

Fifth Sunday of Easter
April 28, 2024

Leading in Worship Today

Welcome and Announcements

Guest Speaker: *Tom Geddens* AV Director: *Marie Stiles*
Music Director: *Christopher A. McCroskey* AV Assistant: *Chris Derrick*

Prelude Christopher A. McCroskey

Call To Worship *“I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord”* Choir
Centering Words

*Hymn *“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”* 89

Opening Prayer
The Lord’s Prayer 895

“Let the Children Come!”
(Those 3 years of age through 8 years of age may go to Children’s Church.)

Old Testament Reading Isaiah 53:1-12 Pages 648-649 (O.T.)

*Hymn *“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”* 298

Psalter Psalm 22:25-31 753

Anthem *“Happiness Is the Lord”* Choir

New Testament Reading Acts 8:26-40 Page 121 (N.T.)
Sermon *Jesus Christ Is The Son Of God* Tom Geddens

*Affirmation of Faith *“The Apostles’ Creed”* 881

*Gloria Patri *“Glory Be to the Father”* 70

Pastoral Prayer

Presentation of Tithes & Offerings

Offertory Christopher A. McCroskey

*Doxology *“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”* 95

*Hymn *“O How I Love Jesus”* 170

*Dismissal With Benediction

*Benediction Response *“May the Lord, Mighty God, Bless and Keep You”* Choir

*The Congregation May Stand

VISITORS ARE WELCOME in the service of worship! Please make use of the visitor’s tags (located in the pew backs) to help us better welcome you as a visitor to Trinity this morning. We ask that you also please fill in the pew pad as it passes to register your attendance with us. **Large print hymnals** are available from the ushers.

You may join as a member into the life and work of this congregation by Confession of Faith or by Transfer of Membership from another church. If you would be interested in becoming a member, please speak to the pastor.

TODAY’S LOVELY FLOWERS are given to the ***Glory of God.***

“AS MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION, WE WILL FAITHFULLY PARTICIPATE IN ITS MINISTRIES BY OUR PRAYERS...

English Pearcy Patsy Zeigler Charlie Hooker Kaye Floyd Patsy Shuler Taylor Linholm
Erin Derrick Becky Derrick John Ballentine Jimmy Grahl Latson Lewis

Shut-Ins: Esther Carter; Gillett Hipp; Linda Maloch; Jean Raynor; Claudia Sineath; Jan Weaver

Family and Friends: Chantel Griffin (sister of Erin Derrick); Russell Eubanks (son-in-law of Jo Ann Heiting); Malcolm Skipper (grandfather of Matthew Skipper); Logan Sturkie (granddaughter of Marty Johnson's neighbor); Bryan Collard (brother-in-law of Mary Sue Lewis); Charlyn McNeill (sister of Mary Sue Lewis); Elizabeth Kelsey & Jamie Barnett (friends of John & Kay Jordan); Alex Courtney (friend of great nephew of Joyce Robinson); Lawrence Gilbert (friend of Becky Derrick); Bob Bohnstengel (spouse of Jo Ann Heiting's cousin); Judy Spence (former member); Missy Abrams (stepdaughter of Lissa Abrams); Mary Davis (daughter of Bob & Libby Strickland); Gloria Erd (friend of Lynn Martin); Pearl Geddens (mother of Tom Geddens); Ross Deal (grandson of Mary Kamoroff); Nancy Wilson (friend of Jeanette Hornsby); David Turner (brother of Pam Turner); Ernie & Betsey Hendrix, Chip Mixon (friends of Tommy Gleaton); Ron & Janet Walker (friends of Tommy & Chris Gleaton); Merit Takach (friend of Joyce and Brent Robinson); James Boggs (father of Claire Boggs); Stacy Coggins (daughter of Steve Aiello); Sweat Family (friends of Marty Johnson); Bill Areheart (friend of Bonnie Ramsey); David Grandshaw (brother-in-law of Edwa Meek); Robert Bradley (Business Associate of Simon Ross); Gary Becton (friend of Mark Branham); Florence Lee Carter, Monnie Tiller (friends of Chris Derrick); Adrin & Linda Hargett (stepfather and stepmom of Christopher McCroskey); Alexa Lookingbill, Teddy Derrick (uncle of Arvan Derrick); Haidee Baehr (friends of Ruth Frady); Denise Paul, Scott & Karen Nelson (cousins of Gale Frady); Dan Conner, Max Johnson (friends of Gale Frady); Bernardo Velasquez, Walt & Janet Beck (friends of Jo Ann Heiting); Adam Lavender (son of Phil Lavender)

If you have a friend or family member on the Prayer List, we ask you to please keep us updated. If no word is received, we will trust that our prayers have been answered and remove the name. To update us, please call the office or e-mail us at trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com.

OUR PRESENCE ...

In-Person Attendance 04/21 SS: 8 Worship: 17

OUR GIFTS ...

General Fund 04/21 \$ 4,740.37

OUR SERVICE ...

OUR WITNESS.”

Upcoming Events

TODAY Taste of Trinity following Worship

Ministry Team following Taste of Trinity

Columbia Community Concert Band, 4 p.m.

(Bus leaves Gunter Circle at 3:20 p.m.)

04/29 Exercise Class, 10:30 a.m.

05/01 Wednesday's Words, 11: 30 a.m.

T.a.G., 7 p.m.

04/25 Exercise Class, 10:30 a.m.

05/02 Office Closed

Readings for May 7

Acts 10:44-48

Psalms 98

1 John 5:1-6

John 15:9-17



Ministers

Pastor

Resident Bishop

District Superintendent

The Congregation

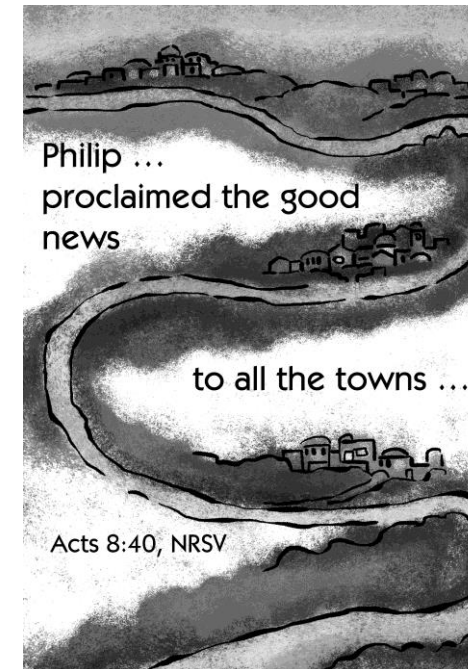
John D. Jordan

Jonathan Holston

Rev. Fran M. Elrod

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our vision is to Connect, Nurture, Inspire and Transform



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**Columbia Community Concert Band's Spring Concert
Today at 4:00 p.m.
Airport High School Auditorium**

Our 43rd season ends with the music of Ray Charles, the Sound of Music, Danny Boy and other Irish tunes which have been challenging for us to learn but which we're excited to play for our audience.

Having so many loyal followers means so much to our group of musicians, and we appreciate that you take time to support us with your attendance at our concerts. The music is listed on the flyer located on the round table in the Gathering Area along with the signup sheet to ride the bus which leaves the Gunter Circle parking lot at 3:20 p.m. Doors to the auditorium open at 3:30 p.m. We hope you can join us for our final performance until October.

**Epworth Mother's Day Offering
May 12**

TRANSFORM A CHILD'S FUTURE. Each year, Epworth Children's Home provides care to children in our own communities who have experienced abuse, neglect, and loss. Epworth's support breaks the destructive cycle and encourages children to aim higher in life. On Sunday, May 12 th, 2024, our congregation will support Epworth by collecting the Annual Epworth Mother's Day Offering. For more information, please visit Epworth online at www.epworthchildrenshome.org.



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“Jesus Christ Is The Son Of God”

(Read Acts 8: 26-40)

This is the Word of God for the people of God! Thanks be to God!

Let us pray: Father God, I pray that the message that I am about to deliver is the message that You want us to hear. It is in Jesus' Name that I pray. Amen.

Luke, the author of the Acts of the Apostles, tells us in Acts 8: 39 that after Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch and the Holy Spirit whisked Philip away that the Ethiopian went his way rejoicing. I, too, rejoiced when Pastor John asked me to fill in for him today and I saw that the Lectionary listed Acts 8: 26-40, which I just read to y'all, as today's New Testament reading! I rejoiced because this scene from the Book of Acts is one of my favorites in the Bible.

First, Philip plays a major role in this scene and I think highly of Philip. He is, I think, one of the Unsung Heroes of the New Testament! Philip is a Rock Star in my book! The Apostle Peter has the starring role in what is roughly the first half of the Book of Acts and then he wordlessly passes the torch to Paul, who becomes the Hero of Acts for the latter half. In between these two men lies another early hero of our Christian faith whose first name also starts with the letter “P”: Philip! He is a supporting actor to the two lead actors, Peter and Paul, but what an impact he makes!

I made the mistake when I first read the Book of Acts many years ago of thinking that this Phillip was the same Phillip who was one of the Twelve Apostles. He is actually a different Phillip. Luke tells us in Acts 6: 2-5 that this Philip was one of seven Christian men who were assigned by the Twelve Apostles the ministry of “serving tables,” which meant distributing food to widows in need.

Two of these seven men, however, Stephen and Philip, end up doing more than merely distributing food. They would both go on to also tell others about the Bread of Life.

Another reason why I love this scene from the Bible so much is what we are told about the second player in this vignette. He is an Ethiopian, a eunuch and the treasurer for no less than the Queen of Ethiopia. I love this detail because it reminds us of what Jesus told His disciples before He ascended to Heaven: “Go and make disciples of all nations.” That is exactly what Philip is doing here: Bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a Gentile, a non-Jew, someone from a different country, a different continent and who has a skin color different from Philip's. We are reminded that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is for all people who believe in Him.

In fact, many believe that this Ethiopian was the first Gentile- the first non-Jew-to be converted to Christianity. How incredible is that? Acts 8: 30 tells us that when Philip approached the Ethiopian's chariot he overheard the Ethiopian reading from the Book of Isaiah. This tells us first that the Ethiopian was reading aloud! But second, it tells us that he apparently worshiped the One True God.

Philip asks him if he understands what he is reading. I just love the Ethiopian's answer! While answering a question with a question is considered bad form, I think that the Ethiopian's response is highly appropriate here. “How can I unless someone guides me?” I love his honesty! I love his humility! Can't we all relate to the Ethiopian? How many times have you read the Bible and been baffled by a verse? Is it just me? And it should be refreshing to all Christians that the Ethiopian was baffled. If you have ever been baffled by the Bible, don't feel bad! Even people in the Bible are baffled by the Bible!

The Ethiopian's desire for someone to guide him reminds us of the importance of Bible studies and of Bible teachers. It reminds us that a big part of learning about God's Word is learning about it from fellow Christians.

And I love what the Ethiopian does next: He invites Philip to come up and sit with him in the chariot! So simple and yet so amazing! Seemingly small but warm gestures like that can go a long way in bringing others to Jesus.

The Ethiopian reads to Philip from the 53rd Chapter of Isaiah, which I read to y'all earlier. He then asks Philip a very good question: Who is this man that Isaiah is describing? Is it himself or some other man?

The 53rd Chapter of Isaiah is regarded by many Biblical scholars as one of the most remarkable and one of the most important chapters in the Bible. In that chapter, Isaiah describes his vision of God's Son, the Messiah: Jesus Christ. He specifically describes Him as the Suffering Servant, "a Man of Sorrows," as Isaiah calls him in Isaiah 53: 3, and the Lamb of God. Read Isaiah 53 sometime. You will see that He is describing Jesus. Isaiah wrote those words hundreds of years before Jesus appeared in the flesh. It is pretty amazing to put it mildly. Saint Augustine called the entire Book of Isaiah "The Fifth Gospel" and John Calvin published a collection of his sermons on Isaiah 53 and called it "The Gospel According to Isaiah."

The parts from Isaiah 53 that we read the Ethiopian reading in Acts 8: 32-33 are from Isaiah 53: 7-8. "And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He opened not His mouth." Recall in the Four Gospels that Jesus did not speak in His defense when He was being accused of blasphemy by the Sanhedrin. "And who will declare His generation?" In other words, who among us will declare Jesus as the Son of God?

Acts 8: 37 provides the summary statement of this entire scene. Full disclosure: The dialogue in that verse is not in every translation of the Bible. For example, it is not in the NIV. It is, however, in the King James Version. The Ethiopian notes that there is a body of water nearby and asks Philip what is to stop him from being baptized. Philip says, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." The Ethiopian replies, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

This is not only the summary statement of this scene but the summary statement of the entire Book of Acts, the entire New Testament and the entire Bible: Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Philip is then mysteriously whisked away by the Holy Spirit. We do not see him again until Acts 21: 8 when he is an older man with four daughters, each of whom have been blessed by God with the gift of prophecy, like Isaiah before them. The Ethiopian goes on his way rejoicing.

Since those words were written, how many men and women have rejoiced once they have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Personal Savior?

I know that there are many scenes in the Bible that we have trouble picturing happening in our modern world. But I do know of a story that is essentially a modern retelling of the encounter between Philip and the Ethiopian. Author Ray Stedman describes it in his book, "Adventuring Through the Bible." It was a story that his Bible teacher, Canadian pastor and theologian Harry Ironside told him. Dr. Ironside was serving as an officer in the Salvation Army where he would lead worship services. There was this one man in his twenties, who would come to the service. He always sat in the back. Dr. Ironside was intrigued by him. While Dr. Ironside would be on stage preaching, he noted from the young man's facial expressions that he had a spiritual battle going on in his heart.

At one worship service, the young man arrived late and therefore had no choice but to sit in the front row. Dr. Ironside was elated because he saw it as an opportunity to talk to the young man after the service and try and find out what was in his heart. After the service, he stepped off the stage and signaled for the young man to remain seated. Dr. Ironside sat next to the young man on the front row, introduced himself and asked him where he was in his walk with Jesus.

The young man admitted that while he would no longer describe himself as an atheist, he still was not sure if he believed in God and if he believed that Jesus is His Son. He told Dr. Ironside that he had read the New Testament but still was not convinced. He was currently reading the Book of Isaiah and he truly loved the beautiful poetry of Isaiah's words. The young man told Dr. Ironside, "If I could become a Christian by believing Isaiah, I probably would."

Like Philip, Dr. Ironside knew that this was a God moment. He opened up his Bible and read to the young man the entire 53rd Chapter of Isaiah. When he was finished, Dr. Ironside asked the young man who he thought Isaiah was describing in that chapter. The young man held his hands out, beckoning for Dr. Ironside to let him hold his Bible and read for himself.

The young man read Isaiah 53. He then plopped the Bible in Dr. Ironside's lap, stood up and bolted out the door.

Dr. Ironside was shocked, as you can imagine. He still did not know what kind of turmoil the young man was wrestling with. He prayed for him.

The young man did not return to the worship service at the Salvation Army the next night nor the night after that. But on the third night, he returned. He took a seat again on the front row. Towards the end of the service, Dr. Ironside asked if anyone in the congregation had a testimony that he would like to share. To his surprise, the young man stood up.

The young man told everyone that he had grown up in an atheistic family. He was from England, and when Palestine, what is now the nation of Israel, was a part of the British Empire following the First World War, the young man was stationed there as a civil servant for the British Government.

One day, he went on a tour of Biblical sites with a group of Christians. The tour ended on Golgotha or Calvary, the hill where Jesus was crucified. Once on the hill, the young man had a meltdown. He began cursing. He cursed God and he cursed Jesus. The reason why, he explained, was that standing there on Calvary, it struck him that this was the place where the whole fraud, as he saw it back then, the whole hoax of Christianity, was born.

The Christians who were with him in his tour group were shocked, as you can imagine, hearing this once-docile young man explode into a torrent of profanity directed at God and Jesus. In fact, they got off Calvary really quick-like because they feared that lightning was going to strike the hill at any second!

Standing before the congregation at the Salvation Army now, the young man quoted Isaiah 53: 5: "He was wounded for our transgressions... And by His stripes, we are healed." The young man then said, "I have learned these last few nights that the One whom I cursed that day on Calvary was the One Who was wounded for my transgressions and by Whose wounds I am healed."

Both that story and the encounter between Philip and the Ethiopian remind us to never underestimate the Power of God's Holy Word. It reminds us, too, that Jesus' Divinity is not only documented in the New Testament but in the Old Testament, too. It reminds us of how the Ethiopian responded to Philip when Philip asked him if he believed with all his heart.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

In the Name of God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit! Amen!