

SOJOURNERS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

“A safe place to begin. A safe place to begin again.”

May 2, 2021

In the morning at 10:00am

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Abiding in Love



“We are a community of faith called and empowered by the Holy Spirit to walk in the way of Jesus, by including all peoples in all walks and ways of life, in our life of worship and celebration, nurture and growth, love and service.”

~ Covenant of Sojourners Congregation

Prelude

Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements

Gathering Music

“Sweet, Sweet Spirit”

Steve Brinkley

words and music by African American gospel songwriter Doris Akers, 1962

There's a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place, and I know that it's the Spirit of the Lord.
There are sweet expressions on each face, and I know they feel the presence of the Lord.

Refrain:

Sweet Holy Spirit, sweet heavenly dove,
Stay right here with us, filling us with your love.
And for these blessings, we lift our hearts in praise.
Without a doubt we know that we have been revived
When we shall leave this place.

There are blessings you cannot receive, till you know that Spirit's fullness, and believe.
You're the one to profit when you say, "I am going to stay with Jesus all the way."

Refrain.

Call to Worship

Rev. Patricia Barth

Liturgist: As we gather, may we open our hearts to receive newness of life.

All: *Out loud but muted*

We gather virtually, with hope for renewal.

In our time of worship, may we be inspired by God's wisdom.

We gather seeking to learn and to draw closer to God.

Come, let us worship, as the beloved children of God.

Invocation

Liturgist: Let us pray:

All: *Out loud, but muted*

Cultivating God, we come as your children to grow and learn, and embrace you as our divine gardener. Abide within us and reveal Your grace to us continually. As your branches, come nourish us for continued growth.

Transform our hearts and minds as we hear your Word, sing your praises, and engage in holy dialogue through prayer. Grant that we may bear good fruit through the vine of Jesus Christ. In Whose name we pray, Amen.

Confession

Liturgist: Let us confess our sins before God and this host of witnesses.

All: *Out loud, but muted*

O God, giver of life, we confess we have failed to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Because of our own nearsightedness, we often do not view those who are suffering as our neighbors, at all. Open our eyes that we may see more clearly and respond to all neighbors with deeds of kindness, love and compassion. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Liturgist: Sojourners and friends, our God abounds in grace and mercy. Therefore, your sins are already forgiven.

All: *Out loud, but muted*

Thanks be to God!

Collections Cart

Rev. Patricia Barth

This is the time the children usually collect donations of food for the food bank from the congregation. The Food Bank and other organizations still need your donations, perhaps even more now than previously. It may be easier right now to contribute financially to the [Blue Ridge Area Food Bank](#).

Time with Children

Dell Erwin and Harper Ullrich

Contemporary Reading

Rev. Patricia Barth

Martin Luther King, Jr.

“It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one destiny, affects all indirectly.”

Scripture Lesson: John 15:1–8

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

Liturgist: *This is the Word of God, for the People of God!*

All: *Out loud, but muted*

Thanks be to God.

Special Music

“All Belong Here”

Rev. Karen Mann and Bones

lyrics by Lenora Rand, music by Hannah Rand

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The Sermon/Message

Pastor Marvin L Morgan

HOLY COMMUNION

Pastor: As grain that was scattered on the hillside was gathered and made into one loaf, we too, although scattered at tables in our own homes, are bound together around Christ's table and become one.

As grapes grown in the field are gathered together and pressed into wine, so too are we drawn together and pressed by our times to share a common lot and are transformed into Christ's self-giving love for all.

Pastor: God be with you.

All: *Out loud, but muted*
And with your spirit.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts
We lift them up to God.

Pastor: Give thanks to God, Blessed Trinity
It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Praise to you Divine Creator. Thank you for the gift of life, the beauty of nature, and your steadfast loving kindness.

Praise to you Divine Redeemer. Thank you for sharing our human existence, from birth through death to everlasting life you have shown us a way worth emulating, bringing healing and hope to people most in need around the world.

Praise to you Divine Sustainer. Thank you for the vision to see beyond the immediate, a calm in the midst of storm, the strength to build an ever-expanding community and the courage to bring about any change necessary within our lives. Amen.

The Words of Institution/Remembrance also Breaking and Pouring *The Pastor*

Jesus shared many meals with his friends during his ministry. But in an upstairs room he would have his last meal with his disciples, because one of his friends would betray him. Knowing his time had come, he took bread and after blessing it he gave it to them saying, "Take. Eat. This is my body broken for you." Later after supper he took a cup and after blessing it he gave it to his Disciples saying, "Drink this. This is my blood of the new covenant poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we open our mouths to proclaim together:

[And I invite you to say, after me...]

Pastor: Christ has died. **All: Christ has died.**

Pastor: Christ is risen. **All: Christ is risen.**

Pastor: Christ will come again. **All: Christ will come again.**

Prayer of Consecration

All: *Out loud but muted (MLM)*

Holy God, send your Spirit upon these gifts of grain and grapes that they might be for us the presence of the living Christ and pour out your Spirit upon us so we might be taken, blessed, broken and distributed so others might know the blessings of living in *worldwide communion* with you and one another.

Through Christ, with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, now and forever. Amen.

The Distribution

The Blessing

Pastor: **+May the presence of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit, keep and preserve you to everlasting life.**

Thanksgiving

Pastor: Let us pray.

All: *Out loud, but muted*

We have been fed, Dear God, by your presence and led by your light. May we bask in this glow now and forevermore. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Pastor: Let us accept God's offer to be ever-present in times of deep despair, and in times of great joy. This is our opportunity to offer ourselves in gratitude and with generosity, as fruits representing the abiding goodness of God.
[We urge you to visit [our webpage](#) and click on the "Donate or Pledge Now" tab, to present your gifts.]

Dedication Prayer

All: *Out loud, but muted*

Generous God, we offer you the fruits of our time, talents and resources in celebration of all your blessings upon us. Come, bless the fruits we have presented to help meet the needs of your beloved community. May these gifts nourish and strengthen the community to grow spiritually, emotionally, and physically. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Joys and Concerns

Rev. Karen Mann

It is more important than ever to hold one another in prayer. If you are participating in this service at-home, we invite you to light a candle and remember your fellow Sojourners in prayer. If you are watching live from home, we invite you to leave a comment, on the "Chat" screen, with your joys or concerns, now. Please remember that this is a PUBLIC forum and can be seen by anyone.

Pastoral Prayer by Pastor Morgan

Closing Hymn **“In Christ There is No East or West”** *Steve Brinkley*
words by John Oxenham, 1908; traditional African American melody,
arranged by singer and composer Harry Burleigh, 1939

In Christ there is no East or West, in Christ no South or North,
But one community of love throughout the whole wide earth.

In Christ shall true hearts everywhere their high communion find;
God’s service is the golden cord close-binding humankind.

In Christ is neither Jew nor Greek, and neither slave nor free,
For men and women live in God, and all are kin to me.

In Christ now meet both East and West, in Christ meet South and North,
One joyous, true community throughout the whole wide earth.

Closing Comments by Pastor Morgan

Benediction Let us go forth, from our sheltering in places, thankful that we have
shared in worship, with the Sojourners family. Be renewed in God’s abiding love
and rejoice in the Good News, of Jesus Christ, whose love is without end. Amen.

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