

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 2nd 2021

Welcome & Announcements

Ringing of the Bell

Prelude

Gathering Around the Word

Call to Worship

One: We come to this place, where God pours out love on us;

All: we join our voices in praise, leaving our fears behind.

One: We gather with these people, who also seek to follow Jesus;

All: so we might walk the paths of service together.

One: We open our hearts to the gifts of the Spirit;

All: so that grace and peace might be the fruit we bear.

One: Let us worship God!

Hymn 624

I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art (vrs.1) TOULON

Call to Confession

from John 15:1-8

The misdeeds and mistakes we make can cut us off from Christ, our True Vine. Our sin is like dead wood, weighing us down and preventing new growth. When we confess the dead places in our lives, God forgives us and prunes them away, restoring us to relationship and allowing us to thrive once more. Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess before God and one another our failures to love our neighbor.

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

from 1 John 4:7-10, 14

God of compassion and mercy,

you sent your Son to save the world,

and told us to love one another

the way that you loved us.

You told us to love one another,

because love is from you, O God.

Yet, we confess we have a hard time

loving those who are different,

or who disagree with us,

or who make us face hard truths about ourselves.

Instead of loving, we are afraid:

afraid for our safety, our wallets,

or how others may perceive us.

Forgive us, gracious God, and show us how to love

**the way you want us to love.
Release us from our judgment and fear.
Open our hearts to your perfect love for the world.
In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

from 1 John 4:11-16

Friends, the good news is this: God abides in us, ready to forgive us in this moment, and any time we ask. Love is from God, and we are loved by God, who sent Christ into the world to assure us of this Good News:

All: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!

Response

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen, amen.*

Listening to the Word

Prayer for Illumination of God's Word

from Psalm 22:30-31

Loving God, when sacred scripture promises that future generations will be told of your great righteousness, we know that it means us. May our ears and our hearts be opened to all that your scriptures will show us today. Speak to us of your wondrous deeds, unquenchable love, and supreme goodness. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, **Amen.**

First Reading

Acts 8:26-39

²⁶ An angel from the Lord spoke to Philip, "At noon, take^[a] the road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.) ²⁷ So he did. Meanwhile, an Ethiopian man was on his way home from Jerusalem, where he had come to worship. He was a eunuch and an official responsible for the entire treasury of Candace. (Candace is the title given to the Ethiopian queen.) ²⁸ He was reading the prophet Isaiah while sitting in his carriage. ²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, "Approach this carriage and stay with it."

³⁰ Running up to the carriage, Philip heard the man reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you really understand what you are reading?"

³¹ The man replied, "Without someone to guide me, how could I?" Then he invited Philip to climb up and sit with him. ³² This was the passage of scripture he was reading:

*Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent
so he didn't open his mouth.*

³³ *In his humiliation justice was taken away from him.*

love. ⁹ This is how the love of God is revealed to us: God has sent his only Son into the world so that we can live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: it is not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son as the sacrifice that deals with our sins.

¹¹ Dear friends, if God loved us this way, we also ought to love each other. ¹² No one has ever seen God. If we love each other, God remains in us and his love is made perfect in us. ¹³ This is how we know we remain in him and he remains in us, because he has given us a measure of his Spirit. ¹⁴ We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the savior of the world. ¹⁵ If any of us confess that Jesus is God's Son, God remains in us and we remain in God. ¹⁶ We have known and have believed the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who remain in love remain in God and God remains in them. ¹⁷ This is how love has been perfected in us, so that we can have confidence on the Judgment Day, because we are exactly the same as God is in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear expects punishment. The person who is afraid has not been made perfect in love. ¹⁹ We love because God first loved us. ²⁰ Those who say, "I love God" and hate their brothers or sisters are liars. After all, those who don't love their brothers or sisters whom they have seen can hardly love God whom they have not seen! ²¹ This commandment we have from him: Those who claim to love God ought to love their brother and sister also.

Sermon

Because Love

Responding to the Word

Hymn 450

Be Thou My Vision (vrs.1)

SLANE

Affirmation of Faith

Apostles' Creed

Sharing our Prayers

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Dedicating our Gifts

The Doxology

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

Charge & Benediction

Blessing

"Irish Blessing"

Inside back of hymnal

Postlude