

Riverside United Methodist Church

The Fifth Sunday in Lent • March 29, 2020 • 9:30 AM

We gather online to worship in the name of the
+the Creator, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit+

GATHERING

Gathering Music

Call to Worship

Processional Hymn

He's Got the Whole World

WHOLE WORLD

He's got the whole world in his hands.
He's got the whole world in his hands.
He's got the whole world in his hands.
He's got the whole world in his hands.

He's got the tiny baby in his hands.
He's got the tiny baby in his hands.
He's got the tiny baby in his hands.
He's got the whole world in his hands.

He's got you and me, brother, in his hands.
He's got you and me, brother, in his hands.
He's got you and me, brother, in his hands.
He's got the whole world in his hands.

He's got you and me, sister, in his hands.
He's got you and me, sister, in his hands.
He's got you and me, sister, in his hands.
He's got the whole world in his hands.

He's got everybody in his hands.
He's got everybody in his hands.
He's got everybody in his hands.
He's got the whole world in his hands.

Invocation

Rev. Keith A. Turner

Gathering the Community

THE WORD

Modern Lesson from an OpEd in *The Dallas Morning News* by the Rev. Dr. Neil Thomas

In this time of safe social practice, my spirit is restless. I have every confidence that, together, we'll weather this episode, though the burden, especially for the vulnerable, will be great, and we must all be prepared to help carry the load for others in need. I believe this time is an opportunity for all of us to become more familiar with the ways in which technology can keep us spiritually connected since

we're unable to physically congregate. And, for all of us, "normal" will need to be re-conceived on a daily basis, but we've done it before, as have our ancestors. My spirit is restless because I am wrestling with questions that keep me awake at night, questions I pray you might consider during your personal worship time, even as we're apart from the pews and the carpeted floors. How does our faith guide us to believe that all of humanity, each and every individual, is created in the image of God? The polarization of individuals who focus so much on our differences is at an all-time high. Male, female, transgender, gender fluid, black, brown, white, straight, gay, Christian, Muslim, Jew, Hindu, right and left — all of these labels are used to polarize, stigmatize and stereotype individuals so that quick and easy judgements can be made about a person's values, morals and behavior. How did we ever get here, and how can we ever return to a community that celebrates the differences of one another? These questions cause me sleepless nights, and I confess that I am having my fair share as are so many in these days of COVID-19. But they are questions that our faith responds to both in the stories of creation and in the experience of a developing world. In the beginning, God created humankind in God's very own image and saw that it was good, yes, very good. God made all humankind in all of God's images. To see another human being is to see God, as God created us. It is there right at the very beginning of the creation story. It was that important to the writers that it was placed at the beginning of it all. Now, COVID-19 is here. We must practice social distancing, which does not mean spiritual distancing. Because COVID-19 will eventually be brought under control. As we worship together, this era of a global pandemic has also given us the ability to stay together online. I urge each of us to be reconciled, defined as: to bring into agreement or harmony; make compatible or consistent. And, from my faith tradition, which is inclusive of all reading or hearing this, that reconciliation lived out loud during these unprecedented times of COVID-19, would change the world — for good.

Expressed as prayer, I would ask:

"Help us, God, to see you in everyone, that we might move beyond the labels and their attempts at dehumanization, so that we can truly welcome all, created in the image of God."

Pastoral Prayer

Gradual

Word of God, Speak

W&S 3172

One: I'm finding myself in the midst of you,
beyond the music, beyond the noise.
All that I need is to be with you.
And in the quiet, I hear your voice.

All: Word of God, speak.
Would you pour down like rain?
Open my eyes to see your majesty.
To be still and know that you're in this place.
Please let me stay and rest in your holiness.
Word of God, speak.
Word of God, speak.

Gospel Reading John 11:1-45

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

All: Come, Holy Spirit.

One: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

All: Glory to you, O God.

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to

awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

One: This is the Gospel of Christ.

All: Praise to Christ, the Word.

Response

Word of God, speak.

Would you pour down like rain

washing my eyes to see your majesty.

To be still and know that you're in this place.

Please let me stay and rest in your holiness.

Word of God, speak.

Word of God, speak.

Sermon

A World Worth Saving: Healing the World

Rev. Keith A. Turner

THE EUCHARIST

Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

God is Our Refuge

Allen Pote

The Great Thanksgiving for Lent

Celebrant

God be with you!

People

And also with you!

Celebrant

Lift up your hearts!

People

We lift them up to God!

Celebrant
People

Then let us give thanks.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right and a good and joyful thing to give thanks to you always, Creator God, because you have made the world in all its complexity. You have given humanity abundant good things. Yet you have also given us the capacity for dark choices and anxiety. You have provided us with paths leading to wisdom through deprivation and suffering. And you have shown us, through the incarnation of your love in Jesus Christ, the way of reconciliation through letting go of self and material concerns, seeking first the compassionate realm of God.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with angels and archangels, with all the company of the heavens, and with all the creatures of the earth, who forever sing their hymns to proclaim the glory of your name:

*Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.*

Ever Living God, you have created the world out of nothingness. You are present in both the darkness and the light.

You have created humanity from the dust of the earth, and have given us the ability to choose between good and evil. You have called your prophets and champions from among the lowly. You have formed your people through wanderings in the desert and through exile in foreign lands.

In your creative thirst to be known to us, you have entered into our struggles, coming among us in the human person of Jesus, the Christ. He was conceived amid scandal, born in want, raised in obscurity. With us he embraces hunger and thirst, temptation, rejection, doubt, grief, suffering and death.

On the night before he died, he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying, "Take, eat: This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine and, when he had given thanks, he gave it to them and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim this mystery of faith:

Christ has died with us.
Christ lives in us.
Christ comes into the world again.

Now in this sacred rite of thanksgiving and praise we celebrate the saving work of Jesus. For in him the cross, the instrument of torture and death, has been transformed into the sign of reconciliation and abundant life. Recalling his life, his teaching, his death and resurrection, we offer these gifts of bread and wine. Spirit of Compassion, breathe upon them now, making them for us the very body

and blood of your incarnate love, the Christ. And breathe your Spirit into us so that, having partaken of this sacramental meal in faith, we may serve you in unity, constancy and peace, and may dwell forever in the joy of communion with you.

All this we ask through the Christ, who is the human and cosmic incarnation of your Love. By Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of your Holy Spirit all honor and glory are yours, Creator God, now and forever.

AMEN.

The Lord's Prayer

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Hymn during Communion

There Is a Balm in Gilead

UMH 375

There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.
Sometimes I feel discouraged, and think my work's in vain.
But then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.

There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole;
there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.
Don't ever feel discouraged, for Jesus is your friend,
and if you look for knowledge he'll ne'er refuse to lend.

There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole;
there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.
If you can't preach like Peter, if you can't pray like Paul,
just tell the love of Jesus, and say he died for all

There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole;
there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

SENDING

Closing Hymn

Healer of Our Every Ill

TFWS 2213

Healer of our every ill,
Light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear,
and hope beyond our sorrow.

1. You who know our fears and sadness,
grace us with your peace and gladness.
Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts **(Refrain)**

2. In the pain and joy beholding

how your grace is still unfolding,
give us all your vision, God of love **(Refrain)**

3. Give us strength to love each other,
every sister, every brother.
Spirit of all kindness, be our guide **(Refrain)**

4. You who know each thought and feeling,
teach us all your way of healing.
Spirit of compassion, fill each heart. **(Refrain)**

****Benediction**

Sending Music