

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 2, 2021 – 9:30 a.m.

PRELUDE “This Joyful Eastertide” -Langlois

OPENING HYMN “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” *LSB* 469

1 “Christ the Lord is ris’n today!”

Saints on earth and angels say;

Raise your joys and triumphs high;

Sing, ye heav’ns, and earth, reply.

2 Love’s redeeming work is done,

Fought the fight, the battle won;

Lo! Our Sun’s eclipse is o’er;

Lo! He sets in blood no more.

3 Vain the stone, the watch, the seal;

Christ hath burst the gates of hell.

Death in vain forbids His rise;

Christ has opened paradise.

4 Lives again our glorious King!

Where, O death, is now thy sting?

Once He died our souls to save;

Where thy victory, O grave?

5 Soar we now where Christ has led;

Foll’wing our exalted Head.

Made like Him, like Him we rise;

Ours the cross, the grave, the skies.

6 Hail the Lord of earth and heav’n!

Praise to Thee by both be giv’n!

Thee we greet triumphant now:

Hail, the resurrection, Thou!

Text: Public domain

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

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

People: Amen.

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the Lord,

People: who made heaven and earth.

Pastor: If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

People: But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.

Pastor: Since we are gathered to hear God’s Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

People: Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of 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.

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. O God, You make the minds of Your faithful to be of one will. Grant that we may love what You have commanded and desire what You promise, that among the many changes of this world our hearts may be fixed where true joys are found; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

FIRST READING *Acts 8:26–40*

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 4:1–21*

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. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we

have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL *John 15:1–8*

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.

APOSTLES' CREED

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

And 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.

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.

SERMON "Vine, Gardener, Branches"

In the Hampton Court Palace in England, there is the world's oldest vine. It is 253 years old, and at its base, it measures 12 feet across. This grape vine has a branch that is 120 feet long, and this vine harvests over 500 pounds of grapes a year! This vine is called the "Great Vine". Today, Jesus compares Himself to a vine with His last "I AM" statement. As we explore this allegory, we see that it is a beautiful picture of our relationship with the Father and the Son. Jesus is the true Vine, the Father is the pruning Gardener, and we are the fruit bearing branches. Let's take a look at Jesus' allegory.

Jesus says, "**I am the true vine....**" If you had to think of a symbol or thing that represents the United States, what would come to mind? Perhaps it might be the bald eagle, mighty, majestic, and in mid-flight. Maybe it would be Old Glory, our beautiful, flying flag. It could be the cracked Liberty Bell, or Uncle Sam with his pointing finger. It might be our nation's capital building. All of these are signs and symbols for our country; they can represent it. If Israel had one, it would be a vine.

Throughout the Old Testament, Israel is pictured as the vine and vineyard of God. In Isaiah 5, the prophet pictures Israel as the vineyard of God. The prophet Jeremiah, not wanting to be left out, says, "**Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed.**" Ezekiel joins the fray and devotes two chapters comparing

Jerusalem and Israel to a vine. Hosea uses this imagery, and so does Psalm 80:8, which describes the Exodus from Egypt with these words: **“You brought a vine out of Egypt.”**

This imagery was even used outside of Scripture, too. During the Maccabees period, roughly from 165 to 140 B. C., a vine was used on the country’s coinage as an emblem for the nation. Even the temple used this imagery. On the front of the Holy Place, there was a great golden vine! Vines represented Israel, and were a symbol for the country.

However, it is an odd and strange choice, even though it is scriptural. In every place where Israel is represented as a vine, Israel is always regarded as faithless or as the object of divine wrath and punishment! It is surprising that they didn’t pick a different symbol to represent themselves. Isaiah complains, **“For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting; and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!”** Jeremiah laments, **“Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine?”** Hosea called Israel an empty vine, and Ezekiel spends a whole chapter calling Jerusalem a useless vine! What is Jesus’ point in calling Himself the “true Vine”? It is this: Jesus stresses and makes clear that life and salvation is only in Him.

The vine gives life to the branches, and not vice-versa. Jesus is the One Who gives life, life that is abundant, full, true, satisfying, and everlasting, and it is only found in connection to Him. With this imagery, He also stresses that salvation is only in Him. It doesn’t come from being a part of Israel, but comes from being in Jesus. It doesn’t come from external factors or qualifications, but from being declared righteous because of His sake. It comes through being connected to Him by faith, and by receiving what He gives: life, forgiveness, and salvation. The vine nourishes and gives life to the branches. The branches are produced from the vine. Jesus is the Vine, the true Vine. Let’s take a look at the next part of the allegory: God is the Gardener Who prunes.

“...and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.” What do we see here? Three things. We see a fruitful vine bursting with fruit. We see a loving Father Who prunes to make us fruitful. We see a lens in how to see our suffering.

When we lived in Fort Wayne, we were renting a three bedroom house. As per the rental agreement, we were responsible for the yard work. That spring, I remember trimming and pruning the hedges that divided our yard from the neighbor’s. It was about the length of the sanctuary, and they were about my height. I remember just clipping away, and clipping away the dead and overgrown branches while Dawn was weeding the garden, and pruning the plants. I remember looking around the yard when we were done, and it was covered in branches, leaves, sticks, and weeds. It looked like a plant murder scene! It looked like a tornado had gone through.

Pruning can look and feel like the yard that day. Pruning can look and feel like a disaster. Pruning can look messy and overwhelming, yet God works through disaster, pain, suffering, setbacks, and misfortunes to bring us closer to Jesus. He works through them to help us bear more fruit, and to remove the unfruitful branches. He works through them to help us stand even firmer on His Word, and He works through them for our eternal good in Jesus.

Peter the Apostle knew all about this. Jesus told Peter that he would deny Him three times, and he did. Peter was crushed and devastated, but that would not be the end. Jesus told Peter, **“When you have turned again, strengthen your disciples.”** Jesus prayed for Peter, and Peter’s faith did not fail, although he did. His denial was a painful experience, but through that pruning, Peter learned the limits of his strength and the expanse of God’s love and mercy.

Paul knew about this, too. Paul wrestled with what he called, a “thorn in the flesh.” What it was, no one knows, but it afflicted Paul terribly. The more that Paul wrestled and struggled with that thorn, the closer he came to Jesus. Jesus worked within him, leading Paul to confess and realize, **“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weakness, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”** That thorn in the flesh was God’s pruning, bringing Paul into an experience of Christ’s strength. It drove him to God’s grace even more, which made him an even better instrument in the hand of Jesus.

Our Lord prunes our lives, too. Luther applies this well when he comments on God's pruning: "He who is able to learn, therefore, let him learn, in order that when afflicted and assailed everyone may conclude that the world, the devil, death, and all misfortune are only God's hoe and clipper; that all the revilement and disgrace the Christian experiences is God's way of fertilizing him. Then let him say: 'Praise God, who can use the devil and his malice to serve our good!'[He] knows how to employ the devil's and all the world's wickedness for the vine's good and not for its harm and ruin, as these intend. (AE 24:195-196)" Pruning can be unpleasant. The manure can smell, but the Vinedresser and Gardener does it all for our good. He knows what He is doing. The Father is the pruning Gardener. Let's take a look at the final part of the allegory.

Jesus says, **"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."** In the waters of baptism, we have been grafted into Christ. We have been buried and raised with Him, and He abides in us through His Spirit. How do we abide in Him? Jesus makes it clear in John 8:31-32, **"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."**

To abide in the vine is to abide in the word. It is to take up residence in the Word, to linger in the Word, to stay put in the Word, to be grounded and built on the Word. And what happens? We bear fruit through Him. By the nourishment that the Vine provides, the branches bear fruit.

St. Paul talks about this fruit in Galatians 5. He says, **"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control"**. Our Lord produces these things in us! But, when we think about it, and look at these things, we see that this fruit is the characteristics of our Savior in His relationship with us. He is perfectly loving of us. He rejoices over us. He is patient, kind, good, faithful, and gentle with us. By being these things to us, Jesus the Vine, creates in us, His branches, the same fruit of the Spirit in us.

He works in us love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. He works this fruit in us! He works it in the relationships that we have, at the places He has put us, and to the people that are around us. Jesus the Vine uses this fruit to nourish our spouses and family with the love and faithfulness that He produces. The Vine strengthens our children and loved ones with the peace and patience that we bear. Our Lord the Vine blesses our neighbor with the goodness and self-control that He produces in us. This fruit gives glory to God, it serves our neighbor, and it points people to Him.

This really is the perfect picture of you and the relationship that you have with the Father and the Son. Jesus is the true Vine, God the Father is the pruning Gardener, and we are the fruit bearing branches.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

HYMN "Speak, O Lord, Your Servant Listens" *LSB* 589

1 Speak, O Lord, Your servant listens,
 Let Your Word to me come near;
Newborn life and spirit give me,
 Let each promise still my fear.
Death's dread pow'r, its inward strife,
Wars against Your Word of life;
 Fill me, Lord, with love's strong fervor
 That I cling to You forever!

2 Oh, what blessing to be near You
 And to listen to Your voice;
Let me ever love and hear You,
 Let Your Word be now my choice!
Many hardened sinners, Lord,
Flee in terror at Your Word;
 But to all who feel sin's burden
 You give words of peace and pardon.

3 Lord, Your words are waters living
When my thirsting spirit pleads.
Lord, Your words are bread life-giving;
On Your words my spirit feeds.
Lord, Your words will be my light
Through death's cold and dreary night;
Yes, they are my sword prevailing
And my cup of joy unfailing!

4 As I pray, dear Jesus, hear me;
Let Your words in me take root.
May Your Spirit e'er be near me
That I bear abundant fruit.
May I daily sing Your praise,
From my heart glad anthems raise,
Till my highest praise is given
In the endless joy of heaven.
Text: Public domain

PREFACE

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God. Praising You for the glorious resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ, we join all who have seen Your glory, Your prophets and apostles, and especially Your martyr-servant Stephen. Therefore with all Your saints and all witnesses of the resurrection, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS



C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth a - dored;



Heav'n and earth with full ac-claim shout the glo-ry of Your name.



Sing ho - san-na in the high-est, sing ho - san - na to the Lord;



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PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. By His death, He has redeemed us from bondage to sin and death, and by His resurrection, He has delivered us into new life in Him. Grant us to keep the Feast in sincerity and truth, faithfully eating His body given into death and drinking His life's blood poured out for our salvation until we pass through death to the promised land of life eternal.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PAX DOMINI

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

People: Amen.

DISTRIBUTION

You are invited to receive the Lord's Supper if you believe and confess that Jesus Christ is your Savior from sin, you are a baptized child of the Triune God, and you believe that He gives you His body and blood in the bread and wine you receive. White grape juice can be found in the center of each tray for those who cannot receive alcohol. Children are welcome to come forward for a blessing.

MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION "Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense" -Bach

Words for meditation:

I Jesus Christ, my sure defense

And my Savior, now is living!

Knowing this, my confidence

Rests upon the hope here given,

*Though the night of death be fraught
Still with many_an anxious thought.*

*2 Jesus, my Redeemer, lives;
Likewise I to life shall waken.
He will bring me where He is;
Shall my courage then be shaken?
Shall I fear, or could the Head
Rise and leave His members dead?*

*3 No, too closely I am bound
By my hope to Christ forever;
Faith's strong hand the Rock has found,
Grasped it, and will leave it never;
Even death now cannot part
From its Lord the trusting heart.*

*4 I am flesh and must return
To the dust, whence I am taken;
But by faith I now discern
That from death I shall awaken
With my Savior to abide
In His glory, at His side.*

*5 Glorified, I shall anew
With this flesh then be enshrouded;
In this body I shall view
God, my Lord, with eyes unclouded;
In this flesh I then shall see
Jesus Christ eternally.*

*6 Then take comfort and rejoice,
For His members Christ will cherish.
Fear not, they will hear His voice;
Dying, they will never perish;
For the very grave is stirred
When the trumpet's blast is heard.*

*7 Laugh to scorn the gloomy grave
And at death no longer tremble;
He, the Lord, who came to save
Will at last His own assemble.
They will go their Lord to meet,
Treading death beneath their feet.*

*8 O, then, draw away your hearts
From all pleasures base and hollow;
Strive to share what He imparts
While you here His footsteps follow.*

*As you now still wait to rise,
Fix your hearts beyond the skies!
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POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

Pastor: Let us pray. We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICAMUS

Pastor: Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTION

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.

CLOSING HYMN “Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen” LSB 474

1 Alleluia!

Jesus is risen!

Trumpets resounding in glorious light!

Splendor, the Lamb,

Heaven forever!

Oh, what a miracle God has in sight! Refrain

Refrain: Jesus is risen and we shall arise:

Give God the glory! Alleluia!

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

3 Jesus the vine,

We are the branches;

Life in the Spirit the fruit of the tree;

Heaven to earth,

Christ to the people,

Gift of the future now flowing to me. Refrain

4 Weeping, be gone;

Sorrow, be silent:

Death put asunder, and Easter is bright.

Cherubim sing:

“O grave, be open!”

Clothe us in wonder, adorn us in light. Refrain

5 City of God,

Easter forever,

Golden Jerusalem, Jesus the Lamb,

River of life,

Saints and archangels,

Sing with creation to God the I AM! Refrain

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Acknowledgments

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

GENEROSITY THOUGHTS: *John 15:2 – “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.”* God is interested in the fruit that we bear in good works, and He even prunes us so that we may bring forth more fruit. Trusting in our Lord’s work for us, we are grafted by grace into His vine. We desire to be more like Him and grow into His image. That’s growth in fruit bearing, and it always comes with some pruning.

MISSIONARY JOANNA HEIDORN will be at Emmaus on Sunday, May 9. She will be sharing about her work in Latin America and the Caribbean.

PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY: Wednesdays we will have a prayer and Bible Study group. Please check with Pastor Kooi for the current start time. Each week, we will gather together to pray and study a text. We will be meeting in-person and virtually. For those that attend virtually, we will have you join us via Zoom (contact Pastor Kooi for the link). Please contact Pastor Kooi for more details.

HELP NEEDED: Have you been thinking about ways you can get involved at Emmaus? We are looking for additional help on the following boards for 2021-2022. Worship, Fellowship, Social Ministry and Practical Services. Interested in helping usher, lector, count offerings, assist with Sunday School or the Youth? We have spots for you too! Please reach out to Pastor Kooi, Nicole Pierce, Pam U or Todd P if you have questions or would like more information. We look forward to joining with you to continue the ministry of Emmaus!

4 DOWN, 96 TO GO! Thanks to all who brought in shoes, sandals and boots last week. Please keep them coming. If you have already cleaned out your closets, please talk to your friends, neighbors, coworkers, extended family, running club, youth soccer group, etc. You can also help by sharing our Facebook posts, posting our event on NextDoor, or setting up a collection box outside your house.

LIBRARY INFORMATION NEEDED: In case you missed it in this month’s newsletter, Nicole P is looking for your feedback regarding the use and placement of our library. Your feedback is appreciated.

BEEP BEEP! In just 6 days we will be having our drive thru shoe collection. Please spread the word so we can keep our youth busy! We will be collecting shoes from 10am until noon on the 8th. **Youth and parents of youth**, please gather in the narthex after church today for a quick briefing for next Saturday’s drive thru event.

HEAR “THE LUTHERAN HOUR” on Sunday mornings at 6:05 a.m. on WCCO 830 AM radio. Next week’s broadcast: “Laughed At” Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler. Speaking out against the prevailing culture might prompt ridicule but it could also produce repentance. (Jonah 3)

RAIN GARDEN UPDATE

The ball is rolling, exciting changes will be made to the west side of the front lawn at Emmaus. I know that many of you are sick of the dirt eroding onto the sidewalk during the summer and ice forming during the winter. That is about to change. With the help of the Capital Region Watershed District (CRWD) we will be installing a Rain Garden in that area. The proposal is in the final approval stages and once that is approved and signed we will have the green light to start the work. With working with the CRWD we will be given grant money to help complete this project. The CRWD grant is covering about 1/3 of the cost, and the rest has been covered by memorial donations. A monthly update will be in the newsletter to keep the congregation informed of what has been done and what the next steps are. At a future date in the project we will be looking for volunteers to help move soil that has been dug from the garden and redistribute around the Emmaus yard as needed and volunteers to help plant in the garden. The rest of the work should be contracted out.

Next steps for the construction are:

Receive final documentation from CRWD, review and sign documents.

Send documents back to CRWD for filing

Removal of the stump from the tree that was taken down in order to construct the garden.

Get estimates from a contractor for the project

Meeting with CRWD to review our project plan and determine a project start date

If you have any questions about the Rain Garden please contact one of the project team members.

More to come!

Nancy W, Molly V, Jean G, Marilyn P

Your Rain Garden project team