

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



It Happens by Chariots

April 28, 2024

AS WE GATHER

How far can the human voice travel? Scientists tell us that the normal outdoor range for an adult voice traveling through still air is about 180 meters or 590 feet. Communication in Silbo, a whistled language of Spanish-speaking inhabitants of the Canary Islands, can travel five miles under ideal conditions. The sound of a voice traveling across still water at night can range up to 10.5 miles. Voices can carry! The message that the voices carry is what is most important. The spoken message about Jesus shared by Philip the deacon with the Ethiopian stranger made an eternal difference in that man's life. The words that we speak and the messages that we share are of great importance and have the divine potential to "spread the reign of God the Lord" (*LSB* 830:1).

✘ Welcome and Announcements ✘

HYMN 8:00 AM “Baptized Into Your Name Most Holy” 590
 11:00 AM “Listen God is Calling” 833

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✘ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES *Psalm 66:1–4, 8–9; 40:5*

Pastor: Shout for joy to God, all the earth;

People: **sing the glory of His name; give to Him glorious praise!**

Pastor: Say to God, “How awesome are Your deeds!

People: **All the earth worships You and sings praises to You; they sing praises to Your name.”**

Pastor: Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of His praise be heard,

People: **who has kept our soul among the living and has not let our feet slip.**

Pastor: You have multiplied, O LORD my God, Your wondrous deeds and Your thoughts toward us; none can compare with You!

People: **I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Humble yourselves then before God, confess your sins to Him, and implore His forgiveness.

People: **O almighty God, most merciful Father, I, a repentant sinner, confess to You all my sins and iniquities with which I have offended You. By nature, I am a sinful creature. In thought, word, and deed I have continually transgressed Your law. For this I justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of the sufferings and death of Your Son, Jesus Christ, be gracious and merciful to me, a penitent and contrite being. Forgive me all my sins and grant me the power of Your**

Holy Spirit that I may amend my sinful life and bear fruit in keeping with true repentance.

Pastor: God be gracious to you and strengthen your faith.

People: Amen.

Pastor: As you believe, so let it be. As a called and ordained servant 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.

People: Amen.

(Share the Peace of Christ with those around you)

HYMN "Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds" 465

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray.

Risen and ascended Lord, You are the vine and we are the branches. Apart from You there is no life. By Baptism You have grafted us into Your gracious life. Cause Your Word to abide in us and make us fruitful to the glory of Your Father, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

FIRST READING *Acts 8:26–40* (Philip witnesses about Jesus to the Ethiopian official.)

An angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and

asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 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 before its shearer is silent,
so he opens not his mouth.

In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.”

And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE 1 *John* 4:1–11 (An exhortation to lives of Christian love)

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

VERSE *Romans 6:9; John 14:23*

Pastor: Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him.

People: Alleluia. If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. Alleluia.

HOLY GOSPEL *John 15:1–8* (Jesus says that He is the vine and His people are the branches.)

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

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY “Alleluia, Jesus is Risen” 474 vs. 1,3,5

SERMON “It Happens by Chariots” Acts 8:26-40

CREED *The Second Article and Explanation from the Small Catechism*

Pastor: As we celebrate the risen Christ in this season of Easter, let us speak together the words of the Apostles' Creed regarding our Savior, who is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.

People: **I 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.**

Pastor: What does this mean?

People: **I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord,**

who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death,

that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,

just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true.

OFFERING We give back to God what he first gave to us

LORD'S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9–13*

People: **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.**

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH *LSB, p. 215*

Pastor: Let us expand on the prayer Jesus gave us and ask again for His blessing and guidance as our Lord Jesus has taught us and freely promised to hear us.

God, our Father in heaven, look with mercy on us, Your needy children on earth, and give us grace that Your holy name be hallowed by us and all the world through the pure and true teaching of Your Word and the fervent love shown forth in our lives. Graciously turn from us all false teaching and evil living whereby Your precious name is blasphemed and profaned. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: May Your kingdom come to us and expand. Bring all transgressors and those who are blinded and bound in the devil's kingdom to know Jesus Christ, Your Son, by faith that the number of Christians may be increased. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Strengthen us by Your Spirit according to Your will, both in life and in death, in the midst of both good and evil things, that our own wills may be crucified daily and sacrificed to Your good and gracious will. Into Your merciful hands we commend [*name(s)*] and all who are in need, praying for them at all times: Thy will be done. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Grant us our daily bread, preserve us from greed and selfish cares, and help us trust in You to provide for all our needs. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Forgive us our sins as we also forgive those who sin against us so that our hearts may be at peace and may rejoice in a good conscience before You, and that no sin may ever frighten or alarm us. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Lead us not into temptation, O Lord, but help us by Your Spirit to subdue our flesh, to turn from the world and its ways, and to overcome the devil with all his wiles. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: And lastly, O heavenly Father, deliver us from all evil of both body and soul, now and forever. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Pastor: We trust, O Lord, in Your great mercy to hear and answer us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: **Amen.**

LUTHER'S MORNING PRAYER

People: **My Heavenly Father, I thank You, through Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, that You kept me safe from all evil and danger last night. Save me, I pray, today as well, from every evil and sin, so that all I do and the way that I live will please you. I put myself in your care, body and soul and all that I have. Let Your holy Angels be with me, so that the evil enemy will not gain power over me. Amen.**

BENEDICTION *Numbers 6:24–26*

Pastor: 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.

People: **Amen.**

HYMN “Lift High the Cross” 837