

April 25, 2021 Bulletin – 4th Sunday of Easter

Welcome

*Call to Worship Scott Crawford

- L: Every week, we reenact the story of God's boundless love and celebrate the reality of God's presence.

P: Such a God! Our God is good! God is with us forever!

L: Look at the most important part of the church--us, the people. It is here that God is most alive, weaving us into a community of faith, teaching us how to love, challenging us far more abundantly, than we could imagine by ourselves.

P: Here we are, Lord. Illumine us, purify us, and shine through us as we worship, listen, and respond to you this holy hour.

*Opening Song "O How He Loves You and Me" FWS #2108

Oh, how He loves you and me, Oh how He loves you and me. He gave his life, what more could he give?
Oh, how He loves you; Oh, how he loves me; Oh, how he loves you and me.

Jesus to Calvary did go, His love for sinners to show. What He did there brought hope from despair.
Oh, how He loves you; Oh, how he loves me; Oh, how he loves you and me.

God, we praise you! We gather together to worship you, to remember the goodness and unfailing love you have shown toward us, your people. Time after time, you have come to our rescue. Your love has sustained us through good times and bad. No matter what we faced —whether accident, illness, disappointment or death —you were there, encouraging, strengthening, and blessing. Even when we turned our back on you, you didn't abandon us, but waited patiently for us to return, ready to welcome us with open arms. Because we have known your love in the past, we look to the days ahead without fear. No matter how uncertain the future may seem, we will continue to trust in your unfailing love, confident that you will guide us in the days ahead as you have guided us in the past. Amen.

Musical Call to Prayer "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying" FWS #2193

Lord, listen to your children praying; Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying; send us love, send us power, send us grace.

Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer

Scripture Reading

1 John 3:13-24

Scott Crawford

¹³ Don't be surprised, brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have transferred from death to life, because we love the brothers and sisters. The person who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵ Everyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that murderers don't have eternal life residing in them. ¹⁶ This is how we know love: Jesus laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ But if someone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but refuses to help—how can the love of God dwell in a person like that?

¹⁸ Little children, let's not love with words or speech but with action and truth. ¹⁹ This is how we will know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts in God's presence. ²⁰ Even if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts and knows all things. ²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts don't condemn us, we have confidence in relationship to God. ²² We receive whatever we ask from him because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. ²³ This is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love each other as he commanded us. ²⁴ Those who keep his commandments dwell in God and God dwells in them. This is how we know that he dwells in us, because of the Spirit he has given us.

Sermon

"Love Is the Litmus Test"

*Hymn

"Where Charity and Love Prevail"

UMH #549

Where charity and love prevail, there God is ever found;
Brought here together by Christ's love, by love are we thus bound.

With grateful joy and holy fear true charity we learn;
Let us with heart and mind and strength now love Christ in return.

Forgive we now each other's faults as we our faults confess;
And let us love each other well in Christian holiness.

Let strife among us be unknown, let all contention cease;
Be Christ the glory that we seek, be ours his holy peace.

Let us recall that in our midst dwells God's begotten Son;
As members of his body joined, we are in him made one.

Love can exclude no race or creed if honored be God's name;
Our common life embraces all whose Maker is the same.

Invitation to Give and Offertory

"God is Love"

Ann Jacobs, Cathy Grattan,

By Van Denman Thompson

Brian Miller, Steve Grattan

(Anthem lyrics are included at the bottom of the bulletin)

*Closing Hymn

"By Grace We Have Been Saved"

W&S #3110

1. By grace we have been saved through faith and not by keeping law.
God's saints believed by what they heard and not by what they saw,
and not by what they saw.
2. For all have sinned and fallen short. God's plan not one obeyed.
Christ has for all fulfilled the law. Believe, confess, be saved;
Believe, confess, be saved.
3. God gave to earth a perfect love through Jesus on the cross.
While we were foes, Christ died for us. We gained by God's own loss,
We gained by God's own loss.
4. We know the wage of sin is death; thank God we shall revive.
For just as Jesus rose again, we too are made alive,
We too are made alive.
5. Set free, we now have peace with God. Salvation is secured.
How beautiful the feet of those who share the gospel word,
Who share the gospel word.

*Benediction

*Postlude

"They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love"
By Peter Scholtes

(Ushers will dismiss the congregation by pew beginning from the rear)

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go

O Love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee; I give thee back the life I owe, that in thine ocean's depths its flow may richer, fuller be, may richer, fuller be. O Light that follows all my way, I yield my flick'ring torch to thee; my heart restores its borrowed ray, that in thy sunshine's glow its day may brighter, fairer be, may brighter, fairer be. O Joy that seeks me through the pain, I cannot close my heart to thee; I trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not vain that morning shall tearless be, that morning shall tearless be. O Cross that raises up my head, I dare not ask to fly from thee; I lay in dust life's glory dead, and from the ground there blossoms red, Life that shall endless be, Life that shall endless be. Amen.

God Is Love

God is love, his mercy brightens all the path in which we rove; bliss he wakes and woe he lightens: God is wisdom, God is love. For the hour that darkest seemeth will his changeless goodness prove; thro' the gloom his brightness streameth: God is wisdom, God is love. There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea; there's a kindness in his justice which is more than liberty. There is welcome for the sinner, and more graces for the good; there is mercy with the Savior, there is healing in his blood. For the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind, and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind. If our love were but more simple, we would take him at his word; and our lives would be all sunshine in the sweetness of our Lord, in the sweetness of our Lord.