LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY

WELCOME VISITORS AND NEW MEMBERS! We would love to welcome you as a new member of our family of faith at IPC. Please indicate your interest by contacting Stacy Pulliam at the church office, 933-3731. "Like" us on Facebook at IPCBirmingham.

YOUR OFFERING IS APPRECIATED. Offerings may be submitted online, by mail, or through the ShelbyNEXT app. As always, thank you for your gifts!

A NEW COFFEE HOUR is now held in the cloister of the church each Sunday following the 8:45 am service. We welcome anyone who wants to come to the church between 9:45 - 10:45 am for coffee and fellowship. We look forward to these opportunities to reconnect with one another!

NEXT SUNDAY AT IPC: May 9 is High School Senior and Senior Acolyte Recognition Sunday and Children's Fresh Air Farm Appeal Sunday. At the 11 am worship service, we will recognize our soon-to-be high school graduates and all of our senior acolytes for their many years of service to the congregation. At both morning services, we'll recognize the Children's Fresh Air Farm and the impact of its ministry over the last 98 years.

CHILDREN'S FRESH AIR FARM: Join friends and Bluff Park neighbors Saturday, May 8, from 9 am – 1 pm to help get the farm ready for a summer of fun. Work teams will plant seeds and vegetables, clean shrub beds, spread mulch and complete other assorted gardening tasks. Bring reusable water bottle; refills and snacks provided. Sign up at ipc-usa.org/connect so we can plan according to volunteer participation.

CHORAL EVENSONG FOR THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD: Join us in the sanctuary on Sunday, May 16, at 4:00 pm for a Choral Evensong with the IPC Choir. The service includes music by David Hogan, T. Tertius Noble, William Smith, and William Byrd. Rev. David Seamon will be the Officiant and Cantor.

TALK WITH THE PREACHER

David is available for conversations by appointment Please email dseamon@ipc-usa.org or call 205-933-3730 to arrange an appointment.

CONNECT WITH IPC'S PASTORAL & PROGRAM STAFF

Rev. Dr. Steve Goyer
Interim Pastor
sgoyer@ipc-usa.org

Rev. Susan Clayton
Associate Pastor of Adult and Community Ministries
sclayton@ipc-usa.org

Rev. David Seamon
Associate Pastor of Faith Formation
dseamon@ipc-usa.org

Dr. Jeff McLelland
Director of Fine Arts & Music -
jmclelland@ipc-usa.org

Catherine Goudreau
Director of Children and Youth
CFAF Programming Director
cgoudreau@ipc-usa.org

Kay Roller
Director of Childrens Faith Formation
kroller@ipc-usa.org

Stacy Pulliam
Director of Member Engagement and Assimilation
spulliam@ipc-usa.org

Kenya Glasco
Nursery Coordinator-
kglasco@ipc-usa.org

Kathy Leaver
Director of IPC Day School
kleaver@ipc-usa.org

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Rev. Susan A. Clayton	Associate Pastor, Congregational Care and Adult Faith Formation
Rev. David J. Seamon	Associate Pastor, Faith Formation
Sean Vanlandingham	Worship Leader, Acoustic Guitar
Billy Gant	Acoustic Guitar
Fred Rogan	Steel Guitar
Annie Norris	Vocals
Nick Mathes	Sound

Cover: Detail from *Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch*, a fresco painted 1952-1960 by Herbert Boeckl (1894-1966) in Seckau Abbey, Austria.

Much of Boeckl's work is described as expressionist, meaning he emphasized the emotional experience rather than the realistic portrayal of a scene. In this fresco, Philip's speech bubble containing a Christogram (an abbreviation for Jesus's name, this one in Greek) is larger than all the the rest of his visible body, emphasizing his role as a vehicle of God's word.

The focus of the fresco is on the listening Ethiopian. To reflect his growing joy and wonder, a celestial blue or baptismal-waters-blue halo glows around him, spreads, and manifests as blooming flowers on the joyful, frolicking horses. A *crux ansata* (a Christian symbol made of a cross with a circle on the top) on a pillar stands behind them, reinforcing the strength of Jesus's name.
Image courtesy of the Vanderbilt Jean and Alexander Heard Divinity Library.

Independent Presbyterian Church
Church office: 3100 Highland Avenue, Birmingham, AL 35205
Office Hours: 8:30-4:30 | Phone: 205.933.1830
www.ipc-usa.org | www.facebook.com/ipcbirmingham
This congregation is affiliated with The Presbyterian Church (USA)

THE TABLE

Independent Presbyterian Church



MAY 2, 2021

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Welcome to The Table

Open · Affirming · Welcoming
Worship is at the center of the life of The Table.
As you prepare yourself for worship,
we invite you to reflect quietly on these words:

O Thou, Who workest in us—O Thou, Who movest through us, we know now that we ourselves are the hindrance. We are not ready for the Guest, our houses would be disarranged. We are not ready to awake and that the lamps in our souls should be lighted. O, make us prudent enough to forget, make us careful enough to leave the doors open. Amen.

from Beginning the Day by Henry M. Edmonds

THE LITURGICAL YEAR

IPC follows the liturgical calendar to mark the seasons of our life together. We are currently in the season of Easter as signified by the color white. Easter isn't just a Sunday — it's a season. One day out of 365 is hardly sufficient to celebrate the great mystery of our faith — that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. Accordingly, the season of Easter lasts seven weeks (a "week of weeks"), spanning the 50 days from the Sunday of the Resurrection to Pentecost Sunday and encompassing the festival of the Ascension of the Lord. The season of Easter is intended to be a joyful time for celebrating the presence of the risen Christ in the church.

Of course, Easter really isn't just a season either. In the fullest sense, Easter is a new way of life — in which we are "dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:11), called to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

An excerpt from the *Companion to the Book of Common Worship*: For seven weeks, a week of Sundays, we acclaim the resurrection of Christ by the power of God. The period of seven weeks of jubilation can be traced back to its Jewish roots of the fifty days celebrated from the day after Passover to Shavuot (Feast of Weeks, Exodus 23:16). For Jews, the Feast of Weeks closed the season of harvest, which had been initiated by the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In a similar manner, early Christians observed a fifty-day period of celebration from Easter to the Day of Pentecost. To underscore the uninterrupted rejoicing of these fifty days, fasting and kneeling in prayer were forbidden at least as early as the end of the second century. On the *pentecoste* ("fiftieth") day, not only was the fifty-day period concluded, but a festival with its own proper content was celebrated. The Jews observed a feast of covenant renewal and eventually commemorated the giving of the Law. Christians celebrated the gift of the Spirit as preparing the way for the day of the Lord. What Moses and the Law did for the Jewish community, the Holy Spirit now does for the community of Christ.

IF THIS IS YOUR FIRST VISIT:

E-mail or call us: We would love to say hello and welcome you to our church family. Please reach out to us by contacting Stacy Pulliam at 205.933.3690 and spulliam@ipc-usa.org or Cindy Shaw at 205.933.3696 and cshaw@ipc-usa.org.

Visit our website: ipc-usa.org/welcome

Gathering

We *gather* as a community and prepare our hearts to worship God

+***Gathering Song***

Welcome

Greeting
Leader: May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
People: And also with you.

Call to Worship
Leader: I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you;
People: You who fear the Lord, praise him!
Leader: From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
People: The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord.
All: Let us praise the Lord!

+***Hymn of Praise #401*** *"Here in This Place (Gather Us In)"*

Listening

We *listen* for the word of God through confession, passing the peace, Scripture, and preaching

Prayer of Confession (unison)
Holy and Gracious God: Your Spirit calls us to go beyond our ordinary paths, to strike out with hope and faith into unknown places, to encounter strangers as well as friends. Often, in our fear, we shrink from your call. Help us to remember that often it is in foreign places and among people who are very different from ourselves that we encounter you most clearly. Help us to open our eyes to the holy surprises along the way. Help us to have the courage to be a part of setting a bigger table so that more and more of your beloved children can find their seat and take part in the feast you have prepared. In the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Please observe a period of silence for personal reflection.

Assurance of Grace:
One: In Jesus Christ,
All: we are forgiven!

+***Gloria Patri***

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Lesson: *Acts 8:26-40*

Sermon: *Making Room at the Family Table*

Responding

We *respond* to the hearing of God's word through reflection, prayer, offering and communion

Musical Reflection *"Come to the Table"*
"He Is Among Us (The Least of These)"

Celebration of the Sacrament of The Lord's Supper
- Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer
- Words of Institution
- Communion of the People
- Song: *"Come as You Are"*
- Prayer after Communion

Sending

We are *sent* out into the world to love God and our neighbors

+***Closing Hymn #288*** *"Spirit of the Living God"*

+***Benediction***

Postlude

Our service is over, let our service begin.
fed by mystery, forgiven of sin.
Now our faith made real, when brokenness we heal.
our service is over, let our service begin.

+*Rise in Body or Spirit*