” as a sign of reconciliation and of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (*Matt. 5:22–24; Eph. 4:1–3*) Any gesture accompanying this greeting (wave, hand over heart with slight bow) is welcome.

OFFERING

(The offerings of God’s people will be received through electronic giving, by postal mail, and in baskets located in the Narthex.)

❖ PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

P Our Father in Heaven, You have grafted us into the True Vine, Jesus Christ, that we may have Life.

C **Bless us and enable us to bear fruit for Your Kingdom.**

P Lord, by Your Holy Spirit, You provide nurture and growth through the efforts of Your missionaries, pastors, and teachers.

C **Bless them with Your Protection and Strength, and give them joy in their ministry. Inspire us to support them with our labor and our gifts.**

P Heavenly Father, we pray that as You tend Your Garden - the Church - You would restore those who are separated from the Vine.

C **Use us to reach out to in Christian love and fellowship, that all of us – Your branches – may produce fruit.**

P We remember before You the leaders of our government and of the world.

C Help them to seek fruits of justice and peace for all whom they serve.

P Defeat the forces of terror that war against the innocent and protect those who are persecuted for their faith in Christ.

C Protect and prosper all who serve our country and bless their mission.

After each portion of the prayers:

P Lord, in Your Mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Into Your Hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your Mercy for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

+ SACRAMENT +

❖ PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

P Almighty God, You created us and all things for Your Glory; and to know intimately Your Love. When sin stole us from You and placed us in the shadow of death, You sought us out to redeem and restore us.

Your Son has paid the full price of our redemption and made us Yours again.

He is the True Vine, and by Your Grace You have grafted us into Him that we may have life both here and in eternity.

P Keep us in Christ that we may fulfill anew Your Holy Purpose in our lives.
Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may receive with faith the grace He bestows through His Holy Body and Precious Blood.

C Amen.

❖ THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took, bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ Body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

P In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ Blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

❖ **PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST**

P For as often as we eat of this bread and drink of this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

C **Christ has died. Christ is risen! Christ will come again.**

P Remembering Jesus' incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection, and looking forward to His coming again in glory, we pray You, Father, to keep us by Your Spirit, that we may live faithfully here on earth until He returns to bring us with all the faithful into the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in His Kingdom which has no end.

C **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

P Remember us in Your Kingdom, O Lord, and teach us to pray:

❖ **LORD'S PRAYER**

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.**

❖ **PEACE**

P The Peace of the Lord be with you always.
C Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

MUSIC DURING THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Chorale Prelude on *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee* – arr. H. Hopson Heavenly Handbells

At the Lamb's High Feast

LSB 633

**1. At the Lamb's high feast we sing Praise to our victorious King,
Who has washed us in the tide Flowing from His pierced side.
Alleluia!**

**2. Praise we Him, whose love divine Gives His sacred blood for wine,
Gives His body for the feast—Christ the victim, Christ the priest.
Alleluia!**

**3. Where the paschal blood is poured, Death's dread angel sheathes the sword;
Israel's hosts triumphant go Through the wave that drowns the foe.
Alleluia!**

**4. Praise we Christ, whose blood was shed, Paschal victim, paschal bread;
With sincerity and love Eat we manna from above.
Alleluia!**

**5. Mighty Victim from the sky, Hell's fierce pow'rs beneath You lie;
You have conquered in the fight, You have brought us life and light.
Alleluia!**

**6. Now no more can death appall, Now no more the grave enthrall;
You have opened paradise, And Your saints in You shall rise.
Alleluia!**

**7. Easter triumph, Easter joy! This alone can sin destroy;
From sin's pow'r, Lord, set us free, Newborn souls in You to be.
Alleluia!**

**8. Father, who the crown shall give, Savior, by whose death we live,
Spirit, guide through all our days: Three in One, Your name we praise.
Alleluia!**

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Chief of Sinners Though I Be

LSB 611

- 1. Chief of sinners though I be, Jesus shed His blood for me,
Died that I might live on high, Lives that I might never die.
As the branch is to the vine, I am His, and He is mine.**
- 2. Oh, the height of Jesus' love, Higher than the heav'ns above,
Deeper than the depths of sea, Lasting as eternity!
Love that found me—wondrous thought! Found me when I sought Him not.**
- 3. Only Jesus can impart Balm to heal the wounded heart,
Peace that flows from sin forgiv'n, Joy that lifts the soul to heav'n,
Faith and hope to walk with God In the way that Enoch trod.**
- 4. Chief of sinners though I be, Christ is all in all to me;
All my wants to Him are known, All my sorrows are His own.
He sustains the hidden life Safe with Him from earthly strife.**
- 5. O my Savior, help afford By Your Spirit and Your Word!
When my wayward heart would stray, Keep me in the narrow way;
Grace in time of need supply While I live and when I die.**

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❖ **DISMISSAL BLESSING**

- P** The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body
and soul to Life Everlasting. Depart ✠ in peace.
- C** Amen.

❖ **PRAYER**

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, We give You thanks, for You have fed us with Your most Holy Body and Blood in, with, and under the bread and the fruit of the vine. Remind us once again that we are attached to You, the True Vine.

By Your Grace, bless the nourishment that we have received, that we may be fruitful, feeding the world with love and service.

C **Amen.**

❖ **BENEDICTION**

P May the God of peace, Who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing His Will, and may He work in us what is pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever and ever.

(Hebrews 13:20-21)

C **Amen.**

P The LORD bless you and keep you.

The LORD make His Face to shine on you and be gracious to you.

The LORD look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace. *(Numbers 6:24-26)*

C **Amen.**

❖ **CLOSING HYMN**

Almighty Father, Bless the Word

LSB 923

**1. Almighty Father, bless the Word Which through Your grace we now have heard.
Oh, may the precious seed take root, Spring up, and bear abundant fruit!**

**2. We praise You for the means of grace As homeward now our steps we trace.
Grant, Lord, that we who worshiped here May all at last in heav'n appear.**

**3. Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

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P Christ is risen!
C He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

POSTLUDE
Earth and All Stars – C. Ore

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Servants in Worship
Preacher.....Rev. Dr. Jonathan Blanke
Liturgist.....Vicar Alan Shaw
Organist/Pianist/Vocalist.....Robert E. Unger, Director of Worship and Music Ministry
Vocalists.....Sanctuary Choir Ensemble
Usher.....Spencer Kostansek
Greeters.....Jenny & Emily Piontek
Reader.....MaryAnn Unger
Heavenly Handbell Ensemble



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2021 Confirmation Class

Name	Baptism Date	Verse
Madelyn Blackburn	11/11/2006	Psalms 23:1-3
Stephen Buckner		Isaiah 41:10
Mary Buckner		Micah 6:8
Addison Collins	8/12/2007	1 Peter 5:7
Allison Heard	12/10/2017	Psalms 118:26
Sydney Holfelder	12/9/2007	Hebrews 13:8
Grant Klein	11/25/2006	Isaiah 41:10
Logan Kostansek	1/21/2007	Psalms 94:19
Aidan Leahy	11/19/2006	Luke 23:39-43
James Miller	11/24/2006	Lamentations 3:22-23
Enzo Moscatello	12/19/2010	Galatians 3:28
Landon Petz	8/11/2007	Exodus 15:2
Benjamin Piontek	4/8/2007	Philippians 4:133
Summer Schwandron		2 Corinthians 3:18
Rachel Shaltanis	2/4/2007	Proverbs 31:25-26
Sullivan Swiersz	11/18/2006	1 Peter 4:10
Mary Trautman	7/22/2006	1 Peter 4:10
Abigail Verburgt	7/29/2007	John 1:16
Lauryn Webb	9/2/2007	Proverbs 3:5-6

God's Love Letter, 4: Love Perfected, Love Lived Out (1 John 4:1–21)

Easter 5

We cannot say that we love God (whom we have not seen) yet continue to hate our brother or sister (whom we *have* seen).

1. **Today is the fourth week of a 5-week series on 1 John**, a letter all about God's love for us—and because of God's love for us, our love for one another. Today John's theme is discerning the true from the false (4:1–6) about Jesus...and how the crucified and resurrected Christ grounds us in God's perfect/completed love!
2. **Spirit-gifted faith sees Jesus not only as _____ and living ____, but also as a man who suffered in human flesh and died (4:2–3).** Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins (4:10). No other sacrifice is necessary! All has been accomplished and completed (4:12, 17, 18) to bring God's unconditional love to us!
3. **John's community suffered from a discernment challenge, but today also, God's perfect/fulfilled love for us in Christ Jesus leads us to exercise discernment and “_____ the _____.”**
 - a. The Spirit leads us to discern and confess with our mouths (as our confirmands are doing today) what we believe to be true about Jesus Christ.
 - b. The Spirit leads us to live out (however imperfectly, here below) the perfect and unconditional love of God for us that Jesus has made possible.
4. **Because we are sinners, we cannot help but fear God's punishment, but God's perfect/fulfilled love for us, gifted to us in Christ Jesus, leads us to stand _____ before God now and on the Last Day; it “_____” our fear!**
 - a. Even though our faith is always--from our point of view--an imperfect and inadequate thing, the Holy Spirit make our unpresentable faith presentable before God.
 - b. Those who wonder if their love will be returned live in fear. We need not live this way! God's love for us was *prior* to our love for God and is *not dependent* on our love for God. We are freed to love God and one another.