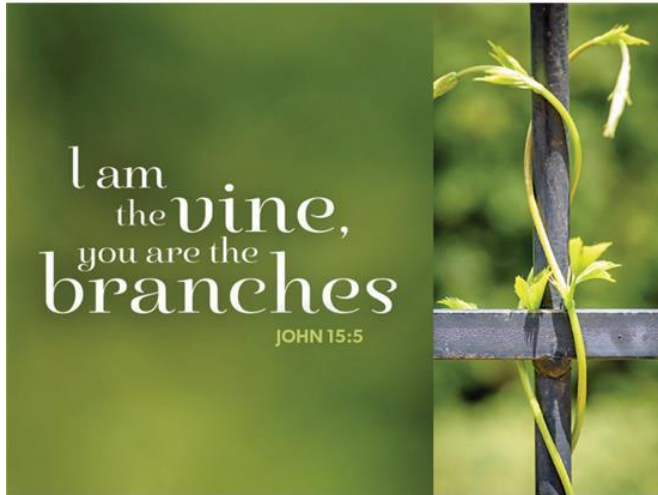




# Welcome to Bethlehem Lutheran Church

God's family working together to welcome all.



## 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

April 24<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>

W8267 Hwy 33 East,  
Portage, Wisconsin 53901

Pastor Dan Odden

Office: 608-742-8502

[www.bethlehemLCportage.org](http://www.bethlehemLCportage.org)

Church Office Hours:

Mon-Wed 9 am to 3 pm

Thurs-Fri 9 am to 12 pm

or by appointment

**Hearing assistance devices** are available on the counter in the Narthex for your convenience. Please ask the usher for help.

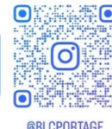
**Large print copies of the bulletin** are available in the Narthex.

**Daily Devotionals** are available in the Narthex. These come out quarterly.

**Holy Communion** is celebrated each week; all people of God are welcome. We offer it two ways: prepacked and communion at the altar. You can pick up the prefilled communion cup on your way into the sanctuary or ask the usher for it at communion time. It has a wafer, which you open first by lifting the clear cellophane on top and then the grape juice. If you would like a **gluten free wafer**, please let the usher know before the start of worship. We also offer communion at the altar for those that wish to come up. Please fill out a Communion Card found in the pew racks and give it to the usher when you come up for communion.

**Children's Worship Activity Bags** are available in the Narthex with activities for your children, please help yourself. You can place the used activity bags in the basket located beneath the activity bag tree as you leave. We have a **Cry Room** for your comfort where you can hear and see the service.

Ways to stay connected. Follow us on



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*Enter to praise*

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*We invite those who are able to stand each time this symbol ❖ appears in the bulletin.*

❖ THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the wellspring of grace, our Easter and our joy. **Amen.**  
Look, here is water! **Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

Immersed in the promises of baptism, let us give thanks for what God has done for us. We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your voice thundered over the deep and water became the essence of life. Adam and Eve beheld Eden's verdant rivers. The ark carried your creation through the flood into a new day. Miriam led the dancing as your people passed through the sea into freedom's land. In a desert pool the Ethiopian official entered your boundless baptismal life. Look, here is water! **Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

At the river your beloved Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By the baptism of Jesus' death and resurrection you opened the floodgates of your reconciling love, freeing us to live as Easter people. We rejoice with glad hearts, giving all honor and praise to you, through the risen Christ, our source of living water, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

Look, here is water! **Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who writes the law on our hearts, who draws all people together through Jesus. **Amen.**

❖ GATHERING HYMN

#359 v 1-3 "Where Charity and Love Prevail"

❖ GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

❖ PRAYER OF THE DAY

**O God, you give us your Son as the vine apart from whom we cannot live. Nourish our life in his resurrection, that we may bear the fruit of love and know the fullness of your joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

FIRST READING: Acts 8:26-40

<sup>26</sup>An angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) <sup>27</sup>So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship <sup>28</sup>and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. <sup>29</sup>Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." <sup>30</sup>So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" <sup>31</sup>He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides

me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. <sup>32</sup>Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. <sup>33</sup>In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” <sup>34</sup>The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” <sup>35</sup>Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.

<sup>36</sup>As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” <sup>38</sup>He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. <sup>39</sup>When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup>But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: 22:25-31

<sup>25</sup>From you comes my praise in the great assembly; I will perform my vows in the sight of those who fear the LORD.

<sup>26</sup>**The poor shall eat and be satisfied, Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts live forever!**

<sup>27</sup>All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; all the families of nations shall bow before God.

<sup>28</sup>**For dominion belongs to the LORD, who rules over the nations.**

<sup>29</sup>Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow down in worship; all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel before the LORD.

<sup>30</sup>**Their descendants shall serve the LORD, whom they shall proclaim to generations to come.**


<sup>31</sup>They shall proclaim God’s deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying to them, The LORD has acted!”

SECOND READING: 1 John 4:7-21

<sup>7</sup>Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. <sup>9</sup>God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup>Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup>No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

<sup>13</sup>By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup>And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup>God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. <sup>16</sup>So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. <sup>17</sup>Love has been perfected among us in

this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. <sup>18</sup>There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. <sup>19</sup>We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup>Those who say, “I love God,” and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. <sup>21</sup>The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

❖  Musical notation for the hymn. It consists of two staves of music in G major (one sharp). The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature. The melody is written on a five-line staff. The lyrics are: "Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the". The second staff continues the melody and lyrics: "words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia." The piece ends with a double bar line.

GOSPEL READING: John 15:1-8

The holy gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] <sup>1</sup>“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. <sup>2</sup>He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>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.

<sup>5</sup>I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.” The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

❖ HYMN OF THE DAY

“The Table” by Chris Tomlinson

❖ THE APOSTLES’ CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

❖ MISSION STATEMENT

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church is a growing community where we love inclusively, welcome, serve, and thrive through our relationship with God.**

❖ THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *Pray aloud as the Spirit guides you.*

P: Rejoicing that Jesus is risen and love has triumphed over fear, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news.

*A brief silence.*

We pray for the church around the world, for all ministers, and for the mission of the gospel. Keep all the newly baptized and confirmed in your care. Cleanse our hearts with your word and help us to abide in you always. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For the well-being of the earth and of all created things: for rivers and lakes, streams, melting glaciers and polluted waters. Renew the face of the earth and shower us with your goodness. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For the nations and all those in authority: for local, state, and national leaders, for elected representatives at every level, and for international organizations, that justice and peace may reign. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For all those in need: for any experiencing homelessness or unemployment, for those fleeing from oppression or seeking asylum, and for all who are ill or suffering especially those on our prayer list and those in our hearts. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For this congregation: for the caring ministries of this faith community, for all who visit and minister to one another, for all who take communion to homes or care centers, and for all who seek to share your love with the world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

With thanksgiving for the saints who rest from their labors. Help us, like them, to bear much fruit and to become your disciples, and at the last, bring us to that heavenly banquet where all will feast together at your table. God of grace, **hear our prayer**

P: Into your hands, most merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abiding love; through Jesus Christ, our resurrected and living Lord. **Amen.**

❖ PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

OFFERING

*We share our offerings for the mission of Christ through Bethlehem. Thank you for your participation in this ministry to the Glory of God!*

❖ OFFERING PRAYER

Risen One, you call us to believe and bear fruit. May the gifts that we offer here be signs of your abiding love. Form us to be your witnesses in the world, through Jesus Christ, our true vine. **Amen.**

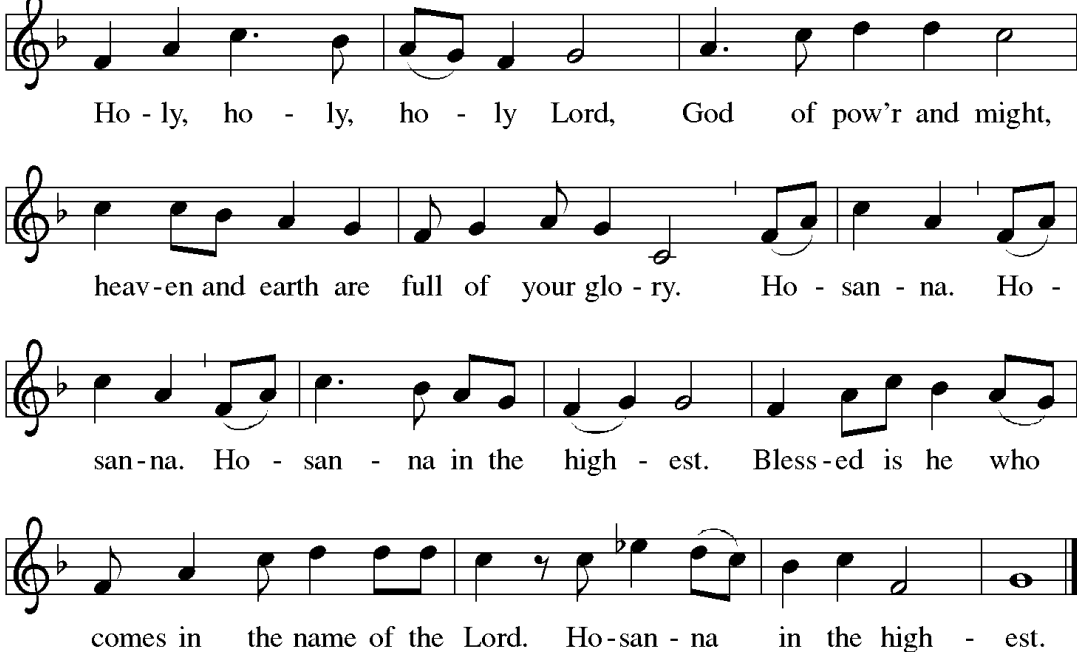
The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

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

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

...we praise your name and join their unending hymn...

❖



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
san-na. 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.

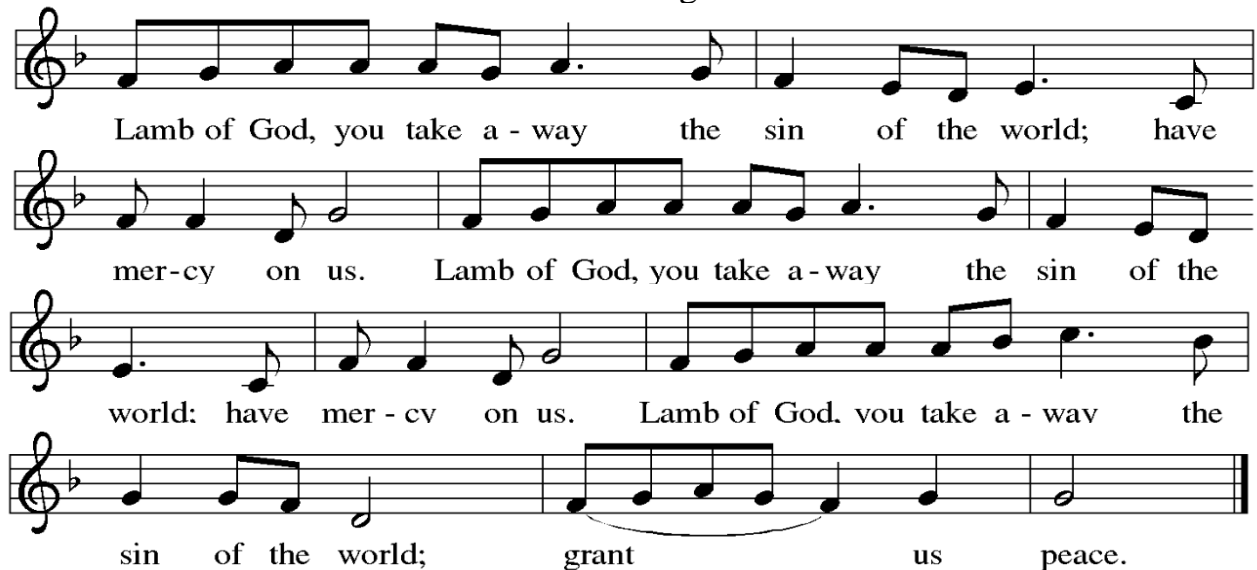
❖ WORDS OF INSTITUTION

❖ 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

The risen Christ is made known to us in the breaking of the bread. Come and eat at God's table.



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.

## DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

*You may come forward to receive communion at this time. If you prefer to celebrate communion in your pew with prepackaged elements, please let the usher know.*

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Shepherding God, you have prepared a table before us and nourished us with your love. Send us forth from this banquet to proclaim your goodness and share the abundant mercy of Jesus, our redeemer and friend. **Amen.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- May 4<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am is the property clean-up for the church grounds.
- May 5<sup>th</sup> there will be a Congregational Spring Picnic Potluck following worship service.
- May 6<sup>th</sup> there will be a VBS Fundraiser at Culver's in Portage from 5:00-8:00 pm.
- May 19<sup>th</sup> there will be a plant sale here at the church.

## MILESTONES

### ❖ BLESSING

The God of resurrection power, the Christ of unending joy, and the Spirit of Easter hope ✠ bless you now and always. **Amen.**

### ❖ SENDING HYMN

#389 v 1-2 "Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing"

### ❖ DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Go in peace. Rejoice and be glad.

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

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## ***Depart to Share***

### Wednesday Worship Team, 5:30 pm 4/24

Music: Sam

Acolyte: Colin Langan

Altar Guild/Com. Assist.: Cara Druckrey

### Sunday Worship Team, 9:00 am 4/28

Music: Carla

Reader: Darlene Anderson

Usher: Sandra Sween

Video Production:

Acolyte: Zane Bovre

Altar Guild/Com. Assist.: Lisa Cook

Communion Assistant: Ann Ciske



**Thank you** to Pastor Dan Odden for leading worship in Pastor Jaime's absence!!!

### Wednesday Worship Team, 5:30 pm 5/1

Music: Carla

Acolyte: Mackenzie Schmidtke

Altar Guild/Com. Assist.: Cheryl Hebel

### Sunday Worship Team, 9:00 am 5/5

Music: Carla

Reader: Ellen Kabele

Usher: Bobbie Goodman

Video Production: Ben Rudolph

Acolyte:

Altar Guild/Com. Assist.: Darlene Anderson

Communion Assistant: Ginny McNeal



Church yard clean-up  
**May 4<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am!**



**This Week at BLC:**

**Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup>**

10:30 am Tai Chi  
1:00 pm Card Club

**Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>**

9:00 am Quilters

**Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>**

10:30 am Tai Chi  
5:30 pm Worship  
6:30 pm Bible Study

**Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>**

10:30 am Tai Chi

**Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>**

9:00 am Church Property Clean-up

**Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>**

9:00 am Worship- Sunday School will sing!  
10:00 am Church picnic potluck  
10:15 am Sunday School – last day!!!!

**Looking for a gardening crew!**

If anyone is interested in planting annuals around the church and/or watering on a rotational basis, please contact the office! 608-742-8502



**VBS**

**Fundraiser at Culver's**

Plan on dining at the Portage Culver's on **May 6<sup>th</sup>, from 5pm to 8pm!**

A portion of your meal will get donated to The Portage Community VBS! Thank you for your support.



**Church Prayer List, please pray for:**

Bonnie Bender, Dianna Bush, Lee Chenoweth, Jim Crawford, Jeff Melby, Shelv Ritter, Mark Teslik, Donn Trinrud

**Our Extended Family Prayer List:**

Lavern Allhiser (brother-in-law of Sandy Sween)  
Janice Atkinson (sister of Betty Ring)  
Tony Dixon (nephew of Brian Franson & Bonnie Dixon)  
Chris Kelly (friend of Ginny & Jack Paulson & Nancy & Emil Loether)  
Sue Linton (friend of Betty Ring)  
Yvonne Marshall (daughter of Jean Elliott)  
Freda Manzullo (sister of Mark Teslik)  
Deb Moe & family (cousin of Sandra Sween)  
Tatiana Sampson (niece of Jean Elliott)  
Sharon Stickford (friend of Ginny Paulson)

**Church Picnic**

On Sunday, **May 5<sup>th</sup>** we will have a Congregational Spring Picnic Potluck following the service with activities for all ages. We will provide Mac n Cheese, chicken, meatballs, sandwiches, coffee, and water. If you'd like to bring something, please sign-up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/805044EAAAE2CABFA7-49227921-spring>

**Plant sale, Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup>!**

As you head out to the garden and you have perennials you'd like to split, you can donate them to the church for our plant sale! Please label them with the plant identification, planting instructions & a picture of when it is full grown or blooming. Please bring them to the church the week of the sale. Office hours are M-W 9-3 pm and Th-F 9-12 pm. There will be hanging flower baskets and other annuals also for sale. If you have any questions, please contact Kerry Melby.

