

*St. Stephens Episcopal Church  
Worship Service*

*The Fifth Sunday of Easter*



*May 2, 2021*

## Worship Service – The Fifth Sunday of Easter

Prelude - *"Here, O Lord, your servants gather" (Isao Koizumi)*

*Celebrant:* Alleluia, Christ is Risen!

**People:** The Lord is Risen in deed! Alleluia

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you 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 Christ our Lord. *Amen*

Saying together:

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen**

*Celebrant:* The Lord be with you.

**People:** And also with you.

*Celebrant:* Let us pray.

**The Collect of the Day: (together) Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life: Grant us so perfectly to know your Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow his steps in the way that leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.***

**The First Reading - A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 8:26-40**

An 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.) So 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 and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside 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 silent before its shearer,  
so he does not open his mouth.  
In his humiliation justice was denied him.  
Who can describe his generation?  
For his life is taken away from the earth."

The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As 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?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When 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. But 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.

*Reader:* The Word of the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 22:24-30** *Deus, Deus meus*

- 24 My praise is of him in the great assembly; \*  
I will perform my vows in the presence of those who worship him.
- 25 The poor shall eat and be satisfied,  
and those who seek the Lord shall praise him: \*  
"May your heart live for ever!"
- 26 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, \*  
and all the families of the nations shall bow before him.
- 27 For kingship belongs to the Lord; \*  
he rules over the nations.
- 28 To him alone all who sleep in the earth bow down in worship; \*  
all who go down to the dust fall before him.
- 29 My soul shall live for him;  
my descendants shall serve him; \*  
they shall be known as the Lord'S for ever.
- 30 They shall come and make known to a people yet unborn \*  
the saving deeds that he has done.

**The Second Reading – A reading from 1 John 4:7-21**

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In 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. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives 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 do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So 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. Love 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. There 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. We love because he first loved us. Those 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. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

*Reader:* The Word of the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

**The Holy Gospel**

**John 15:1-8**

*Reader:* The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John

***Response: Glory to you Lord Christ***

Jesus said to his disciples, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide 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. I 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. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

*Celebrant:* The Gospel of the Lord.

***People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.***

**Sermon – The Rev. Kim Rossi**

Music – *"Many are the light beams" (Olle Widestrand)*

### The Nicene Creed

**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:  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man.**

**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 end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the, Lord and the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.  
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.  
He 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**

### The Prayers of the People

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love. (*A brief silence*)

God of all fruitfulness, you abide in your church and your church abides in you. Cleanse us by your word and give yourself to the whole church on earth so that it bears fruit and witnesses to your love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You have created the heavens and the earth. As we wonder at the beauty of creation, may we seek vital connections among all that depends on the earth for life. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You rule the nations with justice and love. Give the leaders of the earth assurance of your abiding presence that they lead not by fear but with love for those they are called to serve. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You have loved us so that we can love others. We pray for all in need of your love: those who are poor, lowly, outcast, weak, or fearful. Today we especially pray for those we name before you, either silently or aloud. (Brief Period of Silence) Provide for the needs of all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You gather us with all the saints by the power of your Spirit. We pray especially today for the repose of the soul of Dean Ervay and for the Ervay family. With them, may our hearts live forever in your keeping. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### The Peace

*Celebrant:* The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

*People:* **And also with you.**

Music – *"Abbot's Leigh" (Cyril Vincent Taylor)*

## **The Canon of the Eucharist**

*Celebrant:* The Lord be with you

***People And also with you.***

*Celebrant:* Lift up your hearts.

***People: We lift them up unto the Lord.***

*Celebrant:* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

***People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.***

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. But chiefly we are bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord: for he is the true Paschal Lamb, who was sacrificed for us, and has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he has destroyed death, and by his rising to life again he has won for us everlasting life.

Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with Angels, Arch Angels, and all the company of heaven, who forever say this hymn for the glory of your Name:

*Celebrant and People*

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory***

***Hosanna in the highest.***

***Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.***

***Hosanna in the highest.***

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

*Celebrant and People*

***We remember his death.***

***We proclaim his resurrection.***

***We await his coming in glory.***

We offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with St. Stephen, and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. AMEN

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say:

***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,***

***for ever and ever. Amen***

## The Breaking of the Bread

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;  
*Therefore let us keep the feast.*

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith and with thanksgiving.  
*(Receive the body and blood of Christ)*

There is a place for you at the banquet. Come and feast at Jesus' table.  
Let us now open our packages and take and eat. The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, given for you.

*After Communion, the Celebrant says;  
Celebrant: Let us pray.*

**All: Almighty and everlasting God**  
*we thank you for feeding us with spiritual food*  
*of the most precious Body and Blood*  
*of your Son our savior Jesus Christ;*  
*and for assuring us in the holy mysteries*  
*that we are living members of the Body of your Son,*  
*and heirs of your eternal kingdom.*  
*And now, Father, send us out*  
*to do the work you have given us to do,*  
*to love and serve you*  
*as faithful witness of Christ our Lord.*  
*To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,*  
*be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen*

## Blessing

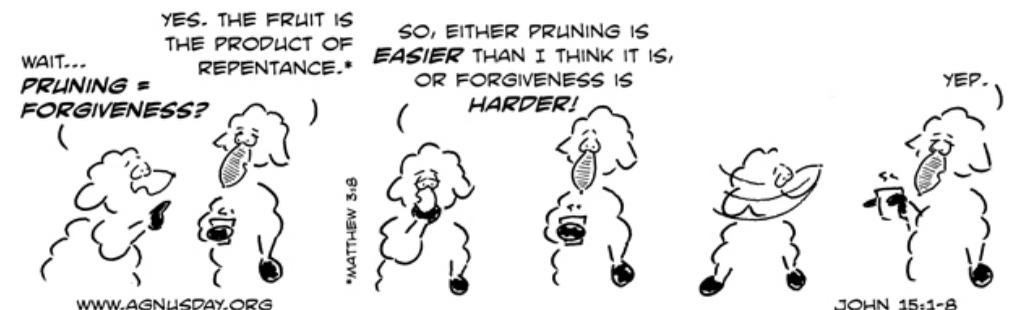
May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus. The God of life, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. *Amen.*

*Celebrant : Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Alleluia, Alleluia. People: Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia.*

**Postlude: "Truro" (melody from Psalmodia Evangelica, Part II)**

## TODAY'S Service Ministers

Celebrant: The Rev. Kim Rossi  
Lector: Gloria Preston  
Intercessor: Suzanne Givan  
Trumpeter – Jason Fox  
Organist: Jack Bollman



**Agnus Day** (Agnus Day appears with the permission of [www.agnusday.org](http://www.agnusday.org))

## SMILES: God bless those with a sense of humor

During his homily, Fr. Tellez was discussing the folly of making the pursuit of happiness more important than God in one's life. "When we pursue happiness as an end in itself, we are committing adultery...I mean idolatry," Fr. Tellez said.

There was a deafening silence, and then the entire congregation exploded with laughter/

Reading from Mark 1:9 one recent morning, Rev. Steven A. Becker, pastor of Theresa Presbyterian Church, transposed a couple of words and it came out: "At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by Jordan in the John."

In a slip of the tongue during his Sunday sermon, Rev. Mel Merwald, pastor of St. Margaret Mary Church, referred to a reading from Deuteronomy as a reading from "debauchery."

It was Easter Saturday and Joanne was sitting at the kitchen table coloring Easter eggs with her son, Dan, 3, and her daughter Debby, 2. She told her children about the true meaning Of Easter, and taught them the traditional Easter morning greeting, "He is risen!" and the reply, "He is risen, indeed!" The children planned to surprise their father, a Presbyterian minister with this greeting on Easter Sunday morning by saying "He is risen!" as soon as he woke up. The next morning, bright and early, little Dan heard his father getting up in the bedroom and he raced down the hallway shouting. "Daddy, God's back!"

## ***Episcopal Church Opening***

We are so glad to have you with us as we are now open to in-person worship services in the Church. It has been over a year since we have been able to worship in our Church building. Thank you to all of you who have been supportive over this past year, attending the many different and unconventional ways that we have continued to worship as a church community. I have enjoyed being with you in the parking lots on your car radios and on zoom. This COVID-19 Pandemic has changed our lives in so many ways, and so many have suffered, but we are able now to see some light at the end of the tunnel.

While all of this is such good news, we still have a ways to go. So, while attending worship in the Church building is joyous, we still need to be cautious and to follow some rules to ensure that everyone is safe here.

- So, I ask that everyone wear masks during the Worship Services. Masks are provided for anyone who does not have one. **No one will be allowed to stay for worship without a mask.**
- **Please remain in your seats** and avoid getting up to talk with friends and family as they come into the building to worship.
- Please place your offering envelopes in the plate as you enter the door.
- We will not be passing the peace by moving around the Church.
- At this time, we will not be singing during worship and will be listening to instrumental music during the service.
- There is hand sanitizer and Kleenex available in every pew.
- Please use the bathroom facilities one at a time and be sure to wash your hands before returning to worship.
- If you are feeling unwell at all, please do not come to worship, there will still be an option to experience worship services via zoom.
- If you are not taking your service bulletins home, deposit them in the trash cans as you leave.
- Please resist the temptation to gather in the parking lot for conversation following worship.