

RIVER OF LIFE



See
HIM

WHO MAKES YOU FRUITFUL

28 APRIL 2024



RIVER OF LIFE LUTHERAN | refreshing truth for all people

725 S. Estrella Pkwy (Suite 120) Goodyear, Arizona 85338

Fifth Sunday of Easter

OUR PASTOR

Pastor Lincoln Albrecht (623) 312.8650 pastor.lincoln.albrecht@gmail.com

WELCOME TO RIVER OF LIFE

Thank you for joining us this morning. In our worship service, God's children—you & I—gather together before God to be strengthened through God's Word. In response to God's message of love to us, we offer God our worship and praise.

The worship folder you're holding has the entire Order of Service. If you have questions, feel free to ask one of our ushers or anyone near you. The unfamiliar can be intimidating—let us help you. We want you to be comfortable & comforted here.

Restrooms are located in the front corner for your convenience.

God wants everyone to worship together. We recognize that public worship is a learning process for children. Parents, if you feel like you need a moment, there is a room in the back of the worship area where you can see, hear, and participate in worship without being heard.

OUR FOCUS FOR WORSHIP THIS MORNING

Today's Gospel gives us a rich metaphor for the Christian life. Jesus says **I am the true vine...You are the branches.** Of course, we cannot help but see that the branches are totally reliant upon the Vine for everything. So it is with Christians. We need Christ. We rely upon him. He sustains us through Word and Sacrament. But in this analogy there is a clear goal. The Father, the Vinedresser, does what is necessary for the branches to be fruitful. He lifts up those who are drooping down (because grapes don't grow like squash or pumpkins). He prunes those who need it to be more productive—and we all do! It is our Almighty God who positions and prunes us as he knows best, so that we may be as productive as he has designed us to be. Remain in Christ and you will produce much fruit!

OPENING HYMN

Welcome, Happy Morning | **469**



1 “Wel - come, hap - py morn - ing!” age to age shall say;
 2 Mak - er and Re - deem - er, life and health of all,
 3 Source of all things liv - ing, you came down to die,
 4 Free the souls long pris - oned, bound with Sa - tan’s chain;



“Hell to - day is van - quished; heav’n is won to - day!”
 God from heav’n be - hold - ing hu - man na - ture’s fall,
 plumbd the depths of hell to raise us up on high.
 all that now is fall - en raise to life a - gain.



Lo, the dead is liv - ing, God for - ev - er - more!
 of the Fa - ther’s God - head you, the on - ly Son,
 Come, then, true and faith - ful, come, ful - fill your word;
 Show your face in bright - ness; shine in ev - ’ry land



Him, their true Cre - a - tor, all his works a - dore.
 man - kind to de - liv - er man - hood did put on.
 this is your third morn - ing— rise, O bur - ied Lord.
 as in E - den’s gar - den when the world be - gan.

Refrain



“Wel - come, hap - py morn - ing!” age to age shall say;



“Hell to - day is van - quished; heav’n is won to - day!”

The Gathering

INVOCATION

Minister: The grace of our Lord ✚ Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

CONFESSION OF SINS

M: If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**P: If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

M: Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

**P: Holy God, gracious Father,
I am sinful by nature
and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.
I have not loved you with my whole heart;
I have not loved others as I should.
I deserve your punishment both now and forever.
But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins
with his innocent suffering and death.
Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

FORGIVENESS OF SINS

M: Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✚ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

P: Amen.

Praise & Prayer

M: You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you.

P: My whole being longs for you, as in a dry and parched land.

M: I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.

P: Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.

M: I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name, I will lift up my hands.

P: I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Gracious God, You Send Great Blessings | **752 (1)**



1 Gra - cious God, you send great bless - ings new each
morn - ing all our days. For your mer - cies
nev - er end - ing, for your love we of - fer praise.

Refrain



Lord, we pray that we, your peo - ple who your
gifts un - num - bered claim, through the shar - ing
of your bless - ings may bring glo - ry to your name.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: O God, you form the minds of your faithful people into a single will. Make us love what you command and desire what you promise, that among the many changes of this world, our hearts may ever yearn for the lasting joys of heaven; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

P: Amen.



The Word

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Acts 4

³² All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all ³⁴ that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), ³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.



CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Jesus encouraged the little ones to come to him. During this portion of the worship service, the children are invited forward to learn a truth tailored for them.

VERSE OF THE DAY

John 15:5

M: Alleluia. Alleluia. Christ is risen!

P: **He is risen indeed! Alleluia.**

M: I am the vine; you are the branches.

P: **If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. Alleluia.**

RESPONSE OF PRAISE

Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen | **454 (1,3)**



1 Al - le - lu - ia! Je - sus is ris - en! Trum - pets re -
3 Je - sus the vine, we are the branch - es; life in the



sound - ing in glo - ri - ous light! Splen - dor, the Lamb, heav - en for -
Spir - it the fruit of the tree; heav - en to earth, Christ to the



ev - er! Oh, what a mir - a - cle God has in sight!
peo - ple, gift of the fu - ture now flow - ing to me.



Refrain

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



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

NEW TESTAMENT READING

1 John 3

¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

¹⁹ This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: ²⁰ If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴ The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

How can we know whether we are connected to Jesus as a branch is connected to the Vine?

In this reading, John encourages us to examine the fruit that we produce—that is the love that we show through the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

So what does this fruit of faith look like?

John says that love that comes from our connection to the Vine is never satisfied to just say all the right things. Love must also produce actions.

Yet, this leaves room for the Devil's accusations.

What do we do when our good deeds are hard to identify or point out? What do we do when our good deeds don't outweigh our missed opportunities?

John reminds us that God is greater than our hearts. We may think that we have not done enough. But God knows everything and sees the good deeds that have flown under our radar (see Matthew 25:31-40). Whatever we do out of faith in God is to God's glory!

15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.



M: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

P: **Praise be to you, O Christ!**



1 This is my will, my one com - mand, that love should
 2 No great - er love can be than this: to choose to
 3 I call you now no long - er slaves; no slave knows
 4 You chose not me, but I chose you, that you should
 5 All that you ask my Fa - ther dear for my name's



 dwell a - mong you all. This is my will, that you should
 die to save one's friends. You are my friends if you o -
 all his mas - ter does. I call you friends, for all I
 go and bear much fruit. I chose you out that you in
 sake you shall re - ceive. This is my will, my one com -



love as I have shown that I love you.
 bey what I com - mand that you should do.
 hear my Fa - ther say you hear from me.
 me should bear much fruit that will a - bide.
 mand, that love should dwell in each, in all.

The Sermon

THE VINE MAKES HIS BRANCHES FRUITFUL

John 15

Our Response to God's Word

M: In Christ, you have heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation.

P: **We believe in Christ and trust in the truth he has revealed to us in his Word.**

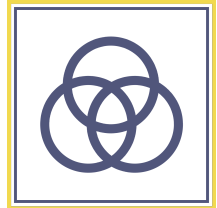
M: Living and serving together in trust and hope, we confess our common faith.

APOSTLES' CREED

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

**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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From there 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.**



The Apostles' Creed first appeared in a letter written by Ambrose in 390 AD after a church council. This creed was written to confess the Bible's teachings in a simple way.

THANK OFFERING



God's people respond with thankful hearts. The people of River of Life have joined to offer God the first-fruits of all he has given us. Our offerings support God's work in this community and the world. If you are a visitor with us, thank you for joining us today. Please do not feel obligated to support our ministry, but we ask that you do take time to fill out a digital connect card (azriveroflife.com/connect) so we can thank you for joining us. Thank you & God bless you!

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Lord of life, fill our hearts with joy, for you have risen and conquered the grave. Imprint the message of victory on our hearts and implant it in our minds.

P: Through the good news of your resurrection renew our hope and strengthen our faith.

M: By baptizing us into your name, you have connected us to your death and rising. You have put our sin to death and have given us a new life.

P: Enable us each day to think of ourselves as dead to sin and alive to you. Help us remain in you so that we might produce fruit.

M: In this fallen world, death and sorrow surround us. Comfort the hearts of all those who are grieving the loss of a Christian they love.

P: Direct all of our eyes to your empty tomb. Ease all of our pain by reminding us that our loved ones who died in faith will one day rise again.

M: Lord, many people in our community grieve without any hope. Let the message of the resurrection reach them and awaken faith in their hearts.

P: Open our eyes and our calendars and use us as your instruments to bring the word of life to their souls and the message of hope to their hearts.

M: Heavenly Father, prune us with precision and compassion. You know what we need and what we do not need to be fruitful in your eyes. Make us flourish in the faith. Work in us a spirit of contentment—and even joy—trusting that you are only doing this work for our good. Knowing you are a good and compassionate Vinedresser, we offer you our private prayers:

—A time for God's people to offer their private prayers silently—

M: Trusting in your love and your wisdom, we pray as you taught us:

P: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

HYMN

Fruitful Trees, the Spirit's Sowing | **595 (1-2)**



1 Fruit - ful trees, the Spir - it's sow - ing, may we rip - en
2 Lad - en branch - es free - ly bear - ing gifts the Giv - er



and in - crease, fruit to life e - ter - nal grow - ing,
loves to bless; here is fruit that grows by shar - ing,



rich in love and joy and peace.
pa - tience, kind - ness, gen - tle - ness.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

M: Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

P: Amen.

BLESSING

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another.
Serve the Lord with gladness. The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

P: Amen.

SONG OF DEPARTURE

Fruitful Trees, the Spirit's Sowing | 595 (3-4)



3 Root - ed deep in Christ our Mas - ter, Christ our pat - tern
4 Fruit - ful trees, the Spir - it's tend - ing, may we grow till



and our goal, teach us, as the years fly fast - er,
har - vests cease; till we taste, in life un - end - ing,



good - ness, faith, and self - con - trol.
heav - en's love and joy and peace.



RIVER OF LIFE LUTHERAN | refreshing truth for all people

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US THIS MORNING

We recognize how busy this world and your life can be. Thank you for setting aside a Sunday morning to be with us in God's house. Stick around for a bite to eat and a refreshing drink. One of life's greatest pleasures is meeting new people and growing lasting relationships. We'd love to get to know you better.

INTERESTED IN JOINING RIVER OF LIFE?

Would you like to learn what the Lutheran church believes and teaches? Are you interested in joining our church, or going through a refresher class? We would love to meet with you and study God's Word. If you're interested, speak with Pastor Albrecht.

NAME TAGS

Have you ever been at a big gathering where everyone seems to know one another but you can't quite remember their names as well as they do yours? It's not much fun! In an effort to help everyone get to know each other better—and remember names—we are ordering a fresh round of name tags. If you already have one, wear it on Sunday. If you don't have one, talk with Richard Hansen about ordering one.

BIBLE BREAKFAST CLUB

4 MAY 2024

In a few weeks, we will meet for our final Bible Breakfast Club before the summer heat kicks in. We've also got a simple project to clean up the bottom of our chairs. Bring some work gloves, box cutters, or a shop vacuum. We will get this work knocked out while breakfast is being made and then enjoy a great meal and some Bible study time.

COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

Portions of our service are from Christian Worship, Christian Worship Supplement (NPH Electronic Ed.), and Luther's Catechism (Revised) and are reprinted under One-License.net License #A-723544 and CCLI Copyright License #20992728 & Streaming License #20992735. All Scripture references taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION © Copyright © 2011 by International Bible Society.

Hymn #469 **Welcome, Happy Morning** Text: tr. John Ellerton, 1826-1893, alt.; Venantius Fortunatus, c. 530-609, abr. Tune: Enchiridion Geistlike Lede und Psalmen, Lübeck, 1545.


Hymn #752 **Gracious God, You Send Great Blessings** Text: Gregory J. Wismar, b. 1946 Tune: ed. William Moore; Columbian Harmony, Cincinnati, 1825

Hymn #728 **This Is My Will** Text: James Quinn, SJ, 1919-2010, alt. Tune: Gaelic, 19th cent. Text: © 1969 James Quinn, SJ, admin. OCP Publications.

Hymn #595 **Fruitful Trees, the Spirit's Sowing** Text: Timothy Dudley-Smith, b. 1926 Tune: Ralph C. Schultz, b. 1932 Text: © 1984 Hope Publishing Co..

RIVER OF LIFE

Certainty & Hope In The Coming Days

- 
- Apr. 28** (10:20 am) Family Bible Study: **Blessed Be the Name: Noah**
- May 1** (4:30 pm) Youth Catechism Class
- May 4** (8:00 am) Bible Breakfast Club
- May 5** (9:00 am) Worship (with Lord's Supper):
See Him: Who Is Love
- May 5** (10:20 am) Family Bible Study: **Blessed Be the Name: Abraham and Sarah**
- May 8** (4:30 pm) Youth Catechism Class
- May 12** (9:00 am) Worship: **See Him: Who Leaves Parting Gifts**
- May 12** (10:20 am) Family Bible Study: **Blessed Be the Name: Abraham and Sarah**

CONNECTING WITH RIVER OF LIFE

Videos of recent worship services and audio recordings of weekly sermons are available online. Check out our website or our Facebook page.

AZRiverOfLife.com facebook.com/AZRiverOfLife

refreshing truth for you