

Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 25th 2021

Welcome & Announcements

Ringing of the Bell

Prelude

Gathering Around the Word

Call to Worship

One: The call of Christ is this:

All: Love one another.

One: The law and the prophets teach this:

All: Love one another.

One: The world tells us to fulfill our desires,

All: But Christ commands us to love one another.

One: Come, let us worship in the presence of our God:

**All: where people who grieve
and children with skinned knees
all have their tears wiped away.**

One: We gather among God's people:

**All: to receive the goodness of God,
to drink deeply from God's mercy.**

Hymn 215

What Wondrous Love Is This (vrs. 1)

WONDROUS LOVE

Call to Confession

from 1 John 3:20-21

If we are honest with ourselves, our hearts condemn us. But God, who knows everything, is greater than our hearts. God's deep desire for us is mercy, love, and peace, and God showers us with these every day. Confident in this great love, let us confess our sin.

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

Almighty God,

we fail to love one another

because we love the things of this world more.

Our possessions make us feel valued.

The more we have, the more we feel safe and secure.

We worry that we will not have enough,
while others face hunger or homelessness.

Forgive us for being owned by our possessions.

Forgive us for relying on wealth instead of love.

Call us back into your commandment

to love our neighbors as ourselves.
Call us into mutual love, understanding, and care.
Assure us there is enough for everyone,
for we know you have provided an abundant world for all.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

from 1 John 3:16, 21–22

Sisters and brothers, we can receive God's grace with boldness because we trust in Jesus Christ, the one who showed God's great love to us and laid down his life for us. Hear and believe this wonderful news of the gospel:

All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Thanks be to God.

Response

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen, amen.*

Listening to the Word

Prayer for Illumination of God's Word

Gracious God, open our ears and hearts as we read the words of scripture, pointing us to your living Word who walked among us. Surround us with your Spirit, teaching our hearts and minds. Inspire us through hearing and reflecting, that we may move beyond mere words into life-changing acts of grace, love, hope, and peace. Amen.

First Reading Acts 4:5-12

⁵The next day the leaders, elders, and legal experts gathered in Jerusalem, ⁶along with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and others from the high priest's family. ⁷They had Peter and John brought before them and asked, "By what power or in what name did you do this?"

⁸Then Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, answered, "Leaders of the people and elders, ⁹are we being examined today because something good was done for a sick person, a good deed that healed him? ¹⁰If so, then you and all the people of Israel need to know that this man stands healthy before you because of the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. ¹¹This Jesus is the stone you builders rejected; he has become the cornerstone! ¹²Salvation can be found in no one else. Throughout the whole world, no other name has been given among humans through which we must be saved."

Psalm Anthem Psalm 23 802 *The King of Love My Shepherd Is (vrs 1,2,6)*

The LORD is my shepherd.

I lack nothing.

²He lets me rest in grassy meadows;
he leads me to restful waters;

³ he keeps me alive.
He guides me in proper paths
for the sake of his good name.
⁴ Even when I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no danger because you are with me.
Your rod and your staff—
they protect me.
⁵ You set a table for me
right in front of my enemies.
You bathe my head in oil;
my cup is so full it spills over!
⁶ Yes, goodness and faithful love
will pursue me all the days of my life,
and I will live in the LORD's house
as long as I live.

Sharing Faith with the Younger Church

Epistle Reading 1 John 3:16-24

¹⁶ This is how we know love: Jesus laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ But if someone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but refuses to help—how can the love of God dwell in a person like that?

¹⁸ Little children, let's not love with words or speech but with action and truth. ¹⁹ This is how we will know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts in God's presence. ²⁰ Even if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts and knows all things. ²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts don't condemn us, we have confidence in relationship to God. ²² We receive whatever we ask from him because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. ²³ This is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love each other as he commanded us. ²⁴ Those who keep his commandments dwell in God and God dwells in them. This is how we know that he dwells in us, because of the Spirit he has given us.

Sermon

Responding to the Word

Hymn 187

Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us (vrs.4)

BRADBURY

Affirmation of Faith A New Creed

from The United Church of Canada (1968)

We are called to be the Church:
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.
We are not alone,
we live in God's world.

We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.

**In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.**

**We are not alone.
Thanks be to God.**

Sharing our Prayers

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Dedicating our Gifts

How does God's love abide in anyone who has the goods of the world and sees a brother or sister in need, yet refuses to help? With love for God and neighbor, let us offer our lives to the Lord.

The Doxology

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

Charge & Benediction

Blessing Hymn 547

Go, My Children, with My Blessing (vrs 3) AR HYDY NOS

Postlude