

Sunday, April 29, 2018
Fifth Sunday of Easter

PRELUDE

"When Morning Gilds the Skies"

Dale Wood

***GATHERING SONG**

"For the Beauty of the Earth"

ELW 879

For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies:
Christ, our God, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.

For the wonder of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale and tree and flow'r,
sun and moon and stars of light:
Christ, our God, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.

For the joy of ear and eye,
for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony
linking sense to sound and sight:
Christ, our God, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.

For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth and friends above;
for all gentle thoughts and mild:
Christ, our God, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.

For each perfect gift of thine,
peace on earth and joy in heav'n;
for thyself, best gift divine,
to our world so freely giv'n:
Christ, our God, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.

***GREETING**

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

G **And also with you.**

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE**

“Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen!” vv. 1 & 3

ELW 377

**Alleluia! Jesus is risen!
Trumpets resounding in glorious light!
Splendor, the Lamb, heaven forever!
Oh, what a miracle God has in sight!
Jesus is risen and we shall arise.
Give God the glory! Alleluia!**

**Jesus the vine, we are the branches;
life in the Spirit the fruit of the tree;
heaven to earth, Christ to the people,
gift of the future now flowing to me.
Jesus is risen and we shall arise.
Give God the glory! Alleluia!**

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P *O God,*

G **you give us your Son as the vine apart from whom we cannot live. Nourish our life in his resurrection, that we may bear the fruit of love and know the fullness of your joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen!**

ANTHEM

“The Gift of Love”

Hal Hopson

Chancel Choir

FIRST READING

Acts 8:26-40

Led by the Spirit, Philip encounters an Ethiopian official who is returning to his African home after having been to Jerusalem to worship. Philip uses their encounter to proclaim the gospel to him. Upon coming to faith in Jesus, the Ethiopian is baptized by Philip.

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.

Reflection

Philip is one of the “deacons” chosen from among the community to make sure that everyone was taken care of in the distribution of food. (See Acts 6:1-6) This portion of Acts is devoted to stories of these men, particularly Stephen (Acts 6-7) and Philip (Acts 8). Who did Philip meet, at the direction of the Spirit? (verses 26-27) Note that this was an important official from Ethiopia. What do we know about him? (verses 27-28) He was a believer, and trying to read the prophet Isaiah, and having no more success than any one of us reading Isaiah for the first time without an interpreter. So what did Philip do? (verses 30-35) This is an example of how important it is to study the Scripture and ask questions. How does Philip interpret this Scripture to him? (The portion of Isaiah quoted here is a different translation of Isaiah 53:7b-8.) What does the man want next? (verse 36) So what happens? (verse 38) I think this is another example of Jesus telling the disciples not to worry about what they will say if they are asked by the authorities, because the Spirit will give them words. It’s also an example of loving God with all your mind! What do you think?

Psalms 22:25-31

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 o- | ver 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 be- | fore the LORD.

³⁰**Their descendants shall | serve the LORD,
whom they shall proclaim to genera- | tions to come.**

³¹They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people | yet unborn, saying to them, "The | LORD has acted!"

Reflection

This is the end of the psalm which Jesus quoted the beginning of from the cross. (See Mark 15:33-34 and Psalm 22:1) Does anything surprise you about this psalm? How does this text from the psalm answer the question asked at the beginning? What are the signs in this psalm that God has not forsaken the psalmist, or Jesus, or us, or our descendants? What difference does it make to your children, grandchildren, great...great-grandchildren that you trust in God?

SECOND READING

1 John 4:7-21

We love God and others because God first loved us. We cannot say we love God, whom we have not seen, while hating fellow Christians, whom we regularly see. Love toward God is to be matched by love toward others because the essence of God is love.

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.

Reflection

What is our defining characteristic as a community if we know and love God? (verses 7-8) How do we know that God loves us? (verses 9-10) How must we respond to God's love? (verse 11) Jesus said to the disciples after his resurrection, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." (John 20:29) How does the writer of 1 John say that we "see" God? (verse 11) How else do we know God? (verses 13-16) There is much fear in our world today, and many who try to make sure we are afraid. What does the author of 1 John say about love and fear? (verses 17-18) Fear is often at the root of hatred or prejudice. What does the writer of 1 John say about this? (verses 20-21) How do we love those who are different from us?

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

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Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia! Alleluia!

***GOSPEL**

John 15:1-8

On the night of his arrest, Jesus taught his disciples about the relationship they would have with him. Those who abide in his word and love would bear fruit, for apart from him, they could do nothing.

[Jesus said:] 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.”

Reflection

This is the reflection of Jesus on the relationship between us and Jesus, and Jesus and the Father. What is the sign that we are alive in Christ? (verses 2-4) What happens to those branches that do not bear fruit? (verses 2, 4, 6) What is the fruit that we as Christians bear? What is the sign of faith in God and in Jesus? Are there parts of you that you fear or hope will be thrown into the fire? You may want to study Colossians 3:5-17 as you reflect on this.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

Kris Langdon

SERMON

“Emptied for Service”

Rev. Roger Lenander

SONG OF THE DAY

“Pass It On”

It only takes a spark
To get a fire going
And soon all those around
Can warm up in its glowing
That's how it is with God's love
Once you've experienced it
You spread His love to ev'ryone
You want to pass it on

What a wondrous time is spring
When all the trees are budding
The birds begin to sing
The flowers start their blooming
That's how it is with God's love
Once you've experienced it
You want to sing it's fresh like spring
You want to pass it on

I wish for you my friend
This happiness that I've found
You can depend on Him
It matters not where you're bound
I'll shout it from the mountain top
I want my world to know
The Lord of love has come to me
I want to pass it on

***APOSTLES' CREED**

- 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!

***PRAYER SONG**

“Let My Prayer Be a Fragrant Offering”

**Let my prayer be a fragrant offering,
as incense to you arise.**

**Let my prayer be a fragrant offering,
my hands lifted up in praise.**

Prayers of Intercession

Rejoicing in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we pray for the witness of the church, the wholeness of creation, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

For ministries that nurture faith formation. For missionaries and Bible study leaders. For those who are seeking, questioning, or curious. For seminarians, campus ministers, and the newly baptized, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For the beauty and health of the earth. For vineyards and orchards, groves and plains. For rain forests and arctic tundra. For volcanoes and mountains, hills and valleys. For oceans deep and rivers wide, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For spears to be beat into pruning hooks. For harsh words to be reformed into loving speech. For bombs and sniper attacks to cease. For justice and peace in every land, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For homeless youth and rejected children. For isolated grandparents and lonely nursing home residents. For the shamed, the slighted, and the disregarded members of our communities. For all the sick *especially Dorothy, Mary Anna, Kay*, and for those we name before you aloud or silently in our hearts (pause for 10 seconds)., let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For all who live with post-traumatic stress disorder and postpartum depression. For all who struggle with eating disorders and anorexia. For all who suffer in silence and all who suffer alone, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

In thanksgiving for all the mystics and theologians who live eternally with you. For those we mourn and those we would rather forget. For the kingdom on earth to be as it is in heaven, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

We entrust all our prayers to you, gracious God. Receive them by the power of the Holy Spirit and the love of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen!

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

P *The peace of Christ be with you always.*

C **And also with you!**

OFFERTORY SPECIAL MUSIC ***“They Will Know We Are Christians by Our Love”***

Mark Hayes

Praise Team

OFFERTORY RESPONSE** ***“Bind Us Together”

**Bind us together, Lord,
bind us together with cords,
that cannot be broken.**

**Bind us together, Lord,
bind us together, Lord,
bind us together in love.**

***OFFERING PRAYER**

P *Be known to us, O Lord,*

C **in the breaking of the bread, as you were made known to the disciples. Receive these gifts, and the offering of our lives, that we may be your risen body in the world.**

Amen!

***DIALOGUE**

P *The Lord be with you.*

C **And also with you.**

P *Lift up your hearts.*

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

C **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

***PREFACE**

P *It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ,
the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin;
who in dying has destroyed death,
and in rising has brought us to eternal life.*

*And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection,
with earth and sea and all their creatures,
and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:*

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

**Holy, Holy, Holy
Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth
are full of your glory.
Hosanna, hosanna,
hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna,
hosanna in the highest.**

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

P *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 and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the 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 for the remembrance of me.*

*With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's passover from death to life
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:*

C **Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.**

***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!

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P *Now let us feast on Christ, the bread of heaven. Hallelujah!*

***BLESSING**

P *The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.*

G **Amen!**

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P *Life-giving God,*

G **in the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection you send light to conquer darkness, water to give new life, and the bread of heaven to nourish your people. Send us forth as witnesses to Jesus' resurrection that we may show your glory to all the world; through the same Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Amen!**

***BENEDICTION**

P *May God who has brought us from death to life fill you with great joy.*

Almighty God, Father, \mp Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

G **Amen!**

***SENDING SONG**

"The Lord Now Sends Us Forth"

**The Lord now sends us forth
with hands to serve and give,
to make of all the earth
a better place to live. Repeat**

**The angels are not sent
into our world of pain
to do what we were meant
to do in Jesus' name;
that falls to you and me
and all who are made free.
Help us, O Lord, we pray,
to do your will today. Repeat**

***DISMISSAL**

P Alleluia! Christ is risen.

C **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

P You are the body of Christ raised up for the world.
Go in peace. Share the good news.

C **Thanks be to God!**