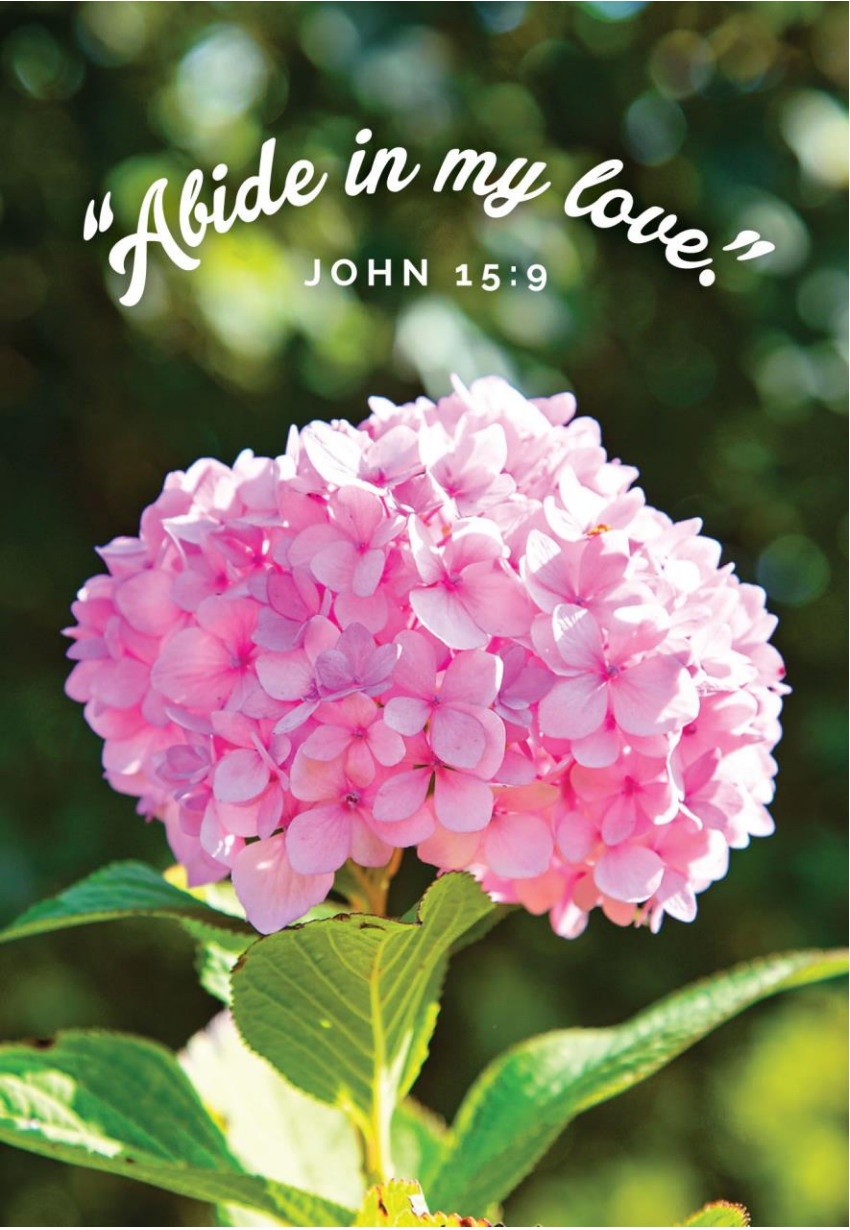


BERN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
820 West Leesport Road, Leesport, PA 19533

"Abide in my love."
JOHN 15:9



FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
Sunday, April 28, 2024 — 10:00 a.m.

INTRODUCTION

This Sunday's image of how the risen Christ shares his life with us is the image of the vine. Christ the vine and we the branches are alive in each other, in the mystery of mutual abiding described in the gospel and the first letter of John. Baptism makes us a part of Christ's living and life-giving self and makes us alive with Christ's life. As the vine brings food to the branches, Christ feeds us at his table. We are sent out to bear fruit for the life of the world.

PRESERVICE MUSIC

PRELUDE "I Need Thee Every Hour" -arr. by Jack W. Jones

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(*) Please stand as you are able.

LBW (green hymnal) WOV (blue hymnal)

GATHERING

*** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence for reflection.

P: Most merciful God,

C: **we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. 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. 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.**

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.

C: **Amen.**

*** GATHERING HYMN**

“Here I Am, Lord”

WOV #752

*** APOSTOLIC GREETING**

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

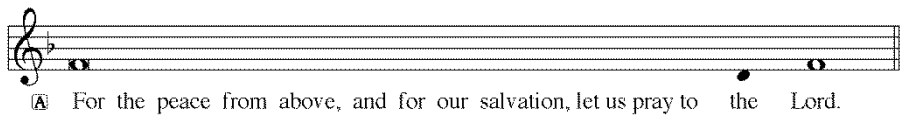
C: **And also with you.**



* KYRIE



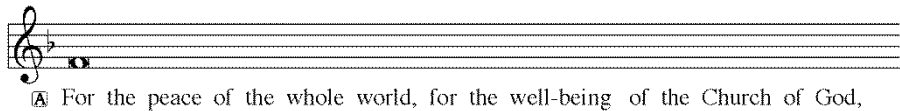
A In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mer - cy.



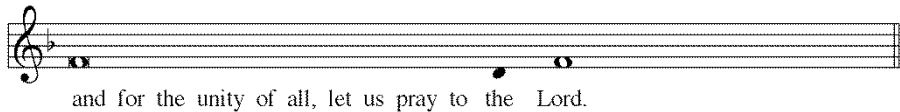
A For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



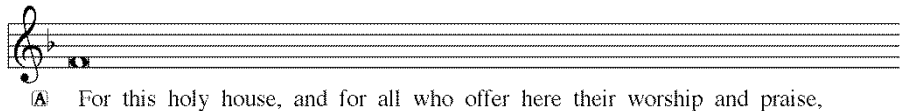
A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



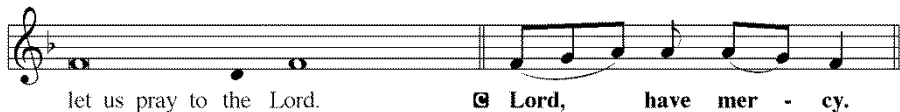
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



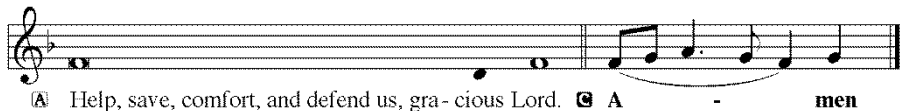
C Lord, have mer - cy.



A For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,

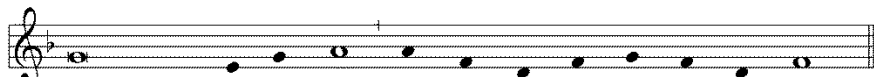


let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mer - cy.



A Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra-cious Lord. **C** A - men

* HYMN OF PRAISE



♩ Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his peo - ple on earth.



♩ Lord God, heav - en - ly king, al - might - y God and Fa - ther:



We wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God:



You take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.



You are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther; re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men

*** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us pray together.

C: **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.**

WORD

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.

²⁶An 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.) ²⁷So 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 ²⁸and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." ³⁰So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³²Now 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.

³³In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth."

³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” ³⁵Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As 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?” ³⁸He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When 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. ⁴⁰But 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.

P: Word of God, word of life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 22:25-31 (*read responsively*)

²⁵From you comes my praise in the great assembly;

I will perform my vows in the sight of those who fear the LORD.

²⁶**The poor shall eat and be satisfied,**

Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts live forever!

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

²⁸**For dominion belongs to the LORD,
who rules over the nations.**

²⁹Indeed, 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.

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

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

SECOND READING: 1 John 4:7-12

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.

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

¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶So 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. ¹⁷Love 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. ¹⁸There 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. ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰Those 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. ²¹The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

P: Word of God, word of life.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

* GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

* GOSPEL READING: John 15:1-8

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

Glo - ry 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:] ¹“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide 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. ⁵I 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. ⁶Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON – Deacon Travis Woodfield

Silence for Meditation

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Lord, Be Glorified”

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Lord, Be Glorified". It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a bass line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are printed below the vocal line. The first system contains the first line of the hymn, and the second system contains the second line. The lyrics are: "1 In my life, Lord, be glo-ri - fied, be glo-ri - fied; 2 In our song, Lord, be glo-ri - fied, be glo-ri - fied; 3 In your church, Lord, be glo-ri - fied, be glo-ri - fied; 4 In your world, Lord, be glo-ri - fied, be glo-ri - fied; in my life, Lord, be glo-ri - fied to - day. in our song, Lord, be glo-ri - fied to - day. in your church, Lord, be glo-ri - fied to - day. in your world, Lord, be glo-ri - fied to - day."

*** APOSTLES' CREED**

P: God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, let us confess our faith:

C: **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**

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.

P: 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,

C: **hear our prayer.**

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

C: **hear our prayer.**

P: 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,

C: **hear our prayer.**

P: 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. We pray especially for Lucy, JoAnn, Jane, Robert, Donna, Pauline, Lisa, Myra, Ruth, and all those we name in our hearts or aloud... God of grace,

C: **hear our prayer.**

P: 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,

C: **hear our prayer.**

P: For our supply pastors: you bless us with the gift of supply pastors who shepherd our congregation each Sunday. Give us patience, wisdom, and guidance as we go through this time of change, and we pray that you will lead us in the right direction as we discern your vision for our future. God of grace,

C: **hear our prayer.**

P: 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,

C: **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.

C: **Amen.**

* **SHARING OF THE PEACE**

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

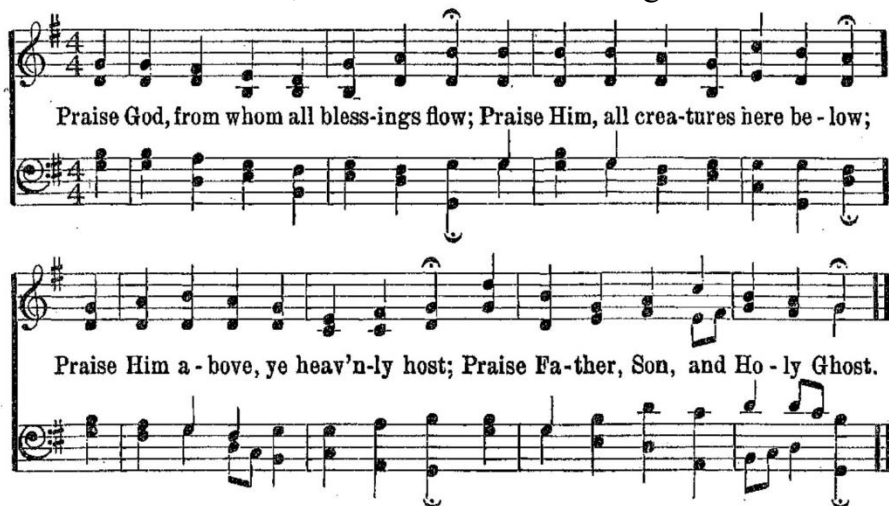
C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us share a sign of that peace with one another.

OFFERING

* OFFERING HYMN

“Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow”



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.

* OFFERING PRAYER

P: Let us pray together.

C: **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'S PRAYER

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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.**

SENDING

*** BLESSING**

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

C: **Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

P: The God of resurrection power, the Christ of unending joy,
and the Spirit of Easter hope ☩ bless you now and always.

C: **Amen.**

*** SENDING HYMN**

“Let All Things Now Living”

LBW #557

*** DISMISSAL**

P: Alleluia! Go in peace. Rejoice and be glad.

C: **Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

*** POSTLUDE**

“Trumpet Tune”

-Georg Philipp
Telemann

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WELCOME to all who have gathered here for worship this morning! If you are a newcomer to Bern, please sign the guest book in the narthex or fill out the yellow card in the pew rack and place it in the offering plate. We rejoice in the opportunity to worship our Lord together!

OFFICE HOURS:

Church Phone: 610-374-4343

Church Email: bernlutheranchurch@gmail.com

Secretary Korinne: Tuesday – 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Wednesday – 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Thursday – 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

THANK YOU to Deacon Travis Woodfield for leading us in worship this morning and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

WORSHIP SERVICE FOR APRIL 21, 2024

Attendance: 54

Income towards Expenses: \$1,655.00

Benevolence: \$ 45.00

TOTAL: \$1,700.00

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS AND SPONSORS:

OPENER: Richard Gruber

GREETER: Nancy Malandra

ACOLYTE: Aidan Slusser

LECTOR: Richard Gruber

ALTAR FLOWERS: Given to the Glory of God in honor of Savannah Litschi’s birthday by Beverly Moyer.

BULLETINS: Given to the Glory of God in honor of Savannah Litschi’s birthday by Barbara Speicher.

CELEBRATIONS THIS WEEK:

APRIL BIRTHDAYS: 28–Aidan Slusser, 30–Ann Myers

MAY BIRTHDAYS: 1–Beth Braucher, 2–Gabe Mondoro

ANNIVERSARIES: 29–Stephen and Janna Kneeream (7 years)

WHAT'S ON THE CALENDAR THIS WEEK:

- Sunday, April 28
- Confirmation Class, 9:00 a.m.
 - Worship, 10:00 a.m.
 - Fifth Sunday of Easter
 - Deacon Travis Woodfield
 - Sunday School, 11:00 a.m.
- Tuesday, April 30
- Bern Township Tax Sitting Hours, 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- Thursday, May 2
- National Day of Prayer
- Friday, May 3
- Frog Pond (AA Group), 6:00 p.m.
- Sunday, May 5
- Confirmation Class, 9:00 a.m.
 - Worship, 10:00 a.m.
 - Sixth Sunday of Easter
 - Confirmands' Faith Statements
 - Pastor William Fryer
 - Sunday School, 11:00 a.m.

GERANIUM FLOWER ORDERS – We will be decorating the sanctuary with red geraniums for Pentecost Sunday, May 19th. The price is \$6.00 for a 6” double-bloom pot. An order form is included in your bulletin. Orders are due to the church office by Sunday, May 12th. Thank you!

KAUFFMAN'S BBQ CHICKEN DINNER, SYCAMORE FARMS APPLE DUMPLING AND FLOWER SALE – We will be holding our annual BBQ chicken dinner, apple dumpling and flower sale this year on **Thursday, May 23rd**. There will be an assortment of hanging baskets, planters, and log boxes to choose from. Pick up of the dinners and dumplings will be between 3:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Prices for the chicken dinners will be \$11.00 and apple dumplings will be \$6.00. You can place your orders by calling the church office at 610-374-4343, emailing the church at bernlutheranchurch@gmail.com, or ordering on our church website at www.bernchurch.org.

NEWSLETTER MAILING – If you are currently receiving the monthly newsletter by mail and would like to receive it by email, or if you are receiving it by mail and email, and no longer need a paper copy, please let Korinne know in the office.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION – When a member experiences a medical emergency while at the church, they are not always in a position to share the information that is asked by the 911 staff and emergency responders. The Health Ministries Committee has developed an Emergency Information Sheet to assist with this communication. They are available on the table in the narthex and once completed, should be placed in the envelope that is with the form. The envelope is then sealed and placed in the Health Ministries mailbox. Your name and the date that the form was completed should be written on the front of the envelope. These will be filed in the locked Health Ministries file cabinet and your envelope will only be opened and your form accessed in the case of an emergency. At any time, you can request your form back to update as needed by contacting Terri Shurr or Brenda Reichart. Please contact Terri or Brenda with any questions.

SIGN-UP SHEETS – We are in need of Bulletin sponsors for Sunday, May 12, and Sunday, May 26. Thank you to everyone who signed up.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER – Do you find comfort in prayer? Have you seen the impact that prayer can have in your life, or the life of those that you pray for? I hope that you can answer yes to both of those questions. We all have different ways of praying and different times that we do it, and that is ok. What is most important is that we continue to pray at all times and under all circumstances. Think of how powerful it could be if Christians throughout the country were all praying at the same time. That is what is going to happen on Thursday, May 2, 2024. That date has been designated as the National Day of Prayer for 2024. This year Bern Lutheran Church will participate in this event as we did in 2021, by having members

commit to 30 minute slots of time from 8:00 a.m. to 8 p.m. and spend that time in prayer. You are invited to do this from the comfort of your home, or in the Sanctuary at church, the doors will be open. I hope that many of you will be willing to participate in this 12 continuous hours of prayer from our congregation. Please choose the time that works best for you from the schedule posted on the bulletin board, or call the church and your name can be added to the schedule. If the time that you prefer has been taken and there is not an opening that works for you, that is ok too. I don't think God will mind if we double up.

LICENSED LAY MINISTERS (LLM) – Many of you are already aware, there are a number of pastoral vacancies within the Northeast Synod, and only a small number of candidates coming out of seminary of looking for a change that would be able to fill those vacancies. As a result, the synod is looking at other options to provide spiritual support to its congregations. One of the options now available is for those who feel a calling to serve to become a Licensed Lay Minister (LLM). As a LLM you can support your own congregation, or others within your community. Details regarding the program and the role of the LLM are posted on the bulletin board in the hallway. If you are interested in becoming a LLM, please speak to Brenda Reichart. The Christian Education Committee has funds available that will cover the \$1,000 formation fee and 75% of the cost of the 4 additional Foundational Courses. We have many gifted individuals within our congregation who would be excellent candidates for this program. If you are feeling that call to share your gifts, please pray for God to help you to discern if this is the best way for you to share them.

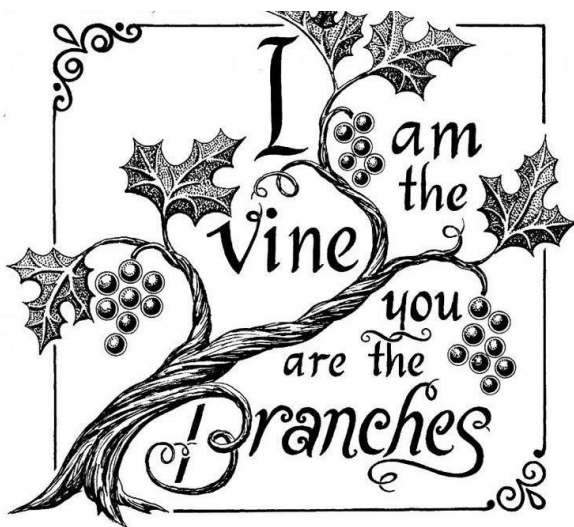
SOCIAL HOURS RETURN! – In response to a suggestion placed in the suggestion box, social hours will be resuming! They will be held the last Sunday of each month, immediately following worship. The first one is scheduled for April 28th. There are a few more slots open for contributors. Please sign-up

on the sheet on the bulletin board if you would like to “host” the social hour, as well as those who would like to contribute to it. The host is responsible for setting up for the social hour, making the coffee, and cleaning up at the end. The host can be an individual, a family, a committee, or a small group of friends. Those who sign up to contribute can bake or purchase items to be served.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

Members: Lucy Moyer, JoAnn Ketz, Jane Battaglieri, Robert Hissinger, Donna Marks, Pauline Shuman, Lisa Miller, Myra Bernhart, and Ruth Keeney

Family and Friends: Debra Kennedy, Joan Hoster, Angie, Eddie Kissling, Bill Manus, Kelly Cockrum, Terry Hine, Ziomara, Nick Odagis, Lara Pappas, Danielle Roberts, Sheri Mafeo, Eleanor, Glenva, Warren, Courtney Davis, Giselle Davis, Joanne King, Tim Brown, Robin Brown, Matt DeLeon, Pastor Joyce Seip, Ashley Rizzuto, Philip Triantis, Mike, Peggy Deemer, Brian, Jamie Hey, Glenn Jones, Kailey, Renee Fullmer, Patrick, Susan, Owen Hey, Joyce, Rev. Fred Foerster, and the ministries of our Lutheran Pantries and community food pantries.



Fed by God, Nourished by Christ

Imagine a nursing baby at its mother's breast—what a blissful picture of love, joy, peace, and contentment! This image can help us understand who we are as God's beloved children and how tenderly God cares for us. God's grace is unconditional, just as a mother's milk flows to an infant without anything to do with deserving. In today's gospel reading, the vine-and-branches metaphor is another image of how intimately connected Jesus is with us and how crucial it is that we, the branches, hold on to him as our vine.

“Apart from me,” says Jesus, “you can do nothing.” Apart from its vine, a branch can do nothing—cannot live long, cannot produce grapes, cannot nourish people and animals. Apart from its mother or another devoted caregiver, a newborn can do nothing—cannot feed itself, cannot become or stay healthy, cannot grow and bear the fruit of life and love for others. Apart from God's love and care, which Christians know in Jesus, the whole web of humanity fails to thrive.

A nursing mother sets her face and does whatever is needed—two or three times a night at first, even through mastitis, weariness, and boredom—to feed and impart life to her little one. Jesus' face is set toward the cross as he shares farewell counsel with his disciples. He, too, is ready and determined to do whatever it takes—even dying on a cross—to sustain the vineyard-world with abundant life.

The imagery of vine and branches, juxtaposed with that of God breastfeeding her babies, comes alive when we celebrate the Eucharist. At the table, Jesus feeds us with his own body and blood, pouring life and nourishment into us. We are called to abide in him forever—an invitation to grace-filled, permanent relationship. In Jesus the true vine, we his branches enjoy a continual flow of grace, mercy, and love. In turn, we are energized to bear the fruit of his love, joy, and peace for the world.