

**SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2026**  
**SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER YEAR A**  
**JOHN 14:15-21 *MOTHERS' DAY***



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Rev. Rosemary Captain

*Organist – Sharon Banjavcic*

*Liturgy - Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay*

*Ushers -*

(NCH) New Century Hymnal - CCLI LICENSE #11164431

\*Please stand if comfortably able.

Respond with words in bold print.

**SUMMARY OF SCRIPTURE TEXTS**  
From "Preaching Through the Christian Year"  
**Fred Craddock**

The readings for today announce the meaning of the resurrection of Jesus Christ to persons who live in a variety of difficult circumstances.

**John 14:15-21** Jesus says farewell to his disciples, soon to feel alone and abandoned in a hostile world. He charges them to continue in obedient love and promises the comfort of the Spirit.

**1 Peter 3:13-22** speaks to suffering Christians, recalling Christ's suffering, death, and triumph in which they participate.

**Acts 17:22-31** Paul announces the resurrection as God's call to those trapped in idolatry, with its attendant ignorance and sin.

**Psalm 66:8-20** calls the suffering to worship and praise the God who sustains life and answers prayer.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:**

**THE BELL IS RUNG:**

**PRELUDE: "Lord, I Want to Be a Christian" Tom Fettke**

**PENNIES FOR MISSION: Strengthen the Church**

**\*RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP: (inspired by Psalm 66)**

One: Bless the Holy One, O peoples; let the sound of

God's praise be heard.

**Many: For God who claims us, tests us, and sustains us comes and invites us to come to them.**

One: Bless the Holy One, O peoples; let the sound of God's praise be heard.

**Many: Blessed be God, who has not rejected our prayer or removed their steadfast love from us.**

One: Bless the Holy One, O peoples; let the sound of God's praise be heard.

**Many: Come as we proclaim, witness, and testify to all God has done. Bless the Holy One!**

**\*INVOCATION:**

Holy and Present God, hear the sound of praise as we share this space and time gathered among you. May our hearts be opened and our minds engaged. Let the Spirit of Truth live in our songs of adoration, prayers of intercession, and words of pondering. In your name, glory and honor. Amen.

**\*OPENING HYMN: 43 "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"**

**\*UNISON PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:**

**Gracious and Eternal One, we proclaim that you breathe life into us and know us fully. Yet, sometimes, you remain unknown to us. Sometimes we search for**

**you and sometimes we fumble about for you. We rest in the assurance that when we seek you, we will find you. But, there are times when we refuse to seek, refuse to search, refuse to fumble. There are times when we rather keep you in compartments so that you will not fully impact our lives. There are moments when we close ourselves off from your revealing word, guiding hand, and nudging Spirit. Forgive us, O God, for not coming to you as you come to us—fully, persistently, and constantly—and give us strength to fumble and reach toward you in all seasons and at all times. Amen.**

**\*WORDS OF GRACE:**

Beloved, you are known by God and received as you are—wonderfully and beautifully, but not perfectly made. Draw near to God who knows your limitations and loves you. Seek the Holy One who recognizes your faults and finds the good in you. Search for the Spirit who discovers you on wayward paths and redirects you. Receive the God who comes to you with peace, grace, mercy, and joy. Come to the One who will not reject or rebuff you but will renew and restore you in hope and love.

**\*GLORIA:**

**Glory to the Creator, and the Christ and the Spirit so near. As it was from the start so it shall be forever, One God always here. (repeat two more times.) (end) One God always here. One God always here.**

**SCRIPTURE LESSONS**

**READING FROM ACTS OF THE APOSTLES: Acts 17:22-31**

<sup>22</sup> Paul stood up in the middle of the council on Mars Hill and said, “People of Athens, I see that you are very religious in every way. <sup>23</sup> As I was walking through town and carefully observing your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: ‘To an unknown God.’ What you worship as unknown, I now proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup> God, who made the world and everything in it, is Lord of heaven and earth. He doesn’t live in temples made with human hands. <sup>25</sup> Nor is God served by human hands, as though he needed something, since he is the one who gives life, breath, and everything else. <sup>26</sup> From one person God created every human nation to live on the whole earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their lands. <sup>27</sup> God made the nations so they would seek him, perhaps even reach out to him and find him. In fact, God isn’t far away from any of us. <sup>28</sup> In God we live, move, and exist. As some of your own poets said, ‘We are his offspring.’

<sup>29</sup> “Therefore, as God’s offspring, we have no need to imagine that the divine being is like a gold, silver, or stone image made by human skill and thought. <sup>30</sup> God overlooks ignorance of these things in times past, but now directs everyone everywhere to change their hearts and lives. <sup>31</sup> This is because God has set a day when he intends to judge the world justly by a man he has appointed. God has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 66:8-20 Page 662-663**

**SECOND TESTAMENT READING: 1 Peter 3:13-22**

<sup>13</sup> Who will harm you if you are zealous for good? <sup>14</sup> But happy are you, even if you suffer because of righteousness! Don’t be terrified or upset by them. <sup>15</sup> Instead, regard Christ the Lord as holy in your hearts. Whenever anyone asks you to speak of your hope, be ready to defend it. <sup>16</sup> Yet do this with respectful humility, maintaining a good conscience. Act in this way so that those who malign your good lifestyle in Christ may be ashamed when they slander you. <sup>17</sup> It is better to suffer for doing good (if this could possibly be God’s will) than for doing evil.

<sup>18</sup> Christ himself suffered on account of sins, once for all, the righteous one on behalf of the unrighteous. He did this in order to bring you into the presence of God.

Christ was put to death as a human, but made alive by the Spirit. <sup>19</sup> And it was by the Spirit that he went to preach to the spirits in prison. <sup>20</sup> In the past, these spirits were disobedient—when God patiently waited during the time of Noah. Noah built an ark in which a few (that is, eight) lives were rescued through water. <sup>21</sup> Baptism is like that. It saves you now—not because it removes dirt from your body but because it is the mark of a good conscience toward God. Your salvation comes through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who is at God’s right side. Now that he has gone into heaven, he rules over all angels, authorities, and powers.

**\*GOSPEL LESSON: John 14:15-21**

**“I won’t leave you as orphans**

<sup>15</sup> “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> I will ask the Father, and he will send another Companion, who will be with you forever. <sup>17</sup> This Companion is the Spirit of Truth, whom the world can’t receive because it neither sees him nor recognizes him. You know him, because he lives with you and will be with you.

<sup>18</sup> “I won’t leave you as orphans. I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Because I live, you will live too. <sup>20</sup> On that day you will know that I am in my Father, you are in me, and I am in you. <sup>21</sup> Whoever has my commandments and keeps them loves me. Whoever loves me will be loved

by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

**MESSAGE: “What is Love?”**

**(Disclaimer: I’m not talking about obedience to a spouse or any other person. This is about love and obedience to Jesus and God.)**

Mother’s Day. What a perfect Sunday to talk about love? We must admit from the beginning that not all mothers are loving to their children. And the love that the author of the Gospel of John is talking about is different than the love between mothers and their children. The love we hear about at weddings or funerals from 1 Corinthians is also different from the love Jesus is talking about in this passage.

In order to understand this and other passages in the Gospel of John that join love and obedience, we must think of love as other than feelings. Feelings are not commanded, but love can be, for to love is to be for another person, to act for another’s good, to do that which brings benefit to the other. This is much more than liking a person or having a particular set of feelings that may be contingent on a variety of factors. To love, obediently is to submit to God’s own model (3:16) and call, even if loving costs dearly, as God’s love did. By placing love and obedience at the beginning (verse 15),

middle (verse 21), and end (verse 24) of this unit, it is clear that the promises offered are not for any and all who may be passing by, but for those who love God obediently.

In our text Jesus offers solace and encouragement to his disciples, intertwining the themes of love, obedience, and the promise of the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit. This passage underscores that genuine love for Jesus manifests in keeping his commandments, rooted in the expansive love of God. The promised Advocate, the Spirit of truth, will empower the believing community to embody and proclaim this love.

Jesus begins by directly linking love and obedience: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (14:15). This is not a transactional statement but rather a reflection of the nature of love itself. Authentic love is not passive; it is active and demonstrative. Just as Paul emphasizes the primacy of love in 1 Corinthians, Jesus highlights that faith devoid of love is incomplete.

In John's Gospel, love originates in God, who demonstrated ultimate love by sending his Son to save the world. This love transcends self-interest, prejudice and parochialism; it embraces all people and creation. For Jesus, true religion is practical and tangible, expressed through acts of love that mirror God's own. His commandments, therefore, are not arbitrary rules, but invitation to participate in God's loving mission.

Obedience is proof of one's love of God. It's as simple as that. When we obey Jesus' teachings, we are showing our love for him. Obedience is not always easy but if we think of it as an expression of love for our Savior, it makes each day a way to say thank you God, for teaching us how to love. Amen

**SPECIAL MUSIC: “You Are My All in All”**  
**Flute/Piano duet Stacie Pickens/Sharon Banjavcic**

**PASTORAL PRAYER:** *“I Need Thee Every Hour”*

God everywhere, God with us, God in us, we may find you and know you anywhere. We are grateful that you give us life and breath, together with all human beings. We acknowledge your greatness in designing the world and creating boundaries of time and place. You display great patience with us in our times of ignorance and delay the day of judgement that we may rediscover you and our solidarity with all humanity. Most of all you have given us Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to guide us to do great works. Thank you.

We love you, heavenly Mother, Father, parent, because you bend down to listen to us when we call. We come to you not only with our own entreaties but for our brothers and sisters as well. We pray for you church universal. Fill it with all truth and peace.

Where it is corrupt, purge it. Where it is in error, direct. Where it is superstitious, rectify it. Where it is right, strengthen and confirm it. Where it is in want, furnish it. Where it is divided and asunder, build it up in unity, God of love and mercy. We realize all efforts for good are up to us to complete and we are thankful that you have sent us the Holy Spirit to help us.

Compassionate God, hear our prayers for all who have been affected by the many shootings in our country. We search for those who know the answer to this problem and can change our policies and laws to stop those who wish to harm others.

Healing God, hear our prayers for all who are troubled in mind and circumstance. Restore to health those who are sick and those recovering from surgery. May they, with new health and strength, give thanks to you and for those who have cared for them. We pray all these things in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, as we pray together.

**OUR LORD'S PRAYER:**

**PRAYER RESPONSE: 769**

**Hear our prayer, O God, hear our prayer, O God;  
Incline your ear to us, and grant us your peace.**

**INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:**

As we gather in the presence of God, let us acknowledge

and act upon the blessings we receive and the gifts bestowed upon us. Let us give generously, as we are able, to fund the ministry of this gathered body and the work of Christ's church in the world.

**OFFERTORY: Meditation on "O Store Gud"**

**(How Great Thou Art) Lani Smith**

**\*DOXOLOGY:**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above you heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING:**

Righteous God, receive these gifts we offer from our hearts and hands that they and we might be of service in your kingdom and for your glory. Amen.

**\*CLOSING HYMN: 575 "O For a World"**

**\*BENEDICTION:**

Go forth from this time and place but never from God's presence.

Go forth to witness and minister in the world.

Go forth knowing that as you go...the Holy One comes to you

With strength and courage for the journey.

Go, in peace to love and to serve the Holy One and  
God's good creation.

**BENEDICTION RESPONSE: 571**

**O God of Love, O God of Peace**

**Make wars throughout the world to cease.**

**The wrath of human wrong restrain;**

**Give peace, O God, give peace again!**

**THE BELL IS RUNG:**

**POSTLUDE: "Beside the Still Waters" Lewis W. Gale**

**PRAYER LIST:** Patti French, Bruce Wagner, Becky Ballard,  
Roger Ballard, Mary Lou and Urban Baum, Ronald Bopp,  
Geraldyn Gamon, Russ Hartmann, Lynne Knecht, Marilyn  
Paul, Pam and Syd Safriet, Yvonne Weber, Jackie  
Canterbury, our Beloved Country.