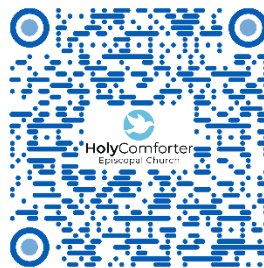




Holy Comforter Episcopal Church
Spring, Texas
The Fifth Sunday of Easter
April 28, 2024
The Holy Eucharist: Rite One
8:00 a.m.

Welcome one and all this morning! Welcome long-time parishioners and visitors alike. If you are new here, we would love to get to know you a bit better. Please fill out a brief welcome form at hcec.link/welcome or scan this QR code



Please ask an usher for an assisted listening device to help hear the service.

Our Mission

We worship God, love our neighbors, create community, follow Jesus, and steward our resources.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING ACCLAMATION (BCP p. 323)

Celebrant: Alleluia. Christ is risen.

People: **The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia**

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ saith:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

SONG OF PRAISE (BCP p. 324)

Glory be to God on high,
and on earth peace, good will towards men.
We praise thee, we bless thee,
we worship thee,
we glorify thee,
we give thanks to thee for thy great glory,
O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.
O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ;
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father,
have mercy upon us.
For thou only art holy;
thou only art the Lord;
thou only, O Christ,
with the Holy Ghost,
art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

COLLECT OF THE DAY (BCP p. 325)

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And with thy spirit.**

Celebrant: Let us pray.

O Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life: Grant us so perfectly to know thy Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow his steps in the way that leadeth to eternal life; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

THE LESSONS

First Lesson: Acts 8:26-40

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

²⁶An 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.) ²⁷So 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 ²⁸and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” ³⁰So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” ³¹He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³²Now 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. ³³In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” ³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” ³⁵Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As 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?” ³⁸He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When 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. ⁴⁰But 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.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 22:24-30 *Read responsively by whole verse.*

²⁴My 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!”

²⁶All 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.**

²⁸To 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.**

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

Second Lesson: 1 John 4:7-21

A Reading from the First letter of John.

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. ¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶So 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. ¹⁷Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸There 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. ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰Those 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, cannot love God whom they have not seen. ²¹The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

Lector: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel: John 15:1-8

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

People: **Glory be to thee, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to his disciples,] ¹"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide 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. ⁵I 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. ⁶Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

Celebrant: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise be to thee, O Christ.**

THE SERMON

Please be seated as you are able for the sermon.

A moment of reflection.

THE NICENE CREED (BCP p. 326) – *Please stand.*

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,

the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.

Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;

he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the

dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (BCP p. 328)

Please use the form at www.bcec.link/pray to add a concern to our prayers.

Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church and the world.

Almighty and everliving God, who in thy holy Word hast taught us to make prayers, and supplications, and to give thanks for all men: Receive these our prayers which we offer unto thy divine Majesty, beseeching thee to inspire continually the Universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord; and grant that all those who do confess thy holy Name may agree in the truth of thy holy Word, and live in unity and godly love.

Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all bishops and other ministers, that they may, both by their life and doctrine, set forth thy true and lively Word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy Sacraments.

And to all thy people give thy heavenly grace, and especially to this congregation here present; that, with meek heart and due reverence, they may hear and receive thy holy Word, truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life.

We beseech thee also so to rule the hearts of those who bear the authority of government in this and every land, that they may be led to wise decisions and right actions for the welfare and peace of the world.

Open, O Lord, the eyes of all people to behold thy gracious hand in all thy works, that, rejoicing in thy whole creation, they may honor thee with their substance, and be faithful stewards of thy bounty.

And we most humbly beseech thee, of thy goodness, O Lord, to comfort and succor especially, Bob, Melanie, Barbara, Rick, Ann, Bob, Kathleen, Rosa, Frank, Lisa, and Don, and all those who, in this transitory life, are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.

Please offer additional petitions and thanksgivings at this time.

And we also bless thy holy Name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear, especially Mae, beseeching thee to grant them continual growth in thy love and service; and to grant us grace so to follow the good examples of all thy saints, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom.

Grant these our prayers, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only mediator and Advocate. **Amen.**

CONFESSION OF SIN (BCP p. 330)

Celebrant: Let us humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God.

Silence may be kept.

Celebrant and People:

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against thee
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved thee with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of thy Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in thy will,
and walk in thy ways, to the glory of thy Name. Amen.

Celebrant:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all those who with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hear the Word of God to all who truly turn to him.

If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the perfect offering for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. *1 John 2:1-2*

THE PEACE (BCP p. 332)

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

***People:* And with thy spirit.**

Offertory Sentence (BCP p. 343)

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.

Ephesians 5:2

Place wooden tokens and financial gifts in the offering plate. You may make a gift online in Church Center at www.bcec.link/give or text a dollar amount to 84321.

Please stand as the gifts of bread, wine, and money are brought to the altar.

The Great Thanksgiving (BCP p. 333)

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

***People:* And with thy spirit.**

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

***People:* We lift them up unto the Lord.**

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

***People:* It is meet and right so to do.**

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God.

But chiefly are we bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; for he is the true Paschal Lamb, who was sacrificed for us, and has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he has destroyed death, and by his rising to life again he has won for us everlasting life.

Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying,

SANCTUS: (BCP p. 334)

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts:

Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.

Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High.

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Please remain standing or kneel as you are able.

All glory be to thee, Almighty God, our heavenly Father, for that thou, of thy tender mercy, didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death and sacrifice, until his coming again.

For in the night in which he was betrayed, he took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat, this is my Body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Likewise, after supper, he took the cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of this; for this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me."

Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, according to the institution of thy dearly beloved Son our Savior Jesus Christ, we, thy humble servants, do celebrate and make here before thy divine Majesty, with these thy holy gifts, which we now offer unto thee, the memorial thy Son hath commanded us to make; having in remembrance his blessed passion and precious death, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; rendering unto thee most hearty thanks for the innumerable benefits procured unto us by the same.

And we most humbly beseech thee, O merciful Father, to hear us; and, of thy almighty goodness, vouchsafe to bless and sanctify, with thy Word and Holy Spirit, these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine; that we, receiving them according to thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood.

And we earnestly desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; most humbly beseeching thee to grant that, by the merits and death of thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we, and all thy whole Church, may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion.

And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto thee; humbly beseeching thee that we, and all others who shall be partakers of this Holy Communion, may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction, and made one body with him, that he may dwell in us, and we in him.

And although we are unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service, not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offenses, through Jesus Christ our Lord;

By whom, and with whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. **AMEN.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER (BCP p. 336)

Celebrant: And now, as our Savior Christ hath taught us, we are bold to say,

**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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD (BCP p. 337)

Celebrant: Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People: therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS (BCP p. 337)

We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

The minister receives the Sacrament in both kinds, and then immediately delivers it to the people. The Bread and the Cup are given to the communicants with these words:

The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven. [*Amen.*]

The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation. [*Amen.*]

All who seek God's blessing are welcome. If you are not yet baptized, or do not wish to receive for any reason, cross your arms over your chest and you will be given a blessing. All baptized Christians are invited to receive the bread and wine. To receive a wafer of bread, extend your hands with your palms up, to receive a gluten free wafer, extend

your hands with your palms down. You may either drink from the chalice or dip the bread in the wine. If you wish to be baptized, please let John know.

Prayer partners are available in the chapel to pray with you about anything on your heart.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER (BCP p. 339) *Please stand or kneel.*

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Celebrant and People:

Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost feed us, in these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favor and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs, through hope, of thy everlasting kingdom. And we humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. **Amen.**

BLESSING

DISMISSAL (BCP P. 340)

Celebrant: Alleluia, alleluia. Let us go forth into the world rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People: **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.**

Altar Flowers

The altar flowers are given to the glory of God
and in memory of Marylou Otto by Sheila Otto.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

Bob Lowry – healing
Ann Rodriguez – healing
Rick Sadler – healing
Barbara Lafreniere – healing
Bob & Kathleen Gissler – healing
Rosa Garcia – healing
Frank Duffy – healing
Melanie Coe- healing
Lisa & Don Taylor – healing
Mae Smith – received by God in death

VESTRY PERSON OF THE DAY – Shawn Henners

Time and Talent Commitment Campaign: The stewardship committee invites everyone, regardless of age, to commitment your time and gifts to “worshiping God, loving our neighbors, creating community, following Jesus and stewarding our resources”. Please use this online link to make your commitment: <https://www.holycomforterspring.org/2024-commitment>

Time and Talent Celebration: On Sunday May 19th, join us for a catered lunch after the 10 AM Worship Service to celebrate Pentecost and our commitments of Time and Talents to Holy Comforter’s mission.

Relational Evangelism Workshop: Jesus asks his followers to share the good news about him to others. Join our five-week course to grow in your evangelism. There are two parts to the workshop each week, an online component and an in-person session. The in-person portion will be offered at multiple times each week. Sign up for the online portion at www.hcec.link/pathwright and sign up for one of the in-person sessions at www.hcec.link/signup.

Blessing Bags for Salyer’s Elementary: Holy Comforter is a partner church for Salyer's Elementary (a Title 1 school located in Spring ISD). We are providing Blessing Bags to all the teachers and staff for the upcoming Teacher Appreciation Week (May 6 - May 10). If you are interested in helping, please reach out to Linda Astala, astala.linda@gmail.com

National Day of Prayer: The church will be open for prayer from 9am-4pm on May 2. All are welcome to stop by and pray.

Save the Date: Feast of the Ascension Holy Eucharist, Thursday, May 9th at 7 PM.

THIS MONTH’S LOVE IN ACTION

For the month of April we will be supporting YES to YOUTH – Montgomery County. This organization provides several important resources to youth and families such as crisis intervention, counseling and a safe and nurturing home. To view the full list of items to consider donating, please visit www.hcec.link/announcements.

WEEKLY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday 8 am – Rite I
Sunday 10 am – Rite II (Music, Nursery)
Wednesday 9 am – Morning Prayer Rite II – Chapel

WEEKLY FORMATION CLASSES

Various Times

Discipleship Small Groups, www.hcec.link/dsg
Relational Evangelism Workshop

Sunday 9 am

Word Made Fresh Book Study – Ed Bldg. Room 2

Sunday 11 am

Episcopal Youth Community – EYC 6th-12th grade
Parenting with Grace – Ed Bldg. Room 2
Weaving God's Promises for Kids – Ed Bldg. Room 1

MONTHLY MEETINGS & GATHERINGS

Lunch Bunch – First Sunday after 10 AM service
Book Club – Third Tuesday 7 pm – Zoom
Tackle Life Market – Second Saturday 9am-2pm

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