

# FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 2, 2021

Growing in Grace

✠ AS WE GATHER ✠

## ***Jesus Christ Is the True Vine Who Bears Much Fruit in Us***

"God is love," and He has manifested Himself to us by sending "his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9, 16). By the ministry of the Gospel, "he has given us of his Spirit," so that we also believe and confess "that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh." In this way, we "abide in him and he in us," and we "love one another" (1 John 4:2, 7, 13). Such divine love is exemplified in Philip's preaching of "the good news about Jesus" to the Ethiopian eunuch. And when "they came to some water," the eunuch was baptized into the very Gospel that Philip had preached (Acts 8:35–38). That Ethiopian was thereby grafted into "the true vine," Jesus Christ (John 15:1), just as we are. Already we are clean because of the Word that Christ has spoken to us and by the washing of water with His Word. We now abide in Him by faith in His forgiveness. As He abides in us, both body and soul, with His own body and His blood, He "bears much fruit" in us (John 15:3–5).

✠ PREPARATION ✠

## **EASTER ACCLAMATION**

Pastor: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

People: **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

**OPENING HYMN:** [\*Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds\*](#)

## **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.**

### ✠ CONFESSIO AND ABSOLUTIO ✠

Pastor: As penitent people, we ask God for His grace and mercy. Humble yourselves then before God, confess your sins to Him, and implore 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 transgressed 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 grant me the power of Your Holy Spirit that I may amend my sinful life and bear fruit in keeping with true repentance.**

Pastor: God be gracious to you and strengthen your faith.

**People: Amen.**

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.**

### ✠ SERVICE OF THE WORD ✠

**INTROIT** *Psalm 145:1–2, 8, 10, 21; antiphon: John 16:16*

Lector: A little while, and you will see Me no longer;  
and again a little while, and you will see Me.

**People: I will extol You, my God and King,  
and bless Your name forever and ever.**

Lector: Every day I will bless You  
and praise Your name forever and ever.

**People:**     **The LORD is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

Lector:     All Your works shall give thanks to You, O LORD,  
and all Your saints shall bless You!

**People:**     **My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD,  
and let all flesh bless His holy name forever and ever.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Lector:     A little while, and you will see Me no longer;  
and again a little while, and you will see Me.

#### **KYRIE**

Pastor:     Christ, the Lamb of God, who saved us while we were still sinners,

**People:**     **have mercy on us.**

Pastor:     Christ, the Lamb of God, once lifted upon the tree of the cross,

**People:**     **have mercy on us.**

Pastor:     Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

**People:**     **have mercy on us and grant us Your peace. Amen.**

#### **SALUTATION and PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Pastor:     The Lord be with you.

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

Pastor:     Let us pray.

Risen and ascended Lord, You are the vine, and we are the branches. Apart from You there is no life. By Baptism, You have grafted us into Your gracious life. Cause Your Word to abide in us and make us fruitful to the glory of Your Father, 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.)*

<sup>26</sup>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. <sup>27</sup>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 <sup>28</sup>and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. <sup>29</sup>And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." <sup>30</sup>So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" <sup>31</sup>And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. <sup>32</sup>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.

<sup>33</sup>In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth."

<sup>34</sup>And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" <sup>35</sup>Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. <sup>36</sup>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?" <sup>38</sup>And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. <sup>39</sup>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. <sup>40</sup>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.**

**GRADUAL** *adapt. from Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6*

**Christ has risen from the dead.**

**God the Father has crowned Him with glory and honor,  
He has given Him dominion over the works of His hands;  
He has put all things under His feet.**

**EPISTLE** *1 John 4:1–11*

*(An exhortation to lives of Christian love)*

<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. <sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>7</sup>Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>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. <sup>11</sup>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*

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

<sup>1</sup>[Jesus said:] "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it

will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>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:** [\*Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen\*](#)

## **SERMON**

### **APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.**

**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.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life + everlasting. Amen.**

### **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

*After each petition:*

Pastor: ... Lord, in Your mercy:

**People: hear our prayer.**

*At conclusion:*

Pastor: ... through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**People: Amen.**

**LORD'S PRAYER**    *Matthew 6:9–13*

**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.**

**CLOSING PRAYER**

**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.**

**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.**

**CLOSING HYMN:** [\*On What Has Now Been Sown\*](#)