

May 2nd, 2021 Fifth Sunday of Easter – Email/At Home Missal

A blessed Fifth Sunday of Easter to you, and thank you for joining us for worship, whether by print, email or Zoom. Since Easter Sunday, not only was the tomb found to be empty, but we also have come to a heightened state of confinement and isolation again due to increasing COVID-19 infection rates. Many of us have received vaccines and are being scheduled for vaccines or pre-registered, and I hope that everyone is managing ok, and reaching out to others when you are having a difficult time. When we reach out for help, or support others who need that ear on the phone or that voice on the line, we are bearing good fruit ☺

This Sunday's gospel lectionary has two lovely readings for the second half of our "returning the tools of ministry" service ... the epistle reading from 1 John 4 reminds us that "if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us." The Gospel reading, from John 15, in turn reminds us that Jesus is "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."

Rather than having a regular sermon this Sunday, we hear from those who agreed to receive the tools of ministry I have returned. This marks our last Sunday together as pastor and congregation, following my announcement of resignation on April 11th. When we finish worship today, my tenure as your pastor ends, and I commend you to the care of the church's lay leaders and our Synod who will, together, ensure that your pastoral care needs are met.

The ZOOM link for today's service, which opens at 9.45 am on May 2nd 2021, can be found here

Sunday Worship May 2, 2021 09:45 am ZOOM room opens; service begins at 10:00 am.

Click here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87286389476?pwd=S0xYZkdZZWxsL2RFNjVFd0FNalpQZz09>

Meeting ID: 872 8638 9476

Passcode: 031738

You don't have to have a computer or internet to connect to any of our church Zoom services; you can also just call in on one of these numbers (long distance charges may apply):

1 778 907 2071,

1 204 272 7920,

1 438 809 7799,

1 587 328 1099,

1 647 374 4685,

1 647 558 0588 (All Canadian numbers).

You can also access the ZOOM from your telephone by using the "One tap mobile" option:

+17789072071,,82275985585#,,, *345384# Canada

+12042727920,,82275985585#,,, *345384# Canada

If you require emergency pastoral care in the upcoming week, arrangements have been made for same and you can access the emergency on call pastor through the church office by calling 519-653-4721. Voicemail will be checked regularly. Pastor Claudine Carlson has agreed to provide emergency on-call care to those in need in the week of May 2 through 9th.

I leave you this Sunday with all love and gratitude for our years of ministry together, and the journey we have travelled in, with and through Jesus.

With love, in Christ
Pastor Janaki.

Announcement on behalf of Church Council:

The current state of our Stay-at-Home provincial order and our current Lockdown status do not permit us to plan an in-person celebration of Pastor Janaki's ministry with us, nor does it allow us to plan even a drive-by version of a farewell event. So in order to give everyone the opportunity to offer words of support and encouragement, you are encouraged to send cards, notes, or emails to the church, all of which will be passed along to Pastor Janaki. When our Lockdown status changes, and with the affirmation of our potential Interim Pastor, (whoever that might be) we hope to plan an outdoor gathering to celebrate Pastor Janaki on the front lawn of the church. This will most likely be when the nicer weather arrives, perhaps in June or July. Church Council will keep you updated in the weeks and months ahead. Luckily for us, Pastor Janaki will continue to reside locally and so we should have some flexibility in planning this event.

You are invited to send your cards and letters to:

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 810 King St. E., Cambridge, ON N3H 3P2

or you can email to secretary@st-peters-cambridge.org

Everything received will be forwarded to Pastor Janaki.

Also, we will be sending out information in the next few days about our Interim Ministry coverage as well as an outline of 'what comes next' in our journey toward calling a new pastor. Watch for those updates in the days ahead.

--Lorre Calder, on behalf of Church Council

Gathering Hymn: #588 There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

Click here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x40YdUod_ng

Text: Frederick W. Faber, Tune: North American, 19th cent.; Tune Name: Lord, Revive Us

Text & Tune: Public Domain; Used by Permission CCLI License # 11098609

Greeting:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all, in your home and in mine.

Prayer of the Day: *God of Spirit-blessings, by your Spirit the ministry of witness to our faith in Jesus is possible. Guide us, the congregation of St Peter's as we receive the tools of ministry and commit to continuing our faithful witness of all that you have done in, with and through us, by the blood of your beloved Son, our teacher, way-maker and redeemer: Jesus. Amen.*

The Lesson: 1 John 4:7-21

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also. [NRSV]

Word of God, Word of Life. C: Thanks be to God.*

Gospel Acclamation: Let Us Enter Into the Silence

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BkchxvuCkjQ>

(Oldham/Moggach – all permissions given by hymn creators!)

The Holy Gospel according to John 15:1-8

C: Glory to you, O God.

[Jesus said]

“I am the Real Vine and my Father is the Farmer. He cuts off every branch of me that doesn’t bear grapes. And every branch that is grape-bearing he prunes back so it will bear even more. You are already pruned back by the message I have spoken.

“Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can’t bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can’t bear fruit unless you are joined with me.

“I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you’re joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can’t produce a thing. Anyone who separates from me is deadwood, gathered up and thrown on the bonfire. But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon. This is how my Father shows who he is—when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples.

[The Message Translation]

This is the Gospel of our Saviour, Jesus. C: Thanks be to Christ.*

Message (Imagine multiple voiced here 😊)

I cannot remember whether I have shared this story with you before, and I cannot resist the opportunity to share one more story with you and it relates to grape vines so it relates to the gospel reading!! Here goes:

When I moved to my house in Cambridge, my garden was overgrown with some kind of wild grape. This ambitious and persistent vine reached to the very top of a very tall evergreen in my back yard, covered much of the fence, and happily precluded the flowering and fruiting of everything that it used to climb.

Interestingly, it bore very little fruit, seeming to be all too preoccupied with taking over my backyard (or the world maybe??). I tried to haul the green vines off the trees they were attacking, and that proved to be a (pardon the pun) fruitless effort! But I quickly learnt that if I crawled around and cut those vines off at the ground, and gave the upward-creeping segments a day or two (or a week or two) to die off, I could pull them down and twist them into handy loops which, when dried, burned quite nicely in my little hibachi.

By this means, some tasty meaty treats were barbequed on grape vines 😊

It seems to me that Jesus in the Gospel reading today is very familiar with this kind of megalomaniac-take-over-the-world type vine that covers and smothers everything but does not bear; is not productive. Jesus is quick to declare in today’s gospel reading that HE is the real vine, and that God will not only cut off the fruitless parts of the vine, but will also prune back the grape-bearing segments – in order to promote even heartier productivity!

I promise you I did not pick this scripture for today! It was indeed the lectionary!!

And how appropriate it feels, that Jesus affirms the cutting back of even the grape-bearing segments to promote heartier productivity. So, today, as we celebrate our last Sunday in this call to ministry for me with you all, I encourage you to think of this as a heavenly pruning back from which MORE productive witness, MORE fruitful ministry, MORE nourishing growth will come from each and every one of you (finger wag)!

There is no excuse for complacency. We are allowed to miss each other and feel sad. AND ... AND we are called to remain connected to the VINE which is Jesus, and We are pruned back to bear more fruit for the Kingdom of God ☺ Don't let me be hearing otherwise!!

So, on that note, I will call upon the disciples who received the tools of ministry, to speak to the items they return and what it means for them and for you as a congregation:

Lorre and Marlen's pottery insert for the font: "I receive the baptismal bowl representing our ministry together as baptized children of God. Only God could take something as simple as water and make it into something so precious and sacred. Many, if not most of us, were baptized as babies or very young children and we only remember our baptisms through family photos taken on that occasion. Pastor Janaki, you were baptized as an adult and because of that you brought a new appreciation of being welcomed into God's family to the rest of us. The excitement, enthusiasm, and inclusivity you wove into each and every baptismal sacrament you presided over was joyous, genuine, and dare I say it in these pandemic times, infectious. Because of the joy and gratitude, you felt from your own baptism, I have come to appreciate my own cleansing in the holy waters so many years ago and I have come to more fully embrace it as a true gift from God. So, no matter where you go or what path your journey in ministry takes, we will always be members of the same family of God. We are reminded by the familiar words from our service of Holy Baptism that '**We** belong to Christ, in whom **we** have been baptized."

Brad and the apple shaker: I receive this shaker and give thanks for the unique opportunity I experienced with Pastor Janaki in finding such a great listener with whom I could share my experiences concerning the role of music in worship. Our music making is a living language that gives us a way to breath as one and binds us together in love. Soli Deo.

Sherri and Bible Study: Some of my fondest memories of St Peter's during this past six years are of having heartfelt discussions and sometimes hearty laughter during our Bible Study classes. It is my honour to accept this Bible. I will keep and protect it until Bible studies resume once more.

Heide and Learning Ministries: "I receive this Lenten Study Booklet *"More than a Sunday Christian"* representing our learning ministry together. Knowing that our congregation had decided to describe our church as having a "Worship and Learning" focus, Pastor Janaki, you took great care in choosing, preparing and guiding us through a variety learning opportunities which focussed on putting into real life action, our mission statement: ***To be an engaged community of Jesus, energized to intentionally share the light of God throughout our daily living.***

Your thought-provoking worship services, so beautifully wove together the readings, prayer, and sermon with Brad's musical support. Your carefully chosen impeccable words challenged me to be more mindful of my thoughts, words and actions.

By facilitating book studies such as *The Gifts of Imperfection* and *Daring Greatly* by Brene Brown, *The Powers that Be* by Walter Wink and *WITH: Reimagining the Way you Relate to God* by Skye Jethani, you encouraged us to dig deep into our present beliefs, to make changes where the spirit guided us to, to step up and truly be light in this world.

You supported VBS, and took an active role each year not only in leading prayers, but in taking time to walk and talk with all participants.

Further, you encouraged us to step outside our comfort zones and put our faith into action by *offering opportunities* to serve each other, to love each other, to forgive each other, and not judge each other, AND to do the same for those unlike ourselves.

AND then you went a step further, and actually demonstrated through your actions, being light in the world by asking for and offering forgiveness, being non-judgement, seeing the good in all, serving us, and also by serving those less fortunate at our picnic table, at Bridges and the Self Help Food Bank, and now in your new employment with Threshold. By journeying WITH.

I feel that my spiritual growth has become "unstuck" in these past years under your pastoral leadership, and for this I am truly grateful. In behalf of our congregation, I receive this Lenten Study Booklet, "More than a Sunday Christian" with intention that we also journey WITH each other and beyond our comfort, to share the light of God."

Jann on behalf of Jann and Bonnie with the Keys – administration – "Pastor Janaki, when you finished seminary, you had no way of knowing 'where you would' be placed as a pastor, but God in all his glory did – he has a plan for you. Your circumstance reminded me of a poem by Roy Lessin, entitled 'Just Think', and I quote:

*"You're here not by chance,
but by God's choosing.
His hand formed you and
made you the person you are.*

*He compares you to no one else -
you are one of a kind.
You lack nothing that
His grace can't give you.
He has allowed you to be here
at this time in history
to fulfill His special purpose
for this generation."* Unquote

You just happened to be looking for your first placement at a time when here at St. Peter's, we were looking for a new pastor. By accepting this call, God bound us together as pastor and people working together for this church. These keys were entrusted to you as you held the official office of pastor for all of us here. They provided you with access into the building, and came with a very gigantic portfolio of administration that was included in your pastoral role. To that end, we thank you for the years of ministry that you have shared with us, for your leadership, for your compassion and guidance, for your kindness and never-failing presence, for your service, for your generosity of time, for your humility and wonderful example of how people should serve each other, and especially for your unconditional love. We have been blessed and privileged to have had you journey with us as our pastor during your time here at St. Peter's. The process of taking back the keys and saying goodbye to you Pastor Janaki does not come easy, but we know that God has a further plan for you, and that your time here at St. Peter's as pastor must come to an end so that your new journey can begin. We take back these keys, and release you from your promises as pastor to us, and ask God to bless you, lead you, and guide you as you go forward in the next new chapter of your journey.

These keys not only represent access to the building, but also the very gigantic portfolio of administration that the pastoral role has included. Today, I receive this item representing this aspect of our ministry together."

Barb on behalf of Barb, Sandra & Ruth for ministry of radical hospitality included home communion ministry: On behalf of Ruth Kroft, Sandra Shantz and myself, we humbly accept these

home communion kits as important tools of ministry at St. Peter's. This ministry not only enables us to commune with members who can't attend church but it helps us share (when able) hugs, smiles, laughter and caring for each other. We pray God will continue to guide and direct in this ministry. We also pray that God will guide and direct Pastor Janaki as she follows a new path in her journey.

Aaron Berg for Confirmation ministry: I receive this hymnal as representation of confirmation ministries. Confirmation is what really cements our personal and congregational relationship with God. Through the vows, we accept and publicly proclaim the promises and values that our parents made for us at our baptism. Pastor Janaki has always guided me and other confirmands through the process of learning what confirmation means as well as how to be a functioning and independent Christian throughout our lives. My favourite part of church has always been confirmation and especially the deep theological discussions that Pastor and I would have. Not only thought provoking, the discussions we had would challenge morals and help me grow as a Christian and a person. As well as this, confirmation led to many other great things such as confirmation camp, adventures on rivers, and pizza for lunch. Pastor Janaki has been a great teacher and mentor that will leave her mark on this church for years to come.

Avery for youth ministry and outreach - Pastor Janaki has both inspired and built foundations for the Youth Ministry and Outreach at St. Peter's church. Her endless support helped revive a Youth Group that had faded, bringing together youths for fun evenings of connection and games. Without Pastor Janaki's generosity of time, energy and spirit, the St. Peter's Youth Group would not have been able to attend the incredible Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth Gathering 2016 in Charlottetown, PEI. With Pastor Janaki's careful attention, the St. Peter's youth have had the opportunity to meet and bond, and she has provided the means for which Youth Ministry may continue by lighting a spark in the congregation. Pastor Janaki's generosity with her time has extended beyond St. Peter's church into the community, as well. She introduced all who would listen to volunteering at the Bridges shelter and kitchen in Cambridge. Without volunteers in the kitchen, the Bridges would not be able to afford to run a dinner service for the residents – and anyone who comes in want of a hot meal. After volunteering for a shift as a guest of Pastor Janaki, I decided to join the regular volunteer roster, and have been volunteering at Bridges for five years. Though St. Peter's is losing a shining star, the warmth and connections Pastor Janaki has instilled in the church will continue on. I wish Pastor Janaki all the best in her next life chapter.

At baptism, as well as before death, anointing with oil happens. I described this to the children as God's invisible ink, marking you with the cross of Christ forever. The "oil stock" that holds anointing oil has been used at many a sick-beds - representing end of life care and anointing too – **Donna Graham receives this item on your behalf.**

Kleenex representing the ministry of pastoral care and accompaniment – received by Tracy Holmes - I, Tracy Holmes, receive this as the accompaniment tool of ministry and pastoral care. This represents so much more than just a box of tissues. When my son Malekai and I first came to St Peter's about 3 years ago, we were welcomed with love and kindness. So what this tool of ministry represents is a welcoming. A welcoming of tears both of joy and sorrow from the very youngest to the eldest. Whether receiving pastoral support or listening to a service, this tool was never out of reach, and neither shall we be out of reach from each other. It represents the love and kindness we've always received and will continue to receive from each other. Thank you.

All these tools of ministry which we have used together so often, are now yours – you are the branches of the main vine which is Jesus ... you are the fruit bearers ... you, each and every one of you, is called: to be witness,
to be servant,

to be Christ to each other ...
 to journey together as pilgrims in the Kingdom
 to share in the joy and suffering that is part of being this Body of Christ.
 God be with you in the journey ☺

Amen.

Hymn of the Day: Will You Let Me Be Your Servant ELW 659; Text & Music Richard Gillard

Click here: <https://youtu.be/pT-YrmucWgo>

Text & Music Richard Gillard; Words & Music: 1977 Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publishing
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Prayers of Intercession

Confident that God provides for us abundantly, we bring our prayers before God ...
 Holy God, our Father, you give us your son, Jesus,
 and you equip us and empower us with the Holy Spirit.
 You lead us with instructions, by example, and with inner promptings.
 Strengthen us to be obedient to you, and to be hopeful about our leaders.
 Guide our leaders especially in these pandemic times of fear.

God of Abundance ... hear our prayers.

Generous & Abundant God, you bless us with many gifts.
 Here in Cambridge, in Waterloo Region:
 you have given us as a congregation the gift of many opportunities:
 opportunities for partnerships, opportunities for our facilities.
 May we invest our gifts in the work of your Kingdom.
 Help us to be responsible servants, investing wisely the gifts you give us.
 In this season of Easter, draw us closer to you in the Word, sacrament and love.

God of Abundance ... hear our prayers.

Great and Holy Spirit, you walk alongside us always,
 Nudging us towards deepening relationship with God.
 Be with the families and loved ones of those who have died unexpectedly,
 With those affected by gun violence all over the world.
 As we encounter news of pandemic deaths, violence and disasters in our world,
 keep us open to your nudging, help us to hear you,
 Make us your Holy vessel and a channel for your love.

God of Abundance ... hear our prayers.

God who sees all and knows all, we Pray:
 For people across Canada who are affected by: poverty and domestic violence,
 of whom Indigenous people are affected in disproportionate numbers.
 We pray for those who are questioning meaning and purpose.
 We pray for our youth and children's ministry.

We ask God to be with those who suffer,
 especially those we name aloud
 or in the silence of our hearts

(leave time for the prayers to come forward).

For these we have named, and the ones we hold in our hearts, we pray.

God of Abundance ... hear our prayers.

God of Love, you call us to serve our neighbors.

Nourish us with word and sacrament and bless those who are unable to worship today.

Receive our prayers into your tender-loving care, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Share the peace of Christ:

The Peace of Christ be with you always, in your home and in mine, and throughout God's creation.

Meal:

Click here for the communion liturgy from worship on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsiaRdyFr50>

I invite you to prepare your table with bread and wine, or crackers and juice, whatever is available to you, so that you may participate in the meal.

Prayer after Communion

We give you thanks almighty God,

that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life.

In your mercy and love,

strengthen us in faith towards you and in love towards each other,

in Jesus name we pray.

Amen.

Sending Hymn: #808 Lord Jesus You Shall be my Song

Click here: <https://youtu.be/SNNani5BbPc>

Text: Les Petites Soeurs De Jesus and L'Arche Community; tr Stephen Somerville; Tune: Les Petites Soeurs De Jesus and L'Arche Community

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Blessing:

May Jesus remain our song as we journey on our different ways ...

May we live as servants of Jesus as we journey

And may our journey on from here be filled with Praise

To our tender loving God: Father, + Son and Holy Spirit **Amen.**

Dismissal: L: Go in Peace. Christ is with us all. C: Christ is Risen, Alleluia. *