

GIFT of GRACE

LUTHERAN CHURCH

GRACE NOTES

May 2026

A Word from PT

I'm always captivated by the appearance of the Risen Christ to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus on that very first Easter. It is recorded in the 24th chapter of Luke's Gospel. And if you will recall, Jesus joined the two on their seven-mile walk, but the disciples were kept from recognizing that it was Jesus.

It was the end of the week-long celebration of the Passover in Jerusalem, and the two disciples were headed home that Sunday afternoon. They were discussing what had taken place on Friday, and as Jesus' followers they were despondent and confused. Then Jesus, unbeknownst to them, joined them and asked what they were discussing.

That's when one of the two, Cleopas by name, answered him, saying, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days? ...

Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him."

It is what the two disciples said next that especially strikes me this month. "But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel."

Obviously, things had not gone down as they had hoped, as they had dreamed, as they had anticipated, and as what they thought was best. "But we had hoped!"

Can't we all identify? But we had hoped... Just fill in the blank. But we had hoped that there would be a healing. But we had hoped they would offer me the job. But we had hoped the attendance would be better. But we had hoped my plan would be adopted. But we had hoped the weather would cooperate. But we had hoped that the invitation would have

been accepted. The list is endless. And all these hopes may have been things for which we had prayed earnestly.

In the disciples case it was a matter of coming to terms with how Christ would redeem the world. It would be through the path of suffering and death, a path that Jesus' disciples would also face. The redemption would not be this-worldly and would not be fully realized until Christ's return at the end of the age.

In our case, our "But we had hoped that..." comes down to none of us knowing the mind of the Lord and what He deems to be best for His purposes. Our concentration must be on two things: His promises and faithful obedience to what He commands. And we do well to find our joy just there, for the Risen Lord promises to be with us always, even to the end of this age.

Calendar of Events

Friday, 5/1

7am Men's Breakfast Bible Study
10am Service at the Care Center

Sunday, 5/3 Fifth Sunday of Easter

8am Choir Practice
9am Divine Service
10:15am Coffee Fellowship
10:45am Bible Study on 2 Corinthians

Friday, 5/8

7am Men's Breakfast Bible Study

Sunday, 5/10 Sixth Sunday of Easter

8am Choir Practice
9am Divine Service
10:15am Coffee Fellowship
10:45am Bible Study on 2 Corinthians

Tuesday, 5/12

6pm Elders Meeting

Thursday, 5/14 Ascension of Our Lord

7pm Ascension Service at Faith Lutheran

Friday, 5/15

7am Men's Breakfast Bible Study

Saturday, 5/16

10am Main Street Living taping

Sunday, 5/17 Seventh Sunday of Easter

8am Choir Practice
9am Divine Service
10:15am Coffee Fellowship
10:45am Bible Study on 2 Corinthians

Mon-Wed, 5/18-20

SWD Theological Conference

Tuesday, 5/19

5:30pm Ladies Night Out at Features

Thursday, 5/21

6pm Council Meeting

Friday, 5/22

7am Men's Breakfast Bible Study

Sunday, 5/24 Day of Pentecost

8am Choir Practice

9am Divine Service

10:15am Coffee Fellowship

10:45am Bible Study on 2 Corinthians

Friday, 5/29

7am Men's Breakfast Bible Study

Announcements

Ascension Day is May 14, and our congregation has an invitation to join Prince of Peace Lutheran and Faith Lutheran for a 7pm Worship Service at Faith Lutheran Church in La Crosse. Pastor Tim will have a part in this service, and there is the possibility for our choir members to join with those of Prince of Peace for the service.

Bible Study, inquiry, and gathering with other Christians to study, pray, and share with each other is vitally important. Consider becoming a part a Bible Study. It is a way to let "the Word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col. 3:16). Bible Study opportunities at Gift of Grace include the **Adult Bible Study** on Sunday mornings at 10:45am. Or for the men, there is the **Men's Breakfast Bible Study** at the McDonald's Restaurant off of County OT on Friday mornings at 7am.

The **Designated Benevolence** for the month of May is for **Lutheran Veterans & Family Ministries**.

The Duesenberg will be cleaning the church the week of May 17. No one is currently signed up for the week of June 21. And the Hansons are taking the July cleaning the week of the 19th. Please take a look at the signup sheet in the kitchen and help us out for one of our months' cleanings. Thanks.

Worship Assistants

May 3 5th Sunday of Easter

Assisting Minister: Mike Meunier

Reader: Jeremy Schoonover

Crucifer: Regan Cunningham

Acolyte: Regan Cunningham

Usher: David Bjornstad

Counters: Dan M/David B

Comm Asst: Mike Meunier

Accompanist: Leslie Duesenberg

Live streamer: Jeremy Schoonover

May 10 6th Sunday of Easter

Assisting Minister: Mike Meunier

Reader: Jessica Schoonover

Crucifer: Dawson Staff

Acolyte: Dawson Staff

Usher: Mary Bartos

Counters: Jeremy S/Tom R

Comm Asst: Mike Meunier

Accompanist: Tom Rislow

Live streamer: Dan Molstad

May 17 7th Sunday of Easter

Assisting Minister: Karri Bjornstad

Reader: Nikki Hanson

Crucifer: Chase Repaal

Acolyte: Chase Repaal

Usher: Jeremy Schoonover

Counters: Connie M/Naomi R

Comm Asst: Tom Rislow

Accompanist: Leslie Duesenberg

Live streamer: Jeremy Schoonover

May 24 Day of Pentecost

Assisting Minister: Naomi Rislow

Reader: Connie Meunier

Crucifer: tbd

Acolyte: tbd

Usher: Jeremy Schoonover

Counters: Dan M/David B

Comm Asst: Mike Meunier

Accompanist: Tom Rislow

Live streamer: Dan Molstad

May 31 Holy Trinity Sunday

Assisting Minister: Tom Rislow

Reader: Naomi Rislow

Crucifer: tbd

Acolyte: tbd

Usher: David Bjornstad

Counters: Jeremy S/Tom R

Comm Asst: Jeremy Schoonover

Accompanist: Leslie Duesenberg

Live streamer: Jeremy Schoonover

By Way of Humor

Puns for Education Minds...

- Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One hat said to the other: "you stay here; I'll go on a head."
- I wondered why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me.
- The sign on the lawn at a drug rehab center said: "Keep off the Grass."
- The midget fortune-teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.
- The soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.
- A backward poet writes inverse.
- In a democracy it's your vote that counts. In feudalism it's your count that votes.
- When cannibals ate a missionary, they got a taste of religion.

May Birthdays and Anniversaries

May 2: Connie Meunier (birthday)

May 10: Dan & Cyndi Molstad (anniversary)

May 3: Jeremy & Jessica Schoonover (anniversary)

May 14: Stella Roll (birthday)

May 6: Tim & Leslie Duesenberg (anniversary)

May 18: Jim & Marilyn Magnuson (anniversary)

May 7: Tom & Naomi Rislow (anniversary)

May 23: Craig & Mary Bartos (anniversary)

May 10: Dan Molstad (birthday)

Becoming More Familiar

Concerning the Ascension of Our Lord?

Forty days following Easter the Resurrected Christ ascended to heaven, where as we confess in the Creed, He is seated at the right hand of the Father. The account of the ascension of our Lord occurs in both Luke 24:50-51 and Acts 1:9-11. As described in these passages Jesus led His disciples up Mount Olivet near Jerusalem where suddenly they witnessed his being elevated up into the sky until a cloud took Him away from their sight. This signified His return to heaven where, as we confess in the Creed, He is seated at the right hand of the Father. This enthronement is a description of the authority He is given by the Father. Christ's going away necessarily preceded His

promised sending of the Holy Spirit. Other hints at the significance of His ascension have to do with His promise to go and prepare a place for His followers to be with Him, and to serve as a High Priest interceding for His Church.

Concerning the Day of Pentecost?

This is a principal Festival, The Day of Pentecost (Jewish harvest festival) was the occasion when the promised gift of the Holy Spirit was sent and poured out on the expectant church. It accordingly marks the culmination of the Easter Season. It occurs 50 days after Easter Sunday. Jesus had promised His followers that when He departed from them (the ascension, not the crucifixion) that He would not leave them as orphans. In fact, until

His return at the end of the age, it would be to their advantage that He was departing, for then He would send the Holy Spirit as one called alongside them to comfort them, teach them, guide them, and empower them, even as the Holy Spirit continued to sanctify them (to make holy).

Concerning the Liturgical Color for the Day of Pentecost?

The liturgical color red on the Day of Pentecost symbolizes the "tongues of fire" of the Holy Spirit descending upon the apostles, representing divine power, zeal, and the birth of the Church. It signifies the fire of God's love, the transformative power of faith, and acts as a visual "team jersey" for believers, celebrating the Holy Spirit's ongoing presence and empowerment.

Stewardship

(of time, talent Treasure)

Our Savior calls us to follow Him in generosity. “For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you” (John 13:15). We cannot give our lives for the salvation of the world, of course. Praise God, that job is already done! But with hearts full of thanksgiving for what Jesus has given us, we can follow His example of generous giving. And Jesus’ generosity is not merely an example. Our Lord also commands us to act according to our gifts: “The one who contributes, [let him give] in generosity” (Rom. 12:8).

So, when we bring offerings to the Lord, we should strive to heed His command and follow the pattern He has established for us. Jesus did not give us leftovers. He gave His best. We should not give leftovers, either, but the first and best of what He has given us. Jesus did not give as an afterthought — He gave according to the plan of salvation God established from the foundation of the world. So, when it comes to our own offerings, we should make a thoughtful plan to give

generously, in proportion to the way He has blessed us. Like the Macedonian Christians, who gave according to their ability, and even beyond their ability (2 Cor. 8:3), we should honor the Lord by giving a generous portion of the income that God provides us.

We should also give freely, just as Jesus gave freely for us. There is no compulsion involved in our works of love and our offerings to the Lord. We do not give grudgingly, but willingly and cheerfully, each “as he has decided in his heart,” as the Lord says (2 Cor. 9:7). There is no New Testament ceremonial law involved here. Rather, we are free to give as generously as our Savior has given for us!

In the same way, our Lord teaches us to give generously out of our love for Him and for our neighbor. Jesus shows us that genuine love is always love “in deed” (1 John 3:18). It is love that sees our neighbor in need and gives generously to help him. It is love that hears the Word of the Lord and does what it says. If we truly love, we give generously. If we give without love, our giving is not truly following Jesus.

Finally, we follow Jesus in generosity when we support His Gospel ministry and other works of mercy. The people of Israel gave generously to construct and support the operation of the tabernacle, for that was the place where the Lord received the Old Testament sacrifices, through which He bestowed the forgiveness of sins on His people. So, they gave abundantly, so abundantly that they had to be told to stop giving! (Ex. 36:5–6). In the same way, we should bring generous offerings to support the Lord’s work. We support our congregations in the preaching of His Word, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which bestow His gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation, and we take care of those who are poor and needy.

Our Savior calls us to follow His example in generous giving. Let us then, with thankful hearts, rededicate ourselves to following Him in generosity.

- from LCMS Stewardship Ministry Website



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Services held at 9am at:
642 Western Avenue
A block north and then
a block west of King Furniture