



Trinity United Church of Christ

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Trinity United Church of Christ
May 5, 2024
8AM and 10:30AM Worship
Sixth Sunday after Easter
Communion Sunday

Awakening joyful service guided by our still speaking God!

*If this is your first time with us, or if you have come to this sacred space your entire life, we are glad to be on this journey of faith with you. Trinity believes that **whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!** To enhance your worship experience, we have large print bulletins and hearing support devices available.*

Please ask an usher or greeter for assistance.

Enter to worship today but stick around to see what God is doing in this place!

*Congregational responses in **bold print**. * Denotes standing as you are able.*

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TIME OF SHARING AND GREETING

PRELUDE – “God of Heaven” – *H. Sorenson*

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Unlock your hearts, God wants to come in.

Open your lives, God needs a home.

Swing wide all the doors, God's children need shelter.

Easter rolls the stone and nothing can be shut anymore!

***HYMN #495 “Called as Partners in Christ's Service”**

***PRAYER**

Risen Savior, in love, you came to earth as the Anointed One to set apart, prepare, and send out your faithful.

**In love, this community finds its purpose
in serving those whom you have anointed.**

In love, we carry our anointing into the world so that we might fulfill the call you have placed in each of your lives.

**In the name of the One who has formed,
redeemed, and inspired this community. Amen.**

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of heights, lift us up:

We are crawling in the mire of everyday routine.

God of the heavens, lift us up:

We are overwhelmed with the attention required by the things of this earth.

God of the stars, lift us up:

We cannot see past the clouds of "truth" that some would have us believe.

God of the sun, lift us up:

We are dazzled by the false jewels of society.

God of the moon, lift us up:

We are taxed by others' demands for us to shine for them.

God the universe, lift us up:

We want to stretch and breathe and see and be awe-struck.

God of heights, lift us up.

Amen.

(MOMENT FOR SILENT PRAYER)

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

ANTHEM

"What Wondrous Love"

arr. D. Collins

Senior Choir

TIME FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART

SCRIPTURES

Psalm 98

O sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory.

²The Lord has made known his victory;

he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.

³He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

⁴Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

⁵Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody.

⁶With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.

⁷Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it.

⁸Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy

⁹at the presence of the Lord, for he is coming to judge the earth.

He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.

John 15:9-17

⁹As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. ¹²"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴You

are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹

⁶You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.

¹⁷I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

SERMON

"Loving Service"

HYMN #522 **"I Love to Tell the Story"**

(Remain Seated)

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH #887 *A New Creed*

We are not alone, we live in God's world.

We believe in God:

who has created and is creating,

who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh,

to reconcile and make new,

who works in us and others by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:

to celebrate God's presence, to love and serve others,

to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus,

crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.

**In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.
We are not alone. Thanks be to God.**

***CELEBRATION OF OUR GIFTS**

We are called as witnesses to God's love for us in Jesus Christ,
to the ends of the earth. May our generous gifts praise
God and give radiant testimony to the faith we share.

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE #562 "Take My Gifts" (v1)**

*Take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me.
Gave me light and food and shelter, gave me life and set me free.
Now because your love has touched me, I have love to give away,
Now the bread of love is rising, loaves of love to multiply!*

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**May our offerings leave no doubt that Christ as shown us how to care for God's
creation and children. Empower our ministries with the fullness of Christ that we
may be inclusive in our outreach and effective as teachers and healers. Amen.**

SERVICE OF COMMUNION

(Our table is open and wide! All are invited to commune. We use gluten free bread and grape juice)

(Please come forward as the Usher directs you up the center aisle.

We will form a semi-circle around the Communion Table.

You will be individually served the bread first and then the cup.

*After we commune, the pastor will offer a benediction and you will leave
the chancel area placing your cups in the receptacles provided, then return to your seat.)*

Invitation

Words of Institution

Prayer of Consecration

Sharing of the Elements

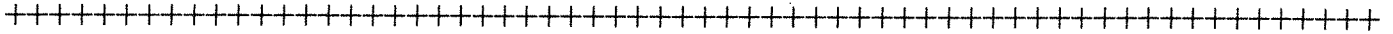
***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**Bountiful God, we give you thanks that you have refreshed
us at your table by granting us the presence of Christ.
Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another,
and send us forth into the world in courage and peace,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

***HYMN #388 “Help Us Accept Each Other”**

***FINAL BLESSING**

***POSTLUDE**



Today’s Worship Elements have been adapted from the following resources:

Led By Love Worship Resources for Year B. Lavon Bayler. United Church Press. Cleveland. 1996.
Before The Amen. Maren and Maria Tirabassi. The Pilgrim Press. Cleveland. 2007.

Prelude: *God of Heaven.* Arranged by Sorenson. ©2009 Hal Leonard Corporation

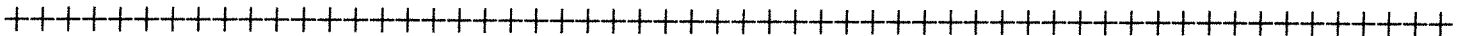
Hymns: *Called as Partners in Christ’s Service.* Text by Jane Parker Huber. ©1981. Used with permission of Westminister/John Knox Press

I Love to Tell the Story. Public Domain

Help Us Accept Each Other. Text Fred Kaan. ©1975 Hope Publishing Company

Response: *Take My Gifts.* Text Shirley Erena Murray, Colin Gibson. ©1992, Hope Publishing Company

Anthem: *What Wondrous Love.* Arranged by Drew Collins. ©2006 Kjos Music Press.



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Today’s Worship Participants

Rev. Dr. Frederick A. Young		Pastor
Jane Malone	8:00am	Serving Elders/ Lay Liturgists
Roberta Weiant	10:30am	
Sara Shank		Organist
John McKay		Senior Choir Director
Mark Luckenbaugh	8:00am	Percussion
Roberta Weiant	8:00am	Ushers
Lucy Greene, Ed Gobrecht	10:30am	
Ann & Buck Harvey	10:30am	Greeters
Buck Harvey	10:30am	Acolyte
Georgia Hollabaugh, Kara Young, Luke Milhimes, Russell Bailey,		Tech Team
Carl Barrick, Suhua Dong, Stacey Rushwald, George Steckert, Garrison Redding, Terry Krietz		

Called as Partners in Christ's Service

495

Jane Parker Huber, 1981

1. Called as part-ners in Christ's ser-vice,
called to min-is-tries of grace,
We re-pond with deep com-mit-ment
fresh new lines of faith to trace.
May we learn the art of shar-ing,
side by side and friend with friend,
E-qual part-ners in our car-ing
to ful-fill God's cho-sen end.

2. Christ's ex-am-ple, Christ's in-spir-ing,
Christ's clear call to work and worth,
Let us fol-low, nev-er fal-tering,
rec-on-cil-ing folk on earth.
Men and wom-en, rich-er, poor-er,
all God's peo-ple, young and old,
Blend-ing hu-man skills to-geth-er
gra-cious gifts from God un-fold.

3. Thus new pat-terns for Christ's mis-sion,
in a small or glob-al sense,
Help us bear each oth-er's bur-dens,
break-ing down each wall or fence.
Words of com-fort, words of vi-sion,
words of chal-lenge, said with care,
Bring new power and strength for ac-tion,
make us col-leagues, free and fair.

DISCIPLESHIP

4. So God grant us for to-mor-row
ways to or-der hu-man life
That sur-round each per-son's sor-row
with a calm that con-quers strife.
Make us part-ners in our liv-ing,
our com-pas-sion to in-crease,
Mes-sen-gers of faith, thus giv-ing
hope and con-fi-dence and peace.

John 15:12–17; Gal. 6:2; Eph. 2:14–22

Katherine Hankey, 1866; alt.

1. I love to tell the sto-ry of un-seen things a-bove.
Of Je-sus' ra-diant glo-ry, of Je-sus' end-less love.
I love to tell the sto-ry, be-cause I know it's true;
it sat-is-fies my long-ings as noth-ing else can do.
I love to tell the sto-ry; and when I am in glo-ry
I'll tell the old, old sto-ry of Je-sus' end-less love.
2. I love to tell the sto-ry; more won-der-ful it seems
than all the gold-en vi-sions of all our gold-en dreams.
I love to tell the sto-ry, I tell it now to you
be-cause I want to share it, be-cause I know it's true.
I love to tell the sto-ry; and when I am in glo-ry
I'll tell the old, old sto-ry of Je-sus' end-less love.
3. I love to tell the sto-ry; it's pleas-ant to re-peat
what seems, each time I tell it, more won-der-ful-ly sweet.
I love to tell the sto-ry, for some have nev-er heard
the mes-sage of sal-va-tion from God's own ho-ly Word.
I love to tell the sto-ry; and when I am in glo-ry
I'll tell the old, old sto-ry of Je-sus' end-less love.
4. I love to tell the sto-ry, for those who know it best
seem hun-ger-ing and thirst-ing to hear it, like the rest.
And when I sing in glo-ry, I know the new, new song
will be the old, old sto-ry that I have loved so long.
I love to tell the sto-ry; and when I am in glo-ry
I'll tell the old, old sto-ry of Je-sus' end-less love.

Fred Kaan, 1974; alt.

1. Help us ac-cept each oth-er as Christ ac-cept-ed us;
teach us as sis-ter, broth-er, each per-son to em-brace.
Be pres-ent, God, a-mong us, and bring us to be-lieve
we are our-selves ac-cept-ed and meant to love and live.
2. Teach us, O God, your les-sons, as in our dai-ly life
we strug-gle to be hu-man and search for hope and faith.
Teach us to care for peo-ple, for all, not just for some,
to love them as we find them, or as they may be-come.
3. Let your ac-cep-tance change us, so that we may be moved
in liv-ing sit-u-a-tions to do the truth in love;
To prac-tice your ac-cep-tance, un-til we know by heart
the ta-ble of for-give-ness and laugh-ter's heal-ing art.
4. God, for to-day's en-coun-ters with all who are in need,
who hun-ger for ac-cep-tance, for righ-teous-ness and bread,
Bring us new eyes for see-ing, new hands for hold-ing on;
re-new us with your Spir-it; God! Free us, make us one!

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John 15:12; 17:20–23; Eph. 4:1–6, 11–16

Trinity United Church of Christ
Gettysburg, PA

6th Sunday of Easter

May 5, 2024



Sermon

John 15:9-17

Rev. Dr. Frederick A. Young
Pastor

Out of Order

Chris was always doing something! The boy could not sit still. In fact, he was so busy at times, he could not be located when meal time came around. Today was no different. Lunch was ready and Chris' mom had no idea where to search for her son. Mrs. Lockard made her way through the house, Chris was nowhere to be found. She even went outside into the backyard only to find it empty. Finally, she opened the basement door to hear a strange shuffling sound coming from the family room.

"Christopher!" She called. No answer.

"Christopher, lunch is ready!" Still no answer... just more shuffling.

Mrs. Lockard went down the staircase and into the family room where she found Chris, who was sitting on the floor surrounded by the many parts of an antique television set. His grandfather gave the TV to the family last year when he purchased a new 60-inch plasma flat screen. This television worked great as a spare for the Lockard family. When Chris' mother saw more of the tv outside of the cabinet than inside, she feared it would never work again.

"Son, what are you doing?" she asked.

"Oh, hi mom!" Chris responded.

"Oh, hi mom! Is that all you can say? Why is the TV all over the floor?" Mrs. Lockard asked, trying to remain calm.

"Well, you see, I was watching an old Yogi Bear cartoon, and was annoyed that the screen wasn't clear enough. So, I pulled the television out from the wall to adjust it, when I noticed something strange."

"Stranger than this mess?" She answered.

"Of course!" Chris replied. *"Anyway, I noticed that the backing to the TV was falling off, so I helped it a little and took it off completely."*

You would be amazed at what an old TV has on the inside!” He told her.

Looking at the floor, she responded, *“I can only imagine!”*

“Anyway... Mom, this old TV is incredible! I mean, look at all of these glass tubes, and connector boxes, and color coded wires, and here is the speaker... I love it!” he continued.

“Your father might not love it when he can’t watch the evening news tonight!” She told Chris.

“Oh, don’t worry mom, I will have this put back together in no time. Dad won’t know a thing.” Chris responded.

“Well, you will have to wait until after we eat lunch. Come on, before your pizza gets too cold.” Mrs. Lockard said going back up the stairs.

“Your special recipe?” asked Chris.

“My special recipe!” She yelled downstairs.

As Chris, Julie and Mrs. Lockard sat around the table eating lunch, Chris made this observation over his pepperoni.

“You know, every piece of this pizza tastes the same, yet when you look at each one individually, they all look different.”

“Yes?” Julie replied.

Chris continued, *“It is kind of like that television downstairs. It looks so different from our newer one in the living room, yet they both get the same channels.”*

“You’re weird!” Julie barked at Chris with a mouth full of pizza.

“Julie!” Mrs. Lockard said. *“Chris that is a great thing to notice. You know what else is different yet the same?”* She asked both of them.

“What?” Chris and Julie asked.

“People!” Mrs. Lockard told them. “We all look different on the outside. Some of us are tall, some short. Some have dark hair, some light. Some have dark skin and some light. Others have physical limitations that cause them to not be able to walk, some of us might not be as happy or outgoing, some might not like large crowds. But inside, we all look the same. God created us equal on the inside, and very creatively on the outside.”

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As a kid, I liked to watch television all day. Chris would spend all day tearing apart their family TV, putting every tube and wire perfectly back in place. While other kids our age used refrigerator boxes as club houses, Chris decided we would build ours from 2x4's and particle board. Eventually, we added a second room complete with a sunken floor, carpet, wallpaper, and furniture. He taught me how to measure twice and cut once. He instructed me on the proper procedures for using power tools. Before we started high school we mastered drills, table saws, and the many uses for a hammer. Most of our childhood was spent between our back yards.

I developed an entire Children's Church Curriculum around our adventures. Many kids at Christ Church grew up hearing about the great friendship between Christopher Lockard and his best friend, Rick.

Never catching on that I was Rick. I share a piece of this friendship with you all as a reminder of how much freedom we are given by our Creator.

In today's Gospel lesson from John, Jesus offers his followers similar freedom, friendship and simplicity, a community of love. Jesus is preparing his disciples, his closest friends, for his time of pain, suffering and death. *"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you!"* What is this command? To love one another as Jesus has loved us. Jesus' death shows his love for his own, as well as revealing God's love for the world. In John's discourse, Christ's self-giving love becomes an example for his friends to follow. We are those friends, too!

When I read about Jesus calling **us** his friends if we abide in love, I think about my friend, Chris. How we spent our lives together, building, repairing, preparing and painting so that others might see our newness of life each time we came together. Melissa Earley, in an article she wrote for the Christian Century Magazine asks:

We often think of leaders as the ones with all the answers, leading from the front of the pack, impervious to need. Here Jesus puts himself in the midst of the disciples. As he faces his torture and death, does he realize his deep need for greater support, friendship and love? Does this one who has fed, healed, and taught others find that he needs to be carried?

This month marks the one-year anniversary of Chris' death after a 13-year struggle with cancer. In his last year our interactions looked a lot like Tuesdays with Morrie. I would go to visit with no agenda and ask, "How is today? Do you feel up to anything?" We ate at our favorite restaurants, cleaned rooms of his house, went through papers or pictures. Toward the end, his typical response was, "*Not today!*" During a visit last May, I asked the same question, but this time he said, "*Well, I would like to put together some shelves for my antique phone collection. I would like to be able to see them together again.*" We made the switch to his portable oxygen tank. I got him into my car, and we went to *Home Depot*, where he drove around the motorized cart and told me what he needed. We spent the rest of the afternoon putting

together four metal shelving units. The activity wore him out, so we waited for the next visit to organize and arrange the unique collection.

The Gospel of John points to why church matters; we are a *community* of believers baptized in grace and love. Just like Jesus and the disciples, we too, need each other in order to continue strengthening our faith. Who do you let into the deepest parts of your soul? Who are the members of your community of love? Who are the privileged allowed to walk with you when you are at your most vulnerable? *These are your people!* These are your friends, who, no matter what, make you feel baptized in grace over and over again.

Jesus calls his disciples, friends and by this proclamation, our friendship with Christ is established. Jesus' friends are those who love one another, who serve one another willingly. Christ never leaves his friends in the dark, but shares everything he knows about life and God with us through his love: like how Chris taught me how to build great things. The shelving units were the last thing we built together, and this project will remain in my heart forever. If you remember anything from

this message, remember this, *Jesus sought our friendship long before we chose him.*

I leave you with these words from Pastor Jan Richardson from the Painted Prayer Book.

Even as he works with such intention and care to make the disciples ready for his absence, Jesus impresses upon them that he is not letting them go, that his physical departure will not bring an end to his relationship with them, his loving of them. Abide in my love, he urges them, echoing and expounding on the imagery of the vine that he has offered in the preceding verses. He twines his words around them, calling them to stay with him, to remain, to persist in their sacred entanglement that will bear fruit for a hungry world.

*In a world where leavings and endings often carry a sense of abandonment, Jesus somehow manages to make an art of departure. He does not turn his face from the pain involved, yet he draws the eyes and ears of his companions to the power and beauty and grace of the connections they have forged: connections that, though changing, will endure. I have called you friends, he says to them. And says to us: offering himself, seeking us, lingering with us still. **Amen.***