

If you have not already done so, please place your offering in the marked basket nearest the exit you use. We look forward to seeing you again next week.

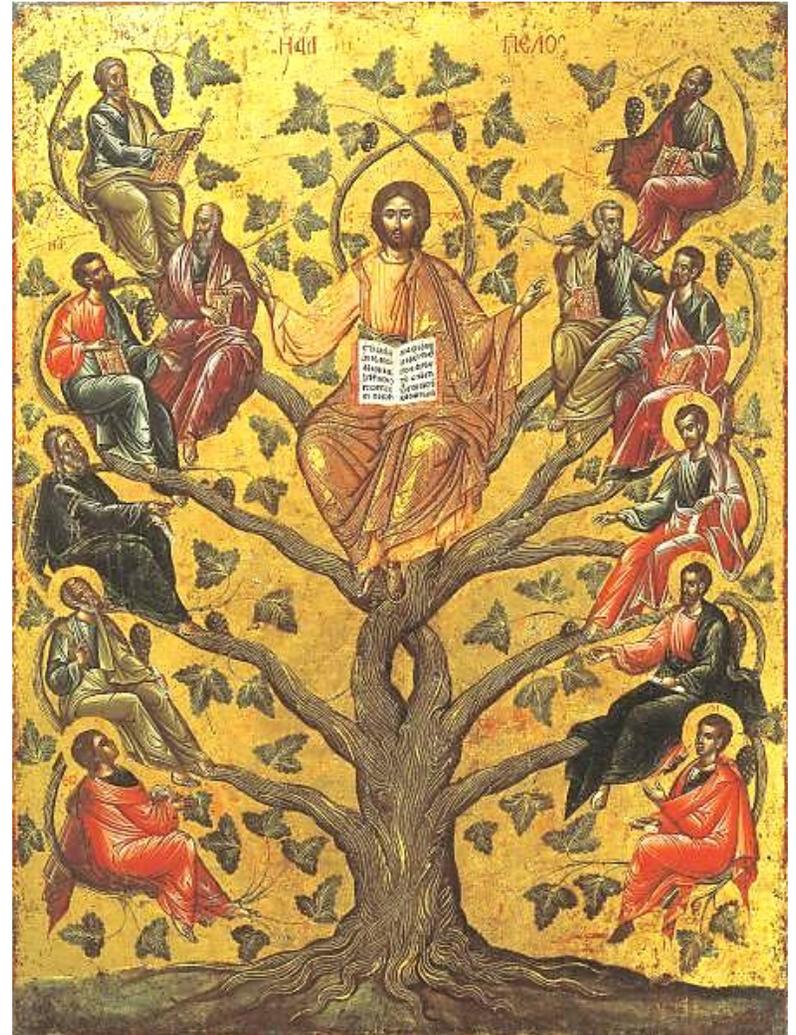
A special thank you to our ushers!

Organist: Vance Harper Jones

Ensemble: Betsy Conzelman, Margaret Cooper, Beth Foley, Charles Francis, Susan Mabie, Mildred Moore Lopez, Pat K. Rowlett

Commentary on cover art by Stephen M. Garrett from “The Visual Commentary on Scripture” (thevcs.org): “The renowned fifteenth-century Cretan iconographer Angelos Akotantos (d.1450) painted the icon Christ the Vine during a pivotal and turbulent period of the Church’s history. The collapse of the Byzantine Empire was imminent, leading to a contentious Church council in the cities of Ferrara and Florence (c.1438–45) where leaders strove to unify the Eastern and Western Church. Today, the icon is sequestered in a Cretan monastery; but, like all icons, many versions exist, including this one in the Byzantine Museum in Athens (Mantas 2003: 355–56). The large figure of Christ with extended arms is seated at the nexus of the intertwined branches, establishing him as the common root and life of the Church (John 15:1–8). An open book, inscribed with excerpts from John 15, is superimposed on the Christ figure at the centre of the icon, suggesting the Word’s centrality. St Peter and St Paul, perhaps representing the two branches of the Church, East and West (Vassilaki 2013–14: 115), are prominently positioned on either side of Christ. They are seated higher than the other apostles while the evangelists sit to Christ’s immediate left and right, dialoguing in pairs. The remaining apostles, like Christ, hold open books and scrolls—their eyes fixed on him. The hanging fruit symbolizes the continuation of the faithful: as they abide in Christ so too, he abides in them (John 15:4).”

Trusting that God’s grace embraces and makes covenant with all believers, First Presbyterian Church intends to be an inclusive place of spiritual growth for all people. All persons are welcomed into this fellowship and membership regardless of age, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic or racial identity, economic or educational status, or political affiliation.



Christ the Vine Icon, 16th Century, Byzantine Museum, Athens, Greece

2 May 2021

5th Sunday of Easter

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Established 1817

A Congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Building Community ▪ Transforming Lives ▪ Engaging the World

Order of Worship

Prayer of Preparation

“When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you care for him?” And yet you do care for me, O Lord. You have awakened me to this new day. You have called me to worship in this sacred place. Calm my fears and concerns, dear God, and allow me to sense the love you have for me this day. Amen.

Welcome

Chiming of the Trinity

Prelude *Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing* Cassler

***Call to Worship** from Psalm 145

I will exalt you, O my God the King;
I will praise your name for ever and ever.
**Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;
his greatness no one can fathom.**
One generation will commend your works to another;
they will tell of your mighty acts.
**They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing
of your righteousness. Let every creature praise his holy name
for ever and ever. Let us worship God!**

Anthem *Christ Is Alive!* Wren/1778

Litany of Affirmation from 1 John 4

Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God,
and whoever loves is born of God and knows God.
**The love of God was made manifest among us,
that God sent Jesus into the world.**
God loved us and sent Jesus to be the atonement for our sins.
If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
If we love one another,
God abides in us and God’s love is perfected in us. Amen.

Summary of the Law

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and the first commandment. And a second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” **Matthew 22:37-39**

Prayer for Illumination

Lesson John 15:1-8
The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon Elder Steve Mabie

***Affirmation of Faith** from the Confession of 1967
The reconciling work of Jesus was the supreme crisis in the life of mankind. His cross and resurrection become personal crisis and present hope for men when the gospel is proclaimed and believed. In this experience the Spirit brings God’s forgiveness to men, moves them to respond in faith, repentance, and obedience, and initiates the new life in Christ. The new life takes shape in a community in which men know that God loves and accepts them in spite of what they are. They therefore accept themselves and love others, knowing that no man has any ground on which to stand, except God’s grace.

Anthem *I Am the Vine* Iona community/Bell

Minute for Mission Legacy Giving Sunday FPC Foundation

Joys and Concerns of the Congregation

Prayers of the People and Lord’s Prayer
God, who makes us one, **hear our prayer.**

Benediction

Postlude *May the God of Hope Go with Us* Lovelace