



Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 10, 2020

St. Stephen's is a Christian community in the making.

At the intersection of what was and what will be, we invite you to gather with us around prayer, food, and the simple conviction that nothing is wasted in God's economy.

All are welcome at St. Stephen's.

Whether you come with great faith or great doubt,
regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation or marital status,
whatever your financial status or housing situation –
we hope you can find a home with us
as we explore together what it means to follow Jesus.

Ministry Team

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ST. STEPHEN'S

ANGLICAN CHURCH, MAPLE

Preparation

*Whether you participate in worship in a small group or alone,
know that you are joined together with the whole St. Stephen's community
and the wider church as we offer our prayers and praise to God.*

*Consider setting a candle or two out in the space you're using for worship,
as a reminder of God's presence. Light the candles, and say:*

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!

May his grace and peace be with us.

May he fill our hearts with joy.

Almighty God,
to you all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from you no secrets are hidden.
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Glory to God

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect of the Day

Almighty God,
your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.
Give us grace to love one another
and walk in the way of his commandments,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

First Reading

Acts 7:55-60

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame;
deliver me in your righteousness.

Incline your ear to me; make haste to deliver me.

Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,
for you are my crag and my stronghold;

for the sake of your name, lead me and guide me.

Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me,
for you are my tower of strength.

Into your hands I commend my spirit,

for you have redeemed me, O LORD, God of truth.

My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies,
and from those who persecute me.

Let your face shine upon your servant;

save me in your steadfast love.”

Second Reading

1 Peter 2:2-10

Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God’s sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture:

“See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious;
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner,”

and

“A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people;
once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Gospel

John 14:1-14

Jesus said to the disciples: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.”

Reflection – Jeff+

The following reflection can be watched online by clicking here

<https://ststephensmaple.ca/2020/05/08/5th-sunday-of-easter-reflection-from-rev-jeff-potter/>

or it can be read in full below.

Please feel free to engage with either or both options,
and know that whatever you choose
will enable you to fully participate in the worship of our community.

“You know the way to the place where I am going,” Jesus says.

With everything changing, everything deeply unsettled, with the promise of death and defeat hanging in the air, Jesus says “do not let your hearts be troubled.”

Don’t worry. Even though you can’t follow this time, you will later. And you know the way.

I’ve been reflecting lately on the simple things that I miss during these strange days of quarantine. Family, friends, and the ease of ordinary social contact. The simple, liminal space between things – a few precious moments of down time in the car between appointments, the refreshment of a quick bite to eat in a neighbourhood café. Smiling faces not obscured behind masks.

But what I think I miss most of all was the sense of certainty that I had. That we had. That each day would unfold more or less like the one before. That nothing could possibly disrupt our modern, comfortable way of life.

How naive that seems now.

Certainty is appealing. We devote all kinds of time and energy to building up a sense of certainty and security in life. Particularly in religious circles, there’s a temptation to cultivate the kind of faith that bends toward certainty. Do these things, and expect this result. Follow these principles, believe these propositions, worship this way, and all is well. But what happens when our usual structure disappears?

This is where the disciples find themselves in our reading from John’s Gospel. Everything is uncertain, and there’s no simple or clear way forward. Just anxiety. And these strange words of Jesus insisting that everything is ok, even in the face of crushing ambiguity.

I wonder if there’s an important lesson for us in this movement – of Jesus submitting to death, walking a road that we can’t follow, and insisting that we sit tight and trust.

The mystic, theologian and philosopher Meister Eckhart wrote, “let us pray to God that we may be free of God.” St. Augustine writes, “if you comprehend it, it is not God.”

I think that both of them are trying to suggest that there’s something about the death of God that invites us to be willing to let go of our preconceived notions of how things are supposed to work. That the comfortable box that we want to put God in can’t possibly contain him. Or us. Or the world. Things just don’t work that way.

What we’re left with is the abiding, generous, spacious promise that God is bigger than our understanding. Bigger than our fears. Bigger than the meagre houses we would build to contain him. Bigger than any virus. Bigger than death.

Jesus meets us in our uncertainty, but doesn’t offer easy answers – as much as we might want them. Instead, he offers companionship. The promise of relationship that will not end.

For in God’s house, there is room for each of us. And we know the way, because we know Jesus.

In these days of uncertainty, when the answers and habits that previously sustained us seem to fall short, when we’re pushed and stretched and feeling lost – may we know the presence of God and that peace that passes all understanding. May we pray to God to be freed from our notions about God, so that we might discover something new, and beautiful and astounding.

Apostles' Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ,
his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He 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,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again
to judge the living and the dead.

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

Prayers of the People

*As a community of people made one in Christ, we offer our prayers to God for ourselves,
our community, and the world. Feel free to adapt these prayers as you like,
and to make use of the spaces indicated to add your own prayers and petitions.*

In joy and hope let us pray to the source of all life, saying,
“Hear us, Lord of glory!”

That our risen Saviour may fill us with the joy of his holy and life-giving resurrection, let us pray to the Lord.
Hear us, Lord of glory!

That isolated and persecuted churches may find fresh strength in the Easter gospel, let us pray to the Lord.
Hear us, Lord of glory!

That he may grant us humility to be subject to one another in Christian love, let us pray to the Lord.
Hear us, Lord of glory!

That he may provide for those who lack food, work, or shelter, let us pray to the Lord.
Hear us, Lord of glory!

That by his power wars and famine may cease through all the earth, let us pray to the Lord.
Hear us, Lord of glory!

That he may reveal the light of his presence to the sick, the weak, and the dying,
that they may be comforted and strengthened, let us pray to the Lord.
Hear us, Lord of glory!

That he may send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon his people,
that we may bear faithful witness to his resurrection, let us pray to the Lord.
Hear us, Lord of glory!

Let us now name before God those for whom we offer our personal prayers.

*A period of silence is kept as we offer silent prayer
and listen for the leading of the Spirit.*

Let us remember before God our selfish ways, the things we have done wrong,
the sorrows we have caused, the love we have not shown.

Most merciful God, forgive us our sins against you and against each other.

**Strengthen us to overcome our weaknesses,
that we may live in love as you would have us live,
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour.**

Amen.

Lord, you have called us to serve you.

**Grant that we may walk in your presence
and experience the present truth of resurrection:
your love in our hearts, your truth in our minds,
your strength in our wills, until, at the end of our journey,
we know the joy of our homecoming and the welcome of your embrace,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**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, the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Blessing

May joy and nothing less find us on our way.

May we be blessed and be a blessing.

And may light guide us, and countless others, all the way home.

Amen.

The Lord has made a promise to love us faithfully forever.

May we live with joy and be led with Peace. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

MUSIC

Following are several hymns and songs that you may want to sing and/or listen to.
Music and texts, as well as sample YouTube links, are provided.

The Lord's My Shepherd



The Lord's my shep - herd, I'll not want. He
My soul he doth re - store a - gain; and
Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, yet
My ta - ble thou hast fur - nish - èd in
Good - ness and mer - cy all my life shall



makes me down to lie in pas - tures green; he
me to walk doth make with - in the paths of
will I fear no ill; for thou art with me;
pre - sence of my foes; my head thou dost with
sure - ly fol - low me; and in God's house for -



lead - eth me the qui - et wa - ters by.
right - eous - ness, even for his own name's sake.
and thy rod and staff my com - fort still.
oil a - noint, and my cup o - ver - flows.
ev - er - more my dwel - ling place shall be.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHQoRfFr1rE>

Seek Ye First

1 Seek ye first the kingdom of God
2 Ask and it shall be given unto you,
3 We do not live by bread alone,

and God's righteousness,
seek and you shall find;
but by every word

and all these things shall be added unto you.
knock and the door shall be opened unto you.
that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Al - le - lu, al - le - lu - ia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLMQfOp9w8k&list=PLt4VkfzWypFsV6GwbVnM3SyCKh3-G_CcD

For other hymns, check out:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGLVPtOYRgM>



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