

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**  
**Holy Communion Sunday**  
**May 2, 2021**  
**WE PREPARE FOR WORSHIP**

**FOR YOUR MEDITATION**

*“Let me learn the lesson. Abiding is to be an act of the will and the whole heart.”*

We enter, never as strangers, but always as guests of God.

If you come as a stranger, please know it is our intention you leave as a friend.

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, we welcome you this morning!

May you experience God's presence, and receive the blessing God has prepared for you.

**THE PRELUDE**

**A WELCOME IN CHRISTIAN LOVE**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**RITUAL OF FRIENDSHIP**

**WE GATHER FOR WORSHIP**

**THE INTROIT**

**THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST & PEACE CANDLES**

**THE CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: Here in this place where God welcomes us,

**People: We learn to include others**

Leader: Here in God's vineyard, with our neighbors in Christ,

**People: We learn to serve with compassion.**

Leader: Here in this place of worship, with the congregation of the faithful,

**People: We learn to love with overflowing hearts.**

Leader: Then let us begin worship

## **HYMN OF PRAISE** - (NCH - black) # 86 “*When Morning Gilds the Skies*”

1. When morning gilds the skies, my heart awaking cries,  
may Jesus Christ be praised! Alike at work and prayer,  
one purpose I declare: may Jesus Christ be praised!
2. New strength comes night or day when from the heart we say,  
may Jesus Christ be praised! Let sin and evil fear,  
when this sweet chant they hear: may Jesus Christ be praised!
3. Discordant human kind, in this your concord find,  
may Jesus Christ be praised! Let all the earth around  
ring joyous with the sound: may Jesus Christ be praised!
4. Be this, while life is mine, my canticle divine,  
may Jesus Christ be praised! Be the eternal song,  
through all the ages long: may Jesus Christ be praised!

## **PRAYER OF PRAISE AND INVOCATION** (unison)(we use “sins”)

*We come, O God, into Your presence with trusting hearts and hopeful souls. In the stillness of this time and place, take from us the strain and stress, and let us rest in Your presence. Then quietly, as we begin to embrace Your spirit, remind each of us that through Jesus Christ we have one who guides and strengthens us, who holds us through every storm of life and who leads us to everlasting life. We pray this in the name of Christ, who taught us to pray:*

## **THE LORD’S PRAYER**

*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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen*

## **\*THE GLORIA PATRI**

*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.*

## WE HEAR GOD'S LIVING WORD

### **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

*(Children are invited to come forward)*

### **OLD TESTAMENT:** Psalm 22: 25-31 - Lay Reader Sue Milici

**25** From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him. **26** The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord. **27** All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him. **28** For dominion belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. **29** To him indeed, shall all who asleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him. **30** Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. **31** and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.

### **NEW TESTAMENT:** John 15:1-8 Lay Reader Sue Milici

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. **2** He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes<sup>[a]</sup> to make it bear more fruit. **3** You are already cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. **4** 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. **5** "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. **6** Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered and, thrown into the fire and burned. **7** If you abide remain in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8** My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

SERMON

*"Abiding Love"*

Rev. MaryAnn Purtill

## THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

## **INVITATION TO THE TABLE**

### **Prayer of confession (*in unison*)**

God, we know ourselves: we are people who graft ourselves to Your spirit, yet we do not always bear the fruits that would serve Your needs. We want to be a healthy and abundant harvest for You, and we long to bear fruits that feed and nourish rather than harm. Prune away the parts that are not healthy and from Your love for us offer us the forgiveness we pray for that we might bring more good news to bear, and more peace to ourselves and our community. Through Jesus Christ our brave savior and gentle redeemer. Amen

## **SILENCE**

### **THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON (*IN UNISON*)**

God hears our prayers, and from the bounty of God's love we graft our forgiveness that our harvest is one of hope and joy. Amen.

### **HYMN OF PREPARATION – NCH # 549 “*Bless God, O My Soul*”**

1-4 Bless God, O my soul! All within me bless God's name!  
5 – Bless God, hosts of heaven, everyone who does God's will!

1. When we suffer, God sends healing: when we sin our God forgives; From the grave our God redeems us, and by grace, we rise to live!

2. With compassion God works justice when oppression shackles truth; Like the phoenix, God restores us to the vigor of our youth.

3. God will not be always chiding, nor forever angry be; God will deal with us in mercy, not according to our sin.

4. As a parent's love is endless, so God's mercy follows us: For the One who framed our being we recall that we have dust!

5. God removes all our transgressions far as east is from the west; For the grace of God is great as heaven stands high above the earth!

## **PRESENTATION OF THE ELEMENTS**

### **BLESSING THE ELEMENTS**

### **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

### **SHARING THE BREAD**

### **SHARING THE CUP**

### **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING** (*in unison*)

Holiest heart, we receive You into our hearts and from Your abiding love we are nourished with abounding grace and so we thank you now, our God, Amen.

### **WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD**

### **THE CHURCH AT PRAYER**

### **PASTORAL PRAYER, SILENT PRAYER**

### **OFFERTORY**

*“We covenant with God through our tithes and offerings”*

### **\*DOXOLOGY**

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

## **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Take our gifts, and compose a song of healing for the broken, of nourishment for the hungry, of hope for those who despair, and peace for those torn by violence. We sing our praises, as we offer our treasures, as well as our hearts, in the name of Jesus. Amen

### **HYMN - (NCH - black) # 454     “*Lord, I want to Be a Christian*”**

In my heart, in my heart, in my heart, in my heart.

1. Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart;  
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.  
Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart.

2. Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart, in my heart:  
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart, in my heart.  
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart, in my heart.

3. Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart, in my heart:  
Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart, in my heart.  
Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart, in my heart.

4. Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart, in my heart:  
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart, in my heart.  
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart, in my heart.

## **SENDING OUT**

### **\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE - NCH # 81     “*God Be With You*”**

God be with you till we meet again; By good counsel guide, uphold you,  
With a shepherd's care enfold you: God be with you until we meet again

## **THE POSTLUDE**

The end of worship, the beginning of service. Go forth and serve God gladly.

\* “We extend our spirits to God”

**We Welcome all who worship** with us this morning. If you are a visitor and have no church home, we hope you find a home here. If you are “passing through,” we offer you God’s blessings as you continue on your journey, and thank you for sharing with us.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY PRAYER REQUESTS PLEASE EMAIL OR CALL  
MICHELE IN ORDER FOR HER TO HAVE THEM ANNOUNCED IN THE  
BULLETIN.**

**WEEKLY PRAYER**

*Creator of the universe,  
You made the world in beauty,  
and restore all things in glory  
through the victory of Jesus Christ.*

*We pray that, wherever Your image is still disfigured  
by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war and greed,  
the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice, love, and peace,  
to the glory of Your name. Amen.*

**LAY READER** – Anyone wishing to share in the leadership of worship by reading the Scripture or bringing a children’s sermon, please sign-up on the appropriate list in the Parish Hall and speak with Dixie Silvestri.

**TRUSTEE OF THE MONTH**

May – Lou Scotti

# NOTES ON THE TEXT

## Psalm 22: 25-31

This psalm is a lament—a literary form expressing sorrow over a loss. It begins with complaint and prayer for relief, and then a shift happens and the character of the psalm changes dramatically to where the psalmist acknowledges relief and expresses joy. This has led some scholars to propose that two psalms were melded into one, but that is a minority opinion.

The last section of this psalm (vv. 27-31) is unusual in that it anticipates a day when “**All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to Yahweh. All the relatives of the nations shall worship before you**” (v. 27). Most Israelites at the time this psalm was written would separate people into two camps: Israel (good) and others (bad).

## John 15:1-8

These verses are an allegory (a work in which the characters represent other things and symbolically express a deeper meaning). There are four actors in this little drama.

- The Father is the vinegrower (v. 1).      • Christ is the vine (v. 5).
- The disciples are branches (v. 5).      • Those not abiding in Christ are useless branches (v. 6).

The Old Testament frequently pictures Israel as a vine or vineyard, but typically these references are negative. God said, “I... planted you a noble vine, wholly a right seed. How then have you turned into the degenerate branches of a foreign vine to me?” (Jeremiah 2:21; see also Isaiah 5:7; Ezekiel 15:6; 19:10, 12). In these Old Testament examples, Israel was the vine and was subject to judgment. In John 15, Jesus is the vine and it is the branches (the disciples or Israel) who are subject to judgment (Borchert, 139).

Vineyards are familiar to Jesus’ disciples. People pass vineyards as they walk from place to place. Some own their own vineyard or work in a vineyard. They are able to discern fruitful branches from those that will drain the vine’s energy. They trim unfruitful branches, all the while feeling good about the surgical purpose of their work. The pruning might seem cruel, but it renews the vine’s vitality. Useless vines drain the plant’s strength. To leave them in place serves no purpose, and reduces the value of the vineyard. The vinegrower cuts away unfruitful branches and, finding them unusable, burns them.

# WEEKLY SCHEDULE

## \*Sunday (2<sup>nd</sup>) **FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

10:00AM Morning Worship with Pastor MaryAnn Purtill

11:15AM Virtual Coffee Hour

11:15AM Deacons Meeting

1:00 PM Walking Group

## \*Monday (3<sup>rd</sup>)

## \*Tuesday (4<sup>th</sup>)

## \*Wednesday (5<sup>th</sup>)

10:00 AM Fair Workshop

7:00 PM Handbell Choir

## \*Thursday (6<sup>th</sup>)

## \*Friday (7<sup>th</sup>)

## \*Saturday (8<sup>th</sup>)

1-3PM Pick up 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday Sustenance Orders

## \*Sunday (8<sup>th</sup>) **SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

10:00AM Morning Worship with Pastor MaryAnn Purtill

11:15AM Deacons Meeting

11:15AM Virtual Coffee Hour

1:00 PM Walking Group

**CHURCH TELEPHONE NUMBER: (860) 228-9306**

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## **AN UPDATE FROM YOUR NEW CHURCH HISTORIAN**

First, I would like to acknowledge Polly Hinckley, who recently retired, for her long tenure as church historian. Polly kept scrapbooks of recent years which are located in the upstairs file. I have begun an inventory and organization of historical materials to facilitate future research and preservation. The file cabinet at the entrance to the lounge is fireproof and is the main repository of materials. (There are still assorted boxes of "stuff" that I still need to cull through.) For the time being, there is a laminated directory of what is in each drawer for reference purposes. If you wish to view materials, please return them to their original place in the file. No historical documents should be removed from the church premises.

FYI, there are 10 bound volumes of Columbia Congregational Church History (1722-1916) in the CT state library. The pastor's file cabinet contains copies of all the church bulletins. In the future, these will be available digitally. We have a complete set of annual reports from 1896-2020. There are copies of all the anniversary books, various books and pamphlets and random years of minutes from various committees and the Council. If you are about to throw away any materials pertinent to church history, please let me know first. Photos are not particularly useful unless they are labeled with names and dates if they are of people. If you need information that I can help you with, please contact me at 860 228-4509