

EASTER II
April 11th, 2010

WE GATHER TOGETHER

MUSICAL PRELUDE

GATHERING REFRAIN: (#958 Voices United)

Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

The light of this candle is a hint of the glory that is found in Jesus, our risen Saviour. This worship is just a glimpse of the faith that is growing in us. The Spirit in this place is a promise of power and grace that belongs to God's people.

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Open to me the gates of the temple that I may enter and give thanks to God.

This is the gate of God, through it the righteous shall enter.

I thank you for you have answered me; you have become my salvation.

The stone that the builder rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

This is God's doing, marvellous in our eyes.

This is the day that God has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!

OPENING PRAYER: (unison)

We are your witnesses, O God, that, in you, suffering and death do not have the final word. Praise be to you, for the dawning of this new day; a day when gentleness rules over might, Spirit makes a way for true community, and love always wins. This is the day you have given us we will rejoice and be glad in it. Amen.

From Seasons of the Spirit

HYMN #175

"This is the Day That God Has Made"

WORDS TO WELCOME

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

At times we do not make resurrection witness a priority when we invest ourselves in ministries that serve our own needs and our own comforts; when we allow the structures and politics of the church to stand in the way of your freedom; when we stifle the voices of prophets and discourage movements for necessary change. Help us to rise with you, O Spirit, and be a living testimony of your way. Amen.

WORD OF ASSURANCE

"God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and saviour that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey..." Acts 5:31-32

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE LESSON:

John 20:19-31

RESPONSE:

God is good

All the time

All the time

God is good

HYMN #375

"Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness" (vs. 1-3)

CHILDREN'S TIME:

Bring a balloon and blow it up....see how big you can blow it, but stop before it bursts...hold it filled, but do not tie the end.

Tell the children that what Jesus did for the disciples was kind of like blowing up this balloon...What will happen if I let go of the balloon....wait for their answers. Then let the balloon go...telling them that when the Spirit of God came on the disciples it made them go and leave the upper room where they were hiding, and eventually the Spirit led them to lots of other places.

Blow the balloon up again, and tell them that there's something else that the Spirit of Jesus did for the disciples that's like this balloon. Pull the opening so that as the air escapes it makes a lot of noise. Tell them that when the Spirit of Jesus came to the disciples it made them brave to talk about Jesus....to make lots of noise about what they had witnessed.

SHARING OUR CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS AND PRAYER OF JESUS

HYMN #375

"Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness" (vs. 4)

MINUTE FOR MISSION

SERMON

Prayer: Jesus breathe on us, and send your Holy Spirit that we may be brave and bold to share our faith with the world. Teach us from your word truths that will challenge and comfort us. Amen.

Have you ever seen a dog that has been rescued from an abusive home....you go to pet it and it growls or cowers in fear of further violence and abuse.

I don't blame the disciples for hiding away....cowering from the possibility that they would experience the violence that they had witnessed.

And I guess I really don't blame today's churches as they struggle to make ends meet, as they look at the age of congregants, and all the while listening to our own leaders telling us that there aren't enough ministers, that churches will have to close....It's scary!

By his presence and friendship, Jesus renews the boldness of those frightened disciples with the Spirit of resurrection...the Spirit of forgiveness...the Spirit of peace.

As a church today, that same Spirit is our resource and reminder that we are a resurrection people....there may very well be bad news, but it is good news that is ours because of the resurrection. Paul told the church in Rome, that "if the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you."

The Christian church is filled with a quickening and emboldening Spirit that is transformative and life-giving.

We are not called to cower in the board rooms and meeting places of our courts worrying about how bad things are and how bad they're going to get, but we are filled with resurrection Spirit to share our faith....the bear witness and to testify.

WE RESPOND WITH THANKSGIVING

HYMN #194

"Filled with the Spirit's Power"

INVITATION TO GIVE:

Finances are one of those areas where anxiety and worry are felt the greatest. The reasonable business spirit in us, tells us that we need so much, and yet have so little. We are fearful that we won't have enough to pay the bills. But the Spirit of God comes into this moment of giving and fills us with hope and promise of abundance. Let us present our gifts.

PRESENTATION OF OUR GIFTS: (#173 vs. 2)

**Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb!
Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom.
Let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
For the Lord now liveth: death hath lost its sting.
Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son:
Endless is the victory thou o'er death has won.**

DEDICATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

THE LIFE AND WORK OF THE CONGREGATION

(this is the time for announcements)

PRAYER:

Invite people to sit quietly and attend to their breathing. Suggest that they count to five on the inhale and six on the exhale....invite people to say what they want to bring into their spirits from God's Spirit....give enough time for as many responses as seems fitting....then invite people to say what they want to exhale from their spirits.....again give them enough time to exhaust ideas. End with a brief moment of silence (20 seconds) and Amen.

WE GO OUT WITH THE SPIRIT

HYMN #179

"Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Give Thanks"

COMMISSION AND BLESSING:

The gospel of John testifies that Jesus did many signs in the presence of the disciples which were not written down. Indeed the Spirit of Christ continues to live in us, and we are a living witness to the way of Christ. Go with spirit to be the love of God, and the gracious presence of Christ.

CHORAL BENEDICTION: (#958 Voices United)

**Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Halle, halle, hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**