Announcements and Opening Hymn

816 From All That Dwell Below the Skies
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5QxnDYwxWs (guitar version
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Mp9iSAnCo4 with ad ☹)

1 From all that dwell below the skies
   Let the Creator’s praise arise;
   Alleluia, alleluia!
   Let the Redeemer’s name be sung
   Through ev’ry land by ev’ry tongue.
   Alleluia, alleluia!
   Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

2 Eternal are Thy mercies, Lord;
   Eternal truth attends Thy Word.
   Alleluia, alleluia!
   Thy praise shall sound from shore to
   shore
   Till suns shall rise and set no more.
   Alleluia, alleluia!
   Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
   △ 3 All praise to God the Father be,
   All praise, eternal Son, to Thee.
   Alleluia, alleluia!
   Whom with the Spirit we adore
   Forever and evermore:
   Alleluia, alleluia!
   Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Text: Public domain

Confession and Declaration of Grace

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

Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the ✞ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Exhortation

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
C 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 on God’s Word and for self-examination.

Confession of Sins

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.
C Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. 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. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. 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.

Declaration of Grace

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His 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. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
C Amen.
Service of the Word

Introit

Psalm 119:89–93; antiphon: v. 105

Your word is a lamp to my feet*
and a light to my path.
Forever, O LORD, your word*
is firmly fixed in the heavens.
Your faithfulness endures to all generations;*
you have established the earth, and it stands fast.
By your appointment they stand this day,*
for all things are your servants.
If your law had not been my delight,*
I would have perished in my affliction.
I will never forget your precepts,*
for by them you have given me life.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son*
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,*
is now, and will be forever. Amen.
Your word is a lamp to my feet*
and a light to my path.

Kyrie

LSB 152

A In peace let us pray to the Lord.
C Lord, have mercy.
A For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.
C Lord, have mercy.
A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.
C Lord, have mercy.
A For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.
C Lord, have mercy.
A Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.
C Amen.

This Is the Feast https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vIH3k4CgeQ

LSB 155

C This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.
This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Power, riches, wisdom, and strength, and honor, blessing, and glory are His.
This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation:
Blessing, honor, glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.
This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
For the Lamb who was slain has begun His reign. Alleluia.
This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Salutation and Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.
C And also with you.
P Let us pray.
O God, the giver of all that is good, by Your holy inspiration grant that we may think those things that are right and by Your merciful guiding accomplish them; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C Amen.

Sit

First Reading

Acts 17:16–31

16While Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. 17So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. 18Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babbler wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. 19And they took hold of him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.” 21Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

22So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. 23For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. 24The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, 25nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. 26And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, 27that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, 28for

“In him we live and move and have our being’;
as even some of your own poets have said,

“For we are indeed his offspring.’

29Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. 30The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

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

Epistle

1 Peter 3:13–22

13Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? 14But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 15but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; 16yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. 17For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil.

18For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, 19in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, 20because they formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely
through water.  21Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,  22who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

A  This is the Word of the Lord.

C  Thanks be to God.

Stand

Alleluia and Verse  

C  Alleluia.

Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia, alleluia.

Holy Gospel

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

C  Glory to You, O Lord.

15[Jesus said:] “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.  16And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,  17even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.  18“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.  19Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.  20In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.  21Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”

P  This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C  Praise to You, O Christ.

Apostles’ Creed

C  I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
    maker of heaven and earth.

And 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.

I 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. Amen.

Sit
Sermon

Grace, Mercy and Peace to you from God our Father and Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Part of the collateral damage of the Covid-19 pandemic stay at home orders is a spike in relationship challenges and domestic abuse. For many, what started out as an opportunity to set aside our hectic, fast paced lives to be at home with loved ones has turned into a nightmare for some. A Google search for “covid 19 stressing relationships” returned 56 million results and “covid 19 domestic violence” returned 164 million results. Many are finding themselves at home with those they love and are finding it very difficult to be together, finding it hard to feel the love. Accustomed to leading very active individual lives outside of the home, the sudden togetherness can cause friction, spark anger and discord which can escalate into physical violence. Others are dealing with isolation from loved ones which can lead to depression. Seeing the Grandkids in their Easter outfits on a computer screen isn’t the same as being able to see them in person. Even the loving act of worship has been relegated to individual computer screens creating more of a sense of isolation and loneliness than one might encounter in even the coldest of churches and relegating the love and encouragement of fellowship to phone calls.

Our gospel text today continues the gospel reading from last week. Jesus is loving his disciples by preparing them for the events coming on Good Friday when the world will see Him no more, on Easter when the disciples will again see Him, and on Pentecost when the Helper, the Holy Spirit will come.

This morning’s gospel reading begins and ends with love, agape love. Love for another that unselfishly places the other’s needs above one’s own. Jesus’s love for the disciples has fostered the disciples love for Jesus, a love that will manifest itself in their obedience to Jesus’s commands. Jesus’s love for them comes from the Father, “For God so loved the world that He gave his only son that whoever believes in him will have eternal life.” And returns to the father as obedience “17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.” (John 10:17) Throughout this farewell discourse, John 13-17, Jesus manifests his love for his disciples “Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.” (John 13:1) In love, as Jesus prepares to be obedient unto death, even death on the cross, Jesus spends his last moments preparing his disciples for the events that will shake them to their very core. Having followed Jesus for three years, this was not how they expected events to unfold. They have seen Him perform miracles, changing water into wine, causing the lame to walk, feeding the five thousand, walking on the water, giving sight to the blind, raising Lazarus from the dead and triumphantly entering Jerusalem just days before. They have seen Jesus win all the squabbles with the Pharisees and Sadducees. Yet, Jesus predicts and prepares His disciples for his death at the hands of sinful men.

Jesus also knows his disciples. He knows that on their own, they cannot carry forward God’s Mission, to proclaim the Good News of God’s Salvation to the whole world. They need a Helper, an Advocate, a Counselor, a Paraklete, the Holy Spirit who will come along side to protect, encourage, and equip the disciples...

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_text: Public domain_

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**Christ the Lord Is Risen Today**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=APMHqRly8H4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=APMHqRly8H4)  
[for a beautiful a cappella version with ad](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_i2xZ9Urago)
for the “greater things” than Jesus had done prior to His crucifixion. Because Jesus was returning to the Father, the Father will send the Holy Spirit who will strengthen them to faithfully witness God’s Redemption, God’s saving love, and to continue God’s mission, The Salvation of All Men.

This morning’s Gospel reading begins “[Jesus said]If you love me, you will keep my commandments” if. As Lutherans, we recognize if statements as law statements. And the law always accuses. So, the questions come “Do I love Jesus?” “Do I obey what Jesus’s commandments?” Because we are sinful human beings, our first thought is to justify ourselves by asking “what commandments?”. The only commandment specifically stated in John’s Gospel is in John 13:34 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for another.” But, there is also Jesus’s response to the lawyer’s question in Matthew 22 “which is the great commandment in the Law” “And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” And of course, we have the 10 commandments, none of which we can completely obey and honor.

Loving one another as Jesus loves you is a really tall order. At some point, you placed you wants and desires above the needs of someone else. You failed to put the best construction on someone else’s words and actions. You lost your temper with a family member or a friend or a store clerk. You didn’t share your abundance with someone who was lacking. Perhaps you chose to look the other way while someone belittled another. You failed to protect someone or something that wasn’t capable of protecting itself. Maybe you reacted to someone who had a cough as if they were Typhoid Mary. Or thought to yourself that someone deserved that disease or horrible situation that he or she found themselves in.

Thanks be to God that the very Jesus whose commands you failed to obey loves you so much that He took your sins to the cross to atone for your sins and redeem you. Paul tells the Romans 4:6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 0 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

We are indeed reconciled to the Father by Jesus’s death on the cross. We have been called by the Holy Spirit to be children of our Heavenly Father through baptism. The Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts that we may be loved by God and that we might love God. And abiding in love, we love one another, placing others before ourselves, serving others all to the glory of God. We show that we are Jesus’s disciples by loving one another. And so, we have Jesus’s command and with the help of the Holy Spirit, we obey Jesus’s commands, loving Jesus, loving the Father and loving one another. Amen.

And now, may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

Stand

Prayer of the Church

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

For the faithful proclamation of Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him, that through hearing the Word of the Lord many may be brought to faith and to the knowledge of the truth, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

For the Church throughout the world, that all who confess Jesus Christ may be united in doctrine and witness, defended against all the assaults of the enemy, and eager to gather together around Your Word and Sacrament in love for one another, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

For this congregation, for the work of the Kingdom in our community, and for the resources to accomplish all that God desires, that His name may be glorified among us and His purpose fulfilled in our words and works, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

For the agencies and institutions through which we love our neighbor and provide for those in need, for the destitute and homeless, and for everyone who suffers unemployment and underemployment, that we may aid
them in their needs and assist them to find honorable labor to supply all their needs, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the lonely who suffer the burdens of life without friendship or family, for those depressed or suffering with mental health issues, for those in abusive relationships, for those weary of pandemic measures, and for the fellowship of the Church, that we may bear one another’s burdens and live in community with Christ as our head, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the sick and those who suffer, especially Mike and Amanda that God would grant healing to their bodies, peace for their minds, and consolation in their grief and sorrows, especially those who mourn the death of Ruth, Sherrie’s mother. let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For love of godly things, that we may delight in God’s Word and walk in His ways; and for the Spirit, that we may be led into all truth and kept from error and false doctrine, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the nation, for those who lead our nation, for the end of the pandemic, for peace among nations, and for an end to terror and violence, that we may work for the common good so that justice may prevail, life be protected and truth abound, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

O Lord, our God, as we recall the obedient life and life-giving death of Your Son for our salvation, we pray You to strengthen our faith and to make our hearts bold, that we may not fear but address our prayers to You in all humility. Hear us on behalf of Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, who even now stands before You on our behalf, pleading our cause with His own blood, until that day when we are delivered from the changes and chances of this mortal life and stand before You in heaven; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

**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.**

**Closing Collect**

*A* Let us pray.

Almighty God, grant to Your Church Your Holy Spirit and the wisdom that comes down from above, that Your Word may not be bound but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ’s holy people, so that in steadfast faith we may serve You and, in the confession of Your name, abide unto the end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*C* **Amen.**

**Benediction**  

*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.**
849 Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLr4vqxWtJQ

1 Praise the One who breaks the darkness  
   With a liberating light;  
Praise the One who frees the pris’ners,  
   Turning blindness into sight.  
Praise the One who preached the  
   Gospel,  
   Healing ev’ry dread disease,  
   Calming storms, and feeding thousands  
   With the very Bread of peace.

2 Praise the One who blessed the children  
   With a strong, yet gentle, word;  
Praise the One who drove out demons  
   With the piercing, two-edged sword.

3 Let us praise the Word Incarnate,  
   Christ, who suffered in our place.  
Jesus died and rose victorious  
   That we may know God by grace.  
Let us sing for joy and gladness,  
   Seeing what our God has done;  
Let us praise the true Redeemer,  
   Praise the One who makes us one.

Praise the One who brings cool water  
   To the desert’s burning sand;  
From this Well comes living water,  
   Quenching thirst in ev’ry land.

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