

ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF TREMONT

May 5, 2024

Sixth Sunday of Easter

A Service of the Word and Holy Communion



Acts 10 – Easter 6B

by Stushie (a Scottish pastor ministering in East Tennessee)

Church bulletin Art for Easter- 6B - bulletin cover

Unique crayon and digital worship art - <https://stushieart.com/this-sundays-lectionary-art-3/>



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Sixth Sunday of Easter

A Service of the Word and Holy Communion

“In the End nothing we do or say in this lifetime will matter as much as the way we have loved one another.”

-Daphine Rose Kingma

Welcome and Announcements

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Prelude – *Adam Petrosino*

***Call to Worship**

One: Christ gives us a new commandment:

Many: “Love one another as I have loved you.”

One: When we love one another as Christ has loved us, we will live lives full of joy.

Many: We will live with God’s love deep in our hearts.

One: Let us worship the one who shows us how to love.

Many: Let us worship with joy! Alleluia!

***Gathering Prayer**

Jesus, our sibling and friend, we confess that we do not always love one another. Our divisions and disagreements so often prevent us from knowing the joy of meaningful relationships. Even as we seek to follow your example, we forget that we are chosen and appointed by you to bring hope to a weary world. Help us renew our focus and live by your will...that we may follow you with joy in our hearts. Amen.

***Gathering Hymn: NCH 42 - " O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing"**

A READING OF THE WORD

First Reading: Acts 10:1-24, 34-36, 44-48

The first selection from Acts 10 contains Peter's bold revelation from both a vision he beheld from God earlier and in his encounter with the Roman centurion Cornelius. In the vision, God gave Peter food to eat that was both from clean and unclean animals, with the lesson that whatever God declared holy, others must not call profane. In Peter's conversation with Cornelius, a Gentile, Peter understood that Cornelius's own encounter with the Holy Spirit was valid and true. There was no need for Cornelius to become Jewish, he knew God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The larger context of the passage from Acts is the Jesus movement's official shift toward including Gentiles as well as Jews. Just a few verses earlier, Peter has preached on God's openness to all people: the phrase translated as "God shows no partiality" is literally, "God accepts no one's face" — in other words, God doesn't crassly play favorites, and so God's love isn't restricted to any in-group, but rather spills over, expanding to include supposed outsiders (Acts 10:34). Accordingly, Peter's question in this week's reading ("What can stop these people...from being baptized?" echoes the Ethiopian eunuch's rhetorical-yet-subversive remark, "What is to prevent me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:36).

10 1 There was a centurion named Cornelius in the Italian cohort stationed in Caesarea.

2 The household of Cornelius was full of God-fearing people; they prayed to God constantly and gave many charitable gifts to Jewish people in need.

3 One day at about three in the afternoon Cornelius had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God enter the house and call out, "Cornelius!" 4 Cornelius stared at the angel, completely terrified, and replied, "I'm at your service."

The angel said, "Your prayers and offerings to those who are poor are pleasing to God. 5 Send a deputation to Joppa and ask for a person named Simon who is called Peter. 6 He is staying with a tanner also named Simon, whose house is by the sea."

7 After the angel had departed, Cornelius called together three members of the household, 8 explained everything to them and sent them off to Joppa.

9 About noon the next day, shortly before they were to arrive in Joppa, Peter went up to the roof terrace to pray. 10 He was hungry and asked for something to eat. While the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. 11 Peter saw heaven standing open, and something like a large sheet being lowered to earth by its four corners. 12 It contained all kinds of animals, birds and reptiles.

13 A voice said, "Stand up, Peter. Make your sacrifice, and eat." 14 But Peter said, "I can't, my God. I have never eaten anything profane or unclean."

15 The voice spoke a second time and said, “Don’t call anything profane that God has made clean.”

16 This happened three times, then the sheet disappeared into the heavens.

17 Peter was still pondering the vision when Cornelius’ deputation arrived. They had asked directions to Simon’s house and were now standing at the door. 18 They called out to ask if Simon, known as Peter, was there. 19 While Peter reflected on the vision, the Spirit said, “A deputation is here to see you. 20 Hurry down, and don’t hesitate to go with them. I sent them here.”

21 He went down and said to the deputation, “I’m the one you are looking for. What do you want?” 22 They answered, “Cornelius, a centurion—an upright and God-fearing person, respected by the Jewish people—was directed by a holy angel to send for you. We are to bring you to the household of Cornelius to hear what you have to say.” 23 Peter invited them in and gave them hospitality.

Peter left the next day, accompanied by some of the coworkers from Joppa. 24 They reached Caesarea the day after. Cornelius was waiting for them, along with his household and many close friends.

34 So Peter said to them, “I begin to see how true it is that God shows no partiality—35 rather, that any person of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to God. 36 This is the message God has sent to the people of Israel, the Good News of peace proclaimed through Jesus Christ, who is Savior of all.

44 Peter had not finished speaking these words when the Holy Spirit descended upon all who were listening to the message.

45 The Jewish believers who had accompanied Peter were surprised that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also, 46 whom they could hear speaking in tongues and glorifying God. Then Peter asked, 47 “What can stop these people who have received the Holy Spirit, even as we have, from being baptized with water?”

48 So he gave orders that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. After this was done, they asked Peter to stay on with them for a few days.

Gospel Reading: John 15: 9-17

This is the sixth of the seven weeks of Eastertide, and the third of four weeks exploring Jesus' teachings about living in intimacy with God. Following directly on last week's passage in which Jesus casts himself as "the vine" and the disciples as the vine's fruitful branches, here Jesus elaborates on just what sort of "fruit" he has in mind: works of love for the sake of joy. The key to understanding the "farewell discourse" in John (chapters 14-17) is to remember that Jesus is engaged here in urgent pastoral care, assuring his distraught disciples that his imminent departure is not abandonment, but rather a move that will make way for an even deeper intimacy. Accordingly, the exhortations in this week's passage ("love one another") are expressions of care and reassurance. Hearing Jesus this way shifts the tone from mere imperative ("you must go and do such-and-such") to warm encouragement and consolation ("take heart, I'm not abandoning you — as you go and do such-and-such, we'll be together!"). This passage introduces a key theme in the farewell discourse — arguably the central theme, nothing less than the purpose of Jesus' mission in the first place. That theme is joy. In this passage, and again in chapters 16 and 17, Jesus frames joy as the ultimate goal of his ministry to the disciples, and by extension to the whole world: "that your joy may be complete" (John 15:11). Jesus has come to dwell with humanity, and now will lay down his life, and promises to equip the church and "draw all people" (John 12:32) — and he does these things out of love, he proclaims, a love for the sake of "complete joy."

- 15** 9 As my Abba has loved me,
so have I loved you.
Live on in my love.
- 10 And you will live on in my love
if you keep my commandments,
just as I live on in Abba God's love
and have kept God's commandments.
- 11 I tell you all this that my joy may be yours,
and your joy may be complete.
- 12 This is my commandment:
love one another as I have loved you.
- 13 There is no greater love
than to lay down one's life for one's friends.
- 14 And you are my friends,
if you do what I command you.
- 15 I no longer speak of you as subordinates,
because a subordinate doesn't know a superior's
business.
Instead I call you friends,
because I have made known to you
everything I have learned from Abba God.

16 It was not you who chose me;
it was I who chose you
to go forth and bear fruit.
Your fruit must endure,
so that whatever you ask of Abba God in my name
God will give you.
17 This command I give you: that you love one another.

**Reflection – “Courage and Trust” - The Rev. Nayiri Karjian,
Association General Minister,
Living Water Association, Ohio Northeast,
United Church of Christ**

WE RESPOND

*** Prayer of Response**

Abba God, we are friends to one another, not because we are so lovable and endearing, or because we choose to be with people who are like ourselves, but because you want us, as your children, to reach out with the best for other people, whoever they are and whatever their characteristics. You want your friends to enjoy a rich and healthy diet of love and joy, peace and patience, kindness and goodness. Thank you for making us your friends, and friends to one another.

By your Holy Spirit, feed our faith on Jesus the Christ so that we grow stronger in our loving concern for other people. Strengthen our faith so that Christ may live in us, so that we may live to please you, rather than try to please the world, and so that our priorities are yours, and not the greedy and selfish priorities of our society.

We marvel how your Spirit takes Jesus to those who are outsiders, those who belong to small or rejected groups in our society. May we welcome them as one with us. Lovingly wash us all clean and sow the risen Christ like a new seed, to sprout and grow in our lives. Amen.

***Hymn of Response NCH 347 - "Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ"**

Invitation to Share Our Tithes and Offerings

Jesus has appointed us to bear fruit that will last. Fruit that will bring love and justice. Joy and hope. Bring what you can; together, the gifts we offer can transform lives.

The Offertory – *Adam Petrosino*

***Presentation of Offerings – 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. Amen.

***Blessing of the Gifts**

Loving God, we remember that one of Christ’s most important commandments is loving one another. With these gifts, help us show this love in our words and actions, caring for those who are vulnerable and offering hope in times of despair. Amen.

***Call to Reconciliation**

Beautiful music, every note perfect, joining together in graceful harmony - this is what we imagine our lives to be. Yet our love is flat, our anger often sharp. Let us confess how we struggle to keep the measured beat of God's life-giving melody in our lives, even as we pray together saying,

***Prayer of Forgiveness**

Joy-giving God, we know who we are: people who hear the harmony of your grace and love in our souls, but sing off-key so often. We want to learn new songs, but those haunting tunes of our past mistakes run through our heads. We long to make a joyful noise to you, but the hurts inflicted on us, and the pain we have caused others, silence our voices.

Sing to us, Conductor of Grace: sing of your forgiveness, your hope, your love for us. Strike a chord of humility in our hearts so our eyes could see all you have done for us; and in seeing, we might believe how much you love us; and in believing, we would echo that new song of hope and life composed through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

- Silent Prayer -

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

One: Listen to the melody of the good news: Christ is risen, bringing joy into the world.

The One who was dead now lives, and wraps us in the delight of life forever with our God.

All: Now, our dirges have turned to joy;

our requiem has been rearranged as a hymn of hope;

our laments are lost in a cantata of praise.

Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Amen.

Choir Hymn: NCH 253 - "Yours Is the Glory, Resurrected One!"

"Yours Is the Glory, Resurrected One!"

Text: Edmond L. Budry, 1904

Source: The New Century Hymnal, 1993, trans.

Translation © 1993 The Pilgrim Press

Tune: JUDAS MACCABEUS 5.5.6.5.6.5.6.5. with refrain

Composer: G. F. Handel, 1751

Choir: Barbara Rossington, Bob Bucklew, and Keith Konet

Accompanist: Adam Petrosino

**COMMUNION LITURGY
A CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION**

Invitation

Leader:

We remind one another:

Jesus welcomes everyone at this table .

No one is turned away.

If you seek God's presence, come and eat.

If you are hungry for this spiritual food, come and eat.

If you have questions and doubts, come and eat.

If you feel unworthy, come and eat.

Unison:

This table is spread for all of us

that we each

might experience

God's abundant and unconditional love.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

Leader: May the God of creation choruses be with you!

Unison: And also with you!

Leader: God sings of hope and grace to your hearts, people of God!

Unison: We open them to be filled with the wonder of love.

Leader: God welcomes your songs of praise and joy.

Unison: We lift our hearts and voices in thanksgiving to the composer of all!

-Allow silence to speak for a few moments-

Leader:

Maestro of the Universe:
the song began low and quiet,
barely disturbing chaos,
but then it slowly grew in tempo
as you beat out the rhythm of creation,
light, sharp and clear,
like the blast of a trumpet;
the hills and valleys bursting forth
like the beat of the tympani;
water running clear and free
like arpeggios on a piano.
You composed all this, and more,
for those created in your image,
and filled with the music of your heart.
We thought your tunes burdensome,
and turned our ears to the discords
of sin, temptation, and death.
You wrote new tunes,
to the same words of hope and promise,
sending the prophets to play them
in the streets where we wandered,
but we continued to dance
to the music only we could hear.
So you sent Jesus to us,
loving us enough to send us
the very One who could bring us home.

So, with those who have sung the song
of grace and hope in every time and place,
and with all who are just learning the words,
we lift our voices in praise to you:

Unison:

**Holy, holy, holy are you, God of beauty and joy.
All the ends of the earth sing praises to you.
Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is the One who comes to sing a new song.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Leader:

As we remember Christ's life, death and resurrection,
as we seek to follow Christ's command to love,
we sing of that mystery we call faith:

Unison:

**The Singer was not silenced by death;
the Singer was raised to new life;
the Singer will come to lead us home to God.**

Table Prayer

**Now we come
as your friends
to your table.
Through the body
and blood of Christ,
given by the Spirit
in the bread and wine,
refresh those who are tired,
heal those who are sick,
and encourage those who are new.
We thank you for hearing us,
through Jesus our risen Lord,
who taught us to pray
saying...**

The Lord's Prayer (using "debts" and "debtors")

**Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory,
forever.
Amen.**

Breaking Bread and Pouring Wine

Leader: Gathered with his friends, Jesus took bread, broke it and said:

“This is my body, broken for you. Take and eat.”

And pouring the wine, Jesus said:

“This is my blood, spilled out for you. Do this in remembrance of me”

Call to the Feast

Leader:

This is the feast prepared for you.

Come and share for all is ready.

***Sharing of the Elements**

Leader:

Let us receive the gift of God, the Bread of Heaven

Unison:

We are one in Christ in the bread we share.

Leader:

Let us receive the gift of God, the Cup of Blessing.

Unison:

We are one in Christ in the cup we share.

***Blessing**

May the most precious body and blood

of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

keep and preserve you

unto life everlasting and eternal.

May you go in peace

and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Amen.

***Prayer of Thanksgiving following Communion**

And when our music has ended,
and there is only the plainsong of life forever
in the tender embrace of your peace,
we will gather at the Table once again,
hands and hearts, siblings all,
joining in the never-ending praise to you,
God in Community, Holy in One. Amen.

GOING FORTH

***Parting Hymn: NCH 43 - "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"**

***Commissioning**

One: As God has loved us,
Many: so we will go to love those despised by the world.

One: As Jesus has forgiven us,
**Many: we will go to forgive everyone who has hurt us
and to bring healing into their brokenness.**

One: As the Spirit calls us 'friends,'
**Many: so we will go to befriend those who are outcasts,
Those who are lonely, and those who are lost of our society.**

***Benediction**

Friends of God, as you leave this place, remember that God has chosen you to share the love you've found with a world of need. Go bear fruit that will last. Let your joyful hearts be signs of hope in these anxious times. **Amen.**

Postlude - Adam Petrosino *(please be seated for the Postlude)*

* * * * *

Credits

- (1) Call to Worship, Gathering Prayer, Tithes and Offering, Blessing of the Gifts, and the Benediction are adapted from *Chosen and Appointed: Service Prayers for the Sixth Sunday of Easter Year B*, written by Rev. Jacob Nault, Pastor of Union-Congregational Church in Waupun, WI. He also works alongside the UCC's Disabilities Ministries Board to provide music, liturgy, and other resources on issues of disability justice. Permission given to reproduce or adapt this material for use in services of worship or church education. All rights reserved.
- (2) The Prayer of Response is adapted from a portion of *Prayer of Intercession*, from the Lutheran Church of Australia's Sunday by Sunday website. [https://www.lca.org.au/sunday-by-sunday-\(lca-worship-resources\).html](https://www.lca.org.au/sunday-by-sunday-(lca-worship-resources).html). Reposted April, 2012 as *Prayers of the People: Easter 6 B* on the blog, *reWorship*. <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/>.
- (3) The Unison Invitation for Communion is adapted from *Communion Liturgy for Epiphany: Cinnamon Stars*, by the Rev Amy Pitton 2016 posted on Worship Well, a ministry of the Vermont Conference United Church of Christ <https://worshipwell.church/2016/01/21/communion-liturgy-for-epiphany/>
- (4) Portions of the Communion Liturgy - Breaking Bread and Pouring Wine and Call to the Feast - are adapted from *Liturgy w/communion for December 5, 2021 (Advent 2 - C)*, written by The Rev. Thom Shuman, and posted December 1, 2021, on the blog, *Lectionary Liturgies*. <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>
- (5) A portion of the Communion Liturgy - the Sharing of the Elements - is adapted from *Online Communion for Palm Sunday*, written by The Rev. Maren C. Tirabassi. ©2020 Maren Tirabassi, all publishing rights reserved. Permission for congregation to use in worship or educational settings, including streaming
- (6) The Table Prayer is adapted from a portion of *Prayer of Intercession*, from the Lutheran Church of Australia's Sunday by Sunday website. [https://www.lca.org.au/sunday-by-sunday-\(lca-worship-resources\).html](https://www.lca.org.au/sunday-by-sunday-(lca-worship-resources).html). Reposted April, 2012 as *Prayers of the People: Easter 6 B* on the blog, *reWorship*. <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/>.
- (7) Commissioning are adapted from *Liturgy and Communion for, May 5th, 2024, Easter 6-B*, written by Thom M. Shuman, and posted April 30th, 2024, on the blog, *Lectionary Liturgies*. <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>.
- (8) Permission to stream the music in this service obtained from ONE License #A-736636. All rights reserve

Ministers, All of Us

Scott Rosenstein, Pastor

Adam Petrosino, Music Director and Pianist

Keith Konet, Council President

Beverly Wurm, Administrative Assistant



NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

God is Still Speaking...

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you will find a spiritual home in this United Church of Christ congregation. WELCOME!

Zion United Church of Christ of Tremont is committed to reaching out to all people with the saving "Good News" of God's Love. To do this, we strive to attain a covenant relationship with people of all races, colors, ethnic origins, ages, sexual orientations and gender identity. We are also committed to grace-filled inclusivity in our worship, programs, membership, mission and social activities. We very strongly believe in outreach and community involvement, as well as ecumenical spiritual involvement within the surrounding community. We are committed to listening to history while joining with the future.

Tithes and Offerings - Checks and Money Orders can be made payable to: "Zion United Church of Christ" and placed in the offering basket or mailed to:

Zion United Church of Christ

c/o Keith Konet

1039 Bridlewood Drive

Copley, OH 44321

Questions: Contact Keith Konet at 330.604.6939

Adam D. Petrosino, Our Music Director/Pianist

We are so pleased to welcome Adam, and his partner, Kiel, to our community of faith here at Zion United Church of Christ of Tremont. We're grateful to you sharing your presence, faith, and your musical gifts with us. Adam can be reached by e-mail at A.D.Petrosino@gmail.com and by phone at 234-205-9397.

Administrative Assistant, Beverly Wurm

Beverly is keeping some limited Office Hours at church (2700 W. 14th Street/home). The days and hours are:

Winter Schedule:

Tuesday– 9am – 1pm

Wednesday – 10am-2 pm

Thursday – 9am – 1pm

Beverly can be reached at: zionchurchtremont@gmail.com or by phone at: 216-273-7561 (church) or 216-310-6810 (mobile)

OWLS Cleveland

(Older, Wiser, Livelier, Seniors)

Cinco de Mayo Celebration, Wednesday, May 8th, 2024, 11:30a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Zion UCC Church, 2700 W. 14th Street

Speaker: Dr. Ronan Factora, MD from The Center for Geriatric Medicine Cleveland Clinic Foundation.

50/50 and raffle baskets.

Call 216-310-6810 to RSVP for lunch.

Made possible through a Neighborhood Connections Grant.



**Cinco de Mayo, or the fifth of May, is a holiday that celebrates the date of the Mexican army's May 5, 1862 victory over France at the Battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War. The day, which falls on Friday, May 5 in 2023, is also known as Battle of Puebla Day. While it is a relatively minor holiday in Mexico, in the United States, Cinco de Mayo has evolved into a commemoration of Mexican culture and heritage, particularly in areas with large Mexican-American populations. – from History.com*

Please Remember in Prayer

- The Universal Church, its members and mission,
- The nation and all in authority, the leaders of our nation - federal, state, and local.
- For democracy and our democratic institutions and norms in the United States.
- The welfare of the world and the concerns of the local community.
- The interrelationship of Gospel values and civic engagement.
- Ministries of the United Church of Christ and of Zion Church.
- The leaders of our church: local, regional, and national, including The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ. We also pray for our Living Water Association UCC, Association General Minister, The Rev. Nayiri Karjian, and Association Faith in Action Minister, The Rev. Michael Howard.
- The ministers and missionaries of the world.
- Those who are refugees and immigrants.
- For racial and religious justice and reconciliation in the United States and around the world.
- Mother Earth and the global reflection on climate disruption.
- For peace, justice, and freedom throughout the world and – and for an end to violence and bloodshed particularly for the peoples of Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Israel and Gaza.
- The people of Haiti.
- According to data from the Gun Violence Archive a total of 164 mass shooting incidents occurred in the US in 2024 as of May 1st.

Mass shooting incidents in the past 10 years in the US:

2023 – 656 (While mass shooting incidents increased slightly since 2022, 2023 has shown an 8-10% overall DECREASE in deaths and injuries from gun violence. Some cities saw 20%+ decreases.)

2022 - 646

2021 - 689

2020 - 610

2019 - 414

2018 - 335

2017 - 247

2016 - 383

2015 - 332

2014 - 272

While we pray for the families and friends of those whose lives have been taken in violent acts – and we pray for those injured in body, mind, soul, and spirit—and for their neighborhoods and communities across the United States – We know that our words and prayers are not enough. We must repent for our collective inaction and commit to tirelessly working toward meaningful gun violence prevention.

- For those affected by the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic and the various variant surges: for all those who are infected and/or sick, and those who are grieving, for all who are affected, all around the world, for essential workers and frontline workers...we pray for their comfort, for safety, for health, and for wholeness.
- The residents and management of the San Sofia Apartments who share a campus with us.
- Those anticipating surgery, recovering from surgery, or undergoing medical procedures, tests, or treatments.
- Those living in assisted living or in a nursing home
- Those who are homebound and those who are caregivers
- Those who suffer or are in any trouble, and the departed.
- Those on our church prayer list:
 - Patti Augustine and family including Noah, Kate, Lucy, and Max along with Patti's brother Dave doing well after another procedure).
 - Robert O Bucklew (*Bob Bucklew's Dad*) is residing in Senior Living. Robert recently celebrated his 91st Birthday.
 - The family, loved ones, and friends of Betty Funk.
 - Marian Heffernan (*neighbor to Scott and Bob*)
 - Ken Kauffman & friends: Nim Bryant, Isadora Almaro, Joe & Janelle Reardon, and Nancy Moore's neighbor - also Ivory, Ken's downstairs neighbor.
 - Maddie (the young daughter of Scott's friend) prayers for her, her parents, Rachel and Ron, and her younger brother.
 - Keith Konet and family (including granddaughter, Jocelyn Paulette, and her parents, Kevin & Jacqui - and for Keith's brother -in-law Bob Naugle
 - The family, loved ones, and friends of Elaine Lukacs.

- Patricia Matheny Kellogg and family (*including prayers for her Cousin Paul Kevin McCray*). Also Patricia's friend, Sue Renovitz and Heather diagnosed with thyroid cancer.
- Our Music Director & Pianist, Adam Petrosino, and his partner, Kiel.
- Our Pastor Scott Rosenstein
- Barbara Rossington and Barb's cousin, Robert
- Debbie Webb
- Beverly Wurm and family

Theologian's Almanac for the Week of May 5, 2024:

Adapted from SALT's "Theologian's Almanac," a weekly selection of important birthdays, holidays, and other upcoming milestones worth marking

<https://www.saltproject.org/progressive-christian-blog/2024/4/30/theologians-almanac-for-week-of-may-5-2024>

May 5 is Cinco de Mayo, commemorating not Mexico's Independence Day, as is often mistakenly thought, but rather the unlikely victory of an outmatched Mexican fighting force over France in the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. France went on to win the larger conflict, occupying Mexico for a few years — but the earlier battle became a point of Mexican pride and a symbol of resistance against colonial aggression. In the 1960s, Mexican-Americans activists claimed the day in the context of the Civil Rights Movement. And in the 1980s, beer companies heavily commercialized the holiday in the United States, coming under criticism for promoting racial stereotypes along the way. Many today call for a recovery of Cinco de Mayo's roots in anticolonial resistance, civil rights, and social justice.

May 5 is also Easter Sunday for many Orthodox Christians in Europe, Africa, and Middle East. The Orthodox Church calculates the date of Easter according to the Julian Calendar — as opposed to the Gregorian Calendar, which Pope Gregory instituted in 1582 in order to incorporate advances in astronomy and timekeeping.

May 5 is also the birthday of Danish theologian and philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, born in Copenhagen in 1813. Largely unknown outside of Denmark during his own time, his work was rediscovered in the twentieth century, and has widely influenced not only theology and philosophy, but also psychology, literature, and literary criticism. Here's a taste of Kierkegaard's lively, provocative, often ironic style:

"The matter is quite simple. The Bible is very easy to understand. But we Christians are a bunch of scheming swindlers. We pretend to be unable to understand it because we know very well that the minute we understand we are obliged to act accordingly. Take any words in the New Testament and forget everything except pledging yourself to act accordingly. My God, you will say, if I do that my whole life will be ruined. How would I ever get on in the world?"

"Herein lies the real place of Christian scholarship. Christian scholarship is the Church's prodigious invention to defend itself against the Bible, to ensure that we can continue to be good Christians without the Bible coming too close. Oh, priceless scholarship, what would we do without you? Dreadful it is to fall into the hands of the living God. Yes, it is even dreadful to be alone with the New Testament."

May 5, in the evening, is also the beginning of Yom HaShoah, “Holocaust Remembrance Day”; the observance ends on the evening of May 6. It’s a day of remembrance, mourning, and honor, recognizing both the approximately six million Jews killed by the Nazis (and their collaborators), and the heroism of the many Jews (and their allies) who, with courage and creativity, resisted.

May 8 is the Feast Day of Julian of Norwich, an English anchoress who experienced a vision in 1373, and wrote about it in *Showings or Revelations of Divine Love* — the earliest surviving book by a woman in the English language.

“And in this he showed me a little thing,” she wrote, “the quantity of a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand, as it seemed. And it was as round as any ball. I looked upon it with the eye of my understanding, and thought, ‘What may this be?’ And it was answered generally thus, ‘It is all that is made.’ I marveled how it might last, for I thought it might suddenly have fallen to nothing for littleness. And I was answered in my understanding: It lasts and ever shall, for God loves it. And so have all things their beginning by the love of God. In this little thing I saw three properties. The first is that God made it. The second that God loves it. And the third, that God keeps it.”

Julian’s most famous line may be her most consoling (and a good word for our times today!): “but all will be well, and all will be well, and every kind of thing will be well.”

May 8 is also believed to be the birthday of poet Phillis Wheatley, born in West Africa in 1753. Kidnapped at the age of eight and put on a slave ship, the *Phillis*, she was sold to a prominent tailor in Boston, John Wheatley, and was manumitted in 1778 — two years after George Washington invited her to his headquarters to meet her, so impressed was he with her poetry. She rarely wrote about herself or her life as a slave — with the notable exception of “On Being Brought from Africa to America,” a poem in which Wheatley pointedly admonishes “Christians” that “Negroes,” too, may “join th’ angelic train.”

**On Sunday, May 5, 2024 we welcome to Zion Church
The Rev. Nayiri Karjian, Association General Minister,
Living Water Association
Ohio Northeast United Church of Christ**

330.940.2220 x 102 | nayiri.agm@livingwaterone.org

Nayiri has been serving as the General Minister of the Association since February 2018. An Armenian Christian born and raised in Aleppo, Syria, Nayiri graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Haigazian University, and Near East School of Theology, Beirut Lebanon; and with a Master of Divinity degree from Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, PA. Since her ordination in 1985 she has served UCC congregations in Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Connecticut, Wisconsin, Chicago, Houston, St Louis, and Colorado Springs. Nayiri has shared her gifts both as settled and transitional Minister, including numerous board and committees on the UCC National Setting.



Contact Nayiri for:

- Pastoral care and consultation to pastors and lay leaders.
- Guest preaching and worship leadership
- When your pastor resigns or retires
- Issues of Committee on Ministry, including Members in Discernment
- Pastoral Excellence and Communities of Practice
- Installations, ordinations, church anniversary celebrations, etc.
- Worship planning/development
- Visioning, Revisioning and Assessment
- Governance restructuring
- Conflict resolution
- Leadership development
- Church closures and Legacy/Forever Church