

Leadership Letter
Sixth Sunday of Easter – May 9, 2021

Dear Zion Family,

Last Saturday evening, knowing that I would not be together with you on Zoom on Sunday morning, I read the Service of the Word for 5 Easter. While driving northeast to Pine Lake on the Sabbath, I kept thinking over and over again about that wonderful key word, “abide.” And, I could envision Jesus in the Upper Room turning to his disciples and saying, “I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5) After that, I thought about Pastor Janet’s Oklahoma version, “Abide in me as I abide in y’all. I am the vine, y’all are the branches,” and how these verses are about the community’s life together, how we need each other, and how together we are more than any one of us alone. On Monday morning, the day after my camp was opened for the season, I decided to view the May 2nd service on YouTube. What joy! I did not miss Kelli Watson’s playing of “Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee” after all. Plus, I found yet another of Rev. Hoover’s gems—“To abide with Christ involves immersing yourself in scripture—reading it devotionally, studying it, wrestling with the difficult and challenging passages, relaxing into the words of comfort....It also involves constantly turning to Christ for help and guidance and strength.” And, there is even more about abiding on page 5. Thank you to all who worshiped with us and/or made the Fifth Sunday of Easter service happen. 38 households (at least three had two or more people) logged on to our Zoom service and two used YouTube.

WORSHIP ON SUNDAY, MAY 9TH

We are truly blessed at Zion to have so many choices of how to worship each week. **On Sunday, May 9th, we have the opportunity to worship in person in the sanctuary.** Please remember your masks, arrive a little early because of the check-in procedure, and turn off your cell phones during the service. Thank you to our volunteers for that day (*Greeters: Deb Murdock, Jan Kowalczyk; Ushers: Doreen Nicholls, Jeanne Gymburch; Worship Assistant: Carl Schmitt*).

On Mother’s Day, our 10:00 AM service will also be offered remotely by Zoom, livestreamed on Zion’s YouTube channel, or available as the Service of the Word, printed later in this newsletter. **Joining the service by Zoom** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84354840714?pwd=TDJGTkwvSTBER2lNb1o1Qzd6WGxDdz09> Meeting ID: 843-5484 0714, Password: 022654. Or by PHONE, +16465588656, 84354840714#, 1#, 022654#. If you are joining us on Zoom, please be sure you are on mute and that your video is turned off from 10 AM when the service commences until it ends and the “Joyful Chaos” begins.

Livestreamed: If you would prefer to view the service via livestream on our YouTube channel, you can do so by visiting our page at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWzOtbfCe2z7-bIPvxp62IA>

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FROM MAY 16TH–JUNE 27TH

Services offered remotely by Zoom and YouTube, Service of the Word
Sunday, May 16, 2021, Sunday, May 30, 2021, Sunday, June 13, 2021

In-person Worship along with Zoom, YouTube, Service of the Word
Sunday, May 23, 2021 (Day of Pentecost), Sunday, June 6, 2021, Sunday, June 20, 2021, and Sunday, June 27, 2021

Please see the Worship Team Schedule on Page 7.

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

Monday, May 10th at 6:30 on Zoom: COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, May 11th at 7PM on Zoom: TASK FORCE FOR RETURN TO IN-PERSON WORSHIP

Saturday, May 15th from 9:30-2PM in the Fellowship Hall: RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE— The sponsor code to schedule an appointment is ZionLutheran and the direct link to schedule an appointment is:

<https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?zipSponsor=ZionLutheran>. Thank you!

June 3rd–5th via Zoom: THE UPSTATE NEW YORK SYNOD ASSEMBLY. We are looking for two members to represent Zion at this year's assembly. Electing a bishop is one of the most important responsibilities in the life of a synod in the ELCA. Registration closes on May 15th. *Please contact Sara if you are interested in being a delegate.*

Here is one more opportunity to read last Sunday's Prayer of the Day. Picture yourself praying under a grape arbor or a banyan tree. 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.

May our lives be enriched by love, joy, peace, and kindness this week,
Laurel McCurdy, church council co-president

Mae Parker called - she wanted to say hello to everyone! She is 95 and said she is "alive & kickin'!" She is doing well; her son does a lot for her and her grandkids do her grocery shopping and laundry. Mae very much enjoys getting her weekly leadership letter/service of the word.



Zion Lutheran Church
New Hartford, NY
6 Easter



May 9, 2021

WELCOME

PRELUDE *Prelude on "Morning Has Broken", David Lasky -Kelli Watson*

Thanksgiving for Baptism

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

Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ, let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We thank you, risen Christ, for these waters where you make us new, leading us from death to life, from tears to joy. We bless you, risen Christ, that your Spirit comes to us in the grace-filled waters of rebirth, like rains to our thirsting earth, like streams that revive our souls, like cups of cool water shared with strangers. Breathe your peace on your church when we hide in fear. Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness. Send us companions on our journey as we share your life. Make us one, risen Christ. Cleanse our hearts. Shower us with life. To you be given all praise, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn: *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling, vs. 1 & 4 Hymn #631 -Kelli Watson*

Vs. 1 Love, divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heav'n, to earth come down! Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all they faithful mercies crown. Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art; visit us with thy salvation, enter ev'ry trembling heart.

Vs. 4 Finish then thy new creation, pure and spotless let us be; let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee! Changed from glory into glory, till in heav'n we take our place, till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Prayer of the Day

O God, you have prepared for those who love you joys beyond understanding. Pour into our hearts such love for you that, loving you above all things, we may obtain your promises, which exceed all we can desire; through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading: Acts 10:44-48

Second Reading: 1 John 5:1-6

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Halle, Halle, Hallelujah

Hal-le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah.

Gospel: John 15:9-17

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon: -Rev. Jennifer DeWeerth

There is no story in today's gospel. There's not even a single image of Jesus—the shepherd, the vine—that we can grasp on to. There's just a lot of the big words: Love, the biggest of course. But also Abide, Friend, Joy. In some ways, the big words make it so easy. I mean, it can't get any easier in the pulpit than preaching a sermon on "love," right? Especially love that is so...organized: "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. As I have loved you, love one another." 1.2.3. It's a simple, linear chain of love from God right to you and me. So easy. But also too easy. Anyone can sign on to "loving one another" in general; it's the specific, concrete instances that are hard! "Love one another" as a theory, as a principle, as a command, is inarguable...but how?

I think there are some clues here, but, once again, we have to look at the context, and in this case, the context is simple. Both the passages last week and this week from John's gospel come from Jesus' "farewell speech to his disciples," which he delivers immediately after washing their feet. The passage ends, "I am giving you these commands *so that* you may love one another" (15;17). See that little twist at the end of the passage? "Love one another" is not really the command itself. It is the *purpose* of the things that Jesus commands. Jesus gives his disciples commands, *so that* they will love one another. Presumably by doing the things he commands, not the least of which is a humble servant action like foot washing, they will love one another.

I read an article last Sunday about how we need to start building up our social human connection skills again after falling out of practice for the past year. The author noted that the actor Ellen Burstyn once said to her in an interview: "When you mother a child, a relationship is formed. You become the noun by doing the verb." The same, the writer says, can be said for building back supportive, strong communities. You become friends by befriending. You strengthen neighborhoods by neighboring. Jesus says, "Do these commandments, these things I am telling you to do, so that you will love one another." We become the disciples he asks us to be by doing the things he shows us, the things he commands us to do. We become the noun by doing the verb. Still, it is hard to do this stuff. And by that I mean some of us, sometimes, are hard to love. And just in general, loving can be hard work. But if we just view loving one another as a hard slog, like something you try but might not really succeed at, then Jesus' command here becomes something like trying to be saved by works instead of faith, our works, instead of God's grace. That's no good! And that's not what Jesus is talking about. Let's go back to that simple 1, 2, 3 formula. Jesus's love for us is not just the *example* of how we should love one another. It is the *source* of our love for another, the inexhaustible source. It's the *overflowing fountain* of our love for one another. "Just as the Father loves me," Jesus says, "I have loved you." Jesus isn't learning by example from his Father how to love us; the love God has for Jesus fills him and creates an abundant love that flows to us, through us, and out from us.

This fits with the overall theology of John's gospel, where love is not a sacrifice in the sense of deprivation or self-denial. It's love in the sense of the free sharing of oneself out of overabundant joy. It is the same kind of self-giving love that Jesus prescribes for his disciples— love inspired by the one who came that we might "have life and have it abundantly" (10:10) — love that spills out of the "fullness we have all received" from him, "grace upon grace" (1:16).

Perhaps none of us can help but think of our mothers on Mother's Day just a little, whether we knew them for a lifetime or a short time, whether they are with us still, or long departed from this life, whether the quality of the relationship we had with them was all that we could have wanted, or not what it might have been. Here's the thing though, about a mother. The work she does, the care she provides, physically demanding, relentless especially at the beginning, in pregnancy, childbirth, feeding, changing, holding, day and night, is not, in the end, drudgery, because of the deep joy she knows as her heart expands beyond her chest and fills everything. Like a mother caring for a baby, the works of love are commanded of us and the tasks are never completed, but if we abide in Jesus' love, we will be *refueled by that love*. When it comes to doing Jesus' commands, especially that daunting command, "love one another," it's not an example that is needed, but a power source. "As the father has loved me, so I have loved you," says Jesus. This is not an example, a 1-2-3 formula that Jesus shares with his disciples. It's a circuit, a conduit of energy flowing through the divine to us and through each of us to one another. Not an example, but a power source. We stay connected to it by abiding in Jesus' love. Gracious God, may we live in your love so that we stay connected to the source of all love. Befriend us so that we will become friends. Fill us with your joy, and let it flow out from us to one another. Amen.

Apostles' Creed,

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, 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, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come 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.

ANTHEM: I Love to Tell the Story, William G. Fischer - Kelli Watson

Prayers of Intercession

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

Loving God, you call us to be your fruit-bearing church. Strengthen the bonds among all Christian churches.

Today we pray for the Moravian Church, giving thanks for the life and witness of Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, renewer of the church and hymnwriter. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Gentle Redeemer, all who die in you abide in your presence forever. We remember with thanksgiving those who shared your love throughout their lives. Keep us united with them in your lasting love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Gracious God, as a mother comforts her child, you comfort us. Bless mothers and mothering people in our lives. Comfort those who miss their mothers, mothers who grieve, those who grieve because they cannot be mothers, and those who have never known a loving mother. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Listen to the cries of your people waiting patiently for your healing hand and comforting Spirit, especially those who suffer with chronic pain and all cancer patients, Pr. Mary Etta, Gail, comfort and understanding for Kayleigh, comfort for Patsy, healing for Jeanette, Claudia & Fran, Edie Marie, Ed and family, prayers for Michael Gilleece and family, Theresa, and our country, that the light of Christ may shine upon them with hope. Hear us O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy.... and join in their unending hymn.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all glory and honor, now and forever. **Amen.**

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 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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION,

The risen Christ invites us to this table. Come, eat and be satisfied.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Wellspring of joy, through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing

May our glorious God grant you a spirit of wisdom to know and to love the risen Lord Jesus. The God of life, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Alleluia! Christ is risen. **Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!** Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

Sending Song: *Abide, O Dearest Jesus, vs. 1 & 5 Hymn #539 -Kelli Watson*

Vs. 1 Abide, O dearest Jesus, among us with your grace, that evil may not harm us nor we to sin give place.

Vs. 5 Abide, O faithful Savior, among us with your love; grant steadfastness and help us to reach our home above.

Postlude: *Trumpet Tune on "This Joyful Eastertide", David Lasky -Kelli Watson*



May/June Worship Team Schedule

Greeters	
May 9 In-Person	Debbie Murdock & Jan Kowalczyk
May 23 In-Person	Linda Bennett & Fran Holzberger
June 6 In-Person	
June 20 In-Person	
June 27 In-Person	

Worship Assistant	
May 9 In-Person	Carl Schmitt
May 16 Zoom only	Fran LaGase
May 23 In-Person	Ryan Kulawy
May 30 Zoom only	Wendy Stevens
June 6 In-Person	
June 20 In-Person	
June 27 In-Person	

Ushers	
May 9 In-Person	Doreen Nicholls & Jeanne Gymburch
May 23 In-Person	Laura Hilt & Caryn Carlson
June 6 In-Person	
June 20 In-Person	
June 27 In-Person	

Greeters & Ushers:

Please sign up in the Narthex or contact Jeanne Gymburch at jgymburch@aol.com or Barb Wilson B62950@aol.com

Worship Assistants:

Please sign up in the Narthex or contact Jim Marscher at jmarscher@yahoo.com

Thank you for volunteering!



Please pray for Kayleigh. Kayleigh lost her mom this past week. Zion has helped her mom, Erin, over the years with Easter and Christmas food baskets. Erin battled leukemia three different times, and, in the end, she lost her life due to sudden health issues. Kayleigh and Erin attended Zion a few times; Pastor David met with Erin a few times in-person and over the phone.



If you would like to send Kayleigh a card, you can do so by sending it to the church, **Attn: Kayleigh**, and I will get it to her.