

May 9, 2021

Sixth Sunday of Easter



William H. Johnson, Three Friends, 1945

We are filled with joy at your presence and hope you experience God's Spirit as you worship and meet with those around you. If you would like more information about RPC, please talk with any Session member or the Pastor.

ORDER FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

Bold Letters -- Indicate congregational response

GATHERING

Prelude

Welcome

Call to Worship

There is no greater love than this:

To lay down one's life for one's friends.

God calls us to proclaim the good news.

Let us open our hearts to hear God's word.

Gathering Hymn

Day of Arising

#252

**1 Day of arising,
Christ on the roadway,
unknown companion walks with his own.
When they invite him,
as fades the first day,
and bread is broken,
Christ is made known.**

**2 When we are walking,
doubtful and dreading,
blinded by sadness,
slowness of heart,
yet Christ walks with us,
ever awaiting
our invitation:
Stay, do not part.**

**3 Lo, I am with you,
Jesus has spoken.
This is Christ's promise,
this is Christ's sign:
when the church gathers,
when bread is broken,
there Christ is with us,
in bread and wine.**

**4 Christ, our companion,
hope for the journey,
bread of compassion,
open our eyes.
Grant us your vision,
set all hearts burning
that all creation
with you may rise.**

Opening Prayer

O God,
you have prepared for those who love you
joys beyond understanding.
Pour into our hearts such love for you,
that, loving you above all else,
we may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.

Amen.

Call to Confession

The Spirit of God helps us in our weakness, interceding with sighs too deep for words. Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sin.

Prayer of Confession

**Almighty God,
in raising Jesus from the grave,
you shattered the power of sin and death.
We confess that we remain captive to doubt and fear,
bound by the ways that lead to death.
We overlook the poor and the hungry,
and pass by those who mourn;
we are deaf to the cries of the oppressed,
and indifferent to calls for peace;
we despise the weak,
and abuse the earth you made.**

**Forgive us, God of mercy.
Help us to trust your power
to change our lives and make us new,
that we may know the joy of life abundant
given in Jesus Christ, the risen Lord.**

Silence is Kept for personal confession

Assurance of Pardon

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints.
**In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!
Amen.**

Response in Praise

Halle, Halle, Hallelujah

#591

Refrain:

Halle, halle, hallelujah!

Halle, halle, hallelujah!

Halle, halle, hallelujah!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

THE WORD

A Time with the Children

Psalm 98

Lay Leader: Phil Ruxton

- ¹ O sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done marvelous things.
His right hand and his holy arm
have gained him victory.
- ² The LORD has made known his victory;
he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.
- ³ He 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.
- ⁴ Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises.
- ⁵ Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre,

with the lyre and the sound of melody.
⁶ With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD.
⁷ Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who live in it.
⁸ Let the floods clap their hands;
let the hills sing together for joy
⁹ at 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.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel

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. ¹⁶You 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."

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Friendship

Unity Hymn

'Tis the Gift to be Simple

**1 'Tis the gift to be simple
'Tis the gift to be free
'Tis the gift to come down
Where we ought to be
And when we find ourselves
In the place just right**

'Twill be in the valley
Of love and delight
When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend
We shall not be ashamed
To turn, turn
Will be our delight
'Till by turning, turning
We come round right

Together, We Confess Our Faith

The Apostle's Creed (Traditional)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.
Amen.

RESPONDING

Invitation to Present Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

Doxology *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*

#606

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Eternal God,
we praise you that your glory has dawned on us,
and brought us into this Day of Resurrection.
We rejoice that the grave could not hold your Son,
and that he has conquered death,
risen to rule over all powers of this earth.
We praise you that he summons us into new life,
to follow him with joy and gladness.
By your Spirit,
lift us from doubt and despair,
and set our feet in Christ's holy way,

that our lives may be signs of his life,
and all we have may show forth his love.
Praise, glory, and thanksgiving to you,
our God, forever and ever.

Amen.

Prayers of the People

Lord's Prayer

**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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not
into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the
power and the glory, forever.**

Amen.

SENDING

Opportunities for Service and Fellowship

Sending Hymn

Joyful is the Dark

#230

**1 Joyful is the dark,
holy, hidden God,
rolling cloud of night beyond all naming:
majesty in darkness,
energy of love,
Word-in-flesh, the mystery proclaiming.**

**2 Joyful is the dark
Spirit of the deep,
winging wildly o'er the world's creation,
silken sheen of midnight
plumage black and bright,
swooping with the beauty of a raven.**

**3 Joyful is the dark,
shadowed stable floor;
angels flicker, God on earth confessing,
as with exultation,
Mary, giving birth,
hails the infant cry of need and blessing.**

**4 Joyful is the dark
coolness of the tomb,
waiting for the wonder of the morning;
never was that midnight
touched by dread and gloom:
darkness was the cradle of the dawning.**

**5 Joyful is the dark
depth of love divine,
roaring, looming thundercloud of glory,
holy, haunting beauty,
living, loving God.
Hallelujah! Sing and tell the story!**

Blessing and Charge

May the steadfast love of the Lord be yours,
this day and forever. Alleluia!

Christ is risen! Do not be afraid.
Go and tell this good news to all.

Thanks be to God, Amen.

Response Be Still and Know That I Am God

#414

**Be still and know that I am God.
Be still and know that I am God.**

Postlude