



Fifth Sunday of Easter

Holy Eucharist B

7 May 2023

**The Episcopal Church of the
Good Shepherd in Athens, Ohio**

Seeking to know and serve Christ
in loving service to the campus, the
community, and the world.

Today's printed [Order of Worship](#)

Lessons

Lessons for Fifth Sunday of Easter

New Testament – Acts of the Apostles 7: 55-60

Psalm – 31: 1-5, 15-16 (Sung)

Epistle – I Peter 2: 2-10

Gospel – John 14: 1-14

<https://www.lectionarypage.net>



The Collect

ALMIGHTY 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.

The Gospel



John 14:1-14

JESUS SAID, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.”

Gospel Engagement Question:

How comforting do you find Jesus' words in today's Gospel?

The Sermon

A Living Commencement Speech

Graduation is a wonderful and exciting time in a person's life. It can also be a time of nervous anxiety and fear as the graduate steps out of one world into another. From high school to college, work, or apprenticeship, or from the world of academia to the professional working world where they are expected to apply what they have learned, or from undergraduate to graduate level academia, whatever transition they are making, this is a time where no matter how well a person has done academically, socially, or politically, they now face an unknowable future where anything can and will happen.

This powerful transition is acknowledged during commencement ceremonies through the presence of the commencement speaker. It is the honor and responsibility of the speaker to offer the graduating class some comfort and inspiration to embrace the next phase of their life's journey. Perhaps you can still remember a particularly meaningful speech given at a graduation ceremony you attended.

Many commencement speakers handle this responsibility by sharing lessons they have learned from their lives, or some bit of wisdom that sustained them during difficulties they may have faced. In 2022 entertainer Charlie Berens told University of Wisconsin Madison winter semester graduates how graduating during times of economic uncertainty can be an opportunity to use creativity to make your way in the world. In her 2014 commencement speech to Portsmouth College, Shondra Rhimes encouraged the graduating class to be doers not dreamers, because doers are more likely to accomplish something. Athens native Dr. Atul Gawande told the 2012 graduates of Williams College to learn how to master what he called the rescue: to admit when something goes wrong and do whatever you can to fix or repair it. David Foster Wallace told Kenyan College's 2005 graduating class to learn how to pay attention to what is going on around you, because that is reality. Will Farrell told University of Southern California's graduating class of 2017, "you will never be successful until you learn to give beyond yourself. Enjoy the process of your search without succumbing to the pressure of the result." 2011 graduates from Northwest University heard Stephen Colbert tell them, "Life is an improvisation. You have no idea what is going to happen next, and you are mostly just making it up as you go along." A little closer to home, OU's graduate commencement address on Friday featured the message to consider the power of the stories we each tell, because story has the power to divide and heal.

I could easily go on, but you get the idea; commencement speakers take many different approaches to inspire and encourage the next generation

of graduates, and sometimes we can all benefit from their wisdom and message.

Today's Gospel has Jesus giving a speech, and answering questions that address the same feelings associated with a major life change. Even though we are still in the season of Easter, today's Gospel takes place before Jesus' death and resurrection. What we heard today is a portion of John's Gospel that happened the night before Jesus was arrested. Jesus and his disciples were sharing their last meal together. He had finished washing his disciples' feet and was trying to prepare them for the major transition of the end of his earthly ministry. Jesus was going to leave them, he was going to die, be buried, and rise again. This is difficult to understand, and we can recognize in both Thomas and Philip their anxiety and frustration as they struggled to imagine a future and a life without Jesus being physically present with them, directing them, showing them where to go, teaching them. In his speech Jesus was trying to tell his disciples, like in many commencement speeches, all their time together was intended to prepare them for this moment and all that will come after. Of course, there was no way to know exactly what would happen next, there was no book he could give them that would tell them what to do, no GPS that could direct them on where to go, all they had were his example, stories and words, stories.

The words Jesus gave them are immensely comforting: *do not let your heart be troubled*. Jesus knew the news he gave his disciples would cause confusion, fear, anxiety, and sadness. That is normal and natural and should not be ignored. At the same time, Jesus also advised to not let those fears, anxieties, or sadness get in the way of being present with him in those final hours. Anxiety for the future can prohibit being able to learn or receive what wisdom or information is being given in the present moment, which ironically, can be helpful when the future does arrive. That is what pretty much every commencement speaker tries to say.

Last Sunday I announced I have accepted a new call to another parish and will be leaving Church of the Good Shepherd. As I've listened to many of you respond, I have heard happiness for my husband and me, sadness, and some anxiety about what the future will hold for you. All these responses are normal and natural, and I do not want to belittle any of them. They make me grateful because they are evidence of our shared love for one another. At the same time, I believe we can all do well to hear and receive the message Jesus gives in today's Gospel. Perhaps, his words might be especially just for us as we enter our own time of transition: "Do not let your heart be troubled. Believe."

Believe in God. Believe that no matter what happens to either you or me, God has us and God holds us in the palm of God's hand. God isn't going to drop us. God's got us.

Believe in Jesus, who died and was raised to new life, resurrection life. Resurrection life brings healing to what has been broken, it brings renewal to what is tired and worn down or burnt out, it brings hope to the overwhelmed, it restores what has been removed. Resurrection life can help us see the opportunities in challenges and gives us courage to face the unknown.

Believe in the Holy Spirit, who has been with us and will continue to be with us whether I am here as your rector or not. Those of you who were part of the discernment process when I was called to come here as your rector eight years ago remember how strongly we all sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit who called us together because we both were ready for a season of reaching out and being present with our neighbors. The Holy Spirit is still here, despite all the changes and transitions, and will never leave.

The good news is, unlike graduation, we have more than a day or two to make our transition and can spend a few more weeks together. I hope these weeks will be dedicated to expressing our gratitude for each other, remembering all we have been through together, continuing to care for each other, and doing the work necessary to celebrate and grieve together. We have the opportunity to be a living commencement speech to each other, in what we say and what we do. Because all this is holy work, work we do with the Holy Spirit, work that helps us to grow closer to God and to each other, which is the best we can do in any time. Alleluia.



Sermon Engagement Question:

Do you remember a commencement speech you felt was inspiring?

What made it inspiring for you?

Fifth Sunday of Easter, 7 May 2023 – Sermon by Rev. Deborah Woolsey, Church of the Good Shepherd, Athens, Ohio

Please include in your prayers

IN OUR WORLD, we pray for Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury, and for Michael, our Presiding Bishop; we pray for peace with justice throughout the

Middle East. We pray for all families and law enforcement affected by gun violence. We pray for the victims of the coronavirus. We pray for all people affected by natural and environmental disasters. We pray for the people who are suffering from war, especially the people of Ukraine, and we pray for all asylum seekers, immigrants and refugees. We pray for Joe our President, Kamala our Vice-President, Mike, our Governor, the Supreme Court and the members of Congress.

IN OUR DIOCESE, we pray for our Provisional Bishop Wayne, the search process for a new bishop, and for Kenneth, Nedi, and Wendell our assisting bishops.

IN OUR PARISH, we pray for Good Shepherd's continued growth, for our Rector Rev. Deborah Woolsey, for our Associate Priests, Rev. Leslie Flemming, and Rev. David McCoy, for our ministry to students, the university, and the community.

THOSE WHOM OUR PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED: Al S., Bud and Carol, Chris L., Jean R., Lia, Miriam, Sharon, R.C., Chuck Brient, Douglas and Gwynne Campbell, Ann Carswell, Zelma Coleman, Lee Kembell-Cook, Phyllis and Dick Dean, Richard DeNune, Norm Fox, Honor Haddox, Debbie Hunsberger, John Jefferson, Peter Kachenko and family, Christine McGinn, Jeff Maiden, Rev. Ed Payne, Dan and Nancy Reedy, Virginia Richards, Jack Roach, Bonnie Savage, Katyana Sayrs, Annette Secoy, Dale Showman, Michael Vaughn, Joanne Worstall and we pray for all who care for them. **

ALTAR FLOWERS: The Altar Flowers are given in thanksgiving for my daughter Connie Gilkey's birthday by Lois Wagner.

BIRTHDAYS: Anne Braxton (5/7), Doug Dygas (5/12)

FOR THE DECEASED: Tom Walker, Scot Brown

** Full names are normally not published online. However for the Sunday 10:30 service we will publish full names unless requested otherwise. If you have a name to be added to the prayer list, Lynn Graham maintains this information. Lynn may be reached at **740-593-5098** or grahammowery@aol.com.

At-Home Worship

Christ Church Cathedral Cincinnati live streams its services Sundays at 10 a.m. These are saved and can be watched anytime later.

Washington D C -- there's much to explore at the the National Cathedral's online portal. <https://cathedral.org/worship/>

Coming up on the Calendar

Tuesday, May 9, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl Group (Nehls)

Sunday, May 14, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

Thursday, May 18, 7:00 p.m. - - Vestry Meeting

Sunday, May 21, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist (Discretionary Sunday)

Tuesday, May 23, 9:30 a.m. - - Prayer Shawl Group (Nehls)

Wednesday, May 24, 11:00 a.m. - - Julie Nehl's Service

Sunday, May 28, 10:30 a.m. - - Holy Eucharist

LOOKING AHEAD:

Wednesday, May 24, 11:00 a.m. - - Julie Nehl's Service



Coffee Hour Schedule

May 14 Dana Carlson
May 21 Alex Buckley
May 28 Anne Walker

Dates Open for Altar Flowers

In June - 4th, 18, 25th.

[To Altar Flower Procedure](#)

Notes & Announcements (additional items in the Friday Bulletin)

The 10:30 service is now streamed live. The



streaming stops before taking communion out of privacy concerns.

Find it on Facebook [HERE](#).



Final Update to Covid Memorial

Now that Covid-19 is no longer considered a national emergency, we will be making one final modification to our Covid Memorial to make it more stable and permanent and continue to use the parts of the Memorial that are beautiful and symbolic. You are invited to be part of this process.

Friday May 12

You are invited to help Michael remove the stained-glass panels on the sides of the archways and then help him pound the archways into the ground. This will stabilize the archways, so they won't fall over in the wind.

Sunday May 14

Please join us after the Sunday service to put the pieces of stained glass into new steppingstones that will be placed beneath the archways. The steppingstones will hold the pieces of stained glass that represent the diversity of people impacted by the virus and our separation during the pandemic.

* the pieces of glass have sharp edges, so we suggest wearing gardening gloves.

We hope you will help us with this final change to our memorial, which continues to attract people from outside our community.



Celebration of the Life of **Julia J. Nehls** May 24, 11:00 a.m.

After working out multiple different schedules, the date that was found to work the best for Julie Nehl's service is Wednesday, May 24 at 11:00 am.

Details will be forthcoming about the reception and a link to watch the service live online.

[Julia's obituary.](#)

For Bishop Transition News and Updates

[-- Follow this link --](#)

If you want to help the folks who have been negatively impacted by climate disaster and war anywhere in the world (including Ukraine) please consider contributing to [Episcopal Relief and Development \(ERD\)](#) which is the official ministry of the Episcopal Church.



This morning's altar flowers. (Photo, Michael Luelloff)



I am not sure what this perennial is called, but it's little flowers really jump out visually. Ted Foster



Contacts, Information

Quick Links

[Parish website](#)

Pandemic Notes:

[Link to the DSO guidelines for in-person worship](#)

[Sermons](#)

[Parish calendar](#)

[Staff](#)

[Campus Interest](#)

[E-News Guidelines
and Back Issues](#)

[Diocese Southern Ohio](#)

[Bishop Transition](#)

[\[E\]Connections](#)

[Episcopal News Service](#)

[Episcopal Journal & Café](#)

In light of local conditions, we still recommend wearing masks inside the church building **regardless** of vaccination status.

Office Hours: 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Masks recommended.

The **Church Building** is not open for public meetings and gatherings but during office hours the thrift shop and chapel are available for individuals. Masks recommended.

CrossRoads Café is temporarily closed.

Contact Information

For pastoral needs, please contact The Rev. Deborah Woolsey at 937-689-8895 (cell) or 740-593-6877 (church), or by e-mail at revdebwoolsey@gmail.com.

To find out more about Good Shepherd and other matters, please contact Alex Buckley, Senior Warden, at 740-593-5513 or by e-mail at macbuck@yahoo.com.

For maintenance matters, please leave a note at the office or contact Dana Carlson, Junior Warden, at 740-664-2022 or by e-mail at carlsondana@hotmail.com.

[DONATE to Good Shepherd](#)

The above takes you to the Parish page where you can find instructions or donate on-line via PayPal. If you have a preference, please indicate on the the "Add special instructions to the seller" section the purpose of the donation -- e.g. organ fund, plate collection, etc.

Check out the

For emergencies, please call
The Rev. Deborah Woolsey at
937-689-8895.

NON-emergency messages
can be left on the church's
answering machine (740-593-
6877).

**The parish office
administrator** is Barbara
Martin (740-593-6877) or
barbara@chogs.org.

**The Episcopal Church of the
Good Shepherd**, 64 University
Terrace, Athens OH 45701

740-593-6877
chogs@chogs.org
www.chogs.org

Church's
[YouTube
Channel.](#)

LIKE us on Facebook
[Episcopal Church of
the Good Shepherd
45701](#)

Office Hours:
Masks recommended.

10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Monday - Thursday
740-593-6877
chogs@chogs.org

Blessings !

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