

# FAITH AT FIVE

SUNDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2020

MT. LEBANON CHAPEL



*Our liturgy this evening draws from the Celtic Christian tradition of Iona and Northumbria in Scotland. There are many standard elements of Christian theology that are, of course, shared in the Celtic tradition - such as the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ. The distinctiveness of the Celtic theology is rooted in its focus on the presence of the divine in the physical world. God is experienced in all of creation and therefore is all of nature. If God is in all things, then the natural world is to be celebrated and honored as holy. This extends to every aspect of life, including human life as well. The everyday world is infused with a spiritual presence - even in the most mundane activities. If creation is holy, humankind is a part of creation and therefore also holy and sacred. This evening's celebration also highlights another Celtic concept—a strong sense of community, because all people together are valued and loved. In this and every age, people are called to offer support to one another and all people, likewise, depend on one another. We thank God for binding us together as a human family within all of creation. Wherever you are in your life and in your journey in faith, we welcome you to this Worship Experience and pray God's Blessing over this time of worship and over your life.*

**Gathering Music** *(Sung by the music team from inside the chapel; the congregation is invited to listen)*

## Opening Sentences

In the beginning, when it was dark, God said, "Let there be light."  
And there was light.

*(The sign of light - a lighted candle - is placed on a central table)*

In the beginning, when it was quiet, The Word was with God.  
And the Word was God.

*(The sign of the Word - an open Bible - is placed on the table.)*

When the time was right, God sent His Son.  
He came among us and was one of us.

*(The Sign of the Son - a cross - is placed on the table.)*

*Last week many of us were given some clay. We had heard this Scripture: "God is the Potter and we are the Clay." Each person was given some clay to create an image or symbol of what this passage meant to them. Jesus encourages us to come together as a community of love, to worship and to share God's Love, Healing and Peace with one another.*

*As our individual clay symbols were brought together & we became a living symbol of God's Love within this world. We place this Cross on the table as a sign of Christ's Love for each of us and for our world.*

**Song of Prayer:** *"Surely The Presence of The Lord is in this Place"*

*(Sung by the music team;  
the congregation is invited to listen)*

*Leader* The God of Love is with us.  
*People* **The Spirit of love is in us.**  
*Leader* Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
*People* **And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. Amen**  
*Leader* Let us pray.

Almighty and eternal God, to you our hearts are open and our inmost desires are known. We cannot hide our most intimate secrets from you. We ask you to be present at all times in our thoughts and our hearts, and to purify them, so that we may love you with the love of the Holy Spirit and praise your name with humility and joy; Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Hymn of Praise:** *"Praise the Lord! ye heavens adore him"*

*(Sung by the music team;  
the congregation is invited to listen)*

*Leader* The Lord be with you.  
*People* **And also with you.**  
*Leader* Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Father; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

**The Word of God: Matthew 13: 1–9 (The Parable of the Sower)**

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seeds fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear."

Here is what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

*Silence is observed after the reading.*

**Psalms 139**

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.  
You know when I sit and when I rise;  
You perceive my thoughts from afar.  
You discern my going out and my lying down;  
You are familiar with all my ways.  
Before a word is on my tongue.  
You, Lord, know it completely.  
You hem me in behind and before,  
And you lay your hand upon me.  
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,

Too lofty for me to attain.  
Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?  
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
If I make my bed in the depths, you are there;  
If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
If I settle on the far side of the sea,  
Even there your hand will guide me,  
Your right hand will hold me fast.  
If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me  
And the light become night around me,"  
The night will shine like the day,  
For the darkness is as light to you.  
For you created my inmost being,  
You knit me together in my mother's womb.  
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
Your works are wonderful, I know that full well.  
My frame was not hidden from you when  
I was made in the secret place,  
When I was woven together in the depths of the earth.  
Your eyes saw my unformed body;  
All the days ordained for me were written in your book  
before one of them came to be.  
How precious to me are your thoughts, God!  
How vast is the sum of them!  
Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains  
of sand - when I awake, I am still with you.

**Second Reading: Matthew 10:10–17**

The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" He replied, "Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. This is why I speak to them in parables "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' [a] But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

*People*            **Thanks be to God.**

*Silence is observed after the reading.*

## The Holy Gospel:

*Priest* The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew. (10:18 –23)  
*People* **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

“Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. 23 But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

*Priest* The Gospel of the Lord.  
*People* **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

## Sermon: “Sower & Seeds”

Will Carter

*Seeds: We have heard The Sower & the Seeds. Each of you will be given some dirt and some seeds.*

*As you plant your seeds in fertile dirt, please think about seeds of God’s Love that have been sowed in your lives, the seeds of love that you have sown in other people’s lives, the seeds of hope, love, healing and grace that you will sow this week.*

*Leader* Lord Jesus Christ,

*People* **Be with us, within us, behind us and before us.**

*Leader* We bind ourselves, O God, today, to the strong name of the Trinity

*People* **And we name you: Three in One, One in Three; and claim our place in your community of love.**

*Leader* We are embraced, loving God, in the community that is the heart not just of our church, but also in the community that is the very heart of who you are:.

*People* **Three in One; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

*Leader* Within that great love, we are held and treasured. Lord, hear our prayers this evening;

*People* **We pray for our hurting world.**

*Leader* That war-makers will find peace. That the hungry will find food. That refugees will find shelter. That injustice will be answered with all that is right and good.

*People* **We pray for all who suffer.**

*Leader* For those we love dearly. For those we barely know. For those whose suffering, we have ignored. Be present in the healing touch of all hands that help the sick and suffering. And send your Spirit to comfort and protect all who need you.

*People* **We pray for all who struggle.**

*Leader* For those who cannot see a way through broken relationships, difficult financial realities, emotional darkness, and deep, deep loneliness. May we find you even in the most helpless places. And may we, your people, be present also in those places, bringing Good News and hope to all who are longing for the true life that only you can provide.

*People* **We pray for all who are joyful.**

*Leader* We rejoice at the promise of new life, and the goodness of each new day. We celebrate the movement through milestones: births, graduations, new jobs, new relationships; and the hopes that they bring. We remember those moments of blessing in our own lives and we thank you for the opportunity to use our lives to your glory, to live lives that are full and worthy of your calling.

We lift up to you, Lord, the prayers that you've placed on our hearts in our own words at this time...

We bind ourselves, O God, today, to the strong name of the Trinity.

*People* **And we name you: Three in One, One in Three: and claim our place in your community of love.**

*Leader* Lord Jesus Christ

*People* **Be with us, within us, behind us, before us. Amen.**

## THE HOLY EUCHARIST

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.**

All thanks and praise  
are yours at all times and in all places,  
our true and loving God;  
through Jesus Christ, your eternal Word,  
the Wisdom from on high by whom you created all things.  
You laid the foundations of the world  
and enclosed the sea when it burst out from the womb;  
You brought forth all creatures of the earth  
and gave breath to humankind.  
Wondrous are you, Holy One of Blessing,  
all you create is a sign of hope for our journey;  
And so as the morning stars sing your praises  
we join the heavenly beings and all creation  
as we shout with joy:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth  
are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is the one  
who comes in the  
name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Glory and honor are yours, Creator of all,  
your Word has never been silent;  
you called a people to yourself,  
as a light to the nations,  
you delivered them from bondage  
and led them to a land of promise.  
Of your grace, you gave Jesus  
to be human, to share our life,  
to proclaim the coming of your holy reign  
and give himself for us, a fragrant offering.  
Through Jesus Christ our Redeemer,  
you have freed us from sin,  
brought us into your life,  
reconciled us to you,  
and restored us to the glory you intend for us.

We thank you that on the night before he died for us  
Jesus took bread,  
and when he had given thanks to you,  
he broke it, gave it to his friends and said:  
“Take, eat, this is my Body, broken for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.”  
After supper Jesus took the cup of wine,  
said the blessing, gave it to his friends and said:  
“Drink this, all of you:  
this cup is the new Covenant in my Blood,  
poured out for you and for all  
for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.”  
And so, remembering all that was done for us:  
the cross, the tomb, the resurrection and ascension,  
longing for Christ’s coming in glory,  
and presenting to you these gifts  
your earth has formed and human hands have made,  
we acclaim you, O Christ:

**Dying, you destroyed our death.**  
**Rising, you restored our life.**  
**Christ Jesus, come in glory!**

Send your Holy Spirit upon us  
and upon these gifts of bread and wine  
that they may be to us  
the Body and Blood of your Christ.  
Grant that we, burning with your Spirit’s power,  
may be a people of hope, justice and love.

Giver of Life, draw us together in the Body of Christ,  
and in the fullness of time gather us  
with all your people  
into the joy of our true eternal home.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ,  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
we worship you our God and Creator  
in voices of unending praise.

**Blessed are you now and for ever. AMEN.**

We break this bread  
to share in the Body of Christ.  
**We who are many are one body,  
for we all share in the one bread.**

**Music during Eucharist:** *"One bread, one body"*

*(Sung by the music team; the congregation is invited to  
listen)*

### **Post-Communion Prayer**

Loving God,  
we give you thanks  
for restoring us in your image  
and nourishing us with spiritual food  
in the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.  
Now send us forth  
a people, forgiven, healed, renewed;  
that we may proclaim your love to the world  
and continue in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.

### **Blessing**

Lord,  
It is night.

The night is for stillness.  
Let us be still in the presence of God.

It is night after a long day.  
What has been done has been done;  
What has not been done has not been done;  
Let it be.

The night is dark.  
Let our fears of the darkness of the world  
And in our lives rest in you.

The night is quiet.  
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,  
All dear to us,  
And all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn.  
Let us look expectantly to a new day,  
New joys,  
New possibilities.

In your name we pray.

**AMEN**

*Priest*

Life is short, and we do not have too much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel with us. So be swift to love. Make haste to be kind, and the blessing of God be with you always. **Amen.**

**Dismissal**



**MT. LEBANON CHAPEL**

**ST. JAMES PARISH**

25 South Third Street ♦ Wilmington, NC 28401 ♦ (901) 763-1628 ♦ [parish@stjamesp.org](mailto:parish@stjamesp.org)

[@stjamesp](https://www.facebook.com/stjamesp) [@stjamesparish](https://www.instagram.com/stjamesparish)

**STJAMESP.ORG**