

***The First Church of Christ in Marblehead
Old North Church, United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation***

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

May 2, 2021

Fifth Sunday of Easter

GATHERING

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

In a world rife with hatred, **God's love breaks through.**
In minds distracted by worries and plans, **God's love breaks through.**
In a church scattered by pandemic, **God's love breaks through.**
In our worship, **God's love breaks through,**
so that in our day-to-day lives, **God's love may break through.**
Let us worship the God who is Love.

HYMN

Fruitful Trees, the Spirit's Sowing
Maria vanKalken, *piano*

#236

CENTERING

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

Holy One, you are the vine. We are the branches.
You give us life, love and purpose.
Without your goodness and grace,
our souls are in peril.
Good and gracious God, remain here with us.
Nurture us where we are not growing.
Encourage us to see the sun again.
Remain with us, O God.
Remain in us.
Speak to us.
Love through us.
We pray in the blessed name and spirit
Of Jesus Christ,
Who taught us to pray...

LORD'S PRAYER (debts)

ALL: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us, not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We thank you, good and gracious God, for Jesus Christ the true vine. We know that by grace we have been grafted into him, to be branches on a vine which bears the loveliest of all the fruits of earth. Yet we confess that all is not well with the way we live. We pause now, to consider the ways in which our words and deeds stunt our growth and spoil the fruit of your work in and through us. Hear us as we confess in silence...

Silent prayer

Lord, have mercy on us. Do not lose patience or sever us from the true vine. Heal our infirmities, discipline and train our wandering souls, and prune our fruitless branches. May we remain in Christ and he in us, through all the changing seasons of life. Let us delight in bearing the fruits of love which are our true purpose and joy. For your Name's sake. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Jesus said: "If you reside in me, and my words reside in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done for you." Friends, we have asked for forgiveness and correction. It has been done for us. It is being done for us. And it will be done for us.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

LISTENING

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

1 John 4:7-21

Read by Diane Thomas

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 his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son 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 his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son 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 judgment, because as he 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 he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

GOSPEL LESSON

John 15:1-8

Read by Bonnie MacDonald

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

HYMN

Like the Murmur of the Dove's Song

#230

Holly Cameron, *soprano*; Stephanie Scarcella, *mezzo-soprano*; Maria vanKalken, *piano*

SERMON

“The Wisdom of the Vinegrower”

Rev. Lindsay Popperson

PASTORAL PRAYER

RESPONDING

MISSION MOMENT

HAWC: Healing Abuse, Working for Change

Sara Stanley, Director

OFFERTORY MOMENT

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

DOXOLOGY (#45)

Praise God for love we all may share.
Praise God for beauty everywhere.
Praise God for hope of good to be.
Praise God for truth that makes us free. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Rev. Dr. Dennis Calhoun

INVITATION

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

OFFERING OF THE BREAD

OFFERING OF THE CUP

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

SENDING

HYMN

Son of God, Eternal Savior
Maria vanKalken, *organ*

S 2 (verses 1,3, &4)

BENEDICTION

Rev. Lindsay Popperson