



Faith United Methodist Church

6810 Montrose Road, Rockville, Maryland 20852

Faith is a member of the Reconciling Ministries Network

March 27, 2022

Fourth Sunday in Lent

WE GATHER

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND STATEMENT OF WORSHIP [don't say this]

Nancy Kuhn, Liturgist

[Introduce self....and invite children present to go to the narthex to help with the procession to give them time to get back there and organized]

Some announcements before we enter into worship...

- Today is UMCOR Sunday. Through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) we can make a difference for communities and individuals whose lives have been turned upside down by storms, wars, fires, displacement and climate change. If you would like to make a donation, please visit the giving page on the Faith website and choose the UMCOR Sunday option.
- Please save the date for our annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 2nd at 3 p.m.
- For the Easter worship service, if you would like to sponsor a potted flower in memory or honor of loved ones, the donation is \$18. Those honored and memorialized will be named in the Easter bulletin. Please refer to Friday's *What's Working at Faith* or the *Good News* for additional information.

Welcome to worship with Faith United Methodist Church.

We are a reconciling community within the United Methodist tradition, seeking to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, and also seeking to invite others who need a place to **belong** in community, **become** followers of Christ, and **believe** the Good News of the Gospel.

Worship is an important act...it is important to share that with all ages and stages. We learn and grow from our time together. Children are not just welcome, they are embraced, and we are going to work together as a community to share their enthusiasm and joy, wonder and curiosity, just like Jesus did.

We share worship with people in our pews and with people that are miles and even oceans away, joining us online. We believe that the Holy Spirit is at work in these bold, new connections, knitting us together as the body of Christ for all the world.

Each week of this Lent season, we are focusing on ways that we can practice a counter-cultural theology that emphasizes the beauty and grace and embrace of the reality of life-right-now rather than waiting with increasing judgment to reach some vision of a perfected existence. Our ladder-climbing efforts sometimes end up taking us down a rung or two as things don't work out just right. And so let us continue to turn ladders into gardens, nurturing our souls and embracing our holy, "good enough," lives.

CENTERING

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell

MUSIC FOR GATHERING

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

Composer: William B. Bradbury

Arr.: Sandra Eithun

Bells of Faith: Nancy Kuhn, Director; Carol Benson, Jean Decker, Mary Gordon, Janice Jones, Pam Kessler, Paula MacCormack, Kay McCarty, Virginia McDowell, Marti Phillips-Patrick, Jane Rall

CALLING ON GOD

Nancy Kuhn, Liturgist

Leader: Let us pray together:

Holy One, God of Forgiveness,

we call out to you and

and you surround us with deliverance.

You love us infinitely more than we love ourselves or others.

Open us this day to your counsel,

helping us be more merciful, more grace-filled,

so that we might rejoice in simple and good enough moments that fill our days.

Amen.

THE CHILDREN LEAD US

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell

SPECIAL MUSIC

TFWS Hymn #2046

Womb of Life

Words: Ruth Duck (John 1:14; 20:19-23)

Music: Skinner Chávez-Melo

Faith UMC Choir

Yeri So, Pianist

HONEST QUESTIONS, COMPASSIONATE RESPONSE

Nancy Kuhn, Liturgist

Leader: Today we will hear how the Prodigal Son lives high on the hog and then famine strikes in the land of his dream vacation. And so he heads home, tail between his legs, expecting that he has lost it all. To his surprise, his extravagant failure is met with extravagant love and grace. We can be pretty hard on ourselves when things don't go as planned. Guilt, shame, and fear of being seen as a failure can leave us wallowing in the pig pen. Our delusions of a perfectible life keep us disappointed in ourselves. Truth is, life is a big ole risk every single day and facing whatever each day holds is not only good enough, but worthy of love and grace. Do you find yourself being unrealistically hard on yourself? Let us take a moment of silent reflection...

Silent Reflection

Leader: Hear this compassionate word from the Second Letter to the Corinthians: "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"

Know that already, God is offering us freedom from the guilt and shame of our past failings and our present unrealistic expectations. We are invited to rejoice that each day is a new beginning, so that we might enjoy, and not dread, the life before us.

And know, that despite our sometimes faltering steps, in the name of Jesus Christ, you are being forgiven, even now.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

Glory to God! Amen.

THE PEACE

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell

(invite people to pass the peace remembering to include the people watching the livestream)

WE PROCLAIM

GOSPEL READING

Nancy Kuhn, Liturgist

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

MESSAGE

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell

TFWS HYMN #2197

Lord of All Hopefulness

Words: Jan Struther

Music: Irish folk melody

Faith UMC Choir

Yeri So, Organist

WONDER

INVITATION TO OFFERING – UMCOR SUNDAY [from center chancel, inviting usher forward with plate]

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell

OFFERTORY PRAYER [from pulpit]

Nancy Kuhn, Liturgist

Generous God,
in light of your extravagant blessings—
no matter what the state of the world or our imperfect lives—
we offer our gifts and ourselves,
and know that you transform what we plant
into the produce of love.

Amen.

WHAT NOW?

Ще Не Вмерла України (Ukrainian National Anthem)

Arr.: John Wernega

Bells of Faith: Nancy Kuhn, Director; Carol Benson, Jean Decker, Mary Gordon, Janice Jones, Pam Kessler, Paula MacCormack, Kay McCarty, Virginia McDowell, Jane Rall

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell

HYMN #573

O Zion, Haste

Words: Mary A. Thomson, 1894

Music: James Walch, 1875

Yeri So, Organist

A BLESSING FOR BECOMING REAL

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell

Blessed are you who do not despise your realness.
It may hurt. You may not recognize yourself in the mirror.
But this is what we hoped for, right?
To live and love. To be loved.
To have our experiences show on our faces and in our cells.
It is the real life of Jesus in us, being made visible, as all our seams show.

BENEDICTION

Rev. Dr. Laura Norvell

And now, may the God who loves all of creation, especially the broken bits,
and Jesus, our companion along this crooked path called life,
and the Holy Spirit, who loves to improvise in surprising ways,
go with you, dwell among you, and give you joy. Amen.

POSTLUDE

Voluntary in D minor

Composer: Samuel Long (18th century)

Yeri So, Organist

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