



First Central Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

EASTER SEASON THEME: ABIDING LOVE

May 2, 2021

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Prelude

Für Elise

Beethoven

Cynthia Rose Garcia, pianist

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Katie Miller

*Greeting and Passing of the Peace

"The Peace of God be with you."

In Unison: **Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.**

** Let us rise in body or spirit.*

Call to Worship

Jim Ogden, liturgist

God is love and those who abide in love abide in God.

We come with hope for renewal.

May we open our hearts to receive newness of life.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.

We are seeking to draw closer to God.

Today, may we be inspired by God's wisdom.

We love because God first loved us.

Come, let us worship, as the beloved children of God.

*Processional Hymn

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Mal. 3:1; 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:17; Eph. 5:27

Charles Wesley, 1747; alt.

1 Love di-vine, all loves ex-cel-ling, joy of heaven, on earth be found,
 2 Breathe, O breathe your lov-ing Spir-it in-to ev-ery trou-bled breast;
 3 Come, al-might-y to de-liv-er, let us all your life re-ceive;
 4 Fin-ish, then, your new cre-a-tion; pure and spot-less may we prove;

Fix in us a hum-ble dwell-ing, all your faith-ful mer-cies crown;
 Let us all in you in-her-it, let us find your prom-ised rest;
 Sud-den-ly re-turn, and ne-ver, ne-ver-more your tem-ples leave.
 Let us see your great sal-va-tion per-fect-ly re-stored in you;

Je-sus, you are all com-pas-sion; pure, un-bound-ed love im-part.
 Take a-way our love of sin-ning; Al-pha and O-mega be;
 You we would be al-ways bless-ing, love you as your an-gels love,
 Changed from glo-ry in-to glo-ry, till in heaven we take our place,

Vis-it us with your sal-va-tion, en-ter ev-ery trem-bling heart.
 End of faith, as its be-gin-ning, set our hearts at lib-er-ty.
 Pray and praise for your un-fail-ing, wound-ed arms out-stretched a-bove.
 Crowned as saints, we ev-er shall be lost in won-der, love, and praise.

***Invocation**

Cultivating God, we, your children, want to grow and learn. We desire for you to abide within us and us within you. Reveal your grace to us anew every day. Nourish our growth. Transform our hearts and minds. And help us to bear good fruit. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

***Gloria**

Black Hymnal, No. 759

Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three in One; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

Conversation with the Children

Fifty Year Member Recognition

Epistle Lesson

1 John 4:7-21

For the Word of God in scripture,
For the Word of God within us,
For the Word of God among us,
Thanks be to God.

Sermon

God Is Love

Rev. Dr. Scott Jones

Musical Interlude

***Prayer of Confession**

O God, giver of life, we confess the times when we fail to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Forgive us when we ignore or fail to see our neighbors in need. We confess the times when we did not tend to our own needs and denied ourselves the freedom of your forgiveness and grace. In our failures, we have refused your invitation to grow closer to you. In our confession, O God, we pray that your abiding love be revealed in us more fully. Amen.

*** Assurance of Forgiveness**

God hears us, give us grace, and restores us. We are a beloved community, filled with light and life. Let us live boldly, free of fear.

Prayers

Pastoral Prayer

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.

Offertory

El Shaddai

Michael Card

*Hymn of Dedication

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

*Offertory Prayer

Generous God, we offer you the fruits of our time, talents, and resources. We celebrate all that we have been given. May these offerings nourish and strengthen the community to grow spiritually, emotionally, and physically. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Celebration of the Sacrament of Communion

God be with you.

And with your spirit.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Give thanks to God.

It is right and good to give God thanks and praise.

Praise to you Divine Creator. Thank you for the gift of life, the beauty of nature, and your steadfast loving kindness. Praise to you Divine Redeemer. Thank you for sharing our human existence, from birth through death to everlasting life you have shown us a way worth emulating, bringing healing and hope to those most in need. Praise to you Divine Sustainer. Thank you for the vision to see beyond the immediate, a calm in the midst of storm, the strength to build an ever-expanding community and the courage to bring about any change necessary within our lives. Today we join in communion with all the saints in every time and age to sing your glory:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full, full of your glory. Hosanna

in the highest, hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.

Words of Institution and Invitation to the Table

The Bread and the Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving

***Recessional Hymn**

Children of God

Eph. 4:31-5:2

John Greenleaf Whittier, 1848; alt.

1 Chil - dren of God, lift hearts to one an - oth - er;
 2 For God whom Je - sus loved has tru - ly spo - ken:
 3 Fol - low with rev - erent steps the great ex - am - ple
 4 Then shall all shack - les fall; the storm - y clan - gor

where pit - y dwells, the peace of God is there;
 the ho - lier wor - ship which Christ deigns to bless
 of Christ whose ho - ly work was do - ing good;
 of wild war mu - sic o'er the earth shall cease;

To wor - ship right - ly is to love each oth - er,
 Re - stores the lost, and binds the spir - it bro - ken,
 So shall the wide earth seem a ho - ly tem - ple,
 Love shall tread out the bale - ful fire of an - ger,

each smile a hymn, each kind - ly deed a prayer.
 and feeds the wid - ow and the par - ent - less.
 each lov - ing life a psalm of grat - i - tude.
 and in its ash - es plant the tree of peace.

***Benediction**

Benediction Response

Bouma

May you hear laughter in the wind. May you see hope in the light.
May you find courage in your faith. May you know joy in your God.

Postlude

O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

Open & Affirming Statement

In our ongoing quest for hearts that open, minds that understand,
and lives that serve, we welcome into our fellowship, membership, leadership, and employment,
all people, regardless of abilities, race, gender, sexual orientation, or any God-given characteristic.

**First Central Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
165 Years of Hearts that Open, Minds That Understand,
and Lives That Serve.**

Fifty Year+ Members

*Janet Acker 1970

*Pauline Bahnke 1971

*Pam Beranek 1971

Judy Blazek 1953

*Janet Bonet 1971

Margaret Frum 1960

Marjorie Goldsmith 1933

Dave Hamer 1958

Margaret Hole 1955

Lennie Jefferson 1967

Mark Jefferson 1951

Maralee Jensen 1955

Shirley Jensen 1962

Lou Lamberty 1968

Pat Lamberty 1968

Pat Lange 1969

Gary McConnell 1963

Kathy McConnell 1963

Susan O'Donnell 1955

Pete Peterson 1969

Jenny Pfeifer 1968

Sam Pfeifer 1968

Irma Rosberg 1960

Bob Vassell 1952

Tracy Zaiss 1964

**Indicates new additions this year.*

Announcements

May 2, 2021

Prayers: *Tara Obner*, on the recent death of her father, *Robert Oberembt*; *Helen Sawtell*, hospitalized at Methodist; *Kaia Kessler*, Pat Kessler's granddaughter, recently hospitalized; *Tara Obner*, on the recent death of her father, *Robert Oberembt*; *Maryhelen Graul*, *Susan Dolezal* and *Sandy Lee's* mother, hospitalized in Lincoln; *Rev. Ellis Arnold*, Associate Conference Minister, recently hospitalized; *Norma Nelson*, hospitalized at UNMC.

Happy Birthday this week: to *Elizabeth Grams*, *Ingrid Halbkat*, *Rob Lewis*, *Maddie Ferber*, *Alexis Grams*, *Gary Kiel*, *Carolyn Gardner*, *Savannah Kirwan*, and *Ariana Villatoro*.

Thank you: to *Cynthia Rose Garcia* for sharing her musical gifts with us this morning.

Fifty-year Members: recognized during worship.

Activities for the Coming Week, May 3 – May 8

Lectionary Readings: Acts 10:44-48; Psalm 98; 1 John 5:1-6; John 15:9-17.

- Monday:** Staff meeting, 1:30 p.m.
Wednesday: Evergreen Thrift Shop 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom
Vespers, 8 p.m., FaceBook Live
Thursday: Evergreen Thrift Shop 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Friday: Evergreen Thrift Shop 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Saturday: **Super Sale!** 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Sunday, May 9

Worship: 10:30 a.m. on FaceBook Live, YouTube, or in person.

FirstKids: Memorial Hall following the Conversation with the Children. Masks required.

Celebration: of *Rev. Dr. Jim Harmon's* 50+1 anniversary of his ordination!

Want to donate electronically? Please scan the QR code.

