

Fifth Sunday of Easter
April 28, 2024
United Church of Christ - Neillsville
Pastor Julie Ruegsegger

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PRELUDE "Prelude & Fugue' in F" J.S. Bach
Karen Mohr

RINGING OF THE CARILLON

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

EASTER ACCLAMATION 'Jesus the Lord is Risen'

(#69 Taizé: Songs for Prayer)

Jesus, the Lord is risen! Alleluia, alleluia.

Jesus, the Lord is risen today! Alleluia, alleluia.

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We delight ourselves in the presence of Christ and
his love for all creation.

**All: Let us open our hearts to receive Christ's
abundant love.**

One: Christ calls us to see him as the vine and for us to
become the branches.

**All: Let us seek to produce much fruit in God's Garden
where all are welcome.**

One: Come, let us worship the Master Gardener,
Creator of all that was, is and forever will be.

All: This is the God we have come to worship!

HYMN "All Are Welcome"

Text and Tune: Marty Haugen

**1 Let us build a house
where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ
shall end divisions.**

**All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.**

**2 Let us build a house
where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.**

**3 Let us build a house
where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured,
taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim
from floor to rafter.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.**

OPENING PRAYER (All)

Creating God, we are grateful for the hope that you
offer to us and all creation. Prune us so that we may
have a cleansed heart. Help us to grow your garden of
love. Water our despair so it can be transformed into
your hope. Feed our minds so that all may glean from
your wisdom. Nurture our spirits so that we can
become more fruitful in our lives. Give us new life, we
pray. Amen.

EASTER ACCLAMATION 'Jesus the Lord is Risen'

(#69 Taizé: Songs for Prayer)

Jesus, the Lord is risen! Alleluia, alleluia.

Jesus, the Lord is risen today! Alleluia, alleluia.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (All)

Loving God, present and near, You are beyond our words and our understanding. Help us to remember that you are at once infinite, boundless, timeless and eternal but, at the same time intimately entwined with our lives. We are rooted in you. You are with us no matter where we find ourselves. When we have forgotten you, Lord, have mercy. When we have failed to speak words of love, Lord, have mercy. When we have neglected the need of another, Lord, have mercy. Loving God, present and near, help us to recognize your presence and nearness with us as we worship together. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Give voice to God's love and peace; those around us need to hear the Good

ALL: The Peace of God be with you.

All are invited to greet one another with words such as "The peace of Christ be with you, and the response: "And also with you".

EASTER ACCLAMATION *'Jesus the Lord is Risen'*
(#69 Taizé: Songs for Prayer)

Jesus, the Lord is risen! Alleluia, alleluia.

Jesus, the Lord is risen today! Alleluia, alleluia.

CHILDREN'S TIME

ANTHEM *"We Are Not Alone"*

Words and Music by Pepper Choplin

SCRIPTURE READINGS

FIRST LESSON

Acts 8:26-40

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him.

Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his

mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

EPISTLE LESSON

1 John 4:7-21

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

"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.

SERMON "Blooming in the Desert" Pastor Julie

HYMN "I Love to Tell the Story" NCH #522 (verses 1,4)
Katherine Hankey, 1866

**1 I love to tell the story of unseen things above,
Of Jesus' radiant glory, of Jesus' endless love.
I love to tell the story, because I know it's true;
It satisfies my longings as nothing else can do.
I love to tell the story, and when I am in glory
I'll tell the old, old story of Jesus' endless love.**

**4 I love to tell the story; for those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest.
And when I sing in glory, I know the new, new song,
Will be the old, old story, that I have loved so long.
I love to tell the story, and when I am in glory
I'll tell the old, old story of Jesus' endless love.**

MORNING PRAYERS

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

**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 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.
Amen**

THE OFFERING SERVICE

**Invitation to Generosity
Offertory**

Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done:
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen**

Prayer of Dedication

HYMN *O God, In Your Love"*

Tune: ST DENIO 11.11.11.11 Traditional Welsh hymn
("Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise")

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Included in [*Gifts of Love: New Hymns for Today's Worship*](#)
(Geneva Press, 2000), used with permission.

**1 O God, in your love, you have made us unique:
In gifts and traditions, in service we seek,
In race and in culture and family design
Diverse are the branches in Jesus the Vine.**

**2 Lord Jesus, you came to bring God's love on
earth;
You welcomed the outcasts and showed us our
worth.
You reached out to people whom others despised
You said all are precious in God's loving eyes.**

**3 So may your church welcome in loving accord
All people who want to serve Jesus our Lord.
O Spirit, unite us in Jesus the Son
In mission and ministry, God, make us one.**

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

CHORAL RESPONSE: "Go Now in Peace"

Words by Don Besig and Nancy Price, Music by Don Besig

POSTLUDE

JOYS AND CONCERNS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

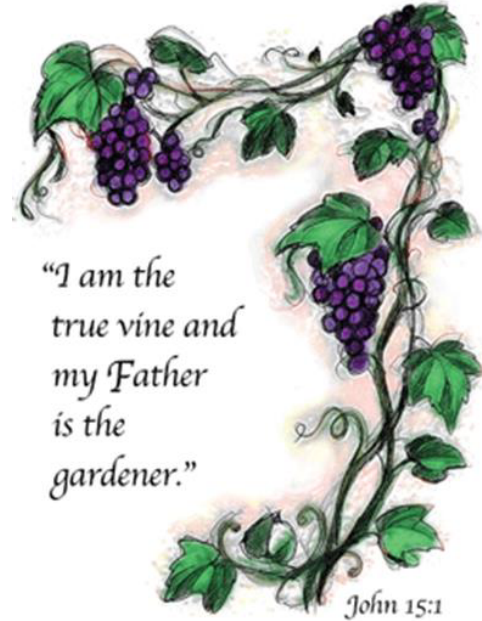
RADIO BROADCAST

11 AM Sunday radio broadcast on WCCN
98.5FM and 1370AM



This week's radio
broadcast

is sponsored by Russ & Susie Karl
in celebration of their
50th Wedding Anniversary



WELCOME

We welcome you to our service of worship!

We are glad that you have joined us in person, through the internet or on the radio.

We pray that you will hear God's call,
seek to follow Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit.

Coffee fellowship after worship -

Sign up on back bulletin board

YouTube link for Sunday, April 28, 2024

https://youtube.com/live/XgDZj_gUmql

Apr 28 – Susie Karl

May 5 – Lydia Schumacher, Karen Northup

May 12 – Mother's Day - Christian Ed

May 19 – Graduation Sunday – Carole Romens

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, April 30th – Worship

- **10 AM** Deacon Host – Barb Shoemaker
Greeter(s) – Nancy & Kirk Rodman
Usher(s) – Russ Karl, Paul Schmidt

Tuesday, April 30th –

- **1 PM – Marge Goetsch Bible Study –**

*will meet in the lounge of church