

Use the following worship guide as we gather on Sunday morning via Zoom. Simply click here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2398495210>

** Announcements are at the end of this order of worship. **

The Service of Worship
First and St. Stephen's United Church of Christ
Baltimore, Maryland

Fifth Sunday in Eastertide – Year B

May 2, 2021

10:30 a.m.!

*Some portions of Zoom church may be recorded to share brief clips on our webpage.
All personal information or prayer concerns will not be a part of recorded information.*



Prelude for Centering

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Welcome and Opportunities for Ministry

The Rev. Kelly M. Sisson, Pastor

Call to Worship

(congregation reads **bold print**)

from Thom Shuman, PCUSA

Here in this place of worship, with the congregation of the faithful,
we lay down our fears, to boldly sing God's praise.

Here in the vineyard of the Lord, with our sisters and brothers in Christ,
grandparents tell stories of faith to little ones sitting on their laps.

Here where God waits to serve us at the Table:

we shall be so filled with love that we will run to serve others.

Hymn for Praise

Let Your Spirit Come

The Gospel is Read

John 15:1-8

Liturgist

A Story for All Ages

Rev. Sisson

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

Remember these known joys and concerns:

- Cindy McCartin's mother and Brian's grandmother – after surgery in Boston.
- Laura Haas and her wife.
- Jen and Jackie Langdon's father, recovering after an eye stroke.
- Michael and Valerie Thaxter-Grant as Michael recovers from COVID-19
- Those affected by mass shootings.
- Alex Vishio – Theologian at Large studying at SMU.
- Emily Perl's mother in Tiffin, OH
- Len Dufauchard's parents in Colorado.
- Gloria Banks – living with cancer
- Alex Vishio's father – living with cancer
- Barbara Joellenbeck living with cancer
- Stef's brother, Dave, living with Alzheimer's

-!!!!All those living in this time of pandemic – healthcare workers, emergency responders, custodial helpers, grocers, food suppliers, scientists – especially local restaurants, nursing homes, hospitals, those struggling with physical distancing and mask wearing.

Call to Reconciliation

The seeds of grace, hope, joy, and love are planted deep with us, so they can bear fruit in our lives. But we resist staying connected to the Vine, thinking we can flourish on our own. Let us confess our sins, so we can once more feel God abiding deep within us. Please join me as we pray, saying,

Unison Prayer for Forgiveness

Mother of Compassion:

called to be one body,
we fragment ourselves into a million selfish pieces;
your children of love,
we insist on the right to despise our sisters and brothers;
though your Perfect Love was broken for us,
we are afraid to give of ourselves to the world.

Abide in us, Vine Grower.

Forgive us of our sins,
so we may live boldly, love fearlessly,
and proclaim unceasingly that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior.

Silence is kept

Assurance of Pardon

Do you feel it – there, deep down in your hearts? God’s love is alive, beating, breathing – in you! Because God abides in us, we can live for others, allowing God’s love to bear fruit in us. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! Amen.

Hymn for the Arts #746 WLP *God The Sculptor of the Mountains*

Offering Ourselves

Please remember that during this time of physical distancing our mission continues, expenses continue, and staff continues to work. If you would consider making an offering through on-line giving, or mail your check to the church address, you can find all of that information on our church web page: first-ststephens.org

The Scripture Lesson

1 John 4:7-21

Liturgist

The Lesson in Music

Up To The Mountain

Jordan Tibo, Soloist

by Patti Griffin

The Homily

Dancing with Dragons

Rev. Sisson

Hymn for Communion #332 NCH *As We Gather At Your Table*

The Welcoming Table

The Invitation

We believe that the invitation to this table comes not from any church or individual, but from Jesus. We therefore invite in Christ’s name all who hear that invitation and who wish to respond by sharing the bread and the cup.

Breaking of the Bread

Sharing of the Cup

Benediction

Rev. Sisson

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Talk Back! We will have Talk Back today after the service. All are welcomed to stay and join in the conversation.

Have you considered joining the membership of First and St. Stephen's? If you are interested in learning about membership at First and St. Stephen's United Church of Christ, please let the pastor know of your interest. She will contact you. We are still receiving new members during our time of physical isolation.

Help ACTC!! As the emergency need for food continues for people in our city, ACTC has sent out a cry for extra help. Each week we ask you to drop off in a box on the pastor's porch by **Monday at 10 a.m.** or you may deliver them directly to the parking lot of Ascension Lutheran Church between noon and 2p.m. We will receive **canned goods**, this coming week. The drop off address: **535 Brook Rd. Towson.**

Plans for church renewal have been discussed since the Annual Meeting. We have heard from artists and experiences from members of other churches about this proposal. If you have comments, questions or ideas – you can post them or read what others are saying by going to: <http://bit.ly/FSSUCCideas>.

If you want to **speak with the pastor** during social isolation time, her phone number is: 410-832-3974. Or, you can email her at: fssuccpastor@gmail.com Kelly is glad to set up a facetime or zoom appointment with you.

If you would like to receive the worship materials, hymns, etc. for Sunday, please place your email in the chat column of Zoom at the end of the service, or email the pastor at fssuccpastor@gmail.com

As We Gather at Your Table

Matt. 22:1-10; Luke 14:16-24

Carl P. Daw, Jr., 1989

1 As we gath - er at your ta - ble, as we lis - ten to your word,
 2 Turn our wor - ship in - to wit - ness in the sac - ra - ment of life;
 3 Gra - cious Spir - it, help us sum - mon oth - er guests to share that feast

help us know, O God, your pres - ence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.
 send us forth to love and serve you, bring - ing peace where there is strife.
 where tri - um - phant Love will wel - come those who had been last and least.

Nour - ish us with sa - cred sto - ry till we claim it as our own;
 Give us, Christ, your great com - pas - sion to for - give as you for - gave;
 There no more will en - vy bind us nor will pride our peace de - stroy,

teach us through this ho - ly ban - quet how to make Love's vic - tory known.
 may we still be - hold your im - age in the world you died to save.
 as we join with saints and an - gels to re - peat the sound - ing joy.

In this hymn, commissioned by an Episcopal parish in Virginia for the celebration of its tricentennial, Carl P. Daw, Jr., utilized a familiar phrase from Isaac Watts' "Joy to the World," which was the motto for the celebration: "Repeat the sounding joy."

Tune: BEACH SPRING 8.7.8.7.D.
 The Sacred Harp, 1844
 Harm. The New Century Hymnal, 1992