

First Congregational United Church of Christ

March 26, 2023



Jesus raises Lazarus to life by JESUS MAFA

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Ministers: All who are a part of this church

Pastor: Rev. Enno K. Limvere

Musician: Karina Roth

Choir Director: Ann Russ

Peace Candle Lighter:

Liturgist:

Gathering Music

Words of Welcome

Prelude

Words to Enter Worship (Based on Psalm 133)

People who have lost a loved one: How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live in unity!

People who have mourned: It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard of Aaron, upon the hair of Miriam, running down over the collar of their robes.

People who have grieved: It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion.

People who have smiled at memories of them: For upon the Earth, the LORD ordained blessing, life forevermore.

Opening Hymn #479 God is My Shepherd

- 1 God is my shepherd, I'll not want,
I feed in pastures green.
God grants me rest and bids me drink
from waters calm and clean.
Through daily tasks, I'm blessed and led
by one I have not one seen.
- 2 Restored to life each morning new,
I rise up from the dust
to follow God whose presence gives
me confidence and trust.
I praise the name of God today;
in God I put my trust.
- 3 When I must pass through shadowed vale,
where loss and death await,
I will not fear for God is there,
my shepherd strong and great,
whose rod and staff will comfort me
and all my fears abate.
- 4 No enemy can overcome,
no power on earth defeat
the one anointed by God's grace
and fed with manna sweet.
My cup is filled and overflows
as I my Savior greet.

Goodness and mercy all my days
will surely follow me;
and where God reigns in heaven and earth,
my dwelling place will be.
My shepherd blesses, cares, and leads
through all eternity. Contributors: K Nolan Pryor Text: © 2000, Shawnee Press

Words of Lament

Almighty and Merciful God, we realize that there is death in this world and that death is not the end. But, there are too many people dying by violence and wars, diseases and pandemics from lack of access to health care, and lack of food or clean water that keep us healthy. There are too many who needlessly suffer and those left behind, are without hope. Help us do better, call us to end suffering, wars, and hoarding of life-giving clean water, food, and medicine. Help your children. Help your world. Amen.

Time of Silence

Words for Blessing the Earth – Hope of Spring – Author Unknown

One: God, thank you for Spring and the hope of warmer, longer, brighter days.

Many: Thank you for the coming of growth and life and birth.
Thank you that things are coming awake in the world.

All: This is what our calendar says, and we do see some signs that it is real.

One: But we also still struggle with the residual layover of winter.

Many: Now we ask that you bring into reality all that belongs in this season.
Your word says that we will have provision, and hope, and joy, and health and loving relationships here and now in this life.

All: We ask that what belongs in this season would become actual in our practical lives.

We hope in you and in your promises. We hope in your gift of Spring.

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.

Tell Me It's Okay

by Tiffany Underwood

<i>Tell me it's okay</i>	<i>To just want to cry.</i>
<i>Tell me it's okay</i>	<i>To never say goodbye.</i>
<i>Tell me it's okay</i>	<i>To be afraid to be strong.</i>
<i>Tell me it's okay</i>	<i>And that you're comin' along.</i>
<i>Tell me it's okay</i>	<i>And that you're staying by me.</i>
<i>Tell me it's okay</i>	<i>And that this life is meant to be.</i>
<i>Tell me it's okay</i>	<i>To feel how I'm feeling.</i>
<i>Tell me it's okay</i>	<i>The way that I am dealing.</i>
<i>Tell me it's okay</i>	<i>That there is a reason for it all.</i>
<i>Tell me it's okay</i>	<i>Even if I fall.</i>
<i>Tell me it's okay</i>	<i>To lose control today.</i>
<i>Tell me it's okay.</i>	<i>Just tell me it's okay.</i>

Passing of the Peace

Hymn #472 Precious Lord, Take My Hand

1 Precious Lord, take my hand,
Lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Through the storm, through the night,
Lead me on to the light:

Refrain

Take my hand, precious Lord,
Lead me home.

2 When my way grows drear,
Precious Lord, linger near,
When my life is almost gone,
Hear my cry, hear my call,
Hold my hand lest I fall:

Refrain

3 When the shadow appears
And the night draws near,
And the day is past and gone,
At the river I stand,
Guide my feet, hold my hand:

Refrain

Contributors: George N. Allen Adapt. Thomas A. Dorsey, Thomas A Dorsey

Scripture Readings John 11:1-22 (Common English Bible)

11 A certain man, Lazarus, was ill. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (² This was the Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped his feet with her hair. Her brother Lazarus was ill.) ³ So the sisters sent word to Jesus, saying, "Lord, the one whom you love is ill." ⁴ When he heard this, Jesus said, "This illness isn't fatal. It's for the glory of God so that God's Son can be glorified through it." ⁵ Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus. ⁶ When he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed where he was. After two days, ⁷ he said to his disciples, "Let's return to Judea again." ⁸ The disciples replied, "Rabbi, the Jewish opposition wants to stone you, but you want to go back?" ⁹ Jesus answered, "Aren't there twelve hours in the day? Whoever walks in the day doesn't stumble because they see the light of the world. ¹⁰ But whoever walks in the night does stumble because the light isn't in them." ¹¹ He continued, "Our friend Lazarus is sleeping, but I am going in order to wake him up." ¹² The disciples said, "Lord, if he's sleeping, he will get well." ¹³ They thought Jesus meant that Lazarus was in a deep sleep, but Jesus had spoken about Lazarus' death. ¹⁴ Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died. ¹⁵ For your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there so that you can believe. Let's go to him." ¹⁶ Then Thomas (the one called Didymus) said to the other disciples, "Let us go too so that we may die with Jesus." ¹⁷ When Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, while Mary remained in the house. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died. ²² Even now I know that whatever you ask God, God will give you."

2nd Scripture John 11:23-45

²³ Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha replied, "I know that he will rise in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die. ²⁶ Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She replied, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are 12.5 God's Son, the one who is coming into the world." ²⁸ After she said this, she went and spoke privately to her sister Mary, "The teacher is here and he's calling for you." ²⁹ When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to Jesus. ³⁰ He hadn't entered the village but was still in the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ When the Jews who were comforting Mary in the house saw her get up quickly and leave, they followed her. They assumed she was going to mourn at the tomb. ³² When Mary arrived where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died." ³³ When Jesus saw her crying and the Jews who had come with her crying also, he was deeply disturbed and troubled. ³⁴ He asked, "Where have you laid him?" They replied, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Jesus began to cry. ³⁶ The Jews said, "See how much he loved him!" ³⁷ But some of them said, "He healed the eyes of the man born blind. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?" ³⁸ Jesus was deeply disturbed again when he came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone covered the entrance. ³⁹ Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said, "Lord, the smell will be awful! He's been dead four days." ⁴⁰ Jesus replied, "Didn't I tell you that if you believe, you will see God's glory?" ⁴¹ So they removed the stone. Jesus looked up and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. ⁴² I know you always hear me. I say this for the benefit of the crowd standing here so that they will believe that you sent me." ⁴³ Having said this, Jesus shouted with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his feet bound and his hands tied, and his face covered with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go." ⁴⁵ Therefore, many of the Jews who came with Mary and saw what Jesus did believed in him.

Children's Message

Water Bugs and Dragonflies

Choir Anthem

Message

Let Us Weep

Musical Reflections

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

Our Father, Mother God, 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. Amen

News of God at Work in our Congregation & Community

Our Time of Giving – Slips of Faith

Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Alleluia, alleluia
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.*

Closing Hymn #433 In the Bulb There Is a Flower

1. In the bulb there is a flower,
In the seed, an apple tree,
in cocoons, a hidden promise:
butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter
there's a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.

2. There's a song in every silence,
seeking word and melody;
there's a dawn in every darkness,
bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future;
what it holds, a mystery,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.

3. In our end is our beginning,
in our time, infinity;
in our doubt there is believing,
in our life, eternity,
in our death, a resurrection,
at the last, a victory,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.

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Benediction

Sending Music