

BLACKSBURG PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SERVICE OF WORSHIP FOR THE LORD'S DAY

May 5, 2024

Sixth Sunday of Easter

We are a community that welcomes all.
We are committed to experiencing beautiful worship,
nurturing lifelong growth,
and pursuing justice and love in the world.



Pastor - Rev. Sarah Wiles
Director of Music & Organist - Alice Brooks Sanders
Director of Children & Youth Ministries - Susan Hunter
Coordinator of Church Life - Sarah Windes
Office Manager - Rhonda Waller
Parish Associate - Rev. Emily Rhodes Hunter

❖ GATHERING AROUND THE WORD ❖

Thought for Meditation: “Love is the only reality and it is not a mere sentiment. It is the ultimate truth that lies at the heart of creation.” —Rabindranath Tagore

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Sarah Wiles and Sarah Windes

Prelude: Meditation on “What Is This Place”

Alice Sanders

❖ **Call to Worship**

Claire White

Grace and peace be with you.

Right: And also with you.

This is the day the Lord has made.

Left: Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Friends, what are the two most important things to do as Christians?

Right: To love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and body.

Left: And to love our neighbor as ourself.

Who is our neighbor?

Right: The person beside us, on our left and on our right.

Left: The people who live near us, next door and down the block.

Is that all?

Right: Our neighbors are people whose names we don't know, who we might not ever meet.

Left: Our neighbors are people who need help, who are lonely or scared or in pain.

Right: With whom we disagree

Left: With whom we seem to share nothing in common.

And who or what is God?

Right: God is love.

Left: No exceptions

How do we love God?

Right: By loving our neighbors.

Left: No exceptions.

So, come friends, let us worship

so that we may be rooted more deeply in love.

All: Alleluia! Amen.

❖ **Hymn 404:** “What Is This Place”

KOMT NU MET ZANG

1 What is this place, where we are meeting?

Only a house, the earth its floor.

Walls and a roof, sheltering people,

windows for light, an open door.

Yet it becomes a body that lives

when we are gathered here,

and know our God is near.

2 Words from afar, stars that are falling.

Sparks that are sown in us like seed:

names for our God, dreams, signs, and wonders

sent from the past are what we need.

We in this place remember and speak

again what we have heard:

God's free redeeming word.

Scroll down for more . . .

**3 And we accept bread at his table,
broken and shared, a living sign.
Here in this world, dying and living,
we are each other's bread and wine.
This is the place where we can receive
what we need to increase:
God's justice and God's peace.**

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

**God of love, bring new life where we are worn and tired;
new love where we have turned hard-hearted;
forgiveness where we feel hurt and where we have wounded;
and the joy and freedom of your Holy Spirit where we are prisoners
of ourselves.**

(Silent prayer)

Assurance of Forgiveness

By grace, we are forgiven.
Alleluia! Amen.

❖ Passing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

(Worshippers may exchange signs of God's peace, and children may come forward for a time of sharing faith together.)

❖ HEARING THE WORD ❖

Sharing Faith with Children

Ben Corl

(Children in 1st grade age and up are invited to remain in the sanctuary. Children in kindergarten or younger may stay in the sanctuary or go downstairs to God's Garden or the nursery for nurturing and care.)

Prayer for Illumination

Light of our lives,
Light of our hearts,
**open our eyes to your presence with us,
this morning and always.
Alleluia! Amen.**

Scripture

1 John 4:7-8, 17-21, The Message (adapted)

7-8 My beloved friends, let us continue to love each other since love comes from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and experiences a relationship with God. The person who refuses to love doesn't know the first thing about God, because God is love – so you can't know God if you don't love. 17-18 God is love. When we take up permanent residence in a life of love, we live in God and God lives in us. This way, love has the run of the house, becomes at home and mature in us, so that we're free of worry on Judgment Day – our standing in the world is identical with Christ's. There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life – fear of death, fear of judgment – is one not yet fully formed in love. 19 We, though, are going to love – love and be loved. First we were loved, now we love. God loved us first. 20-21 If anyone boasts, "I love God," and goes right on hating their sibling, thinking nothing of it, they are a liar. If they won't love the person they can see, how can they love the God they can't see? The command we have from Christ is blunt: Loving God includes loving people. You've got to love both.

For the Spirit of Wisdom in scripture,
for the Spirit of Wisdom among us,
for the Spirit of Wisdom within us,
thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen.

Sermon: God is Love

Rev. Sarah Wiles

❖Hymn 769: "For Everyone Born"

1 For everyone born, a place at the table,
for everyone born, clean water and bread,
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star overhead,

Refrain:

and God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!

2 For woman and man, a place at the table,
revising the roles, deciding the share,
with wisdom and grace, dividing the power,
for woman and man, a system that's fair, (Refrain)

3 For young and for old, a place at the table,
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,
the hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,
for young and for old, the right to belong, (Refrain)

4 For just and unjust, a place at the table,
abuser, abused, with need to forgive,
in anger, in hurt, a mindset of mercy,
for just and unjust, a new way to live, (Refrain)

5 For everyone born, a place at the table,
to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
for everyone born, the right to be free, (Refrain)

Offering of Letters

Rachel Parson

Call to Offering

Offertory: "There is a Place of Quiet Rest"

Cleland B. McAfee
Text, Hymn 824

1 There is a place of quiet rest,
near to the heart of God,
a place where sin cannot molest,
near to the heart of God.

Refrain:

O Jesus, blest Redeemer,
sent from the heart of God,
hold us, who wait before thee,
near to the heart of God.

2 There is a place of comfort sweet,
near to the heart of God,
a place where we our Savior meet,
near to the heart of God. (Refrain)

3 There is a place of full release,
near to the heart of God,
a place where all is joy and peace,
near to the heart of God. (Refrain)

Doxology: "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"

OLD HUNDREDTH

Hymn 607

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise Christ, all people here below;
praise Holy Spirit evermore;
praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

❖ **Prayer of Dedication**

Celebration of Communion

Rev. Russell Gregory and Rev. Sarah Wiles

(All are welcome at Christ's table. Use the center aisle to reach a station in the front of the sanctuary and return by the side aisle to your seat. Gluten-free bread is available at the center station in front. If you need to remain seated, the elements will be brought to you.)

❖ **Hymn of the Table:** "Come to the Table of Grace"

TABLE OF GRACE

Hymn 507

Invitation to the Feast

Prayer of Thanksgiving and The Lord's Prayer

The Lord be with you. **And also 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.**

Our Father in heaven,	Forgive us our sins
hallowed be your name,	as we forgive those who sin against us.
your kingdom come,	Save us from the time of trial
your will be done,	and deliver us from evil.
on earth as in heaven.	For the kingdom, the power,
Give us today our daily bread.	and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Sharing of Bread and Cup

Prayer After Supper

❖ **BEARING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD** ❖

❖ **Hymn 748:** "Go with Us, Lord"

TALLIS' CANON

(Sing twice)

**Go with us, Lord, and guide the way
through this and every coming day,
that in your Spirit strong and true
our lives may be our gift to you.**

❖ **Benediction**

Postlude: "Bound for the Promised Land"

American Folk Hymn
Joseph Martin



Citations: Prayer of Confession from *Stages on the Way*.

Art: *Untitled (Blue Divided by Blue)* by Mark Rothko, 1966, WikiArt (fair use). In the artist's words: "I'm interested only in expressing basic human emotions — tragedy, ecstasy, doom, and so on — and the fact that lots of people break down and cry when confronted with my pictures shows that I communicate those . . . The people who weep before my pictures are having the same religious experience I had when I painted them." (from "Mark Rothko on the Transcendent Power of Art and How [Not] to Experience His Paintings" by Maria Popova, themarginalian.org, 02/10/24)

AV Technicians: Luke Clark (livestream) and Gavin Faulkner (sound).

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WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

This is a space for everyone. No matter who you are, no matter what your story is, no matter what--you are welcome here. May this be a time where your breathing slows, your heart opens, and you connect with the Holy One. If you are seeking a church home, we invite you to explore some of what happens in the life of this community.

Serving: Church Opener: Ben Corl

Ushers: Chris Lawrence, Heidi Swartzwelder, Reed or Ella Lawrence, and Marcia Parks

Elder Serving Refreshments: Todd Lowe

Headsets for the hard of hearing are available. Speak to an usher to use them for the worship service.

You can send prayer requests for Prayers of the People in Sunday worship and/or to be added to the *MidWeek Update* and website prayer list to Rhonda at (rhonda@blacksburgpres.org).

Text or QR Code to Give: To give by text, send keyword **bpcva** and an amount to phone number 779777 (e.g., bpcva 20). If it is your first time, there will be a brief registration process. To give via QR code, use the camera app on your phone and follow instructions. Thank you for your support of BPC's ministry.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



Bread for the World Offering of Letters today at BPC: Pass a Family-Friendly and Climate-Friendly Farm Bill. The Farm Bill is the most significant piece of legislation concerning our national food system. Its role is indispensable in our ongoing effort against hunger, affecting countless lives both domestically and internationally, as well as our response to climate change. You have two options: If you wish to send a handwritten letter or postcard, you can pick up addresses of our members of Congress or postcards in a small basket in the Gathering Space on Sunday, May 5. You can also go to bread.org/page/62477/action/1 to get more info and to send your email today!

Calling all interested singers: If you sing soprano or alto and would like to add your voice to the BPC choir for a Sunday, we welcome you to sing on May 12. You need to be able to attend at least one of these rehearsals, and both if possible: May 8 at 7pm and May 12 at 9:45am. If interested, contact Alice at alice@blacksburgpres.org.

Save the Date!
Vacation Bible School at BPC
July 14-17, 5:30-8:00pm



For more information, contact Susan Hunter at susanh@blacksburgpres.org.

Come Meet Us!

All women and their families are invited to join us at
Rising Silo for the Presbyterian Women Social

Rising Silo, 2351 Glade Rd
Thursday, May 16, 5-7 pm

THIS WEEK

All activities are open to everyone.

Contact Rhonda at rhonda@blacksburgpres.org for more information.

Sun., May 5-Sat., May 12: Pastor Sarah will be away for continuing education.

Sun., May 5: Communion Sunday

- 10:30: Worship Service, SNC
- Bread for the World Offering of Letters – see announcements for details.
- After worship: Matthew 25 Advisory Team, HCR
- 5:30 pm: Youth Group, FH
- 7:00 pm: Sunday Night Discussion Group, HCR. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Understanding of Jesus for a Complex World*, lecture series, with discussion facilitated by Russell Gregory (russellgregor@gmail.com) and Jack Call (jcall@radford.edu).

Mon., May 6:

- 12:00 pm: Lydia Circle meeting, FH (*note change in start time*)

Tues., May 7:

- 7:30-9:00 am: Morningstars Bible Study, Zoom. Contact Pastor Sarah for link.
- 9:30-2:00 pm: Quilters, FH

Wed., May 8:

- 5:30 pm: Handbell choir rehearsal, FH
- 7:00: Choir rehearsal, choir room

Thur., May 9:

- 3:30-4:30 pm: AIM meeting. Zoom
- 5:00: Hangout Hour. Rising Silo (2351 Glade Rd). Feel free to show up.

Sun., May 12:

- 9:00 am: Children and Youth Sunday School, various rooms
 - *Not meeting today* - 9:00: Adult Sunday School, WM
 - 10:30: Worship Service, SNC
 - 3:00-5:00 pm: Interfaith Reading Group, Unitarian Universalist Congregation
 - 7:00: Sunday Night Discussion Group, HCR. *Jesus and the Gospels: An Understanding of Jesus for a Complex World*, lecture series, with discussion facilitated by Russell Gregory (russellgregor@gmail.com) and Jack Call (jcall@radford.edu).
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Mon., May 13:

- 12:00-1:30 pm: Deacons meeting, HCR

Thur., May 16:

- 5:00-7:00 pm: Presbyterian Women Social during the Hangout Hour, Rising Silo (2351 Glade Rd). Feel free to drop by between 5-7pm. See announcements.

Sun., May 19: Pentecost Sunday

- 9:00 am: Last Sunday School class for children, youth, and adults.
- 10:30: During worship, we will celebrate our graduating seniors.
- 5:30 pm: Youth Group – End of the Year Party
- 7:00: Session meeting, HCR

Mon., May 20:

- 6:00 pm: Hildegard Circle meeting, Nancy Alexander's home (709 Burruss Dr., NW)
- 7:00: Congregational Care meeting, Zoom

Thur., May 23:

- 6:00 pm: Faith Circle dinner, Moon Hollow Brewing Co. (4237 Prices Fork Rd.)

Sat., May 25:

- 2:00 pm: Memorial Service for Barbara Michelsen with reception to follow, BPC
- BPC team travels to the Philippines

Mon., May 27: Memorial Day – church office is closed.

Sun., July 14-Wed. July 17: Save the date for VBS!
