

**The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit, Verona, NJ**  
**The Lessons for the Fifth Sunday of Easter**  
**April 28, 2024**

**The Collect**

**A**lmighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life: Grant us so perfectly to know your Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow his steps in the way that leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

**A Reading from the Book of Acts 8:26-40**

**A**n angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth."

The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

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

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

**Psalm 22:24-30**

**M**y praise is of him in the great assembly; \*  
I will perform my vows in the presence of  
those who worship him.

25 The poor shall eat and be satisfied,  
and those who seek the LORD shall praise him: \*  
"May your heart live for ever!"

26 All the ends of the earth shall remember and  
turn to the LORD, \*  
and all the families of the nations shall  
bow before him.

27 For kingship belongs to the LORD; \*  
he rules over the nations.

28 To him alone all who sleep in the earth bow  
down in worship; \*  
all who go down to the dust fall before him.

29 My soul shall live for him;  
my descendants shall serve him; \*  
they shall be known as the LORD's for ever.

30 They shall come and make known to a  
people yet unborn \*  
the saving deeds that he has done.

*Leader and People: Glory be to the Father, and  
to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in  
the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.*

### A Reading from the First Letter of St. John 4:7-21

**B**eloved, 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 sac-  
rifice 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 per-  
fected among us in this: that we may have bold-  
ness 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, can-  
not love God whom they have not seen. The com-  
mandment we have from him is this: those who  
love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

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

*People: Thanks be to God.*

### The Holy Gospel

*Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John 15:1-8.*

*Congregation: Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

**J**esus said to his disciples, "I am the true vine,  
and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes  
every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every  
branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear  
more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the  
word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I  
abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit  
by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can  
you unless you abide in me. 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. Whoever does not abide in me is  
thrown away like a branch and withers; such  
branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and  
burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in  
you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be  
done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that  
you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

*Celebrant: The Gospel of the Lord.*

*Congregation: Praise to you, Lord Christ.*