

THE
United Church
OF THE **San Juans**



**FIRST SUNDAY
IN EASTER**
THE LORD'S SUPPER
APRIL 7, 2024

MEDITATION

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them, anyway.
If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind, anyway.
If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies.
Succeed, anyway.

If you are honest and sincere, people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere, anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create, anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy, anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten. Do good, anyway.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best, anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God.

It was never between you and them anyway.

– St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

REV. MELINDA VEATCH

PRELUDE *Instrumental Music*

RON & DEE JAMES

CALL TO WORSHIP - ADAPTED FROM ISALAH 25-6-9

TIM SPANGLER

Leader: The prophet Isaiah wrote: On this mountain, the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

People: And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever.

Leader: Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

People: It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. Let us worship God!

WELCOMING SONG* *Christ is Alive!* (Brian Wren)

HYMN NO. 312

*Indicates we stand - if it is comfortable

Holy God, we know that you created us in love, to enjoy this world and You. You empower us to serve your creation and your children. And we know that we do not do your will. With clenched hands, we can neither give nor receive. With eyes tight shut, we cannot see pain or beauty. With feet of clay, we cannot dance in joy or run to help. We ask for your help and your power to change. Keep teaching us to love others as you have loved us. Help us to put away everything that keeps us from living out your love. Open our hands and eyes and move our feet toward grace and hope and trust in You. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING *1 JOHN 1:1 - 2:2*

TIM SPANGLER

From the very first day, we were there, taking it all in—we heard it with our own ears, saw it with our own eyes, verified it with our own hands. The Word of Life appeared right before our eyes; we saw it happen! And now we're telling you in most sober prose that what we witnessed was, incredibly, this: The infinite Life of God himself took shape before us.

We saw it, we heard it, and now we're telling you so you can experience it along with us, this experience of communion with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. Our motive for writing is simply this: We want you to enjoy this, too. Your joy will double our joy!

This, in essence, is the message we heard from Christ and are passing on to you: God is light, pure light; there's not a trace of darkness in him.

If we claim that we experience a shared life with him and continue to stumble around in the dark, we're obviously lying through our teeth—we're not living what we claim. But if we walk in the light, God himself being the light, we also experience a shared life with one another, as the sacrificed blood of Jesus, God's Son, purges all our sin.

If we claim that we're free of sin, we're only fooling ourselves. A claim like that is errant nonsense. On the other hand, if we admit our sins—simply come clean about them—he won't let us down; he'll be true to himself. He'll forgive our sins and purge us of all wrongdoing. If we claim that we've never sinned, we out-and-out contradict God—make a liar out of him. A claim like that only shows off our ignorance of God.

I write this, dear children, to guide you out of sin. But if anyone does sin, we have a Priest Friend in the presence of the Father: Jesus Christ, righteous Jesus. When he served as a sacrifice for our sins, he solved the sin problem for good—not only ours, but the whole world's.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God, Amen.**

ANTHEM

RON & DEE JAMES

SCRIPTURE READING *JOHN 20:19-31*

REV. MELINDA VEATCH

Later on that day, the disciples had gathered together, but, fearful of the Jews, had locked all the doors in the house. Jesus entered, stood among them, and said, "Peace to you." Then he showed them his hands and side.

The disciples, seeing the Master with their own eyes, were awestruck. Jesus repeated his greeting: "Peace to you. Just as the Father sent me, I send you."

Then he took a deep breath and breathed into them. "Receive the Holy Spirit," he said. "If you forgive someone's sins, they're gone for good. If you don't forgive sins, what are you going to do with them?"

But Thomas, sometimes called the Twin, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples told him, "We saw the Master."

But he said, “Unless I see the nail holes in his hands, put my fingers in the nail holes, and stick my hand in his side, I won’t believe it.

Eight days later, his disciples were again in the room. This time Thomas was with them. Jesus came through the locked doors, stood among them, and said, “Peace to you.”

Then he focused his attention on Thomas. “Take your finger and examine my hands. Take your hand and stick it in my side. Don’t be unbelieving. Believe.”

Thomas said, “My Master! My God!”

Jesus said, “So, you believe because you’ve seen with your own eyes. Even better blessings are in store for those who believe without seeing.”

Jesus provided far more God-revealing signs than are written down in this book. These are written down so you will believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and in the act of believing, have real and eternal life in the way he personally revealed it.

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God. Amen.

SERMON

Walking the Free Way

REV. MELINDA VEATCH

RESPONDING TO GOD’S GRACE WITH OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Thank you for your continued support of the church and our mission.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

DOXOLOGY*

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all people here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen*

INVITATION TO THE LORD’S SUPPER

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

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

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

TIM SPANGLER AND REV. MELINDA VEATCH

THE LORD’S PRAYER

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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.

CLOSING SONG* *Christ is Risen!* (Brian Wren)

HYMN NO. 293

*Indicates we stand - if it is comfortable

Holy God, we give you thanks that you reach out to us, and you reach out through us. As we go from this place, open us to your guidance. Direct our vision to see you at work. Tune our ears to hear your counsel. Guide our minds to understand your call to us. Open our hearts to both receive and share your love and your forgiveness with a hurting world. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

POSTLUDE *Instrumental Music*

RON & DEE JAMES

CHARGE AND BLESSING

REV. MELINDA VEATCH

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OUR MISSION

- We are a loving and compassionate church family that *respects the dignity and integrity* of each individual.
- We find our joy and meaning through faith in God and Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.
- We seek to promote Christian unity and to encourage understanding and cooperation with those from different traditions.
- We seek to foster deeper relationships with God and each other through worship, fellowship, growth and service.

WE ARE AFFILIATED WITH

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH USA ~ THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ~ THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA



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