

Living Table United Church of Christ
May 2, 2021 • Fifth Sunday After Easter

"No Matter"

Gathering Song

Refrain: No matter who, no matter what,
no matter where you are on the journey of life:
you're welcome, welcome in this place.

No matter who, no matter what,
no matter where you are on the journey of life:
accepted, welcomed by God's grace.

1. For we are family, meant to be purpose for eternity.
Born in love, from above, God's community.

Refrain

2. and in diversity, unity, harmony for all to see: Justice and equity, God's community.

Refrain

3. Together we will sing, worship bring, hands and hearts outstretched to all.
Jesus praise, hearts ablaze, listen to God's call.

Refrain

4. The God who spoke through Christ, speaks to us; Listen to our Maker's call.
Welcome home, welcome in, welcome one and all.

Gathering Words

One: Praise God!

All: We will worship and praise the Holy One!

One: Children of Jacob, come glorify God!

All: We come in awe of the God of Hosts!

One: All who hunger may enter in.

All: We will eat our fill at the table of God.

One: All who seek God are invited.

All: We sing praises and worship the God of glory!

Gathering Prayer

As we worship you, God of life and love, teach us to love one another with that passion which comes from your overflowing heart. May those around us recognize us as siblings, bound together by your love and no longer divided by our fears. Teach us to serve one another with the compassion that comes from our broken, vulnerable places. May we recognize our siblings in the hungry ones, the homeless ones, and the displaced ones. Teach us to include others with the embracing welcome that comes from your open heart. May we be moved to offer forgiveness to those who hurt us, peace to all filled with hate, and hope to

those burdened by despair. Teach us to understand all we read and hear, God in Community, Holy in One. Amen.

Welcome & Announcements

Acknowledging Our Need for God

One: The seeds of grace, hope, joy, and love are planted deep with us, so they can bear fruit in our lives. Yet, too often we resist staying connected to the Vine, thinking we can flourish on our own. Let us acknowledge how much we need God in order to stay connected, so we can once more feel God abiding deep within us.

All: God of Compassion: called to be one body, we fragment ourselves into a million selfish pieces. Your children of love, we insist on the right to despise our neighbors and siblings. Though your Perfect Love was broken for us, we are afraid to give of ourselves to the world.

Abide in us, Holy One. Forgive us when we stray from your ways so we may live boldly, love fearlessly, and proclaim unceasingly your love for the whole of Creation.

Moment of Silent Reflection

Words of Promise

One: Do you feel it – there, deep down in your hearts? God’s love is alive, beating, breathing – in you!

All: Because God abides in us, we can live for others, allowing God’s love to bear fruit in us. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! Amen.

We Share the Peace

Song of Centering

“Grateful”

Refrain: Grateful for the life you give us, thankful for you, Holy One, joyful in your Spirit flowing over all, O God of Love.

Grateful for the Bread of Heaven, thankful for your Holy Word, joyful in your mercy flowing, we will praise you.

You are more than we imagine, Ancient, Holy, Living God.

Even when we doubt your presence, you are faithful to your Word.

Refrain

May our lives proclaim your justice, may our voices sing your praise.

May our hands work in your service to the glory of your name.

Refrain

Children’s Sermon

Readings

Thom Schulz

It's likely that every day presents an opportunity for you to practice radical hospitality to someone with whom you cross paths. There is no shortage of people who could use the fit of

a caring, welcoming person in their life. How awesome would it be if, in a time of need, the first thing people would say is, "I need a Christian!" If you expect to be that person, you'll be surprised at how often the opportunities come along for you to show love through radical hospitality.

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 God's only Child into the world so that we might live through the One. In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us and sent God's Child 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 God's love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in God and God in us, because God has given us of God's Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Abba has sent the Child as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Child 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 judgement, because as God 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 God first loved us. Those who say, 'I love God', and hate their siblings, are liars; for those who do not love a sibling whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from God is this: those who love God must love their siblings also.

Message

Love Abides, Even Now
Rev. Dr. Rachael Keefe

Song of Reflection

"We Are One in the Spirit"

1. We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord.

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord.

And we pray that all unity will one day be restored.

Refrain: And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,

Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

2. We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand.

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand.

And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land.

Refrain

3. We will work with each other, we will work side by side.
We will work with each other, we will work side by side.
And we'll guard each one's dignity and save each one's pride.

Refrain

Prayers of the People

Pastoral Prayer

Prayer of Jesus

adapted by Richard McCall

Blessed One, our Father, Mother, Parent

Holy is your name.

May your love be enacted in the world.

May your will be done

On earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread

And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

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

For all that we do in your love,
and all that your love brings to birth,
and the fullness of love that will be
are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Offering

Offertory

Presentation of Gifts

"Table of Life"

All who thirst, come to the water. All who hunger, eat without price.

Why spend your wages on what fails to satisfy? Come to the table of life, table of life.

Prayer of Dedication

The Great Thanksgiving

Adapted from Thom Shuman

One: Easter people, come now to the table with Christ!

All: For Christ is risen! Christ lives and invites us to this Feast.

One: Come, eat together the Bread of Life!

All: For Christ is risen, and nothing separates us from God's love.

One: Come, drink together from the Cup of Gladness!

All: For Christ is risen and life is made new! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

One: Let us lift our hearts and voices, in giving thanks to God our maker,

All: and offering God our praise.

One: We are right to praise you, faithful God! (...) We, too, proclaim it and join our voices
with the multitude as we sing:

Song of Praise

You are holy, you are whole.

You are always evermore
than we ever understand.

You are always at hand.

Blessed are you, coming near.

Blessed are you, coming here
to your church in wine and bread,
raised from soil, raised from dead.

You are holy, you are wholeness; you are present. Let the cosmos praise your name!

Sing hosanna in the highest! Sing hosanna! Sing hosanna evermore! (*repeat*)

We Remember

One: Now, O God, with grateful hearts we remember Jesus. We remember that Jesus was laid in a borrowed grave.

All: A heavy stone sealed up the tomb.

One: We remember that the women came, early in the morning, on the third day.

All: The women did not find Jesus among the dead.

One: We remember that Jesus met the disciples on the road.

All: Jesus opened the scriptures, explaining everything; and their hearts burned within them.

One: They invited Jesus to stay with them for it was evening. Jesus went with them. And while they were at table, he took the bread, gave thanks, and broke it for them to share. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized the One in the breaking of the bread.

All: When we eat this bread, we are sharing in the promise of life and love made in Christ.

One: Only a few nights before, Jesus had also offered a cup to the disciples, telling them that it would be a new covenant for all who sought love and forgiveness.

All: When we drink from this cup, we accept God's mercy and make a promise to be merciful to all.

One: Let us pray together:

All: Come, Holy Spirit, come. Bless this bread. Bless also this cup. Bless us as we eat and drink that we may enter the life you desire for us. As we rejoice in the resurrection, give us love for each other and make us servants of peace, until the whole of creation lives in love. Today, we pray in the name of Christ, who lives and invites us to share this simple meal. Amen.

Sharing of the Elements

Prayer of Thanksgiving

All: Holy One, we thank you for the bread of life and the cup of liberation. Thank you for the hope and healing, promise and love that meet us when we gather at your table, a table so much larger than we can imagine. May your love live in us as we seek to find peace, and be peace in a world filled with fear. In gratitude for all that you have provided, we pray. Amen.

Communion Song

“Sanctuary”

God, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true;
with thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you. *(repeat)*

Words of Sending Forth

One: Let us go to follow the Shepherd's example.

All: We will speak up for all people who long for healing and hope.

One: Let us go to be shepherds with our siblings in Christ.

All: We will risk our lives for justice; we will serve the outcast.

One: Let us go to anoint others with the Holy Spirit.

All: We will bring goodness and mercy to all whose lives need restoring.

Song of Sending

“Put on Love”

1. Holy beloved friends of God, may peace be yours this day.
May faith shine bright, may hope fill the night all along your way.

Refrain: Put on love, it binds all things together.

Put on love in perfect unity.

Put on love; wear it for each other; for each other, put on love.

2. Fill your cup with kindness. Let patience overflow
Like a stream of gentle ever-living water everywhere you go.

Refrain

3. Let compassion be your guide. Then walk together side by side
on an earth forgiven, ever forgiving, faithful to the end.

Refrain

Benediction

Contact Us

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