



Welcome to Christ Episcopal Church

in Cape Girardeau, Missouri

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 7th 2023

The Gathering of God's People

Prelude.....Kevin Hampton, Organist

Processional.....#243 When Stephen, full of power and grace

Greeting *Beginning on BCP p. 77*

Presider: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

People: **The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

The Presider continues with one or more of the following

On this day the Lord has acted; we will rejoice and be glad in it. *Psalms 118:24*

Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. *1 Corinthians 15:57*

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. *Colossians 3:1*

Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. *Hebrews 9:24*

You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. *Acts 1:8*

The Invitatory and Psalter *BCP. 80*

All stand

Presider: Lord, open our lips

People: **And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

All: **Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen Alleluia.**

From Easter Day until Ascension

Presider: Alleluia. The Lord is risen indeed:

People: **Come let us adore him. Alleluia.**

Song of Praise.....Rutter Gloria

The Psalm *Psalms 31:1-5, 15-16*

Conserva me, Domine

1 In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame; *
deliver me in your righteousness.

2 Incline your ear to me; *
make haste to deliver me.

- 3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,
for you are my crag and my stronghold; *
for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me.
- 4 Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, *
for you are my tower of strength.
- 5 Into your hands I commend my spirit, *
for you have redeemed me,
O Lord, O God of truth.
- 15 My times are in your hand; *
rescue me from the hand of my enemies,
and from those who persecute me.
- 16 Make your face to shine upon your servant, *
and in your loving-kindness save me.

First Reading

Acts 7:55-60

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Stephen gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Second Reading

1 Peter 2:2-10

Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture:

"See, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious;
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not

believe,

"The stone that the builders rejected
has become the very head of the corner",

and

"A stone that makes them stumble,
and a rock that makes them fall."

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

***People:* Thanks be to God.**

The People stand for the hymn.

The Sequence Hymn.....#487 Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life

The Third Reading

John 14:1-14

Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do

and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it."

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Bob Lowe

Apostle's Creed

BCP p 96

Presider and People together, all standing

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

BCP p 97

The people stand or kneel

Officiant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Officiant: Let us pray.

All: 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,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

The Prayers of the People: Suffrages A

BCP p 97

V. Show us your mercy, O Lord;
R. And grant us your salvation.
V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;
R. Let your people sing with joy.
V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;
R. For only in you can we live in safety.
V. Lord, keep this nation under your care;
R. And guide us in the way of justice and truth.
V. Let your way be known upon earth;
R. Your saving health among all nations.
V. Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
R. Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.
V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;
R. And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

Collect of the Day

Presider. God is with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Presider. Let us pray:

Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life:
Grant us so perfectly to know your Son Jesus Christ to
be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may
steadfastly follow his steps in the way that leads to
eternal life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy
Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Collect for Sunday

BCP p. 98

O God, you make us glad with the weekly remembrance of the
glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Give us this day such
blessing through our worship of you, that the week to come may be
spent in your favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Collect for Renewal of Life

BCP p. 99

O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night

and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness during the day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer for Mission

BCP p. 100

(Choose only one Collect)

Presider: Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Or this

Presider: O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Or the following

Presider: Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you: for the honor of your Name. **Amen.**

Offertory Hymn.....#455 O love of God, how strong and true

The General Thanksgiving

BCP p. 101

Officiant and People

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,

and all the blessings of this life;
 but above all for your immeasurable love
 in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;
 for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
 And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
 that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
 not only with our lips, but in our lives,
 by giving up our selves to your service,
 and by walking before you
 in holiness and righteousness all our days;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord,
 to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
 be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

BCP p. 102

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord
 to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised
 through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered
 together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O
 Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in
 this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life
 everlasting. Amen.

Announcements

Stand for the hymn and dismissal.

Closing Hymn.....#518 Christ is made the sure foundation

Then may be said

Presider: Alleluia, alleluia. Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia.

The Presider may then conclude with one of the following

Presider: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of
 God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us
 evermore. **Amen.** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

Presider: May the God of hope fill us with all the joy and peace
 in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen. *Romans 15:13*

Presider: Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do
 infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to
 him from generation to generation in the Church, and
 in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. **Amen.** *Ephesians*
3:20, 21

Postlude.....Kevin Hampton, Organist

This Service's Servers

<i>Presider</i>	Tyler Helm
<i>Preacher</i>	Bob Lowe
<i>Reader</i>	Kent Miller
<i>Greeter</i>	Sue Balsamo
<i>Altar Guild</i>	Monica Waldon
<i>St. Isidore's Guild</i>	Bob Lowe
<i>Vestry Counter</i>	Julie Wittenborn-Sikorski
<i>Organist</i>	Kevin Hampton

Notes on the Service

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 7:55-60 • Ps 31:1-5, 15-16 • I Pet 2:1-10 • Jn. 14:1-14

Today's collect was composed for the 1549 Prayer Book's Feast of St. Philip & St. James, May 1, which used the same passage from John for its Gospel as does today. The Way to eternal life is a key subject of the readings.

Stephen was the first Christian martyr, that is, the first to have been killed because of his faith. Unlike modern terrorists' misuse of the term, the New Testament martyr does not murder others nor take his own life. Today's reading is the climax of a chapter about Stephen's testimony to a Jerusalem crowd and the crowd's lethal reaction. Notice how Stephen's last words repeat Jesus' last words as quoted in Luke's Gospel, "into thy hand, O Lord....". First appearing here as keeper of the coats of killers, Saul will play a lead in later chapters of Acts, after the risen Christ changes him.

Psalm 31 is a lament composed by someone who was in need of protection from impending menace. It has often been used by those in extremis. "Into thy hand I commend my spirit," v 5, anticipates the dying words of both Jesus and Stephen. In Medieval devotions, words from the psalm were part of the "script" of holy dying. The last words of Francis Xavier were "in thee, O Lord, have I put my trust." (v.1)

I Peter addresses Gentiles who have come to worship Israel's God. Once they had been no people; now they are God's people, according to I Peter's paraphrase of the prophet Hosea. To reach that conclusion about their change of status, the author strings together verses from Isaiah and two psalms arguing that believers are stones of a living temple. "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" is I Peter's restatement of God's words to Moses on Sinai, "You shall be my own possession...a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." This passage has been cited to support the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, i.e., the doctrine that the Church as a corporate entity constitutes the priesthood, not ordained individuals by themselves. This is distinct from the priesthood of every believer, the Protestant doctrine that each single believer is his/her own priest.

As Ascension Day approaches, Gospels are from Jesus' farewell to his disciples before his arrest, but applied to the risen Christ's departure from this earth. Christ assures his followers that he is their way to God, and that whoever has seen him with faith's eyes, has seen God. "In my Father's house are many mansions..." is often read at funerals. Asking "in my name" means asking in agreement with the will of Christ the Cosmic Intercessor.

Rev. Stephen Weissman
Asheville, North Carolina

Thank you for visiting Christ Episcopal Church!

Who are We?

We are a community, forgiven and loved by God, joyfully called to the work of reconciliation.

Known throughout Cape Girardeau as "the Red Door Church" by those we serve, our mission is to share God's love and grace.

When are our Services?

On Sundays, there are Morning Prayer services every Sunday at 8:00 AM.

Services are held 10:30 A.M. – 11:30 A.M. on Sundays and Evening Prayer is from 5:30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M. on Wednesdays.

We are hosting a Bible study group before service at 9:00 A.M. on Sundays as well.

