

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Growing in Grace

May 2, 2021

AS WE GATHER

The images Jesus uses as He proclaims the kingdom of God often come from the world of agriculture. His parables are filled with plants and trees and birds and animals. Grapes, grapevines, and vineyards are all used as illustrations by Jesus as He teaches the people who are His first hearers and us also. As people who have been grafted as branches into Christ the Vine through Holy Baptism, we seek ways to strengthen that connection as the Holy Spirit works in and through us. We now nourish our faith as branches in Christ's vineyard as we grow in Him by Word and Sacrament.

PRELUDE "Hallelujah" solo, Shellie Ellis

✠ Welcome and Announcements ✠

HYMN "Chief of Sinners Though I Be" 611 vs. 1,2



1 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Je - sus shed His
2 Oh, the height of Je - sus' love, High - er than the



blood for me, Died that I might live on high,
heav'ns a - bove, Deep - er than the depths of sea,



Lives that I might nev - er die. As the branch is
Last - ing as e - ter - ni - ty! Love that found me—



to the vine, I am His, and He is mine.
won - drous thought! Found me when I sought Him not.

Tune and text: Public domain

INVOCATION

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

People: Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES *Psalm 34:8; 104:24, 31; 147:11*

Pastor: The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him,

People: in those who hope in His steadfast love.

Pastor: Taste and see that the LORD is good!

People: Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!

Pastor: O LORD, how manifold are Your works!

People: In wisdom have You made them all.

Pastor: May the glory of the LORD endure forever;

People: may the LORD rejoice in His works.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: As repentant people, we ask God for His grace and mercy.

Pastor: Humble yourselves then before God, confess your sins to Him, and ask His forgiveness.

People: O almighty God, most merciful Father, I, a repentant sinner, confess to You all my sins and iniquities with which I have offended You. By nature I am a sinful creature. In thought, word, and deed I have continually broken Your Law. For this I justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of the sufferings and death of Your Son, Jesus Christ, be gracious and merciful to me, a penitent and contrite being. Forgive me all my sins and give me the power of Your Holy Spirit that I may change my sinful life and bear fruit in keeping with true repentance.

Pastor: As you believe, so let it be. 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.

HYMN OF PRAISE “Christ the Lord is Risen Today” 469 vs. 1,5,6



1 “Christ the Lord is ris’n to - day!” Saints on earth and an - gels say;
5 Soar we now where Christ has led; Fol - l’wing our ex - alt - ed Head.
6 Hail the Lord of earth and heav’n! Praise to Thee by both be giv’n!



Raise your joys and tri - umphs high; Sing, ye heav’ns, and earth, re - ply.
Made like Him, like Him we rise; Ours the cross, the grave, the skies.
Thee we greet tri - um - phant now: Hail, the res - ur - rec - tion, Thou!

Text and tune: Public domain

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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* (Philip witnesses about Jesus to the Ethiopian official.)

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* 4:1–11 (An exhortation to lives of Christian love)

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.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

VERSE *Romans 6:9, John 14:23*

Pastor: Alleluia. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. Alleluia.

People: **Alleluia! If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. Alleluia!**

HOLY GOSPEL *John 15:1–8* (Jesus says that He is the vine and His people are the branches.)

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.**

HYMN OF THE DAY “Fruitful Trees the Spirit’s Sowing”
(sung to the tune “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”)

Fruitful trees, the Spirit’s sowing,
May we ripen and increase,
Fruit to life eternal growing,
Rich in love and joy and peace.
Laden branches freely bearing
Gifts the Giver loves to bless;
Here is fruit that grows by sharing
Patience, kindness, gentleness.

Rooted deep in Christ our Master,
Christ our pattern and our goal,
Teach us, as the years fly faster,
Goodness, faith, and self-control.
Fruitful trees, the Spirit’s tending,
May we grow till harvests cease;
Till we taste, in life unending,
Heaven’s love and joy and peace.

SERMON “Stay Connected” John 15:1-8

CREED / CATECHISM *The Second Article*

Pastor: As we celebrate the risen Christ this Easter season, we now speak together the words of the Apostles’ Creed regarding our Savior, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.

People: **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.**

Pastor: What does this mean?

People: **I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord,**

who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death,

that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness,

just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Friends in Christ, I urge you all to lift up your hearts to God and pray with me as Christ our Lord has taught us and freely promised to hear us.

God, our Father in heaven, look with mercy on us, Your needy children on earth, and grant us grace that Your holy name be hallowed by us and all the world through the pure and true teaching of Your Word and the fervent love shown forth in our lives.

Graciously turn from us all false doctrine and evil living whereby Your precious name is blasphemed and profaned. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Pastor: May Your kingdom come to us and expand. Bring all sinners and those who are blinded and bound in the devil's kingdom to know Jesus Christ, Your Son, by faith that the number of Christians may be increased. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Strengthen us by Your Spirit according to Your will, both in life and in death, in the midst of both good and evil things, that our own wills may be crucified daily and sacrificed to Your good and gracious will. Into Your merciful hands we commend [*names*, and] all who are in need, praying for them at all times: Thy will be done. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Grant us our daily bread, preserve us from greed and selfish cares, and help us trust in You to provide for all our needs. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Forgive us our sins as we also forgive those who sin against us so that our hearts may be at peace and may rejoice in a good conscience before You, and that no sin may ever frighten or alarm us. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Lead us not into temptation, O Lord, but help us by Your Spirit to subdue our flesh, to turn from the world and its ways, and to overcome the devil with all his wiles. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: And lastly, O heavenly Father, deliver us from all evil of both body and soul, now and forever. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: We trust, O Lord, in Your great mercy to hear and answer us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: Amen.

OFFERING

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

PREFACE *2 Timothy 4:22*

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.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD *Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24;
Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25*

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 \times 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 \times blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST *1 Corinthians 11:26; Revelation 22:20*

Pastor: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

People: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Pastor: Remembering Your mercy, O Lord, and how our Savior suffered upon the cross, died the death that was ours to die, rose to bestow upon us the life that death cannot overcome, ascended to the glory of the Father's right hand, and sent forth the Spirit to lead us into faith, we pray You to bring to conclusion all that our Savior began and deliver us to that everlasting life and light in heaven forevermore. Hear us as we pray with one voice the prayer He has taught us:

LORD'S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9–13*

**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.

PAX DOMINI

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

People: **Amen.**

DISTRIBUTION

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray.

Holy Father, we ask You now, by this blessed food and drink, to deliver Your Church from every evil, to teach it to love You perfectly, and to make it truly one, even as this bread was made from many grains of wheat to become the carrier of the body of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and the wine was drawn from the fruitfulness of many grapes. Grant that we ever abide in the Word, Christ Himself, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

People: **Amen.**

BENEDICTION *Numbers 6:24–26*

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.**

HYMN "Alleluia, Jesus is Risen" 474 vs.1-3



1 Al - le - lu - ia! Je - sus is ris - en! Trum - pets re -
2 Walk - ing the way, Christ in the cen - ter Tell - ing the
3 Je - sus the vine, We are the branch - es; Life in the



sound - ing in glo - ri - ous light! Splen - dor, the Lamb, Heav - en for -
sto - ry to o - pen our eyes; Break - ing our bread, Giv - ing us
Spir - it the fruit of the tree; Heav - en to earth, Christ to the



ev - er! Oh, what a mir - a - cle God has in sight!
glo - ry: Je - sus our bless - ing, our con - stant sur - prise.
peo - ple, Gift of the fu - ture now flow - ing to me.



Je - sus is ris - en and we shall a - rise:



Give God the glo - ry! Al - le - lu - ia!

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