

We joyfully proclaim God's love through worship, relationships, and service



Living Water

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

May 5, 2024

10:00 am

6th Sunday of Easter

“Resurrection Story: Liberated”

**Please stand, those who are able*

Prelude: *Quiet Song* – Peter J. Tchaikovsky/Smith

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Welcome: Pastor Dawn

Worship Leader: This country is made up of so many who escaped to the “promised land” from oppressive regimes. Throughout history, people have had to flee situations of horror. Even within our country and in our own time, there are those who live with oppression and fear. We seek to widen our understanding of what we must do to continue to work for liberation on so many fronts.

Leader: Jesus made a charcoal fire to make breakfast, and Jesus beckoned the disciples to bring some of their fresh-caught fish.

Abundance is meant to be shared. Jesus shows us how to serve and care.

Leader: Jesus said, “Come and have breakfast” giving bread and fish to each disciple.

In our fear of scarcity, we sometimes are hesitant to share, but Jesus shows us how.

Leader: After offering sustenance to the weary disciples, Jesus turned to Simon Peter and asked: “Do you love me?” Peter said, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said: “Feed my lambs.”

Often we discover the love language of our faith by sharing with others.

Leader: A second time, Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me?” Peter said, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said: “Tend my sheep.”

We can grow in faith by caring for others.

Leader: A third time, Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me?” Peter felt hurt at the repeated request and said, “Lord, you know everything, you know that I love you.” Jesus said: “Feed my sheep.”

We are called to feed and tend to the needs of all people, especially those in need of liberation from hunger and oppression.

Leader: Jesus reminded the disciples that we all will need help at times in our lives. Then, Jesus said, “Follow me.”

We open our hearts and hands and resources to make better the circumstances of all people for living and thriving.

Leader: This is a Word of Hope for the people who long for it.

Thanks be to the Living Word.

– based on John 21:9-19

Hymn of Praise: *Lord, Whose Love through Humble Service* (UMH#581)

Lord, whose love through humble service

Bore the weight of human need,

Who upon the cross, forsaken,

Offered mercy's perfect deed;

We, your servants, bring the worship

Not of voice alone, but heart,

Consecrating to your purpose

Every gift that you impart.

Still your children wander, homeless.
Still the hungry cry for bread.
Still the captives long for freedom.
Still in grief we mourn our dead.
As, O Lord, your deep compassion
Healed the sick and freed the soul,
Use the love your Spirit kindles,
Still to save and make us whole.

As we worship, grant us vision,
Till your love's revealing light
In its height and depth and greatness
Dawns upon our quickened sight,
Making known the needs and burdens
Your compassion bids us bear,
Stirring us to tireless striving
Your abundant life to share.

Called by worship into service,
Forth in your dear name we go
To the child, the youth, the aged,
Love in living deeds to show.
Hope and health, good will and comfort,
Counsel, aid, and peace we give,
That your servants, Lord, in freedom
May your mercy know, and live.

The Key to Peace

Know that Christ shows us how to love ourselves and others, ensuring that all are nourished and cared for. Because of this, we can be honest about our lives, our struggles, and the things that keep us locked up.

This is the key to peace: as soon as truth is spoken and the desire for liberation is known, Divine Love begins the process of resurrecting your life.

....In the name of Jesus Christ, you can know liberation.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you can know liberation.

Children's Time

Let's see what we can unlock this Sunday that will speak of the song of new life.

Worship Leader: A frog! Yes, frogs sing too! One of the signs of spring that you might hear if you listen is the sound of frogs singing at night. What do you think a frog song sounds like?

Wow, we've got some beautiful singing frogs in here! So I'll tell you something cool about frog songs: usually frogs are singing because they're looking for a partner! Springtime is when frogs lay their fertilized eggs in the water. And when the eggs are laid, they are in a blob of goo that helps them grow into tadpoles, which are kind of this in-between animal of not quite an egg, and not quite a frog. Eventually the tadpoles are liberated from their goo and gradually grow arms and legs, and their long tail goes away and grows into the frog's body. Then they grow into an adult and every year, you can hear those frogs singing the same songs, laying more eggs in goo, and the next generation of tadpoles follows their instincts to liberate themselves from their egg-like states and grow into a whole new creature.

Today one of the scriptures is the Psalms, the songbook of our spiritual ancestors, and it says that God made everything, including the frogs! Sometimes the songs that we sing can be the keys to unlocking our own freedom and new ways of living. So before you go, let's chant our alleluia and then sing our Easter alleluia song:

Oh, yeah!
Woo hoo!
Alright!

Right on!
Way to go!
Thank you, God!
Woop woop!
Yeah!

Leaving song: Halle halle halle
Halle, halle, halle – luia!
Halle, halle, halle – luia!
Halle, halle, halle – luia!
Halleluia, halleluia!

The Word in Song: *Come to the Table* – McDonald, Frey, Glover/Wise
Love opened the door for us...
No one unwelcome here...

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Scripture: Psalm 146

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!
I will praise the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help.
When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish.

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God,
who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them;

who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free;

the Lord opens the eyes of those who cannot see. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the strangers;

the Lord upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked, the Lord brings to ruin.
The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!

A Story of Liberation: God Hears the Cry - Exodus 3: 1-15

Reader: Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness and came to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight and see why the bush is not burned up." When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then God said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." God said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. Now go, I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" God said, "I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I am who I am." God said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': This is my name forever, and this is my title for all generations.

Sermon: A Resurrection Story – Liberated

Hymn of Response: *Rise Up in Us*

Rise up in us and we will rise
From death into a newfound life:
From bondage freed, from harm released,
From illness healed, as one in peace.
When all is lost our hearts are warmed,
Our hope restored, our lives transformed.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Communion

Christ invites to this table all who are ready for a resurrection in their own lives, to move beyond the limitations of the past, to move into the “new day” that God is doing in our midst, willing to let go of the pain that’s gone.

This is a day of new beginnings, time to remember and move on, time to believe what love is bringing, laying to rest the pain that’s gone...

And so this is an open invitation to come and receive the bread that will sustain us as we embark on a journey towards our own resurrection story. All are invited to receive the sweetness of the cup as a sign of God’s promise of abundant possibilities. All are invited to this meal, for all are forgiven their past regrets and invited into God’s grace-filled future! Praise to the Living God! Our hope restored, our lives transformed. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts in this new day.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Creator and Renewer of all life. Time and again you seek us out, breathing again the breath of life into the deflated places our lives. And so, we come to your table again to praise you and taste yet again what your steadfast love can do...

In faith we’ll gather round the table to taste and share what love can do.

This is a day of new beginnings; our God is making all things new...

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners. All this spoke of resurrection of lives even before his own.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

For by the life and death of Jesus, God’s mighty Spirit, now as then, can make for us a world of difference, as faith and hope are born again...

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: “Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

And so, as we remember these words and acts of Jesus, we offer our own lives, leaving behind what we do not need, seeking new paths full of resurrected life in you. As followers of Christ, we proclaim and live out this holy mystery:

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again. Then let us, with the Spirit’s daring, step from the past and leave behind our disappointment, guilt, and grieving, seeking new paths, and sure to find...

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us a resurrection story in Christ, so that we may be a resurrection story for the world as the Body of Christ, breaking ourselves open to God’s redeemed future. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in

ministry to all the world until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever!

Christ is alive, and goes before us to show and share what love can do. This is a day of new beginnings; our God is making all things new!

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Offering Intro:

Doxology: *I Love to Tell the Story*

The Savior of our stories
has brought his peace to you;
now go and tell the story,
for others need it too.
From God we all are given
These blessings vast and free,
That we must share with others
So they God's love may see.
I love to tell the story;
it will be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story
of Jesus and his love.

Offertory Prayer:

Holy One, we do not doubt that Jesus, the Messiah, lives again. Yet, only a few short weeks from Easter, our thoughts are cluttered with finite, insignificant activities and agendas. Instead of remaining focused on the abundance of divine transformation, we return to a pessimistic mindset of scarcity. Refocus our attention on the joy of Easter, so that we may recognize all that we have received, and be led to give cheerfully. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Closing Hymn/Song: *The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve (TFWS#2241)*

The Spirit sends us forth to serve;
We go in Jesus' name
To bring glad tidings to the poor,
God's favor to proclaim.

We go to comfort those who mourn
And set the burdened free;
Where hope is dim, to share a dream
And help the blind to see.

We go to be the hands of Christ,
To scatter joy like seed
And, all our days, to cherish life,
To do the loving deed.

Then let us go to serve in peace,
The gospel to proclaim.
God's Spirit has empowered us;
We go in Jesus' name.

Benediction

Whatever binds you, whatever locks you up, whatever makes you feel backed into a corner, whatever prevents you from fully expressing your spirit can be wiped clean for we believe our stories can be rewritten each and every day. We know it isn't this easy or quick, but let this be a vision of your life resurrected. And now, may you go into the world, proclaiming liberty in all the ways you discover you can, for yourself, for others, for the world. And may the God who created you to be unrestrained in your joy and unabashed with your love for others, the Christ who showed you what liberation looks like, and the Spirit who is transforming your life even now, be with you now and evermore. Amen.

Postlude: *Solid Rock* – Bradbury/Mason

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