

“With Glad Hearts”
Second Sunday of Easter
April 19, 2020



WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

—Spend Time—

Leader: Easter is not just a day. It is a whole season of time when we remember that Jesus’ Spirit lives on in each one of us. In the Bible, the early church was described in this way:

“Day by day, as they **spent much time together** in the temple, they **broke bread at home** and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, **praising God** and **having the goodwill** of all the people.” ACTS 2: 46-47A

So over the next few weeks, we are following our ancestor’s traditions. We are creating a “temple” of worship in our hearts whether we can be physically together or not. By sharing in words and music and breathing and eating and moving together, we will stay connected. The earliest Christians worshiped in their homes before they had churches, and so will we, until we can meet again in our sanctuaries. Because at the “heart of the matter,” we are connected through the Spirit that makes us one in love.

—Opening Act of Centering Our Hearts as One—

We are going to center our hearts as one to begin. Let’s take a deep breath together.
(everyone breathes together)

I invite you to place your hand on your heart and let’s lightly tap together
in a slow heartbeat rhythm.



Holy Living God,
Heartbeat of Creation,
help us to take this time to center on you,
for you made us,
you gave us life,
and you continue to be with us
every moment...

(wait a couple of beats)

every breath...

(wait a couple of beats)

every step.

(the heartbeat tapping fades away)

Hear this assurance from God — *(sing to the tune of Amazing Grace...)*

**Be still, O heart, you're not alone, your beat is shared with me.
Come now, and calm, and center here, you're mine, secure and free.**

Let's take another deep breath, making sure our shoulders and any tension
we feel in our bodies is letting go with the breath. *(Pause to breath)*
Let's take another one. *(Pause to breath)*

Let us pick up our heart stone, sometimes called a "worry stone,"
and let our touch on its surface remind us that God's touch
is within us, between us, and around us.

As close and real as this object is in our hands right now,
is how close Love is to us always.

Let us imagine letting go of our worries for now into God's heart of love.

We offer a prayer song of letting go:
(sing to the tune of Amazing Grace)

**Into your care, we offer now, our worries, fears and strife.
We turn to you and know you're near – Your light, our love and life.**

Let's light our candles now and set our heart worry stones or rock next to it.
(Light the candle/candles you have on your table and put your stone(s) around the base of it)

—BREAK BREAD— Blessing the Meal

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION:

Leader: Loving God,

All: **we confess that at times we do not share in the joy of the resurrection but are caught in the worries of the world. We confess that we do not always live in the spirit of new life but remain discontent, grumbling and anxious. Forgive us for not sharing in the Good News. Forgive us when we find it more comfortable to worry and complain than to risk the joy and encouragement of new life in Christ. Call us back to your ways, O God, to seek hope and reconciliation, restoration and peace.** *(silence)*

Leader: Christ is Risen! The stone is rolled away, the tomb found empty. Mary calls out, "I have seen the Lord!" We have seen Christ, too, in every helping hand, in every heartfelt gift, in every choice to restore life in this world. We are called to this new life, a life of forgiveness and reconciliation. You are forgiven; accept your forgiveness and know that God loves you and desires great joy for your life. Walk forward on this journey of faith, knowing your brothers and sisters are with you. All: **Amen.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION *(All)*

**In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples,
saying: Take and eat; this is my body,
given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.**

**Again, after supper, he took the cup,
gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink,
saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.**

LORD'S PRAYER *(All)*

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Leader: We have gathered with food to nourish our bodies even as we nourish our souls together in worship. This is very much what our spiritual ancestors did as they gathered in those early days in houses. They would bring what they had and share with each other. It's no wonder that "pot luck" is in our Christian DNA! Let us pray this "repeat after me prayer"...

Holy Peace-Giver,
Holy Peace-Giver *(continue to repeat the next lines in this way)*
We gather in your name...
invited by Jesus...
bound together with your Spirit...
in union with each other...

Feed our bodies and our spirits...
with your comforting presence...
so that we might be your comfort to others...

Bless this food...
and break open our hearts...
Bless this drink...
and pour out your love...
Amen...

And now I invite you to pick something (bread and wine) from the table and let us say the one word that is at the heart of the matter in every blessing we do at our tables, repeating after me...

(with gusto)
"Grateful!"
"Grateful!"
The Body of Christ given for you.
The Blood of Christ shed for you.



Let us begin to "break bread" while we "break open the Word" in our scriptures.
(begin to serve and eat even breakfast as the next scriptures and thoughts are shared)

—Breaking Open the Word with Scripture—

Leader: This week we read a passage from the account of the Acts of the Apostles that is a wonderful encouragement and reminder that death never is the last word.

Reader: “God raised him up! God freed him from death’s dreadful grip, since it was impossible for death to hang on to him. David says about him,

‘I foresaw that the Lord was always with me;
because he is at my right hand I won’t be shaken.

Therefore, my heart was glad
and my tongue rejoiced.

Moreover, my body will live in hope,
because you won’t abandon me to the grave,
nor permit your holy one to experience decay.

You have shown me the paths of life;
your presence will fill me with happiness.”

ACTS 2: 24-28

Leader: The “David” referenced in this passage is the Psalmist, and the quote is from the 16th Psalm:

Reader: “You, Lord, are my portion, my cup;
you control my destiny.
The property lines have fallen beautifully for me;
yes, I have a lovely home.
I will bless the Lord who advises me;
even at night I am instructed in the depths of my mind.
I always put the Lord in front of me;
I will not stumble because God is on my right side.
That’s why my heart celebrates and my mood is joyous;
yes, my whole body will rest in safety
because you won’t abandon my life to the grave;
you won’t let your faithful follower see the pit.
You teach me the way of life.
In your presence is total celebration.
Beautiful things are always in your right hand.”

PSALM 16: 5-11

MUSIC: “*Breath on Me Breath of God*”

Leader: It may feel odd to have moved into the season of Easter, a season of celebration, in the midst of these difficult times. Perhaps it is an opportunity to really take into consideration that, at the heart of our Christian faith, we are called to live our lives in the belief that death is not the final word. This is why Christians are called “Easter People.” The tomb becomes the womb of new life. What would we do differently if we really believed that we are loved beyond all endings? That there was nothing to fear?

Today we imagine Jesus at our “right hand,” counseling us throughout our days, with these words, “Peace be with you.” This is what he did when he appeared to the disciples after his resurrection. They were in a locked room, fearing for their lives. Sound familiar? Let’s let Jesus speak these words to us as well. Here is how the story from the Gospel of John goes:

Reader: “It was still the first day of the week. That evening, while the disciples were behind closed doors because they were afraid... Jesus came and stood among them. He said, “Peace be with you.” After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. When the disciples saw the Lord, they were filled with joy. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As [Abba, God] sent me, so I am sending you.” Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” JOHN 20:19-22

Leader: Two things Jesus wanted the disciples to have in their moment of fear was peace and the Spirit. “Taking a breather” is one way to see what Jesus offered to them. He wanted them to take his breath so that they would feel his spirit living in them.

—Action Response—

Leader: I invite you to lean over and whisper toward someone, “Peace be with you.” If you have several people around the table, let it go around like when we play “telephone,” passing it around to the next person when it gets to you. If you are alone, text someone right now that you want to share this with, or if you don’t usually use text, plan to call when this worship is over and tell someone, “Peace be with you.”

[pause to allow time to whisper]

—Breaking Open our Lives with Discussion—

Leader: Our theme scripture says, “they ate their food with glad and generous hearts.” One way we can be glad and generous is to share about how we are finding strength, hope, love and peace in these days. This is part of “breaking bread” with each other as we break open our hearts to one another as well. This week, since Jesus has said he wants us to feel peace, let’s talk about peace.

Think about what sights, sounds, words, and actions, nature, birds, taking a walk, for example, are things that act in your life as a “voice in your ear” that says, “Peace be with you.”

When have you felt peace this week?

Or if you have not experienced much peace, what do you have in your memory as something that brings you peace?

Take some time at your table to talk about this question or journal
Complete this sentence: **“I see Peace (in/when/where)**”

—Breaking Open our Hearts with Prayer—

Leader: It is difficult in this moment not to be near some of the people we love and might be worried about. Take a moment and say out loud the names of people you wish were right there next to you at your table today. As we name them, they are present with us in our hearts.

We also want to call to mind, the people we cannot name, whose names we do not know. But we know they need our prayers and God's comfort.

For those who have lost loved ones
For those who are sick and recovering
For those who are caring for loved ones who are sick at home
For those who are caring for persons in medical care
For those who are separated from loved ones
For those who are feeling alone and isolated
For those who are helping and are so very tired
For those who are struggling to find friends, food, and comfort
For those who are afraid

Leader: Let us take another breath of Spirit as our "Amen." We know that God sends out our prayers and the Spirit, Breath of God, is blowing from within us outward, as a Spirit of Compassion and Presence.

—Praise God!—

It is time to praise God and raise our endorphin levels to improve our heart-health, both physically and spiritually! So whether your "dance" is in your bed, in your chair, or all over the living room, it's time for the **Easter Season Dance Party!** If you are going to dance standing up, go ahead and get ready. And let's start with this affirmation, repeating after me (*with energy!*)

We know Jesus is present among us... (*repeat*)
even in this very home... (*repeat*)
We will not let fear be louder than love... (*repeat*)
but with glad hearts and rejoicing souls... (*repeat*)
we will sing God's praise... (*repeat*)
for we are Easter People! ...(*repeat*)

—Have Goodwill—

That was great! I hope you feel some good vibes right now. So while we have our energy up, let's decide to send some energy out to the world that needs it! What message does the world need? Perhaps you will decide to create a way to let more and more people know the message of Christ, "You are not alone. I am here. Peace be with you." What can we do to create more peace in our household, in our family, in our relationships with those we cannot be with right now? How can we offer peace to those who are working so hard right now? How can we offer peace to those who feel no peace or comfort?

—Blessing—

(based on Psalm 16)



As we close this time together,
remember:
God is always with you.
No matter what you face,
no matter what trials or hardships
come your way,
God is right beside you,
whispering
“Peace be with you,”
guiding and directing your path.
So do not live in fear, but in joy.
Take heart!
This is the heart of the matter.
Amen.

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REMEMBER IN PRAYER

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