

First Congregational United Church of Christ

May 1, 2022



Detail from James Tissot's *Jesus Eats Breakfast with His Disciples*

Third Sunday in Easter

Ministers: All who are a part of this church

Preacher: Ben Steckelberg Musician: Linda Noble

Choir Director: Ann Russ

Peace Candle Lighter: Bruce Tyler Liturgist: Sandy Stover

Gathering Music

Words of Welcome

Prelude

Words to Enter Worship: (based on 1 Corinthians 13)

People who love their dogs & cats: **Love is patient, love is kind, love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.**

People who love their goats and chickens: **It does not insist on its own way, it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.**

People who appreciate no pet hair: **It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things; endures all things.**

People who love wild animals: **Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. And now faith hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.**

Words of Lament:

Almighty God,

**Whose breath quickened us,
Whose tongue named us,
Whose language we are:**

Grant us grace to be true words-

**Not gentle when it is in anger that we live,
Not smooth when it is desperation that we know,
Not patient when time has narrowed down to now,
Not wise, not neat, not all our fences mended,
But words, broken yet honest words, and lost,
Stumbling their way towards silence.**

Take us back. Recall us. Then speak us once again.

**Set us in order. Mend our shattered syntax. Set all our commas straight.
Imbue in us a power that keeps company with pain,
Then march across the pages of this beautiful, fragile, tormented,
and perishable earth to the sing the songs of Zion.**

In the name of the Word made flesh, made dead, and made alive again. Amen.

(Barbara Sargent)

Words of Blessing: (Based on Psalm 30)

One: I will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up, and did not let my foes rejoice over me. O LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me.

Many: O LORD, you brought up my soul from Sheol, restored me to life from among those who have gone down to the Pit. Sing praises to the LORD, O you his faithful ones, and give thanks to God's holy name.

All: Sing praises to the LORD, all you faithful ones, and gives thanks to the holy name. For God's anger is but for a moment; God's favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

One: As for me, I said in my prosperity, "I shall never be moved." By your favor, O LORD, you have established me as a strong mountain; you hid your face, I was dismayed. To you, O LORD, I cried, and to the LORD I made supplication.

Many: "What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the Pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness? Hear, O LORD, and be gracious to me! O LORD, be my helper!"

All: You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, so that my soul may praise you and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

Words of Poetry & Lighting the Candle of Peace

It is a custom in our congregation to light our Peace Candle during worship, as a witness to the Prince of Peace and our communal intention to be peace-makers as a Just Peace Church.

Hope

by Susanna Khoo

*Dream a million dreams tonight
While rest falls upon your eyes
For better moments yet to come
To cast light upon despondencies
And champion heroes unsung
If only to be free of fears unspoken
To expectantly greet the beckoning dawn
Wistful yet ever aware
Of the resonant realities
But faith does not desert us here
Beyond these towering shadows
Lies our alternate ending
While we live, there is yet hope*

Passing of the Peace

Scripture Readings:

1st Scripture: Acts 9:1-19 (New Revised Standard Version)

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.³ Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"⁵ He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."⁶ But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one.⁸ Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.⁹ For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰ Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord."¹¹ The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying,¹² and he has seen in a vision^[a] a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight."¹³ But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem;¹⁴ and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name."¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel;¹⁶ I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."¹⁷ So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul^[b] and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."¹⁸ And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized,¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus,²⁰ and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."

2nd Scripture: John 21:1-19 (New Revised Standard Version)

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way.² Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin,^[a] Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples.³ Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

⁴ Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵ Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." ⁶ He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. ⁷ That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. ⁸ But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards^[b] off. ⁹ When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." ¹¹ So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹² Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. ¹⁵ When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶ A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. ¹⁸ Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." ¹⁹ (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

Children's Message : "Do you come to God, or does God come to you?"

Message: Long-Awaited Appearances

Musical Reflections

Joys and Concerns, Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father-Mother God, who is in the heavens, may your name be made holy, may your kingdom come, may your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today the bread we need; and forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors; and do not put us to the test, but rescue us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Our Time of Giving

Doxology:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God all creatures here below;

Praise God for all that love has done;

Creator, Christ and Spirit one. Amen.

News of God at Work in our Congregation & Community

Sending Music

Benediction