



From the Seckau Abbey in Styria, Austria; "Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch"

# "From You Comes My Praise: Guide My Steps"

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 2, 2021

Worship with First Lutheran Church

*Welcome! Our Easter celebration continues. We are thankful for the many ways the Holy Spirit connects us together. Yes, the risen Jesus appears where we are, awakening us to a beat that will not stop stirring our hearts to move, with all creation to a song of resurrection, that not even death can stop. Come and join the dance that has no end.*

**Prelude -  
Welcome and Announcements**

*Protocols for the congregation's safe gathering can be found on page 12.*

**Gathering**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

*Leader:* We are a resurrection people! Those who seek new life – new beginnings. And we, the church, must be a place of knowing and growing and accepting love. We hear today the question asked by the Ethiopian eunuch: “Here is water. What is to keep me from being baptized?” As we dance into diversity and acceptance, may the Spirit guide our steps for nothing is keeping us from it!

**Dare to dance with dreamers, sing their song,  
Dare to dance their stories, sing out strong.  
Dare to dance with freedom your whole life long,  
Dare to dance again!**

*[music continues softly...]*

*Leader:* Dancing requires that we pay attention to the steps; watch the feet of those who have danced this dance of life before us. Imagine now, a dreamer in whose steps you would like to follow, who lived their faith with hope, justice, and love. How did they choreograph their dance of life? Imagine yourself following their steps with courage and joy!

**Dare to dance with dreamers, sing their song,  
Dare to dance their stories, sing out strong.  
Dare to dance with freedom your whole life long,  
Dare to dance again!**

**Greeting**

Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed!**

**Prayer -**

Let us pray,

Holy One, Justice-Seeker, Lover of Creation –

Open us to learn new steps of faithfulness.

Give us courage and patience.

Come and dance with us, engage with us, as we seek you –  
so that we can be risen with Christ and in Christ.

Be with us now, we pray. **Amen.**

**SONG OF PRAISE:**      *Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer*      (ELW 618 v 1&2)

1 Guide me ever, great Redeemer,  
pilgrim through this barren land.  
I am weak, but you are mighty;  
hold me with your pow'rful hand.  
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,  
feed me now and evermore,  
feed me now and evermore.

2 Open now the crystal fountain  
where the healing waters flow;  
let the fire and cloudy pillar  
lead me all my journey through.  
Strong deliv'rer, strong deliv'rer,  
shield me with your mighty arm,  
shield me with your mighty arm.

**WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**FIRST READING: Acts 8:26-40**

*Led by the Spirit, Philip encounters an Ethiopian official who is returning to his African home after having been to Jerusalem to worship. Philip uses their encounter to proclaim the gospel to him. Upon coming to faith in Jesus, he is baptized by Philip.*

<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>3</sup>

<sup>6</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.**

## **SECOND READING: 1 John 4:7-21**

*We love God and others because God first loved us. We cannot say we love God, whom we have not seen, while hating fellow Christians, whom we regularly see. Love toward God is to be matched by love toward others because the essence of God is love.*

<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.**

**\*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION - ELW 172**

## Halle, Halle, Hallelujah

Hal-le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah.

Music: Caribbean traditional

### **GOSPEL: John 15:1-8**

The holy gospel according to John.

#### **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*On the night of his arrest, Jesus taught his disciples about the relationship they would have with him. Those who abide in his word and love bear fruit, for apart from him, they can do nothing.*

[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**

**MUSIC FOR REFLECTION -**

*Lead Me, Guide Me (ELW 768)*

Refrain:

Lead me, guide me, along the way;  
For if You lead me, I cannot stray;  
Lord, let me walk each day with Thee.  
Lead me, O Lord, lead me.

**\*CREED**

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended into hell.\***

**On the third day he rose again.**

**He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again 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**

**\*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

*A brief silence.*

God of all fruitfulness, you abide in your church and your church abides in you. Cleanse us by your word and give yourself to the whole church on earth so that it bears fruit and witnesses to your love. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You have created the heavens and the earth. As we wonder at the beauty of creation, may we seek vital connections among all that depends on the earth for life. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You rule the nations with justice and love. Give the leaders of the earth assurance of your abiding presence, that they lead not by fear but with love for those they are called to serve. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You have loved us so that we can love others. We pray for all in need of your love: those who are poor, lowly, outcast, weak, or fearful. Provide for the needs of all (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

You gather us with all the saints by the power of your Spirit (*especially with Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria and those we name before you*). With them, may our hearts live forever in your keeping. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **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.**

## **\*PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*The people may turn in their places and greet one another with a sign / wave of Christ's peace,  
and may say, "Peace be with you,"*

### **Offering Our Resources and our Energy**

*Leader: How has the testimony of the people in our lives and through the generations guided our steps into dances of praise at the good news that we are loved and blessed?*

*Let us pool our resources and order our steps to bring life and wholeness to the larger community through our offerings this day.*

**SONG OF THANKSGIVING:** *(Instrumental of Dare to Dance as people reflect upon what they are grateful for)*

### **SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us to step out in mission for the world.

*Praising God, Nurturing Faith, and Serving All*

### **Benediction**

*Leader: May we follow the lead of the Spirit  
as we find expansive ways to dance the dance of love.*

And may the Loving God, Risen Christ,  
and Dancing Spirit fill you with all you need for the days ahead.

And all God's people said, "**Amen!**"

Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed! Thanks be to God!**

**SENDING SONG**

*Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen! (ELW 377 v 1 & 2)*

1 Alleluia! Jesus is risen!  
Trumpets resounding in glorious light!  
Splendor, the Lamb, heaven forever!  
Oh, what a miracle God has in sight!

*Refrain*

Je - sus is ris - en and we shall a - rise.

Give God the glo - ry! Al - le - lu - ia!

Text: Herbert F. Brokering, b. 1926  
Music: David N. Johnson, 1922–1987  
Text © 1995 Augsburg Fortress.  
Music © 1969 *Contemporary Worship 1*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

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

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Share the good news.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**OFFERINGS**

*Offerings may be placed in the plates as you go out from this worship to live in service to God throughout the week.*

*Or you can give online <https://firstlutheransandpoint.breezechms.com/give/online>.*

**Postlude:**

## **Worship Notes:**

Image Boeckl, Herbert, 1894-1966. Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=58594> [retrieved April 28, 2021]. Original source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Abtei\\_Seckau\\_Engelskapelle\\_Bekehrung\\_des\\_%C3%84thiopiens.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Abtei_Seckau_Engelskapelle_Bekehrung_des_%C3%84thiopiens.jpg).

Liturgy adapted from “Dare to Dance” [www.worshipdesignstudio.com/easterdance](http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com/easterdance)  
And From [sundaysandseasons.com](http://sundaysandseasons.com).

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## **Worship Team:**

Organ - Corina Hughes

Pastors - Lori Morton and Steve Neuder

AV/Tech - Scott Youngren and Don Farnham

## **Office Contact Information:**

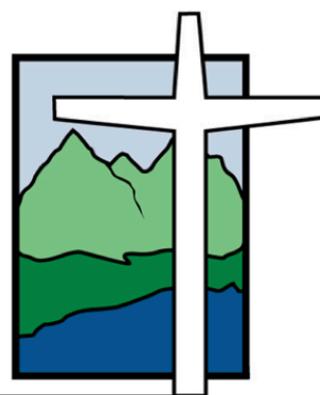
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**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

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## **Announcements:**

**Prayer List:** Arlin Ojala, Royce Howell, Libby DeLong, Michelle Thurston, George Marker, Lynn Franck, Chris Ingham; Randy Petersen; Charles Shobe Sr., Nicky Schripsema; Wendi Lies; Gerda Burke; Kara Schripsema; Trey Haberlock; Tom Taylor; Hunter Taylor; Eugene Kurwicki; Mike Shobe; Marguerite Suttmeier, Sylvia Greenwood; Janet Merrill, and those on your hearts and minds today.

We include prayers for Luther Park - its staff, residents, and their families and all senior living communities as we continue to learn how to live with Covid-19 as communities, in our worship, and mission as the church.

**Church Office:** Lisa Tyrrell, our Secretary on Council will be working with Pastor Lori to update our infrastructure and prepare for another staff search. In April and May, please be patient with your requests. Messages by phone and email will be checked regularly on the days when staff are not in the office.

The Weekly Newsletter has additional announcements.

## **Covid - 19 Protocols for Gathering**

Please note the following things to support you in your worship:

- First, thank you for adjusting to and heeding the precautions we have put in place to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus, while we gather.
- In addition to wearing face masks, remaining 6' apart from other family groups or friend cohorts, staying home if you do not feel well, and refraining from shaking hands or hugging:
- The Children's Playroom and Nursery is not available for use.
- We ask that you meditate on or hum the songs as the music plays, rather than singing.
- During the passing of the peace, we invite you to wave, show a peace sign, extend your arms in a gesture of blessing, etc. as you remain in your pew.
- At the end of the worship, please remain seated until the ushers dismiss you by rows. The upright piano side of the sanctuary will leave through the door up front. The lectern side will exit the way you came in.
- Fellowship is encouraged with social distancing, once you are outside of the building.
- We requested your name and phone number in case we need to notify you of a potential exposure to Covid-19. We will heed HIPAA laws if or when the need arises.
- On Sundays, the fellowship hall door that leads out to the Ontario St. parking lot will be exit only for anyone who might be seated in the overflow seating. The Main Ontario St. door and the doors nearest the church office will be the only doors unlocked for entry.
- Even with all of this, we cannot eliminate the risk of contracting the Covid-19 virus while gathering indoors. Therefore, we will record each worship and post for those who choose to stay home. Yes, the Holy Spirit connects us all together wherever we are, with the saints today, and all those who have gone before us in the faith.