

I am
the vine,
you are the
branches

JOHN 15:5



Sunday, April 28, 2024
Fifth Sunday of Easter



48 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY ~ (585) 223-0634 ~ www.blcfairport.org
The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman and The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson, co-Pastors

Sunday, April 28, 2024 ~ *Fifth Sunday of Easter*

PRELUDE

Drone, Barcarole, and Glee on “Royal Oak”
(All Things Bright and Beautiful)

Richard H. Kerr
English folk tune, 17th c.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This Sunday’s image of how the risen Christ shares his life with us is the image of the vine. Christ the vine and we the branches are alive in each other. Baptism makes us a part of Christ’s living and life-giving self and makes us alive with Christ’s life. As the vine brings food to the branches, Christ feeds us at his table. Today we welcome to Christ’s table three young people who have completed communion instruction! We celebrate with them that there is a place for each and every one of us at Christ’s table and that Christ’s sends us out to bear fruit for the life of the world.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jesus is the vine

and we are his branches!

Jesus showed God’s love in many ways:

welcoming children, forgiving sinners, teaching God’s love, helping people who are hungry or poor.

Jesus was friends with people who were hated, made fun of, and treated badly.

Jesus showed his love by sharing food!

Today we say: Welcome to Christ’s table of mercy!

There is a place for all here!

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

GREETING

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

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. O 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 your joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Joyful Canticle

Kevin McChesney
arr. Karen Roth

The Chancel Bells

HEARING GOD'S WORD

DISMISSAL TO WORSHIP FOR KIDS

All kids ages 3 through elementary are welcome to a special time of hearing the Word, conversation and activity! Parents can remain in the sanctuary while the kids gather in the room across the hall from the side entrance to the sanctuary. Kids will return during the offering so they can participate in Communion.

READING: Acts 8:26-40

Led by the Spirit, Philip encounters an Ethiopian official who is returning to his African home after having been to Jerusalem to worship. Philip uses their encounter to proclaim the gospel to him. Upon coming to faith in Jesus, he is baptized by Philip.

²⁶An 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.) ²⁷So 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 ²⁸and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." ³⁰So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹He replied, "How can I,

unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³²Now 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.

³³In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.”

³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” ³⁵Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As 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?” ³⁸He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When 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. ⁴⁰But 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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: 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.

[Jesus said:] ¹“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide 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. ⁵I 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. ⁶Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Cantors: st. 1/*Refrain*All: Repeat st. 1/*Ref.*All: sts. 2/*Ref.* and 3/*Ref.*

May This Church Be like a Tree

Que esta iglesia sea un árbol



1 *Que es-ta i - gle - sia se - a un ár - bol en el*
 1 May this church be like a tree, be - hind your
 2 May this church be like a tree there in the
 3 May this church be like a tree, O God, that



fon - do de tu ca - sa, que ha - ya fies - ta, ya - le -
 house, there in your gar - den, meet - ing - place for joy, and
 street or in the pla - za, for the birds a nest - ing -
 thrives where you have plant - ed; may it stand to show the



grí - a yo - ra - ción ba - jo sus ra - mas.
 feast, and sim - ple prayer be - neath its branch - es.
 branch, for pass - ers - by a wel - come shel - ter.
 way, your way of lov - ing and self - giv - ing,



Con ra - í - ces bien pro - fun - das y sus bra - zos
 With its roots in earth so fer - tile, and its arms raised
 May it stand as if it's watch - ing, near my house, just
 of - f'ring shade, and fruit for shar - ing, giv - ing up its

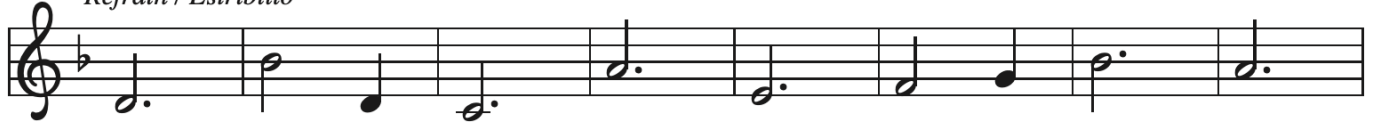


ha - cia_el cie - lo, que es - ta i - gle - sia sea fe -
 high to heav - en, may this church bear fruits of
 round the cor - ner, wait - ing for this wea - ry
 wood for burn - ing. May this liv - ing church that



cun - da dan - do fru - tos de con - sue - lo.
 jus - tice, acts of lov - ing and com - pas - sion.
 pil - grim with its arms wide to em - brace me.
 names you be a tree of life e - ter - nal.

Refrain / Estribillo



Ár - bol plan - ta - do jun - to a las a - guas
 Tree ev - er grow - ing by liv - ing wa - ter,



de vi - da e - ter - na de nues - tro Dios.
 run - ning e - ter - nal, flow - ing from God.



Ár - bol plan - ta - do jun - to a las a - guas
 Tree ev - er grow - ing by liv - ing wa - ter,



de vi - da e - ter - na de nues - tro Dios.
 run - ning e - ter - nal, flow - ing from God.

APOSTLES' CREED

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come 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.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Our prayers are always offered on behalf of the whole community.

Rejoicing that Jesus is risen and love has triumphed over fear, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news.

A brief silence.

#1 We pray for the church around the world, for all ministers, and for the mission of the gospel. Keep all the newly baptized and confirmed in your care. Cleanse our hearts with your word and help us to abide in you always. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

#2 For the well-being of the earth and of all created things: for rivers and lakes, streams and estuaries, melting glaciers and polluted waters. Renew the face of the earth and shower us with your goodness. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

#3 For the nations and all those in authority: for local, state, and national leaders, for elected representatives at every level, and for international organizations, that justice and peace may reign. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, you make all things new. Strengthen and renew the relationships we share with these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: Jeffrey & Kelly, Grace, Madison, Cori & Steve (Hazel), David & Patty (Michael, Nathan). Bring new life and growth to the ministry of our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. Help us to welcome Blakely, Quinn and Haley to your table with joy. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Breathe new life into those struggling in body, mind, or spirit.

We pray for those in need of healing, especially:

- Volker H as he transitions to living at the Presbyterian Home in Rochester
- Art W who is recovering from a recent hospitalization
- Roberta B, sister of CarolynAnn S, who is recovering from surgery

Hear these prayers we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice.

Silence for individual prayer.

God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Into your hands, most merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abiding love; through Jesus Christ, our resurrected and living Lord.
Amen.

SHARING GOD'S MEAL

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Share the peace in a way that cares for friend and neighbor.

If you worship virtually, share the peace through the comments section or text.

OFFERING

Information about supporting Bethlehem's ministry with your offerings is available in the Welcome insert in your pew rack or by visiting blcfairport.org/support-our-ministry.

OFFERING OF MUSIC

You Are the Vine

text, based on John 15
words and music, Joseph M. Martin

The Chancel Choir

OFFERTORY



Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Risen One,
you call us to believe and bear fruit. May the gifts that we offer here be signs of your abiding love. Form us to be your witnesses in the world, through Jesus Christ, our true vine. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

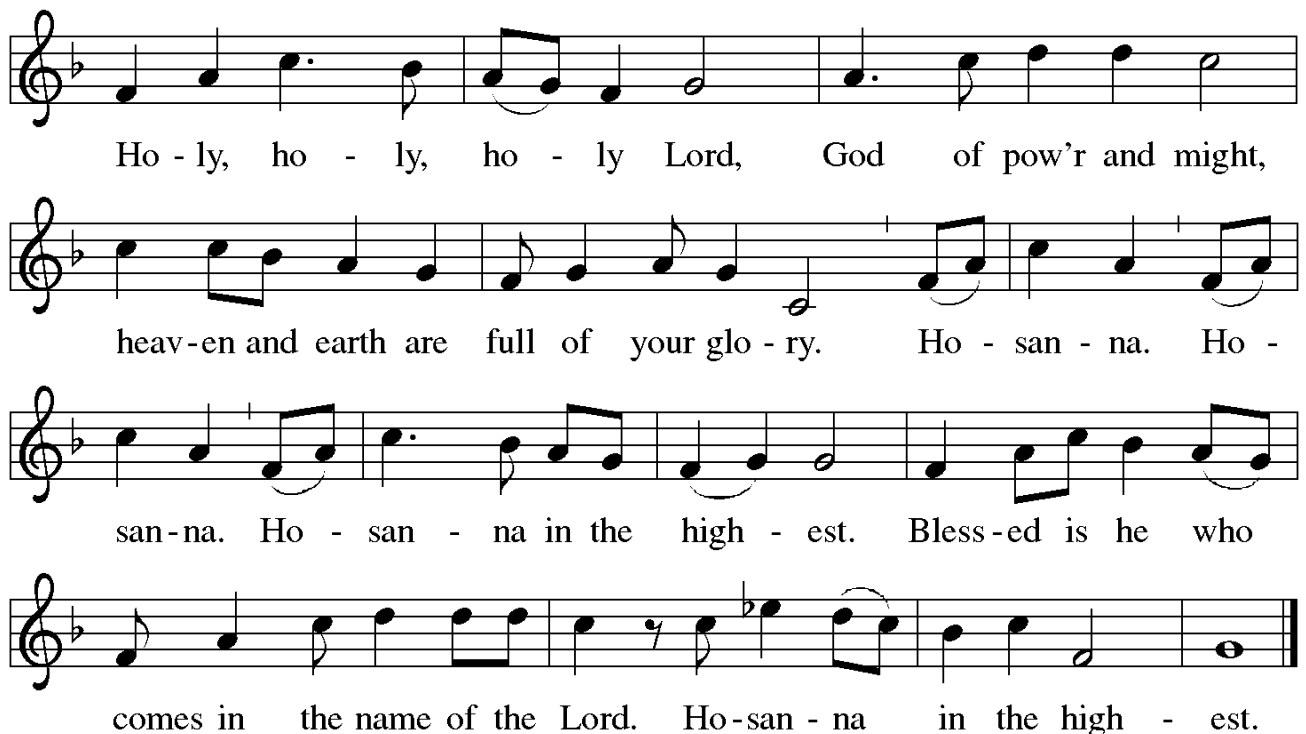
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy . . . we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Today we celebrate with Blakely, Quinn and Haley who join in sharing the meal of Holy Communion.

In this special meal, Jesus is with us—feeding us, loving us, forgiving us, and asking us to do the same for the people around us and around the world. We welcome these friends to Holy Communion:

Welcome to Jesus' table!

We rejoice with you and thank God for you!

Enjoy this meal that strengthens us all to live as Jesus lived.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Joined to Christ, our vine, we pray:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who
sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

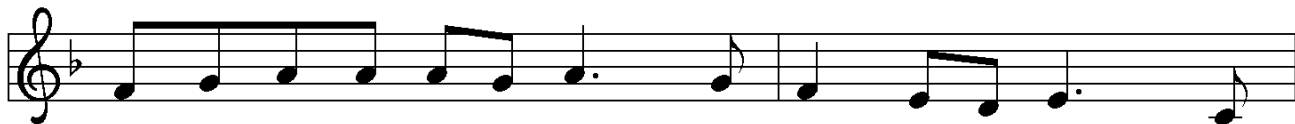
The risen Christ is made known to us in the breaking of the bread. Come and eat.

Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

Our communion bread is gluten-free, unless noted by the pastor. Grape juice is available; indicate your need to the communion assistant. If you worship through the Livestream and wish to receive communion, please reach out to one of the pastors.

THE COMMUNION



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the

world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMNS

O Blessed Spring

ELW 447

Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love

ELW 708

TABLE BLESSING

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE

Thank-ful hearts and voic - es raise; tell ev-'ry-one what God has done.

Let all who seek the Lord re - jice and bear Christ's ho - ly name.

Send us with your prom - is - es and lead your peo - ple forth in joy with

shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

LEAVING TO SERVE

BENEDICTION

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The God of resurrection power, the Christ of unending joy, and the Spirit of Easter hope † bless you now and always.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN	We Know That Christ Is Raised	ELW 449
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DISMISSAL

Alleluia! Go in peace!

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Concerto on “Das is der Tag, den Gott gemacht”

Paul Fey

(This is the day that God made)

source, Geistliche Lieder und Psalmen, 1567

BLC Musicians

Raelynn Clare, Music Director and Organist

Dr. Jim Jefferis, Director of The Chancel Choir

Rich Towsley, Director of The Folk Group and BLC Dulcimers

Additional musical leadership provided by:

Cantors: Sarah Morrissette, Donna Berner, Neil Vokes, Andy Gates

Guitars: Jim Berner, Rich Towsley

Thank you to all those who participated in worship this Sunday! Want to learn more about what roles are needed in worship or sign-up for a pre-scheduled role? Talk with Mark Finke or one of the pastors following worship or contact Mark directly at volunteersupport@blcfairport.org.

Communicate with us: Share more about who you are, request further information, or leave a prayer request or comment through our website - <https://blcfairport.org/share-in-worship/> - scroll down the page to request or share information.

What's happening at BLC this week? Visit the Calendar of Events at www.blcfairport.org. Zoom links for virtual meetings are also found there. If you would like to schedule a meeting or event, please email the church office at office@blcfairport.org or visit <https://blcfairport.org/blc-facility-request/>

Church office hours: Our co-Pastors are available Sunday-Thursday and on-call for emergencies. Contact them directly to schedule an appointment either by calling (585) 223-0634 or emailing pastor.hoffman@blcfairport.org or pastor.amy@blcfairport.org.

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Concerto on "Das is der Tag, den Gott gemacht" © 2023 Paul Fey

Connected for Life

A parent stands at the bus stop on the first day of school with a kindergarten student. Another parent lingers in the doorway of a first-year dorm after unloading the final box from the car. These parents are entering new times they will not be present to help their children make some important life choices, and words of advice slip from their lips—eat your sandwich before your dessert, share with others, don't drink and drive, remember who you are. After years of preparation, their children step toward greater independence.

Jesus lingers with the disciples before his death and prepares them for the time when he will no longer be present day to day to help them make their way in the world. Words slip from his mouth: "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). These are difficult words as the disciples try to make sense of Jesus' impending death and the promise of his continued presence.

"Apart from me you can do nothing" may also be a difficult word for a self-reliant, individualistic culture such as our own, focused on personal achievement and success. God is the vine grower, Jesus the vine, and we the branches, who, separated from the life-giving vine, can do nothing.

Yet, these are gracious, gospel words from Jesus. He's been preparing his disciples for years to take this step. These are words that point not toward individualistic, self-reliant independence but toward dependence on the one whose life defies death and whose perfect love casts out all fear. Connected to the vine, these branches are given a death-defying life free from fear. These are gracious, gospel words from Jesus that point to a community nourished by this life-giving vine and bearing fruit for the sake of the world.