

Sunday April 11, 2021
Peace: Life's Torch

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Leader: Evening came on Easter's first day, and the followers of Jesus were fearful. It was then that our Risen Lord the Living Christ came among them and whispered:

People: *(Out loud, but muted)* **Peace be with you.**

Leader: Their hearts skipped a beat as they double checked that the lock on the front door was still latched. So the Presence of God spoke a little louder:

People: *(Out loud, but muted)* **Peace be with you.**

Leader: They looked around at each other, puzzled, amazed, befuddled, and bewildered. Some smiled. Some doubted. Some wondered if it were just too magical sounding or too good to be true. So the Christ showed them that his own scars were not the end of the story and that is when the words of God began to feel joyous:

People: *(Out loud, but muted)* **Peace be with you.**

Opening Prayer **Unison** *(Out loud, but muted)*

God, you come to us in every new moment in surprising ways we don't expect. Yet we open our hearts to you because you are our source of all life. Only in you are we complete and whole. We entrust our continuing life journey in community to you. Thanks for these beloved souls with whom to share our life of faith. Bless us all in this time of worship this morning. Amen.

Hymn # 253: Yours Is the Glory, Resurrected One!
(Please see separate attachment for the score)

- 1) Yours is the glory, Resurrected One!
Endless is the victory you o'er death have won.
Angels clothed in radiance rolled the stone away;
Conquered is the grave in which your body lay.

Refrain: Yours is the glory, Resurrected One!
Endless is the victory you o'er death have won.

- 2) See, it is Jesus, Jesus has appeared;
Do not doubt at all for nothing you will fear.
Let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing;
Tell it without ceasing: Death has lost its sting. [Refrain]
- 3) Am I still frightened? One whom I adore,
Jesus, lives again, gives peace forevermore.
Jesus is my victory, life and strength and Head;
Jesus is my glory, nothing shall I dread. [Refrain]

Prayer of Confession **Unison** (*Out loud, but muted*)

- Leader: Holy One, our confession won't be news to you, but maybe if we allow it to be spoken aloud, You can help us find a way forward.
- People:** (*Out loud, but muted*) **Holy One, we have doubts. We're not talking about doubts like Thomas—his were perfectly reasonable—after all we too long to see You, touch You, and truly know You.**
- Leader: Our doubts feel different. We doubt that the peace you offer really is possible because our own minds are a mess of thoughts.
- People:** (*Out loud, but muted*) **We doubt that new life is possible because the wounds we bear are still overwhelming.**
- Leader: We doubt that You really intended to call us when You called the disciples to be of service in creating a new way of being in the world.
- People:** (*Out loud, but muted*) **We hear the age-old stories, but we are filled with doubts about ourselves, and if we are honest, doubts about your Holy possibilities. Holy One, in these moments of stillness, hear our doubts and settle our hearts, souls, and minds...**

Moments for Reflection and Silence

Assurance of Pardon

In the midst of the disciples' doubts and worries, in the midst of their fear, the Spirit of God came among them and whispered, "Peace be with you." Beloved People of God, hear the holy invitation of grace offered to every generation: Peace be with you. You are God's beloveds not because of what you have done or not done. Your shortcomings are forgiven. Grace abounds. God calls to you. Peace be with you.

Passing of the Peace (*unmute for Passing of the Peace*)

- Pastor: The Peace of Christ be with you
People: And also with you!

Reading

Louise Piper

Psalm 133:1, 3

133:1 How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

133:3 It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there the LORD ordained his blessing, life forevermore.

Acts 4:32-35

4:32 Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common.

4:33 With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

4:34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold.

4:35 They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

1 John 1: excerpts

1:1 We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life--

1:2 this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us--

1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in God there is no darkness at all.

1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with God while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true;

1:7 but if we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another...

Special Music

Rachel Alexander

Gospel Reading

John 20:19-31 (NIV)

20:19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

20:20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

20:21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

20:22 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

20:23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

20:24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

20:25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

20:26 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

20:27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe."

20:28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

20:29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

20:30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.

20:31 But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Musical Interlude

Sermon: Peace—Life's Torch

Music for Meditation

Prayers of the People (unmute yourself to offer a request, giving first names only, please)

Hymn #508 Prayer Is the Soul's Sincere Desire (verses 1 and 5)
(sung muted but together)

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, unuttered or expressed;
The motion of a hidden fire that trembles in the breast.
O Christ, by whom we come to God, the Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer you too have trod: Christ, teach us how to pray.

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer **Unison** (*Out loud, but muted*)

Offering Invitation

God invites us to bring the fullness of who we are into worship and to share the fullness of who we are with the world. So it is God's holy invitation that asks us to pause and wonder what we want to offer of ourselves to the world. Time? Presence? Kindness? Financial support? Prayers? In these moments of quiet and reflection: what is it that you have to offer this day to bring about God's peace on Earth?

Offering and Dedication **Unison** (*Out loud, but muted*)

Our gifts of many kinds we leave upon your altar of our hearts. Bless these our gifts and may they multiply blessings in the world. Amen.

Blessing and Benediction **Unison** (*Out loud, but muted*)

At the beginning of the day, at the beginning of the week, when the faithful yet fearful people gathered together, Jesus came among them and whispered an invitation, "Peace be with you." This hour is only the beginning. We will not be afraid. You have been called and you are being sent into this world to be a force of love, light, hope, and joy. Carry and pass forward this torch.

Leader: Peace be with you.
People: Peace be with you.