

**Welcome to Niskayuna Reformed Church**  
**April 28, 2024**  
**Fifth Sunday of Easter**  
**Rev. Dr. Sherri & Rev. Michael Meyer-Veen**

**The Approach to God**

The Lord be with you. **And also, with you.**

Welcome and announcements

Prelude      Meditation on The Gift of Love      English Folk/Martin

Introit

Votum      Joyce Anderson  
Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Amen

Call to Worship (Responsive): Psalm 22:25-31

From you comes my praise in the great congregation,  
my vows I will pay before those who fear the LORD.

**The poor shall eat and be satisfied,  
those who seek God shall praise the LORD.  
May your hearts live forever!**

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD,  
and all the families of the nations shall worship before God.

**For dominion belongs to the LORD,  
and God rules over the nations.**

To the LORD, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down,  
before God shall bow all who go down to the dust,  
and I shall live for the LORD.

**Posterity will serve the LORD,  
future generations will be told about the Lord,  
and proclaim God's deliverance to a people yet unborn,  
saying that the LORD, our God has done it!**

\*Hymn of Worship "Fill Thou My Life, O LORD, My God"

**Lift Up Your Hearts, 356**

\*The Salutation and People's Amen: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Call to Confession:

"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."  
Seeking freedom from fear, and abiding in love,  
let us confess, our sins, struggles, and sorrows,  
to know God, love one another, and be made whole.

**Prayer of Confession (Responsive):**

You asked for my hands,  
that you might use them for your purpose.  
**I gave them for a moment, then withdrew them,  
for the work was hard.**  
You asked for my mouth,  
to speak out against injustice.  
**I gave you a whisper that I might not be accused.**  
You asked for my eyes,  
to see the pain of poverty.  
**I closed them, because I did not want to see.**  
You asked for my life,  
that you might work through me.  
**I gave a small part, that I might not get too involved.**  
Lord, forgive my calculated efforts to serve you—  
**only when it is convenient for me to do so,  
only in those places where it is safe to do so,  
and only with those who make it easy to do so.**  
Vine-grower God, forgive me, and abide with me.  
**Prune what needs to go.  
Plant what needs to stay.  
Produce what gives you glory.  
That your good fruit may be found in me  
and shared with the world. Amen.**

Kyrie Eleison: **Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us; Lord, have mercy upon us.**

Moment of Silent Reflection

Words of Assurance: 1 John 4:9-10

God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent God's only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us and sent God's Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

\*Gloria Patri: ***Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.***

Anthem Let Us Gather in the Shadow of the Cross

Nix

### **The Word of God**

Junior Sermon

Prayer for Illumination

New Testament Reading:

Acts 8:26-40

This is the Word of the Lord. ***Thanks be to God.***

\*Gospel Reading

John 15:1-8

This is the Gospel of the Lord. ***Praise to you, O Christ.***

Sermon "*Living As Easter People: Abiding Fruit*"

Pastor Sherri

A Prayer for Blessing Upon the Word

\*Hymn of Worship “Abide with Me: Fast Falls the Eventide”

**(Verses 1,3,5)  
The Hymnbook, 64**

## **The Response of God's People**

The Offering

Offertory Once Upon a Tree

Choplin

\*The Doxology 544 and Prayer of Consecration

The Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Prayers of the people and The 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 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.**

\*Hymn of Worship “The Servant Song”

**Lift Up Your Hearts, 309**

\*The Benediction

Benediction Response

\*The Postlude Glory to the Lord on High

Decius/Burkhardt

(\* Please stand if you are able.

Prayer of Confession Adapted from: The Worship Sourcebook. CRC Publications, 2004.

Cover Art: “Abiding” by Sue Carroll



## Announcements

You are invited to join us for a special 6-week spring Bible Study on the Epistle of 1 John. Bible study groups will meet on Monday Evenings on Zoom beginning Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup> through June 3<sup>rd</sup>, and in-person in the lounge on Wednesday mornings at 10:00am beginning May 1<sup>st</sup> through June 5<sup>th</sup>. All you need to bring is a favorite Bible if you have one and an open heart to share, listen, and learn from one another and the Holy Spirit! If we do not have your email address and you would like to join the Zoom small group, please be sure to give it to Pastor Mike or Pastor Sherri so we can send you the link.

Junior and Senior High Youth are invited to a Cinco De Mayo Youth Gathering on Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup> from 4pm to 6pm in the fellowship hall. There will be games, tacos, and a conversation together. Hope to see you there!

NRC has begun our 2024 service at the Salvation Army of Schenectady. Lunch dates have been scheduled for **May 14 and June 11**. This is a commitment from about 9:30am until 1:30pm. We will serve monthly from April until November, so if you are unable to join us at the above dates, maybe we will catch you at another time! If you are able to

help us prepare and serve meals to our neighbors, *please call or text Sue Lichtig at (518)421-1734.* Thank you!

City Mission Update: Dinners have moved to take out meals only until further notice. No need for volunteers at this time.

## Scripture

### Acts 8:26-40

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” <sup>27</sup> So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, <sup>28</sup> and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. <sup>29</sup> The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

<sup>30</sup> Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked.

<sup>31</sup> “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

<sup>32</sup> This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,  
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.

<sup>33</sup> In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.  
Who can speak of his descendants?  
For his life was taken from the earth.”

<sup>34</sup> The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” <sup>35</sup> Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

<sup>36</sup> As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being

baptized?” [37] 38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. 40 Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

### **John 15:1-8**

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes<sup>[a]</sup> so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.