

"Christ the Vine," Peter Koenig



THE 5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER
A Service of the Word and Holy Communion

May 2, 2021 ✦ 10:00 a.m.

The 5th Sunday of Easter

I am the true vine, and my Abba is the vine grower.

— John 15:1

The Risen Christ shares his life with us in the image of the vine. Christ the vine and we the branches are alive in each other, in the mystery of mutual abiding. As the vine brings food to the branches, Christ feeds us at his table. We are sent out to bear fruit for the life of the world.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit gathers us in unity on the first day, the day of Christ's resurrection

Prelude — “Prelude on SLANE” by Willan

Dr. Patricia Snyder

Welcome

Invocation

One: Cultivating God, 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 our joy, through Jesus Christ, the One we call Most Holy.

Many: **May you help us to bear good fruit through the vine of Jesus Christ.
In Whose name we pray, Amen.**

Acclamation & Greeting

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Many: **Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

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

Many: **And also with you.**

Call to Worship

One: As we gather, may we open our hearts to receive newness of life.

Many: **We come with hope for renewal.**

One: In our time of worship, may we be inspired by God's wisdom.

Many: **We come seeking to learn and to draw closer to God.**

One: Come, let us worship, as the beloved people of God.

Hymn — “Be Thou My Vision”

this bulletin, pg. 8

Prayer of Confession

One: O God, giver of life, we confess the times when we fail to love our neighbors as we

love ourselves.

God, forgive us when we ignore or we fail to see our neighbors in need.

Abiding God, also forgive us when we reject love from others, and shut down completely.

As we confess the times when we did not tend to our own needs, and denied ourselves of your forgiveness and grace.

In our failures, we have refused your invitation to grow closer to you.

Many: In our confession, O God, we pray your abiding love be shown through the ways we love more fully. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

One: O God, hear your beloved community as we repent and pray for your forgiveness.

Give to us your grace and restore to us your love that is forgiven and fearless.

God, we desire for your loving Spirit to renew and strengthen us daily. Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song

Refrain — “Alleluia”

CELTIC ALLELUIA

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Reading — Psalm 22: 25-31

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord. (Ps. 22:27)

Scripture Reading — 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 bear fruit, for apart from him, they can do nothing.

The “Alleluia” refrain (music above) is repeated.

RESPONSE

We begin our lives of responding to the gospel in prayer and offering

Invitation to Offering

One: Today we are invited to become deeply attached, close, and loyal as branches who are connected with Jesus Christ, our vine.

In other words, we are to bear fruit with a spirit of love by helping each other, reaching out to each other, and encouraging each other in our daily faith pilgrimage.

As it is written in the wisdom book of Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, that “Two are better than one, because if they fall, one will lift up the other; but for the one who is alone and falls, there is not another to lift that person up.”

So, let our offering lift up one another in God’s love that abides in times of sadness, loss and grief.

Let our offering lift up one another in God’s love that abides in times of hopelessness, brokenness and failure.

Let our offering be a thanksgiving of God’s love that abides within us times of hopefulness, forgiveness, unity, and peace.

And let us accept God’s invitation to be ever-present in times of deep despair, and in times of great joy.

Now, let us offer ourselves in gratitude and with generosity, as fruits representing the abiding goodness of God.

Dedication

***Many:* Generous God, We offer you the fruits of our time, talents and resources in celebration of all that we have been given.**

Loving God, we give you thanks for all that we have and ask a special blessing on the fruits we have given back to help meet the needs of your beloved community.

May the gifts nourish and strengthen the community to grow spiritually,

emotionally, and physically.
In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Responding with our Gifts

During the offertory music, while reflecting on the gifts we have to offer, those participating via Zoom are welcome to submit prayer petitions—joys and concerns—via the “Chat” feature in Zoom. These petitions will be collected together and transmitted to Pastor Debbie for inclusion during the time for prayers of the people. To protect privacy, surnames will not be used.

OFFERTORY MUSIC — “Jesus Christ the Apple Tree” by Elizabeth Poston *Adult Choir*

The tree of life my soul has seen, laden with fruit and always green:
The trees of nature fruitless be compared with Christ the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel: by faith I know, but ne’er can tell
The glory which I now can see in Jesus Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought, and pleasure dearly I have bought;
I missed of all; but now I see ‘tis found in Christ the apple tree.

I’m weary with my former toil, here I will sit and rest awhile:
Under the shadow I will be of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive, it keeps my dying faith alive;
Which makes my soul in haste to be with Jesus Christ the apple tree.

The Prayers of the People, *ending with The Lord’s Prayer*

Many: 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and glory forever. Amen.

For the Lord’s Prayer, we invite you to use the language most comfortable for you: “Our Father/ Mother/ Creator/ Holy One...”

MEAL

God feeds us with the Presence of Jesus Christ

Communion Hymn — “Bread of Heaven, on Thee We Feed” *this bulletin, pg. 9*

Invitation to the Table

One: This morning, Jesus’ table extends to all of humanity. People of all ages, of all gender identities, of all cultures, of all socio-economic conditions are welcome here.

Many: No one can earn a place at this meal. Come of your own choice.

One: This is the inclusive welcome table of God were all who seek to be at peace with

their neighbor and all who desire a deeper relationship with the universal Christ are worthy and welcome.

Many: Bring your hope and your history.

One: Bring your worries and your doubts. Come as you are!

Words of Institution

We remember now Jesus' last supper with his disciples and friends; those who loved him and those who would betray him. He offered bread in thanksgiving saying, "Take and eat. This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way Jesus offered the cup of blessing saying, "Take and drink. This is the cup of the new covenant which is poured out for you and for all people. Do this in remembrance of me."

By the eating and drinking of these gifts, we participate in the body of Christ and in the new life that Christ gives each of us.

Consecration of Elements

One: At this table, we are one in the Body of Christ. I invite you now to rest your hands lightly, along with me, upon your bread and cup which we now share as sacrament. Let us ask God's blessing upon them and to all in our prayers today.

Many: Breathe your Spirit of life and love, O God, so that this bread may be broken and gathered in love, and this cup poured out to give hope and solace to all.

One: All is ready. These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

Sharing of the Elements:

The bread we share is blessed and broken.

As long as it is open to all, it is holy.

Sharing in God's love and mercy, we will never be hungry.

(Let us take and eat this bread of life together).

The cup we drink is blessed and shared like the overflowing of tears and joy.

Drinking deeply, we will never thirst.

(Let us take and drink the cup of blessing together).

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Many: In thanksgiving for this sustenance of Eastertide and the grace of holy dispersion in virtual worship, we claim the story of Jesus Christ as our own, a path of healing and service, the cross and the ever-present truth of the resurrection.

O Holy One, we come to you with our weariness and hope. Give us the strength of this Communion meal that we may re-turn our tables to service in the world. Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us forth in mission for the world

News from our Life Together

Hymn — “For the Fruit of All Creation”

this bulletin, pg. 10

Benediction

Postlude

Dr. Patricia Snyder

Following the postlude, the Zoom Meeting will remain open for those who wish to connect and chat—a bring-your-own-coffee “coffee hour”! Depending on the number of participants, we may break people into smaller groups using the “breakout room” functionality. We look forward to connecting with you!

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Be Thou My Vision

Capo 1: (D)

(G)

(D/F#)

(A7)

(D)

E \flat A \flat E \flat /GB \flat 7E \flat 

1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
 2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true Word;
 3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise;
 4 High King of Heav - en, my vic - to - ry won,

(A)

(D)

(G)

(A)

B \flat E \flat A \flat B \flat 

naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord;
 thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways;
 may I reach heav - en's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!

(G)

(D)

(F#m7)

(G)

(A)

A \flat E \flat

Gm7

A \flat B \flat 

thou my best thought, by day or by night,
 thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tower;
 thou and thou on - ly, first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,

(Bm)

(D/F#)

(G)

(D)

Cm

E \flat /GA \flat E \flat 

wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
 raise thou me heaven - ward, O Power of my power.
 High King of Heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

Bread of Heaven, on Thee We Feed 496



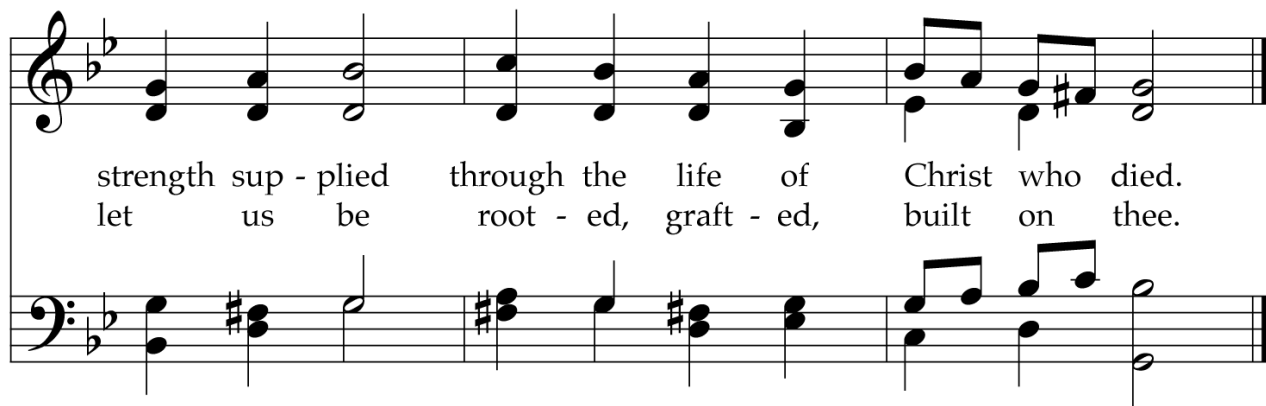
1 Bread of heaven, on thee we feed, for thou art our
2 Vine of heaven, thy love sup-plies this blest cup of



food in - deed. Ev - er may our souls be fed
sac - ri - fice. 'Tis thy wounds our heal - ing give;




with this true and liv - ing Bread, day by day with
to thy cross we look and live. Thou our life! O



strength sup - plied through the life of Christ who died.
let us be root - ed, graft - ed, built on thee.

For the Fruit of All Creation


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1 For the fruit of all cre - a - tion, thanks be to God.
2 In the just re - ward of la - bor, God's will be done.
3 For the har - vests of the Spir - it, thanks be to God.



For the gifts to ev - ery na - tion, thanks be to God.
In the help we give our neigh - bor, God's will be done.
For the good we all in - her - it, thanks be to God.



For the plow - ing, sow - ing, reap - ing, si - lent growth while we are
In our world - wide task of car - ing for the hun - gry and de -
For the won - ders that as - tound us, for the truths that still con -



sleep - ing, fu - ture needs in earth's safe - keep - ing, thanks be to God.
spair - ing, in the har - vests we are shar - ing, God's will be done.
found us, most of all that love has found us, thanks be to God.

Notes and Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements:

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- **Mail:** *You can mail your check or money order to us at the church office*
- **Drop-off:** *You can drop off cash, checks, or money orders at the church office during the week.*
- **Online Bill Pay:** *Most banks and credit unions offer an “online bill pay” in their online account access. All you need to do is set up the church as another payee in that system, and your bank or credit union will print a check and mail it to us at no cost—you don’t even need to find a stamp!*
- **Online or text via ACH debit from a checking or savings account:** *By using our website giving portal (go to www.storrsconchurch.org and click the green “Give now...” button), you can make an auto-debit from your checking or savings account. (Note that we are assessed a small processing fee, 1% of the contribution, plus 35¢ per transaction. You will be given the option—and it is optional—when you make your contribution to add a small amount to offset the 1% processing fee.)*
- **Online or text via Debit Card or Credit Card:** *By using our website giving portal (go to www.storrsconchurch.org and click the green “Give now...” button), you can charge your contribution to a debit card or credit card. (Note that we are assessed a small processing fee, 3% of the contribution, plus 35¢ per transaction. You will be given the option—and it is optional—when you make your contribution to add a small amount to offset the 3% processing fee.) If using a credit card, know that we as a church do not want you to add to any debt load in order for you to contribute, as that’s not good stewardship! If using a credit card, please make sure, for your own sake, that it’s a card for which you pay off the balance each month.*

If you have any questions about how to make a contribution, or about your giving history, feel free to contact our Collector, Donna Latincsics (contact info available through the church office).

We envision our community as a welcoming, historic, and progressive Christian community. *We are an Open and Affirming congregation: Believing that each of us is unique and blessed with special talents from God, each a creation of God's love, alike and yet different, we open our doors and our ministry to all. We accept into full participation in the life of this Church: people of any age, economic status, gender, marital status, race, sexual orientation, and physical, emotional and mental capability. As a community, we will work to put aside all prejudices and to affirm and promote the worth and dignity of each person.*

STORRS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

***We share in God's love by growing in faith,
courageously seeking justice, and generously caring for all people.***

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