



An inclusive and welcoming Christian community where expressing the love of God to all people is central to our worship, study, and service.  
“Love one another as I have loved you.” John 15:12

**Fifth Sunday of Easter**

**11 a.m., May 2, 2021**

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**Prelude**

*The Mercy Tree*

arr. Mary McDonald

Arranged for Clarinet, Piano, and Keyboard by Russell Gross

**Words of Welcome**

Michael Catlett

**Call to Worship (Psalm 22:25–31)**

Holly Hollman

Here in this great gathering for worship  
I have discovered this praise-life.

And I'll do what I promised right here  
in front of the God-worshippers.

Down-and-outers sit at God's table  
and eat their fill.

Everyone on the hunt for God  
is here, praising him.

“Live it up, from head to toe.  
Don't ever quit!”

From the four corners of the earth  
people are coming to their senses,  
are running back to God.

Long-lost families  
are falling on their faces before him.

God has taken charge;  
from now on he has the last word.

All the power-mongers are before him  
—worshiping!

All the poor and powerless, too  
—worshiping!

Along with those who never got it together  
—worshiping!

Our children and their children  
will get in on this

As the word is passed along  
from parent to child.

Babies not yet conceived  
will hear the good news—  
that God does what he says.

**Let us worship God!**

**Morning Prayer**

Holly Hollman

**Hymn No. 450**

*God, the Spirit, Guide and Guardian †*

HYFRYDOL

God the Spirit, guide and guardian, wind sped flame and hovering dove,  
breath of life and voice of prophets, sign of blessing, power of love:  
give to those who lead your people fresh anointing of your grace;  
send them forth as bold apostles to your church in every place.

Christ our Savior, sovereign, shepherd, word made flesh, love crucified,  
teacher, healer, suffering servant, friend of sinners, foe of pride:  
in your tending may all pastors learn and live a shepherd's care;  
grant them courage and compassion shown through word and deed and prayer.

Great Creator, life bestower, truth beyond all thought's recall,  
fount of wisdom, womb of mercy, giving and forgiving all:  
as you know our strength and weakness, so may those the church exalts  
oversee its life steadfastly yet not overlook its faults.

Triune God, mysterious being, undivided and diverse  
deeper than our minds can fathom, greater than our creeds rehearse:  
help us in our varied callings your full image to proclaim,  
that our ministries uniting may give glory to your name.

## Lesson from the Epistles

1 John 4:7–21

Holly Hollman

My beloved friends, let us continue to love each other since love comes from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and experiences a relationship with God. The person who refuses to love doesn't know the first thing about God, because God *is* love—so you can't know him if you don't love. This is how God showed his love for us: God sent his only Son into the world so we might live through him. This is the kind of love we are talking about—not that we once upon a time loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to clear away our sins and the damage they've done to our relationship with God.

My dear, dear friends, if God loved us like this, we certainly ought to love each other. No one has seen God, ever. But if we love one another, God dwells deeply within us, and his love becomes complete in us—perfect love!

This is how we know we're living steadily and deeply in him, and he in us: He's given us life from his life, from his very own Spirit. Also, we've seen for ourselves and continue to state openly that the Father sent his Son as Savior of the world. Everyone who confesses that Jesus is God's Son participates continuously in an intimate relationship with God. We know it so well, we've embraced it heart and soul, this love that comes from God.

God is love. When we take up permanent residence in a life of love, we live in God and God lives in us. This way, love has the run of the house, becomes at home and mature in us, so that we're free of worry on Judgment Day—our standing in the world is identical with Christ's. There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life—fear of death, fear of judgment—is one not yet fully formed in love.

We, though, are going to love—love and be loved. First we were loved, now we love. He loved us first.

If anyone boasts, "I love God," and goes right on hating his brother or sister, thinking nothing of it, he is a liar. If he won't love the person he can see, how can he love the God he can't see? The command we have from Christ is blunt: Loving God includes loving people. You've got to love both.

## Quiet Time

### Prayers of the People & Lord's Prayer

Michael Catlett

*Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

### Special Music

*I Love You Lord*

Laura Klein, arr. Lloyd Larson

Phil Carpenter, Vocal; Russell Gross, Piano

**Lesson from the Gospels**

John 15:1–8

Michael Catlett

“I am the Real Vine and my Father is the Farmer. He cuts off every branch of me that doesn’t bear grapes. And every branch that is grape-bearing he prunes back so it will bear even more. You are already pruned back by the message I have spoken.

“Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can’t bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can’t bear fruit unless you are joined with me.

“I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you’re joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can’t produce a thing. Anyone who separates from me is deadwood, gathered up and thrown on the bonfire. But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon. This is how my Father shows who he is—when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples.

This is the Gospel of Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon***Explaining Away Contradictions*

Michael Catlett

**Communion**

Michael Catlett

We will celebrate communion together, remembering we are connected even though we are apart. Bring your own elements to worship and remember that you are Beloved.

**Musical Meditation***More Love to Thee, O Christ*

Anthony Giamanco

Arranged for Clarinet, Piano, and Keyboard by Russell Gross

**Invitation to Give**

Holly Hollman

**Hymn No. 86***Great Is Thy Faithfulness* †

FAITHFULNESS

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father, there is no shadow of turning with thee;  
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not; as thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

**[Refrain] Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!**

**Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
all I have needed thy hand hath provided—  
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!**

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest, sun, moon and stars in their courses above,  
join with all nature in manifold witness to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

**[Refrain]**

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, blessings all mine, with then thousand beside!

**[Refrain]**

**Benediction**

Michael Catlett

## Postlude

*The Church's One Foundation*

arr. Jason W. Krug

Adapted for Piano and Keyboard by Russell Gross.

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## Pave the Way! Anniversary Gift Donations

It's time, after nearly 30 years, to resurface and repair our parking lot! Can you help us "Pave the Way" by giving to the Anniversary Gift fund? You can give by:

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- Give through your Ravensworth Realm profile, or use this link to give directly: <https://onrealm.org/RavensworthBaptist/give/anniversary>; or
- Text RBCGIVE ANNIV to 73256 to give online via text messaging.



Giving on the Go

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