

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH
A UNITED METHODIST/PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) COMMUNITY
WILDE LAKE INTERFAITH CENTER • COLUMBIA, MARYLAND
UNITED IN LOVE – UNITED FOR SERVICE

February 5, 2023

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY // IN-PERSON & ONLINE SERVICE

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Liturgist: Pamela Love

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WE GATHER IN GOD’S NAME

PRELUDE

Patricia Hammer
Accompanist

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING SONG

“Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”

GTG #65

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but thou art mighty.
Hold me with thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me till I want no more.
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,
whence the healing waters flow.
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield.
Be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside.
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to thee.
I will ever give to thee.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Written by Rev Mindi and posted on Rev-o-lution. <http://rev-o-lution.org>. Reposted: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2017/01/call-to-worship-loving-god-and-one.html>.

We are called to bring a new understanding of God: that God so loves the world.

We are the salt of the earth.

We are called to bring a new hope in God: that God gives us new life.

We are the light of the world.

We are called to follow the commandments and the law.

The Law of God is to love God and to love one another.

Come, let us be the salt of the earth, the light of the world.

Come, let us love one another with the love of God. Let us join together in our love of God to worship and follow Jesus.

INVITATION TO RECONCILIATION/UNISON PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

This is what God hopes for us - that we will speak of the mistakes we make, so we might be forgiven. Relying on the Spirit for the right words, let us pray together, saying,

It is true we break your commandments, God of our lives. Much worse, we break your heart when we point the finger at those who are different from us; when we gossip about our friends and neighbors; when we think everything is all about us. Forgive us, Loving God, we pray. We long to know your ways, so open our ears to hear those words we always ignore. We search for you each day, so open our eyes to your wonders so we may see them anew. We believe in your promises, so fill our hearts with the presence of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

(silence is kept)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

God will show us the way to God's realm. Gracious, merciful, and righteous is our God of salvation!

God rebuilds our lives, repairs our mistakes, fills our emptiness with hope and joy. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! Amen.

ANTHEM

“This Little Light of Mine”
Spiritual; arr. Neil A. Johnson

SJU Chancel Choir

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine (3x)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

On a Monday, He gave the gift of love
On Tuesday peace came from above
On Wednesday told me to have more faith
On Thursday gave me just a little more grace
On Friday told me to watch and pray
On Saturday told me just what to say
On Sunday gave me the power divine
Just to let my little light shine

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 5:13 – 20

TIME WITH CHILDREN

“You Are the Light of the World”

Rev. Mary Ka Kanahan

MESSAGE

“SALT AND LIGHT”

Rev. Mary Ka Kanahan

CALL TO GENEROSITY

God of all creation, source of every blessing: you have given us so much. As we bring our tithes and gifts to you this day, these seem so small by comparison, unless we see that we are truly called to give ourselves back to the world. May we be the salt that brings value and flavor into relationships with those around us. May we be the light that helps others find their way to your love and care. We pray all of this in the mighty name of Jesus, who came to help us see all we could be. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation to The Lord's Table

The meal at this table does not belong to the church—this is the joyful feast of the people of God, and it is Christ himself who invites you, all of you, to come, eat, drink, and see.

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, O God, guiding your people in paths of love and justice. In the beginning, you brought light into darkness, and created a people to reflect your glory.

When we lost our way or turned away, you called us through the words of prophets and came in the life of your Son, who was born as we are born, and lived as we do, who not only revealed your way but is the way.

And so, we join together with your children, in all generations and in everlasting time, to proclaim angelic words:

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

Even now, your Spirit reminds us we are salt and light, and we pray to be restored where we are wounded, so we may carry light into the world to your glory. We see violence and hatred, apathy and disgust, power misused and people treated as disposable. Give us courage to stand and act, to refuse to be consoled, until your creation is healed by the hot light of your justice. When we shade our eyes against the brightness of your way, help us see what you see.

When Jesus faced the hardest moments of his life, the night before gave up himself up for us, he gathered for supper with his disciples and friends, feasting on bread and wine. On the night in which he gave himself up for us, Jesus our Rabbi took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Likewise, when the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

When we assume the end of the story, remind us that you, not we, are the author of life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. As we break bread together, may our hearts be broken with yours. May your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other and one in service to the world. May our eyes be opened, may we recognize you, and may we glorify you. We pray these and all things in the name of Jesus the Christ, who taught us to pray together...

The Lord's Prayer...

The Breaking of the Bread and Sharing of the Cup

COMMUNION SONGS

“Let Us Break Bread Together”

(African-American spiritual) (Gunn HS Chamber Singers; video)

Let us break bread together on our knees, (on our knees)
let us break bread together on our knees. (on our knees)
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me. (on me)

Let us drink wine together on our knees, (on our knees)
let us drink wine together on our knees. (on our knees)
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me. (on me)

Let us praise God together on our knees, (on our knees)
let us praise God together on our knees. (on our knees)
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me. (on me)

Let us praise God together on our knees, (on our knees)
let us praise God together on our knees. (on our knees)
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy if you please. (if you please)

“God Is So Good”

TFWS #2056

God is so good, God is so good
God is so good, God’s so good to me

God cares for me...
God loves me so...
God is so good...

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We give thanks, O Lord, for once again you have filled us with good things—bread and the juice of the grapevine, and your very self. Now may the experience of this holy mystery give us eyes to see you at work in every place, and strength to be your body in the world. Make us your people, again and again, salt of the earth and light for the world. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

CLOSING SONG

“Lead Me, Guide Me”

TFWS #2214

Refrain

*Lead me, guide me along the way;
For if You lead me, I cannot stray.
Lord, let me walk each day with Thee.
Lead me, oh Lord, lead me.*

I am weak, and I need Thy strength and power,
To help me over my weakest hour.
Let me through the darkness Thy face to see,
Lead me, oh Lord, lead me.

Refrain

Help me tread in the paths of righteousness;
Be my aid when Satan and sin oppress.
I am putting all my trust in Thee,
Lead me, oh Lord lead me.

Refrain

I am lost, if you take your hand from me;
I am blind, without Thy light to see;
Lord, just always let me Thy servant be,
Lead me, oh Lord, lead me.

Refrain

BENEDICTION

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To those huddled in the shadows of fear and worry,
God sends us to be light.
To those whose lives and hopes have lost all flavor,
Jesus sends us to be salt.
To a society where love is tossed aside as easily as a food wrapper,
Spirit sends us to be faithful carers of everyone we meet.

POSTLUDE

Patricia Hammer
accompanist

Readings are NRSV unless otherwise noted. CEB=Common English Bible; CEV=Contemporary English Version; KJV=King James Version; MSG=The Message; NIV=New International Version; NLT=New Living Translation; TIB=The Inclusive Bible

Matthew 5:13 – 20

5:13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid.

5:15 No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.

5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.

5:18 For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.

5:19 Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

5:20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

