

# *Spirit of Grace* ELCA UMC



April 28th, 2024  
*Fifth Sunday of Easter*

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Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Easter people, we have been saved by the Risen Christ, the life-giving Vine.

**We abide in Love, the life-giving Vine.**

We are branches of the Vine—sustained, nurtured, and pruned by Love.

**We have no life apart from Love, the life-giving Vine.**

When we make our home in the Vine, and the Vine makes a home in us, we bear the fruit of Love.

**We produce the fruit of Love, the life-giving Vine.**

Easter people, how shall we bear the fruit of Love, the life-giving Vine?

**We will love and learn to love as we rest, play, work, and build community with God and one another. Amen.**

## Thanksgiving for Baptism

Alleluia! Christ is risen.  
**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
the wellspring of grace,  
our Easter and our joy.  
**Amen.**

Look, here is water!  
**Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

Immersed in the promises of baptism,  
let us give thanks for what God has done for us.  
We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning  
your voice thundered over the deep  
and water became the essence of life.  
Adam and Eve beheld Eden's verdant rivers.  
The ark carried your creation through the flood into a new day.  
Miriam led the dancing as your people passed through the sea  
into freedom's land.  
In a desert pool the Ethiopian official  
entered your boundless baptismal life.

Look, here is water!  
**Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

At the river your beloved Son was baptized by John  
and anointed with the Holy Spirit.  
By the baptism of Jesus' death and resurrection  
you opened the floodgates of your reconciling love,  
freeing us to live as Easter people.  
We rejoice with glad hearts,  
giving all honor and praise to you,  
through the risen Christ, our source of living water,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Look, here is water!  
**Here is our water of life! Alleluia!**

Opening Hymn

Let All Things Now Living  
*ELW 881 – verses 1+2*

## Greeting & Prayer of the Day

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray. O God, you give us your Son as the vine apart from whom we cannot live. Nourish our life in his resurrection, that we may bear the fruit of love and know the fullness of your joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## First Reading: Acts 8:26-40

An angel of God spoke to Philip and said, “Be ready to set out at noon along the road that goes to Gaza, the desert road.” So Philip began his journey.

It happened that an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official in charge of the entire treasury of Candace, the ruler of Ethiopia, had come to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage and was returning home. He was sitting in his carriage and reading the prophet Isaiah.

The Spirit said to Philip, “Go up and meet that carriage.”

When Philip ran up, he heard the eunuch reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

“How can I,” the eunuch replied, “unless someone explains it to me?” With that, he invited Philip to get in the carriage with him. This was the passage of scripture being read:

“You are like sheep being led to slaughter,  
you are like a lamb that is mute in front of its shearers:  
like them, you never open your mouth.  
You have been humiliated and have no one to defend you.  
Who will ever talk about your descendants,  
since your life on earth has been cut short?”

The eunuch said to Philip, “Tell me, if you will, about whom the prophet is talking – himself or someone else?”

So Philip proceeded to explain the Good News about Jesus to him.

Further along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look, there is some water right there. Is there anything to keep me from being baptized?”

He ordered the carriage to stop; then Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came out of the water, the Spirit of God snatched Philip away; the eunuch didn’t see him anymore, and went on his way rejoicing.

Philip found himself at Ashdod next, and he went about proclaiming the Good News in all the towns, until he came to Caesarea.

Word of God, Word of Life

**Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 22:25-31

To You, O Beloved, I lift up my voice  
in the great congregation;  
**for You promise to remain with  
those whose love is steadfast.**  
The hungry shall eat and be satisfied;  
**Those who seek You shall sing praises!**  
**your Heart is our dwelling place forever!**

All the ends of the earth shall remember  
and turn to Love's way;  
**And all the families of the nations  
shall bow down with grateful hearts.**  
For power and authority belong to  
the Most High,  
who rules over the nations.

**Yes, the proud of the earth shall be humbled,**  
while those who still live in  
fear and illusions will separate themselves  
not knowing the indwelling Peace of the Beloved.  
**Posterity shall know and serve Love,**  
**telling of the One who abides in all  
to the coming generations,**  
and proclaiming deliverance  
to a people yet unborn  
that the Most High dwells among us.

Gospel Acclamation

Halle, Halle, Hallelujah – ELW 172

Gospel: John 15:1-8

The Holy Gospel according to John the 15th chapter.

[Jesus said to them],  
“I am the true vine,  
and my Abba is the vine grower  
who cuts off every branch in me that doesn’t bear fruit,  
but prunes the fruitful ones  
to increase their yield.  
You’ve been pruned already,  
thanks to the word that I have spoken to you.  
Live on in me,  
as I do in you.  
Just as a branch cannot bear fruit itself  
apart from the vine,  
neither can you bear fruit  
apart from me.  
I am the vine;  
you are the branches.  
Those who live in me and I in them  
will bear abundant fruit,  
for apart from me you can do nothing.  
Those who don’t live in me  
are like withered, rejected branches,  
to be picked up and thrown on the fire and burned.  
If you live on in me,  
and my words live on in you,  
ask whatever you want  
and it will be done for you.  
My Abba will be glorified  
if you bear much fruit  
and thus prove to be my disciples.”

Word of God for the people of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Rev. Miranda Bermes

Hymn of the Day

Joyful Joyful, We Adore Thee  
*UMH 89 – verses 1-4*

Affirmation of Faith: Ionian Creed

*Please stand as you are able as we confess our faith in God together:*

**We believe in God above us,  
maker and sustainer of all life,  
of sun and moon, of water and earth,  
of male and female.  
We believe in God beside us,  
Jesus Christ, the word made flesh,  
born of a woman, servant of the poor,  
tortured and nailed to a tree.  
A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,  
he died alone and forsaken.  
He descended into the earth  
to the place of death.  
On the third day he rose from the tomb.  
He ascended into heaven,  
to be everywhere present throughout all ages,  
and His kingdom will come on earth.  
We believe in God within us,  
the Holy Spirit burning with Pentecostal fire,  
life-giving breath of the Church,  
Spirit of healing and forgiveness,  
source of all resurrection and of eternal life.  
Amen**

Joys & Concerns

*If you have any joys, concerns, or prayer requests to share, please type them into the comment section of the livestream so that we may lift them up together as a community.*

## Prayers of the People

Rejoicing that Jesus is risen and love has triumphed over fear, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news.

*A brief silence.*

We pray for the church around the world, for all ministers, and for the mission of the gospel. Keep all the newly baptized and confirmed in your care. Cleanse our hearts with your word and help us to abide in you always.

God of grace,

**Receive our prayer.**

For the well-being of the earth and of all created things: for rivers and lakes, streams and estuaries, melting glaciers and polluted waters. We pray for the great Columbia river, and all of the rivers and streams that feed into it from the great mountain Wy'east. Renew the face of the earth and shower us with your goodness.

God of grace,

**Receive our prayer.**

For the nations and all those in authority: for local, state, and national leaders, for elected representatives at every level, and for international organizations, that justice and peace may reign. We pray especially this day for those enduring genocide in Palestine, and for the workers for peace and justice who put their lives at risk to protect your people and your creation. Be with the college and university students around our country as they stand in solidarity with your people, and speak truth to power in the face of adversity.

God of grace,

**Receive our prayer.**

For all those in need: for any experiencing homelessness or unemployment, for those fleeing from oppression or seeking asylum, and for all who are ill or suffering

God of grace,

**Receive our prayer.**

For this congregation: for the caring ministries of this faith community, for all who visit and minister to one another, for all who take communion to homes or care centers, and for all who seek to share your love with the world.

God of grace,

**Receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Offering

*At this time, if you are willing and able, please consider giving to Spirit of Grace Church to support our ongoing ministry.  
Checks can be mailed to 1140 Tucker Road, Hood River OR, 97031.  
Online Donations can be made through the link below:  
[Spirit of Grace Church](#)*

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Risen One,  
you call us to believe and bear fruit.  
May the gifts that we offer here  
be signs of your abiding love.  
Form us to be your witnesses in the world,  
through Jesus Christ, our true vine.  
**Amen.**

Gathered together by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us, using the language you are most familiar with - the language of your heart.

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**



## Blessing of Kits & Quilts

*“...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria,  
and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8b*

Jesus gave this charge to his disciples before he ascended into heaven — a far bigger mission than they likely anticipated. Jerusalem made sense. This was close enough to their home turf. Judea expanded their call to the greater region, a place where Jesus’ ministry was rejected. But Samaria? This was a place where the disciples would have felt out of place and even avoided so that they wouldn’t have to associate with the Samaritan people. And to the ends of the earth? Despite the daunting challenge Jesus charged them with, moved by the Holy Spirit, the disciples put aside their doubts and got to work. You too are sending God’s love to the very ends of the earth. No matter how far away your neighbor lives, your quilts and kits are reaching them and wrapping them in comfort and hope. May God’s promise keep you steadfast in your work so that all may feel God’s love.

Let us pray.

Creator God, you have entrusted us to be your witnesses in the world and you give us the tools to do this work.

Thank you for the skills to create beautiful quilts that will wrap our neighbors in your love.

Thank you for the hands that put together kits to care for families in need.

Bless the recipients of our gifts and help us to continue to care for our neighbors all around the world, even those who are far away and sometimes hard to reach. **Amen**

## Litany of Blessing & Sending

God, you call us to love our neighbors as ourselves. Send forth your Spirit today as we call upon you to bless our work and make it holy. Help these quilts and kits, our offerings of hope, travel across the furthest distances to reach our most weary neighbors and surround them with your grace and peace.

**Jesus, open our hearts to love our neighbors.**

God, we give you thanks for the pieces of fabric, thread, sewing machines, and the items collected for the kits. May their presence be a sign of your faithful promise, may these quilts wrap our neighbors in unending love, and may these kits offer dignity and healing.

**Jesus, open our hearts to love our neighbors.**

God, we give thanks for all those who have taken part in creating these quilts and kits. May you guide us to greater empathy for our neighbors in crisis, for the mothers that struggle to feed their hungry children, for the fearful, the anxious, the isolated. May these quilts and kits provide comfort and relief to those who are downtrodden around the world.

**Jesus, open our hearts to love our neighbors.**

God, be with those who will receive these gifts — neighbors we have never met, neighbors who are far away, neighbors who, like us, long for your grace and mercy. May the work crafted from our humble hands serve as a beacon of light and hope to those who are desolate and hopeless and fill them with the peace that is only found in you.

**Jesus, open our hearts to love our neighbors.**

We thank you for this ministry of service, for the opportunity to comfort those in their darkest hours, to remind our neighbors in Christ of your loving presence. Bring us ever closer to your heart and our neighbors in need throughout the world. We pray all this in the name of Jesus, the one who is our hope.

**Amen.**

Sending Song:

Touch That Soothes and Heals  
*ACS 939 – verses 1-4*

Blessing

Alleluia! Christ is risen!  
**Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

The God of resurrection power,  
the Christ of unending joy,  
and the Spirit of Easter hope  
✠ bless you now and always.

**Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace. The Spirit of God is alive in you!  
**Thanks be to God!**



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**Church Office Hours**

**Closed on Fridays**

**Pastor Miranda Bermes-Goller**

M-W 9-1, or by appointment

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**Linda Boris, Pastoral Assistant**

Tuesday 10-1

**Attributions**

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