

Sebastopol United Methodist Church
Sunday, May 2, 2021
FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER – COMMUNION

.....
*If you would like to participate in Communion, please have your bread and juice
(or their substitutes) ready before beginning worship*
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Seasonal Theme:

Alive and out of the grave, the Risen Christ is witnessed in the real world.

Theme for the Day:

Easter people take the good news of Jesus's Resurrection into the world, and love others as God loved us.

Call to Worship:

*(please read the **BOLD** text, aloud or silently as you prefer)*

Pastor: In the wilderness, water brings life.

People: **Seek us out, O God, and take us to the water.**

Pastor: In the Word of God, the good news gives light.

People: **Seek us out, O God, and fill us with understanding.**

Pastor: In the bread and the wine, the body of our Savior nourishes everyone.

People: **Seek us O God, and give us yourself.**

Pastor: Here is the water of life, the word that feeds, the food of eternity.

Unison: **Come and praise the vine that gives all goodness. Amen.**

Centering and Prayer of Illumination:

(please read along with me, aloud or silently as you prefer)

Loving God, you have made all things new in Water and Word, feeding your people with love, joy, and peace. Lead us today, and every day, to the font of new beginnings. Teach us to love what you have commanded and to prune what does not nourish your creation. Come, Holy Spirit, that through your Word we may be guided into the love of God for all the world. Amen.

Readings from Scripture: **Acts 8:26-40** **1 John 4:7-21** **John 15:1-8**

Message: **STAY CONNECTED!**

Affirmation of Faith

The Apostles' Creed, Ecumenical Version (UMH 882)

(please read along with Pastor, aloud or silently as you prefer)

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

I believe 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 to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy universal church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer

Sacrament of the Holy Communion

*In peace and love, in gratitude and faith, I invite you to have your bread
(or chips, crackers, etc.) and juice (or water, wine, etc.) ready.
Let us come together to Christ's table.*

*(we read together the texts in **BOLD**)*

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

O God, you are the creator of heaven and earth. You formed us in your image, to love and to be loved. You made a holy covenant with us and sent prophets to teach us your truth. When we turned away and were unfaithful, you kept faith with us.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven,
we join in your praise, saying,

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Taking our form and flesh, Jesus came among us as a servant. He showed us the depth and power of your love. By his suffering, death, and resurrection you delivered us from sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

On the night in which Jesus gave himself up for us, he took bread. He gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said, *“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”*

When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said, *“Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”*

Remembering your gracious acts, we offer ourselves to you in service and praise as we keep the feast that Christ prepares:

[lifting the bread] Bread of Heaven,

[lifting the cup] Cup of Salvation,

[lifting bread and cup] Resurrection and Life.

Great is the mystery of faith:

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

O God, pour out your Holy Spirit among us: in this bread, in this cup, in your people; one in the body, one in the blood, one with Christ, one in mission, one in ministry; in this place, in every place, in this world, and in the world to come. Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, Almighty God, now and forever.

The Lord's Prayer (UMH 885)

(we read together)

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 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.

Receiving the Bread and Cup

Prayer after Receiving

(we read together)

O God, we give you our thanks and praise. You feed us by your grace. You are with us in all our journeys. Give us courage and faith to serve you in all we do. Fill us with the power of your Holy Spirit. Enable us to be faithful and fruitful servants of the gospel and ministry to which you have called us. In Jesus's name we pray. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication:

Generous and Loving God, through our offerings we give your loving Spirit to a world in need of comfort. Make our many gifts one offering for the world, in the name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Benediction and Blessing:

Stay connected, as you have been fed and healed, securely abiding as branches of the true Vine. Tell your story of faith, which is given to you by the One who never lets you go. Seek out those who are filled with sacred questions. Respond with open hearts and open minds, and with boundless love.

Scripture readings begin on the next page.

SCRIPTURE – MAY 2, 2021 – THREE READINGS

first reading – **Acts 8:26-40**

Then 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.

second reading – **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.

third reading – John 15:1-8

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.

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Thank you for joining us in worship today.

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