

**A SERVICE TO UNITE US IN SPIRIT
FOR SUNDAY MAY 8, 2022
FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
(and a daily prayer)**

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***Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ
2401 Atwood Avenue, Madison WI***

Pastor: Rev. Leslie Schenk

Accompanist: Wilder Deitz

Ministers: All the people of Plymouth Congregational UCC

Worship Help: Marianne Mollway (reader and greeter), Ted Peterson (usher), Bill Mollway (tech and audio support), ? (Social Hour hosts)



The Community Gathers

Lighting of the Candles

Ringling of the Bell

Welcome

Announcements

♪ **Prelude** "Banklick Creek" by Wilder Deitz

Gathering Prayer

Pastor: *God's Spirit has invited us to this time of blessing.*

All: **God's presence lifts us up and brings us peace.**

Pastor: *Let us open our hearts to the One who is our center.*

All: **With one another's help, let us refresh and renew our faith and hope.**

Pastor: *God's promises are ancient and ever new. God is with us here, and on all the roads we travel. Together let us sing to God a new song, for God has done marvelous things.*

All: **Together we recognize that each is precious in God's sight!**

♪ Opening Hymn No. 11 *Bring Many Names (verses 1-6)*

Bring many names, beautiful and good, celebrate in parable and story, holiness in glory, living loving God. hail and hosanna. Bring many names.

Strong mother God, working night and day, planning all the wonders of creation, setting each equation, genius at play, hail and hosanna, strong mother God.

Warm father God, hugging every child, feeling all the strains of human living, caring and forgiven, till we're reconciled, hail and hosanna, warm father God.

Old aching God, grey with endless care, calmly piercing evil's new disguises, glad of good surprises, wiser than despair, hail and hosanna, old aching God.

Young growing God, eager on the move, saying no to falsehood and unkindness, crying out for justice, giving all you have, hail and hosanna, young growing God.

Great living God, never fully known, joyful darkness far beyond our seeing, closer yet than breathing, ever lasting home, hail and hosanna, great living God.

The Community Shares God's Word

Children's Message

Scripture Reading: Acts 9:36-43

Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near



Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay." So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

Sermon

The Community Responds to God's Word

♪ Hymn of Response No. 426 *O God, Whose Steadfast Love*

O God whose steadfast love, true motherhood has blessed, who shields the infant small, upon its mother's breast. Embrace us too O God our God, and hold us in your loving arms and hold us in your loving arms.

Your promises O God, so sure throughout the years, have lived in mother's hearts, have bloomed from mother's tears. So Sarah laughed and Hannah wept, and singing Mary secrets kept and singing Mary secrets kept.

In your great love O God, full parenthood is known, a father mourns his child, a mother's strength is shown. Let parent's faithful lives unbind, your love that through them we might find Christ's deeper love for humankind.

May your household of faith, one family become, that love may be increased, and none may be alone. That mothers love and fathers care, and children's joy we all may share and children's joy we all may share.

Joys & Concerns, Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer (version by Parker Palmer)

Pastor: Let us pray...in the spirit Jesus taught us to pray to You, saying

All: Heavenly Father, heavenly Mother, Holy and blessed is your true name. We pray for your reign of peace to come. We pray that your good will be done, let heaven and earth become one. Give us this day the bread we need, give it to those who have none. Let forgiveness flow like a river between us, from each one to each one. Lead us to holy innocence beyond the evil of our days—come swiftly Mother, Father, come. For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy: forever your name is All in One. Amen.

♪ Sung Prayer Response No. 283 *Spirit of the Living God*

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

Offering

Thank you for your offerings (in-person, electronic, or mailed in) for the ministry and mission of this congregation. Through your generosity, we are doing God's work in the world.

Offerings can be placed in the basket by the door at the back of the sanctuary, for those attending in person.

Thank you for all you are doing to help keep all in the community safe, including getting vaccinated and boosted (if safe for you), wearing of face masks, physically distancing, and hand washing.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

Pastor: *Most gracious God, we thank you for blessing us and all creation. May our offerings bring life-changing good news,*

All: **both to those who give and to all who are blanketed by the caring ministries of this congregation.**

Pastor: *May our ministries help strengthen relationships of trust among us*

All: **and outpourings of generosity that echo your steadfast love around the world.**

Pastor: *These offerings are but a portion of what we dedicate of our time and talents and compassionate hearts*

All: **to the building up of your new order here on earth. Amen.**

The Community Goes Forth

♪ Sending Hymn No. 252 *Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us*

Savior like a shepherd lead us, much we need your tender care; in your pleasant pastures feed us, for our use your folds prepare. Blessed Jesus blessed Jesus, you have bought us yours we are; blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have bought us yours we are.

We are yours in love befriend us, be the guardian of our way; keep your flock from sin defend us, seek us when we go astray. Blessed Jesus blessed Jesus, hear your children when we pray; blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear your children when we pray.

Let us always seek your favor, let us always do your will; Jesus Christ our only Savior, with your love our spirits fill. Blessed Jesus blessed Jesus, you have loved us love us still; blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have loved us love us still.

Blessing and Sending Prayer

Pastor: *We go forth with the living Christ.*

All: **We go forth, in faith and hope and joy!**

Pastor: Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. The blessings of God—Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer—be with you all!

All: Our worship has ended, our service begins, as we take God’s light out into the world with us!

♪ **Postlude** "Author and Architect" by Wilder Deitz

Elements of our worship service and thoughts to ponder for the week are adapted from resources of the Local Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ, made possible through our contributions to Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM).

Thoughts to ponder for the week:

The 33rd General Synod adopted a Resolution to Recognize the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024). As part of its implementation, Sermon and Weekly Seeds offers Reflection from Voices of People of African Descent related to the season or overall theme for additional consideration in sermon preparation and for individual and congregational study.

“I Can Trust”

I can not see why trials come,
And sorrows follow thick and fast;
I can not fathom His designs,
Nor why my pleasures can not last,
Nor why my hopes so soon are dust,
But, I can trust. When darkest clouds my sky o’er hang,
And sadness seems to fill the land,
I calmly trust His promise sweet,
And cling to his ne’er failing hand,
And, in life’s darkest hour, I’ll just
Look up and trust. I know my life with Him is safe,
And all things still must work for good
To those who love and serve our God,

And lean on Him as children should,
Though hopes decay and turn to dust,
I still will trust.

— Daniel Webster Davis

For further reflection:

“There is a legend about a bird which sings just once in its life, more sweetly than any other creature on the face of the earth. From the moment it leaves the nest it searches for a thorn tree, and does not rest until it has found one. Then, singing among the savage branches, it impales itself upon the longest, sharpest spine. And, dying, it rises above its own agony to outcarol the lark and the nightingale. One superlative song, existence the price. But the whole world stills to listen, and God in His heaven smiles. For the best is only bought at the cost of great pain... Or so says the legend. — Colleen McCullough

“Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts.” — Mother Teresa

“As we grow our faith, we wait in silence. As we listen for His voice, we have hope that He will speak. It may not be a loud boom or thunder, but a soft whisper. He may use a song, a butterfly, a sermon, a stranger, or even a red cardinal, but there is hope that God will come through for us.” — Dana Arcuri

[Pastor Leslie: now read each of these thoughts to ponder, but with the male pronoun for God replaced with she/her or they/their – does it not still offer us a glimpse of God?]

Prayer for the Week

To the Moms Who Are

To the Moms who are struggling, to those filled with incandescent joy.

To the Moms who are remembering children who have died, and pregnancies that miscarried.

To the Moms who decided other parents were the best choice for their babies, to the Moms who adopted those kids and loved them fierce.

To those experiencing frustration or desperation in infertility.

To those who knew they never wanted kids, and the ways they have contributed to our shared world.

To those who mothered colleagues, mentees, neighborhood kids, and anyone who needed it.

To those remembering Moms no longer with us.

To those moving forward from Moms who did not show love, or hurt those they should have cared for.

Today is a day to honor the unyielding love and care for others we call 'Motherhood,' wherever we have found it and in whatever ways we have found to cultivate it within ourselves.

God bless those who mother others. Amen.

- Hannah Kardon, Pastor at Elston Avenue United Methodist Church

Found at [Mother's Day Prayers \(xavier.edu\)](http://xavier.edu)