



# First Central Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## EASTER SERIES: LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

May 17, 2020

Sixth Sunday of Easter

**Prelude**

Psalm 42

**Welcome and Announcements**

Rev. Katie Miller

**\*Greeting and Passing of the Peace**

*"The Peace of God be with you."*

*In Unison:* **Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;  
the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.**

*\* Let us rise in body or spirit.*

**Call to Worship**

Ashley Villatoro, liturgist

We long for community and the Presence of God.

**In whom we live and move and have our being.**

Christ reminds us that we will never be alone; a Comforter will share our journey.

**With whom we will live and create community and celebrate being.**

May we know the presence of the Spirit as we gather, continuing to share the cost of discipleship with deeds of bold mercy and courageous justice.

**We are an Easter People following a Risen Lord.**

**\*Processional Hymn**

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

*Black Hymnal, No. 23*

IN BABILONE

# There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

23

*Frederick William Faber, 1854; alt.*

1 There's a wide-ness in God's mer-cy, like the wide-ness of the sea;  
2 For the love of God is broad-er than the mea-sures of our minds;

there's a kind-ness in God's jus-tice, which is more than lib - er - ty.  
and the heart of the E - ter - nal is most won - der - ful - ly kind.

There's no place where earth-ly sor-rows are more felt than in God's heaven;  
If our love were but more faith-ful, we would glad-ly trust God's word;

there's no place where earth-ly fail-ings have such kind-ly judg-ment given.  
and our lives would show thanks-giv-ing for the good-ness of our God.

*Of Huguenot Protestant ancestry, Frederick William Faber was influenced by the Oxford Movement and eventually became a*

Tune: IN BABILONE 87.87.D.  
*Quaker melody*

X

## \*Invocation

Still-speaking God, we gather today to immerse ourselves in your Sacred Story. We find ourselves caught up in the drama and beauty of Jesus' teachings, life, and ministry. Your Spirit enables us to move boldly into the future embodying divine love. Join us together with you and one another. Amen.

## \*Gloria

*Black Hymnal, No. 759*

Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three in One; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

## Conversation with the Children

## Word in Music

Romance

Erin Bennett, soloist

# New Testament Lesson

Acts 8:26-40

For the Word of God in scripture,  
For the Word of God within us,  
For the Word of God among us,  
Thanks be to God.

# Sermon

Embracing Our Power of Influence

Rev. Dr. Jim Harmon

# \* Hymn

Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant?

Black Hymnal, No. 539

SERVANT SONG

## Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant? 539

Richard Gillard, 1977, alt.

Rom. 12:9-18; Col. 1:24-29

1 & 6 Won't you let me be your ser- vant, let me be as Christ to you?  
 2 We are pil- grims on a jour-ney, we are trav- elers on the road;  
 3 I will hold the Christ- light for you in the shad- ow of your fear;  
 4 I will weep when you are weep- ing; when you laugh, I'll laugh with you.  
 5 When we sing to God in heav- en we shall find such har- mo- ny,

Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my ser- vant, too.  
 We are here to help each oth- er go the mile and bear the load.  
 I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.  
 I will share your joy and sor- row till we've seen this jour-ney through.  
 Born of all we've known to- geth- er of Christ's love and ag- o- ny.

*(repeat stanza 1)*

© 1977 by Richard Gillard and Terrence Williams

Time: SERVANT SONG 8787

## **\*Prayer of Confession**

Rev. Dr. Jim Harmon

It seems, at times, we forget that you know us at our very depth. We become anxious and afraid that you are not with us, and that our lives have lacked meaning and purpose. We know that you have called us to great things, but we focus instead on what we lack, rather than on Whose we are. By your mercy, help us to live out the commandments of Christ through every aspect of our lives. May we become for the world the very presence of justice, hope and peace. Amen.

## **\*Words of Assurance**

As God's children we are loved and equipped for great ministry. Follow Jesus' commandment to love boldly as you are held in the grace and love of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

## **Prayers**

Pastoral Prayer

Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

## **Offertory**

Canzona

*Bouma*

*Margot Wickman, cello; Morgan Bennett, violin*

## **\*Hymn of Dedication**

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit,  
Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

## **\*Offertory Prayer**

Thank you, Holy God, for the abundant life we enjoy. For the relationships that nurture us. For the blessings that support us. May everything we give here today help to meet human needs. Extend our outreach beyond our vision. In these ways we offer praise to you. Amen.

**\*Recessional Hymn**

Amazing Grace

Black Hymnal, No. 547

HEALING AND FORGIVENESS

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound 547

St. 1-4, John Newton, 1779; alt.  
St. 5, A Collection of Sacred Ballads, 1790

1 A - maz - ing grace, how sweet the sound, that  
 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and  
 3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares, I  
 4 My God has prom - ised good to me, whose  
 5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright

saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but  
 grace my fears re - lieved; How pre - cious did that  
 have al - read - y come; 'Tis grace has brought me  
 word my hope se - cures; God will my shield and  
 shin - ing as the sun, We've no less days to

now am found, was blind but now I see.  
 grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!  
 safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.  
 por - tion be as long as life en - dures.  
 sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

*John Newton's autobiographical hymn reflects his conversion from his earlier existence as a slave trader. While serving as curate in the English village of Olney, Newton met William Cowper, and together they published Olney Hymns, which included this hymn.*

Tune: AMAZING GRACE C.M.  
(NEW BRITAIN)  
Columbia Harmony, Cincinnati, 1829  
Arr. Edwin O. Excell, 1900

X

AMAZING GRACE

**\*Benediction**

**Benediction Response**

*Bouma*

May you hear laughter in the wind. May you see hope in the light.  
May you find courage in your faith. May you know joy in your God.

## **Postlude**

Sing Joyfully!

### **Open & Affirming Statement**

In our ongoing quest for hearts that open, minds that understand,  
and lives that serve, we welcome into our fellowship, membership, leadership, and employment,  
all people, regardless of abilities, race, gender, sexual orientation, or any God-given characteristic.

## Announcements

**May 17, 2020**

**Joys:** *Claire Bouma*, awarded a 2020 Nebraska Young Artists Award in music!

**Chancel flowers and decorations:** sponsored this month by friends and family of First Central. Thanks to *Bud Cassiday* for the loan of his beautiful painting!

**Happy Birthday this week:** to *Martin Richards, Chris Andersen, Karen Wheeler, Steve Jackson*, and *Greg Higginbotham*.

**Fair Trade Coffee:** sponsors this month are *Jeannie Bates, John & Nancy Schalles*.

**FIRSTKids:** 1 p.m. on Zoom. Kids through sixth grade.

### Activities for the Coming Week, May 18 – May 23

*Lectionary Readings: Acts 1:6-14; Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35;  
1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11; John 17:1-11*

**Monday:** Staff meeting, 1:30 p.m., Pastor's Study.

**Wednesday:** Bible study, 3 p.m. on Zoom  
Pre-K, K Sunbeams, 6 p.m., Zoom.  
FirstYouth, 8 p.m., Zoom

**Thursday:** Ministry Support, 7 p.m., Zoom

### Sunday, May 24

**Worship:** 10:30 a.m. on YouTube

**FIRSTKids:** 1 p.m. on Zoom. Kids through sixth grade.

**First Forum:** 3 p.m. on Zoom. *Biblical Israel*, led by *Deb Kirwan*.

**Graduation Sunday:** if you or a family member are graduating this spring, please email [Katie@firstcentral.org](mailto:Katie@firstcentral.org). and let her know!

*Want to donate electronically? Please scan the QR code.*

