



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



The Fourth Sunday of Easter

Matthew 21:18-27

April 26, 2026

10:30 Service of the Word

Jesus is loving and kind, right? Then what do we make of the gospel reading today when Jesus curses a fig tree? The tree has done nothing wrong! But the tree is an example of the failing of the religious authorities. They do not do what God wants them to do. They will wither and fail.

Welcome to worship today!

If you are visiting with us we invite you to sign the Guest Book in the back of the sanctuary.

Large print bulletins are available on the usher's stand.

The Zoom feed for this service is available in the nursery.

† GATHERING †

Prelude and Announcements

Thanksgiving for Baptism

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

C: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

P: Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb!

C: Amen.

P: Let us give thanks for the gifts of baptism.

Water is poured into the baptismal font as we continue.

P: Merciful God,
you are the one who was, who is, and who is to come.
You lead us beside still waters.

We thank you for the waters of creation:
morning dew, gentle rain, roaring waves.

We thank you for Lake Ontario, the Finger Lakes, and the Erie Canal; all
of whose waters made our region flourish.

Blessed are you.

C: You guide us to springs of the water of life.

P: Jesus Christ, you are the faithful witness
who accompanies us on our journeys.

We give you thanks for your life-giving death and resurrection.

We praise you for joining us in joy and sorrow.

Blessed are you.

C: You guide us to springs of the water of life.

P: Holy Spirit, you anoint our head with oil and our cup overflows.
Break down barriers that divide us.

Fill us with the breath of new life to share the gospel.

Blessed are you.

C: You guide us to the springs of the water of life.

P: Holy One, we thank you for the gifts and grace of baptism,
and for making us a new creation.

We join with saints and angels, giving you honor and praise
now and forever.

C: Amen.

Gathering Hymn Rise Up, O Saints of God!
(For music see Hymn 669 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **Rise up, O saints of God!**
From vain ambitions turn;
Christ rose triumphant that your hearts
with nobler zeal might burn.
2. **Speak out, O saints of God!**
Despair engulfs earth's frame;
as heirs of God's baptismal grace,
the word of hope proclaim.
3. **Rise up, O saints of God!**
The kingdom's task embrace;
redress sin's cruel consequence;
give justice larger place.
4. **Give heed, O saints of God!**
Creation cries in pain;
stretch forth your hand of healing now,
with love the weak sustain.
5. **Commit your hearts to seek**
the paths which Christ has trod;
and, quickened by the Spirit's pow'r,
rise up, O saints of God!

Text: Norman O. Forness, b. 1936, copyright Norman O Forness, admin. Augsburg Fortress.. Music: William H. Walter, 1825-1893

Greeting (2 Corinthians 13:13)

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.

Gathering Dialog (Romans 10)

A: The word is near you,

C: on your lips and in your heart.

A: If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord,

C: and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

A: Faith comes from what is heard,

C: and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray.

Bend your ear to our prayer, Lord Christ, and come among us. By your gracious life and death for us, bring light into the darkness of our hearts, and anoint us with your Spirit, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

† WORD †

First Reading Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

B: The word of the LORD came to me: ²What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? ³As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die. ²⁵Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. ²⁷Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

³⁰Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Scripture Poetry Psalm 25:1-9 (read responsively)

D: Lord, I give myself to you.

I trust you, God;
do not fail me,
nor let my enemies gloat.

**C: No one loyal is shamed,
but traitors know disgrace.**

D: Teach me how to live,
Lord, show me the way.

**C: Steer me toward your truth,
you, my saving God,
you, my constant hope.**

D: Recall your tenderness,
your lasting love.

**C: Remember me, not my faults,
the sins of my youth.
To show your own goodness,
God, remember me.**

D: Good and just is the Lord,
guiding those who stray.

**C: God leads the poor,
pointing out the path.**

Second Reading Philippians 2:1-13

E: If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,

⁷but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

⁸he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him

and gave him the name
that is above every name,
¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation (Matthew 21:22)

C: Alleluia. Jesus said, “Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive.” Alleluia

Gospel Reading Matthew 21:18-27

The gospel is announced:

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 21st chapter.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

In the morning, when he returned to the city, he was hungry. ¹⁹And seeing a fig tree by the side of the road, he went to it and found nothing at all on it but leaves. Then he said to it, ‘May no fruit ever come from you again!’ And the fig tree withered at once. ²⁰When the disciples saw it, they were amazed, saying, ‘How did the fig tree wither at once?’ ²¹Jesus answered them, ‘Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, “Be lifted up and thrown into the sea”, it will be done. ²²Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive.’

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, ‘By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?’ ²⁴Jesus said to them, ‘I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?’ And they argued with one another, ‘If we say, “From heaven”, he will say to us, “Why then did you not believe him?”’ ²⁶But if we say, “Of human origin”, we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.’ ²⁷So they

answered Jesus, ‘We do not know.’ And he said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

After the reading:

P: The gospel of the Lord

C: Praise to you O Christ.

Children’s Sermon

Sermon

Hymn of the Day Be Thou My Vision

(For music turn to Hymn 793 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
thou my best thought both by day and by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.**
2. **Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me Lord.
Thou my soul’s shelter, thou my high tow’r,
raise thou me heav’nward, O Pow’r of my pow’r.**
3. **Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,
thou mine inheritance, now and always:
thou, and thou only, first in my heart,
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.**
4. **Light of my soul, after victory won,
may I reach heaven’s joys, O heaven’s Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

Text and Music: Irish Folk Tune 8th-10th century; tr. Mary Burne; vers. Eleanor Hull

Response to the Word

P: In Christ you have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

C: We believe in him and are marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.

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

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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.**

A: Build yourselves up on your most holy faith;

C: pray in the Holy Spirit.

(Jude 20)

A: Keep yourselves in the love of God;

C: look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. *(Jude 21)*

A: If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:

**C: Everything old has passed away;
behold, everything has become new!**

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

Peace

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

C: And also with you.

P: Let us share that peace with one another.

The congregation may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

✠ THANKSGIVING ✠

Gathering of Prayers and Offerings

You are invited to write a prayer concern on the small blank slip of paper in your worship bulletin. This slip will be collected by the ushers in the offering plates. The concerns raised will be prayed for later in the service.

Offertory

Offertory 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.**

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637-1711. Music: Louis Bourgeois, 1510-1561

✠ PRAYER ✠

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray: Blessed are you, O God,

C: ruler of heaven and earth. Day by day you shower us with blessings. As you have raised us to new life in Christ, give us glad and generous hearts, ready to praise you and to respond to those in need, through Jesus our Savior and Lord. Amen

Prayers of Intercession

P: With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

Issues raised by the congregation lifted in prayer.

The prayer concludes:

P: Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

C: Amen.

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**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: The triune God,
who was, who is, and who is to come,
Sovereign, Savior, and Spirit,
light your way with resurrection dawn,
now and always.

C: Amen.

Sending Hymn Go, My Children, with My Blessing
(For music see Hymn 543 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **“Go, my children, with my blessing,
never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you,
you are my own.
In my love’s baptismal river
I have made you mine forever.
Go, my children, with my blessing,
you are my own.”**
2. **“Go, my children, sins forgiven,
at peace and pure.
Here you learned how much I love you,
what I can cure.
Here you heard my dear Son’s story,
here you touched him, saw his glory.
Go, my children, sins forgiven,
at peace and pure.”**
3. **“Go, my children, fed and nourished,**

closer to me.
Grow in love and love by serving,
joyful and free.
Here my Spirit's power filled you,
here my tender comfort stilled you.
Go, my children, fed and nourished,
joyful and free."

Text: Jaroslav J. Vajda, b. 1919, alt. Copyright 1983 Concordia Publishing House. Music: Welsh traditional; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958, Copyright Oxford University Press

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: **God's Work. Our Hands.**



Worship assistants TODAY:

Greeters and Ushers Bruce and Connie Stevenson
Acolyte Alyssa Young
Counters John and Linda Thompson
Coffee Hour The Stuarts

Worship assistants for next Sunday, May 3

Greeters and Ushers Greg and Mary Zuege
Acolyte Charlotte Stroup
Counters Burdie Gillern and Babette Huber
Coffee Hour

Scripture readings from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible* copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States. Psalm from *The Psalter* copyright 1994, Liturgical Training Publications. Variable worship texts from *Sundays and Seasons 2026* copyright 2025 Augsburg Fortress.

St. John's Lutheran Church
888 County Road 9, Victor, NY 14564
stjohnsvictor.com (585) 924-5192
The Rev. Jonathan Deibler, Pastor
Dongwon Shin, Pianist