

**Astoria First United Methodist Church**  
**May 2, 2021**

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*Fifth Sunday of Easter*

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**ORDER OF WORSHIP**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Mary Frances Gunn**

**CENTERING MUSIC**

*“To God Be the Glory”*  
*(verse 1)*

**Mary Frances Gunn**

**WORDS OF WELCOME**

**Pastor Michael**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

**Loel Bresko**

Come to Christ, the true vine, and bear much fruit. We have come to abide in the vine, and to bear the fruit of salvation. Come to love one another, for love is of God. We have come to the household of love, for God is love. Come to set aside your fears, for perfect love drives out fear. We have come to love one another, as God has loved us. Come! All are welcome here.

**OPENING PRAYER**

**Pastor Michael**

**NT SCRIPTURE READING**

*“Acts 8:26-40”*

**Loel Bresko**

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place. And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with 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 before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.”**

And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” Then Philip opened his mouth and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And he

commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

**SPECIAL MUSIC**

*“Let Us Be Bread”*

**Mary Frances Gunn**

**PSALTER READING**

*“Psalm 22:25-31”*

**Lorel Bresko**

From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will perform before those who fear him. The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him 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 you. For kingship belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations. All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive. Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it

**CALL TO RECONCILIATION**

**Pastor Michael**

**SILENT UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Lorel Bresko**

Source of love and life, your glory knows no bounds. We yearn to set aside our fears, but we are often afraid. We long to love our sisters and brothers, but we often feel alienated from them. We desire to abide in you as you abide in us, but we can't seem to figure out how. Show us once more how to love, for only love can cast out our fear. Show us how to love one another well, for only then can we truly know you. Show how to abide in your vine, for only then can we bear the fruit that glorifies your name. **AMEN**

**MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION**

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE:**

**Lorel Bresko**

When we abide in Christ, we abide in the vine of love and grace. Abide in the vine and receive mercy beyond measure. In the Name of Christ our Lord, we are forgiven. May we forgive one another as you constantly, lovingly, forgive us. **AMEN**

**EPISTLE READING**

*“I John 4:7-21”*

**Lorel Bresko**

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides 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 testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is, so also 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 been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

### **INVITATION TO OFFER OUR BEST GIFTS TO GOD**

**Pastor Michael**

Through our offerings, we are invited to put God first in our lives, to show our gratitude and our commitment. We owe everything to God: our lives, our health, people who love us, meaningful work, and activities. Let us respond in proportion to our gratitude.

### **OFFERTORY PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**Pastor Michael**

### **HYMN OF PREPARATION**      *(versus 1, 2, 3, 4)*

**UMH#384**

*"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"*

### **GOSPEL LESSON**

*"John 15:1-8"*

**Pastor Michael**

### **SERMON**

*"Apart from Me"*

**Pastor Michael**

### **JOYS AND CONCERNS**

### **PASTORAL PRAYER**

**Pastor Michael**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

**Pastor Michael**

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, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. AMEN

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CELEBRATING HOLY COMMUNION

*(Please remember the communion elements of the bread and juice will be provided in a sealed container to be received individually.)*

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**BENEDICTION:**

**Pastor Michael**

**SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**We welcome to our friends from the Warrenton UMC  
as they join us for worship.**

**We still need volunteers for liturgist each week.  
Please call Sue Hicks or Mary Frances Gunn if you wish to help.  
If you want to provide special music – let Mary Frances know.  
We now have recordings of the worship services available as a link.**