

John 15:1-8



Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 2, 2021

WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

Announcements

Prelude

Easter Greeting

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Confession and Forgiveness

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

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

C: Amen.

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.

Amen.

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

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

Most merciful God,

C: we confess that we are captive 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. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

EASTER

379

Now the Green Blade Rises



1 Now the green blade ris - es from the bur - ied grain,
 2 In the grave they laid him, love by ha - tred slain,
 3 Forth he came at Eas - ter like the ris - en grain,
 4 When our hearts are win - try, griev - ing, or in pain,



wheat that in dark earth man - y days has lain;
 think - ing that he would nev - er wake a - gain,
 he that for three days in the grave had lain;
 your touch can call us back to life a - gain,



love lives a - gain, that with the dead has been;
 laid in the earth like grain that sleeps un - seen;
 raised from the dead, my liv - ing Lord is seen;
 fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been;



love is come a - gain like wheat a - ris - ing green.

Text: John MacLeod Campbell Crum, 1872–1958
 Music: French carol
 Text © Oxford University Press

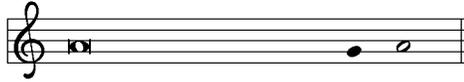
NOËL NOUVELET
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*Greeting

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

C: And also with you.

***Kyrie**



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



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.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor - ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord. A - men.

Refrain
Assisting minister



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.

All



1 Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and



strength, and hon - or and bless-ing and glo - ry are his.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.



2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless-ing and hon - or and glo - ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Final refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

***Prayer of the Day**

P: We pray in your name.

C: AMEN!

First Reading: Acts 8:26-40

pg. 154

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.

C: Thanks be to God

Responsive Psalm--Psalm 22:25-31

pg. 616

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!"

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.

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.

P: The Holy Gospel according to

Gospel: John 15:1-8*C: Glory to you, O Lord!**

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: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ!

Message

The Rev. Bob McGurn

Sermon Song

“Like the Murmur of the Dove’s Song”

#403

NICENE CREED

C: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the People

(Please respond: Your mercy is great.)

Like the Murmur of the Dove's Song



1 Like the mur - mur of the dove's song, like the chal - lenge of her
 2 To the mem - bers of Christ's bod - y, to the branch - es of the
 3 With the heal - ing of di - vi - sion, with the cease - less voice of



flight, like the vig - or of the wind's rush, like the
 vine, to the church in faith as - sem - bled, to our
 prayer, with the pow'r to love and wit - ness, with the



new flame's ea - ger might: come, Ho - ly Spir - it, come.
 midst as gift and sign: come, Ho - ly Spir - it, come.
 peace be - yond com - pare: come, Ho - ly Spir - it, come.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944

Music: Peter Cutts, b. 1937

Text © 1982 Hope Publishing Company

Music © 1969 Hope Publishing Company

BRIDEGROOM
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THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Praise to you, O God, for your Word of life: creating a wondrous universe, proclaiming freedom from captivity, becoming the song of your people. We praise you, O God, for your Word.

We praise you, O God, for your Word.

Your Word is made of flesh among us: with Mary in the garden, you call us by name. With Thomas beholding your wounds, you call us to believe. With sheep of others folds, we are gathered by your voice. Your Word names our death and our life: a seed that falls into the earth and dies, rain and snow that come down from heaven to water the earth, a vine in which we abide. Through the Word, you appoint us to bear fruit, fruit that will last. We bless you, O God, for your Word. **We bless you, O God, for your Word.**

By your living Word, we are witness of these things. Breathe into us your Holy Spirit. Open our minds to understand the scriptures. Give us wisdom to declare what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands concerning the word of life. Fill us with strength to love, not in word or speech alone, but in truth and action. With every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, we join in the hymn of all creation, as we thank you, O God, for your life-giving Word. **We thank you, O God, for your life-giving Word. Amen.**

A PRAYER OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Most merciful Lord, we grieve that we cannot assemble together physically to hear your word and receive your supper. We experience the weight of separation and we long for conversation and consolation gathered as one body in you.

Since we cannot receive you today in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, we beseech you to come spiritually into our hearts. Cleanse and strengthen us with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let us never be separated from you. May we live in you, and you in us, in this life and in the life to come.

In this wilderness, teach us to be your people and bring us again to your table so that we may commune with you. Shape us through this experience to better embody being your people for the sake of the world. Renew and restore us O Christ, for you live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

***Lord's Prayer**

P: Let us pray with confidence in the words our Savior taught us:

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

Benediction

C: AMEN

PRAISE, THANKSGIVING

821

Shout to the Lord

My Je - sus, my Sav - ior, Lord, there is none like you.
 All of my days I want to praise the won - ders of your might - y love.
 My com - fort, my shel - ter, tow - er of ref - uge and strength;
 let ev - 'ry breath, all that I am nev - er cease to wor - ship you.
 Shout to the Lord, all the earth; let us sing pow - er and maj - es - ty, praise
 to the King. Moun - tains bow down and the seas will roar at the
 sound of your name. I sing for joy at the work of your hands;
 for - ev - er I'll love you, for - ev - er I'll stand.
 Noth - ing com - pares to the prom - ise I have in you.

Text: Darlene Zschech, b. 1965
 Music: Darlene Zschech
 Text and music © 1993 Darlene Zschech/Hillsong Publishing, admin. in USA & Canada Integrity's Hosanna! Music

SHOUT TO THE LORD
 PM

P: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God!

Postlude

Parking lot worship

We continue to offer “in person” worship with communion at church on Sundays when a Pastor is conducting worship. How this works is that people in their cars in the parking lot will be able to listen to the worship being broadcast from inside the church on the FM channel 98.1, or watch on their phones on Facebook. At the conclusion of the livestream (after the postlude) Pastor Jonathan will do the rite for Eucharist, which you can hear on your radios, will come out into the parking lot, and will distribute the elements (grape juice and wafer sealed in a plastic package) to your cars, and give you a blessing. Please refrain from consuming the communion elements until your car windows are closed, and please wear a mask at all times unless you are in your car with the windows closed. The restrooms and other facilities will not be available as the building will remain closed.

Words of Institution

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened His arms to all. In the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to His disciples saying: ‘Take, eat; this is My body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.’

Again, after supper, He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood, shed for you and for all people, for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of Me.’ Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory. Pour out your Holy Spirit, that by this Holy Communion we may know the unity we share with all your people in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Through Him, with Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.

***Lord’s Prayer**

P: Let us pray with confidence in the words our Savior taught us:
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**

P: These are the gifts of God, for the people of God.

C: Thanks be to God!

Devotional

GOSPEL MESSAGE

May 2, 2021

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

I AM

Readers familiar with John's gospel will recognize in the opening "I AM" of this lesson a linking of its imagery of the vine with other distinctive Johannine images of the identity and mission of Jesus in relation to that of his chosen community of followers (I AM bread of life, 6:35; I AM light of the world, 8:12; I AM the door of the sheep, 10:7; I AM the resurrection and the life, 11:25).

The promise of God's abiding presence in Christ has been anticipated already in Jesus' words in 14:1-6, a passage whose frequent use primarily at funerals often disguises its intent of giving assurance for life in the present. Jesus speaks of "dwelling places" (the Greek word *monē* is from the same root as *meno*, abide) in the Father's house prepared for those who believe. But use of the same word in 14:23 together with Jesus' promise to "come again" and "take you to myself" makes clear that this image is not primarily about our going to heaven, but rather confirms Jesus' promise as resurrected Lord to come and be with his followers.

The promise of "abiding" in Jesus is not for its own sake, nor an end in itself. Jesus imagines and promises a dynamic and changing life for the disciple community. Vines are pruned and cleansed. Branches that wither and die are removed. This points to a constantly changing community that is called to be up and doing. This is a relationship of purpose and power.

This call to "bear fruit" could seem risky or judgmental to our ears, but only if it is heard as the call of some distant or judgmental taskmaster. But here we hear the same promise as the one from Jesus who invites us to pray to a beloved Father — "Our Father..." Such a promise invites us into the abiding relationship in which vine and branches are held together by the one whose glory is seen in his being lifted up on the cross for us and in a Father who also is glorified when those who abide in that Son are revealed in the faithful bearing of fruit in service to the world.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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Our thoughts and prayers go out to Barbara Anderson, Chris Anderson, Bob, Don Cheetham, Janet Davies, Johan DeVries, Barbara Dombroski, Donna, Doug & Mary Ann, Kay Evanilla, Florence Fay, Andrea Grushka, Kayla, Dorothy Kowaleski, Jim McKnight, Richard, Lorraine Stevens, Tom Sutherland, Eugene Walz, Jeremy Webb.

NES Virtual Assembly is Saturday, June 12, 2021, 10-3 pm. Delegates needed. Please contact the church office or a council member if you would like to attend.

Zoom Book Club will meet Monday, May 10th at 7 pm. Participants will receive a link to join the group a few days before the meeting. Please email Nancy Janes with any questions at nfjanes@gmail.com.

Devotional Booklets are outside to the right of the front door of the church in the white mailbox. Please contact the church office if you are unable to pick one up.

The Worship Service will be livestreamed on Sunday at 9:30 am via facebook from the sanctuary. Please use the link below:

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/stpaulelong/>

You may also watch the recorded service on YouTube using the link below:

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkegkaMRg9zh6CLwZL4JM-w/featured>

- St. Paul remains closed to in-house worship.
- Parking lot worship will be conducted every Sunday, but Communion will only be distributed on the Sundays when a Pastor is conducting worship.
- Please contact the church office at stpaul@stpaulelong.org if you are able to volunteer for any openings in the Worship Schedule.