



St. Andrew's United Church of Christ

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FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

MOTHER'S DAY

May 10, 2020

10:00 A.M.



Dear Friends in Christ,

The Easter Season continues as we celebrate the hope of Resurrection on this Fifth Sunday of Easter. These past weeks, we have seen the disciples encounter the risen Christ, while they were locked in a room behind doors and along the dusty road to Emmaus. Today, we find the disciples encountering the risen Christ at a morning fish fry, extending an invitation to “come and have breakfast.”

One learns from this pandemic to value our personal connections and how those connections are sometimes taken for granted. I miss shaking hands (or bumping elbows), seeing people chatting in the narthex before worship, hearing the organ play and choir sing, all those tangible forms of connection to Christ, to others and the world. We are connected, and I am learning to appreciate those connections even more.

Again, included in this bulletin are links to YouTube Hymns and the Liturgy for the day. Debbie and I are using our kitchen table, which has become “holy ground” for worship. Perhaps you have found a sacred place in your home for worship, too? Now, let us worship the living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Peace and Prayers

In Christ,

Pastor Bigelow

Silent Prayer for the Beginning of Worship — Great and loving God, your will for us in Jesus is peace, which the world cannot give. As we continue to worship in our homes and apart from one another, calm our troubled hearts and dispel every fear. Keep us in steadfast love and faithful to your word, that we may be your abiding place. In the name of Jesus, we pray, Amen.

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP THE TRIUNE GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

Christ is risen!

He is risen, indeed!

May our lives profess and proclaim that “that our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.” (Psalm 124:8)

Amen!

Thank God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that in his great mercy **we have been born again into a life of hope, through Christ’s rising from the dead!**

Why did God create us?

To praise him forever.

Let us praise the Triune God: Father, Son and Spirit.

SALUTATION

“Grace to you and peace from the One who is and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.”

Alleluia, Amen!

(Revelation 1:4-5)

GATHERING HYMN — [*Alleluia! Alleluia!*](#)

OPENING PRAYER

Living and Faithful God, once again, we gather today to be the church today without being together. As we adjust to our different places and ways of worship, help us now to stay connected with you and one another. Receive our worship that it may be joyful, reverent and holy. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

WE ARE RENEWED BY THE SPIRIT

CALL TO CONFESSION

We know that nothing is able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ. In that freedom and hope, let us confess our sins. Let us pray.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, we confess that in the week that lies behind us, we have been consumed by our troubles, our sorrows and our sins. These and the events of our days have been real to us, have crowded into the center of our lives and occupied so much of our thinking.

(silent reflection)

Lord, give us a new perspective. Make our blessings as real to us as our troubles. Help us to once more count our blessings in the past that have made life worth living, give us the space that helps us to once again re-center and re-frame our lives in your love and grace. In the name of the risen Christ, we pray, Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND FORGIVENESS

The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who can call on him in truth. He fulfills the desire of all who fear him, he also hears their cry and saves them.

(Psalm 145:18,19)

Believe this Gospel, go forth and live in peace.

GOD'S DIRECTION FOR OUR LIVES

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your insight.

In all your ways, acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths.

Do not be wise in your own eyes, fear the Lord and turn away from evil. (Proverbs 3:5-7)

WE HEAR AND LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Old Testament—Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

New Testament — John 21:1-14

Text: verse 12: Jesus said to the, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you"? because they knew it was the Lord.

SERMON – *Come and Have Breakfast* (found on pages 6-8)

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

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

HYMN OF RESPONSE

[*Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain*](#)

WE GO FORTH TO REVEAL JESUS CHRIST IN THE WORLD

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

We thank you God, that we are not left alone in our confusions, fears, sorrows, questions and doubts; for you are with us. We thank you for the life and love that you give us. On this Mother's Day, we are mindful of the gift of family, places of love and nurture. We thank you for the loving influence of our mothers and the sacrifices that they made to shape and mold us into the people we are. We give thanks for all parents, grandparents, teachers, and all who have nurtured us along the way.

We pray too Lord, for those who find this to be a difficult day, for those who found barriers to motherhood, to those who found family to be a place of agony, hurt, neglect and abuse. Uphold them and comfort them as they seek to heal from painful wounds.

Now, as once again, we step into this new week; be near and walk with us while serving as our guide through this maze of uncertainty, reminding us of who we are and to whom we belong. We pray this in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray:

***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. Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory forever. Amen.***

PARTING HYMN [*Spirit Song*](#)

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.

Let the people...say Amen!!!

SERMON – *Come and Have Breakfast*

SCRIPTURE

Old Testament—Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

New Testament — John 21:1-14

Text: verse 12: Jesus said to the, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you”? because they knew it was the Lord.

Some of you have done some camping. One of the joys of that experience is to smell some of the aromas that waft through the campgrounds in the morning. The smell of coffee, bacon and eggs is quite a pleasure. We have a breakfast scene like that here in our scripture passage this morning. Listen to the crackle of the fire going on near the beach with the waves gently lapping on the shore. Smell the smoke, hear the sizzle of the fish frying and delight in the fragrance of just-baked bread.

Here we find Jesus, the resurrected Lord, fussing with fish and cooking breakfast along the shore of the Sea of Tiberias. Why in the world with this man have time to spend with some discouraged anglers and then also do the work of a cook, poking at a charcoal fire with a stick, frying up some fish and baking pita bread?

Generally speaking, the higher a person ascends in power and prestige, the less likely it is that he or she will either have the time or desire to deal with some of life’s more mundane details. The most powerful CEOs don’t have to deal with taking out the office garbage or repairing the broken drinking fountain. The higher one climbs the ladder of success, the less one has to do with the lower, more ordinary chores of life.

Here we find the risen Christ giving fishing tips and serving as the chief cook and bottle washer. “Catch anything”? Jesus shouts to the disciples, “no” they answered; “then cast your nets to the other side of the boat.” After the disciples catch the most fish they ever caught, Jesus invites them to breakfast. “Come and have breakfast,” he says. (verse 10)

Like those two disciples on Emmaus Road, these disciples do not recognize Jesus either. He is a stranger to them. “Who are you?” they wonder. Jesus sits with them on the beach, sharing food; it is a new day, a new world for the disciples. Their eyes are opened and they see Jesus risen before them. Jesus begins again, with these very same disciples who had forsaken, betrayed and denied him; the same ones who did not recognize him and starts speaking with them. There are many lessons that we can learn from the disciples encounter with the Risen Christ along the beach of the Sea of Tiberias. I will lift up two of those lessons for your thinking. Trust me, there are many more in this passage; you will want to add your own learnings, too.

First, it teaches us that if one is to meet the living Christ, it just might not be on Sunday, but the encounter may be on Monday morning while having breakfast. Jesus is Lord of the whole week and all of life. The risen Christ is free and moving and does not intend to be boxed in for one day or one hour during worship. Jesus does not recognize the separation between secular and religious. He is intrusive and comes to you and speaks to you where you are. Pay attention tomorrow when you are at the breakfast table, washing dishes, taking care of the grandchildren, cleaning yet another closet, or on your daily walk, there just may be a sacred moment and encounter. Easter is true and Easter means among other things, that Jesus is loose and looking for you!

Think of how we celebrated Easter Day, this year. We did not have a large congregation gathering, no choir with festive and celebrative music and no Easter lilies with their fragrance filling the sanctuary. Those were all gone. The sanctuary was empty. While we abandoned our sacred gathering place, we did not abandon the gospel. We testified to what the white robed messenger announced at the tomb, "he is not here." Where then, is he? Our passage says that Jesus is out looking for his disciples, the very ones that abandoned him and ready to start over again. And the risen Christ can surely find you on this fifth Sunday in Easter, wherever you have isolated yourself.

Another lesson that we learn in this passage is that we can't go home again. We cannot reverse the course of events and return to a time that we remember with warm nostalgia. Remember the disciples were called away from their vocation of fisherman and then commissioned to fish for people.

But then Jesus was crucified, dead and buried. The disciples' hopes were shattered, their leader, teacher and Savior was gone. So, these disciples went back to that fork in the road, and tried to pick up their former profession as fisherman again. Peter said, "I am going fishing;" and all the disciples said, we are going with you"! But that night they caught nothing. Which is to say, one can't go back to the good o'le days. The 1950s were the heyday of Protestantism when our churches were full and active places. That time period was marked as "a spirituality of dwelling," where people viewed the church as a safe and comfortable place to be nurtured. A quick look at protestant churches will indicate that many of the new additions were made in the late 1950s or early 1960s. Like those early disciples, we cannot go back to that place again.

The trauma and impact of the present moment is going to have a similar influence. It's going to be impossible for us as a culture and church to go back to the way it was before Covid-19 came as an uninvited guest and disrupted our lives. The temptation is to be like those early disciples and say, "let's go fishing"! Let's go back to what we know. Let's be the same church we were before all this pain, suffering and upheaval took place.

God just might be calling the St. Andrew's congregation to something different. Let me confess that I am not sure what that model of church might be. When the congregation called me to ministry here, I didn't come expecting a situation like this, or with a new bag of tricks to change the church, because this old dog was retired and out of new tricks.

In the pain, suffering, change and uncertainty of these strange days, I do believe that God is calling the church to a new Easter normal. Easter resurrection is about new life, new hope, new ways of being. The joy and challenge before us, is to now become aware and ready to rediscover God's new and fresh purposes for his church today. Easter's hope gives me the confidence that just as God raised Jesus from the dead, God can and will do the same for us today. Amen.

Let us pray.

Almighty and ever-loving God, the beginning and the end, of all that is, and all that shall be, give us a fresh vision of your promised glory and renewed sense of your purpose for creation. Refresh our hope for the completion of your good intent for the world, so that we might live today as those who have seen the shape of the future. In Jesus' name. Amen.