

Sunday Worship - April 23, 2023
Third Sunday of Easter



Garden Beans by Nancy Hoang, food photographer

Narrative Lectionary Week 29 - The Season of Easter
The Acts of the Apostles: Peter's Vision

First Presbyterian Church of Mount Vernon, Iowa

*“Striving to live as Jesus lived –
confronting injustice with love, compassion, service.”*

Welcome to Worship

**Please stand if you are able*

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

L: The Lord be with you.

P: And also with you.

INTROIT

*CALL TO WORSHIP

L: It is a risk to have come to worship today.

This is a place where believers
worship what cannot be seen,
choose to participate in a living mystery,
and try—with all of the Spirit's help—
to allow transformation within their lives,
the church, and the world.

**P: This is a place where believers try—
with all of the Spirit's grace—
to risk letting go of familiar but stubborn ways
in order to believe, receive, and love anew.**

L: Friends, let us worship God together in this place.

~from *Words for Worship 2* edited by Diane Zaerr Brenneman, #14

*HYMN #231 Christ Has Risen While Earth Slumbers

*1 Christ has risen while earth slumbers; Christ has risen where hope died,
as he said and as he promised, as we doubted and denied.*

*Let the moon embrace the blessing; let the sun sustain the cheer;
let the world confirm the rumor: Christ is risen, God is here!*

*2 Christ has risen for the people whom he died to love and save;
Christ has risen for the women bringing flowers to grace his grave.
Christ has risen for disciples huddled in an upstairs room.
He whose word inspired creation can't be silenced by the tomb.*

*3 Christ has risen and for ever lives to challenge and to change
all whose lives are messed or mangled, all who find religion strange.
Christ is risen, Christ is present making us what he has been:
evidence of transformation in which God is known and seen.*

*PRAYER FOR EASTERTIDE

L: Let us pray together:

ALL: God of our dreams, you confound us and disturb us.

You shake us up, and you change the way we think and act.

You reveal yourself to us and you make your ways known to us.

God of our dreams,

forgive us when we fail to grasp your will at work in our lives.

Forgive us when we are puzzled by your challenges and afraid to step out in faith.

Forgive us when we believe that things should always be done our way.

**Forgive us when our experiences of life are too narrow
to open up a bigger world where we can find you.**

**Forgive us when we refuse to accept your word
and believe that we know what is best for us.**

Have mercy upon us, Lord.

**Forgive our lack of confidence, our lack of trust, our lack of vision,
and bring to us a deeper sense of your peace and understanding,
that our lives can be made new in you and our sins forgiven.**

We ask these things in the name of Christ Jesus.

Amen.

***WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

L: Do not be afraid! In Christ, God comes near to us, bringing hope, joy and forgiveness into our lives.

ALL: God gathers up the fragments of our lives and shapes us into new people. For this reason, we lift our thanks to God. Amen.

***RESPONSE #243 Be Not Afraid**

Be not afraid; sing out for joy! Christ is risen, alleluia!

Be not afraid; sing out for joy! Christ is risen, alleluia!

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

L: This is the Good News—the grave is empty, Christ is risen.

P: Hallelujah!

L: This is the Good News—the light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness can never put it out.

P: Hallelujah!

L: Christ is our peace,

P: the indestructible peace we now share with each other.

L: The peace of Christ be with you.

P: And also with you.

DISCOVERY TIME

ANTHEM

SCRIPTURE

L: In the beginning was the Word.

P: And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

L: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Acts 10:1-17, 34-38 (NRSV Updated Edition) - Peter's Vision

Reader 1: In Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Cohort, as it was called. He was a devout man who feared God with all his household; he gave alms generously to the people and prayed constantly to God. One afternoon at about three o'clock he had a vision in which he clearly saw an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius." He stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" He answered, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. Now send men to Joppa for a certain Simon who is called Peter; he is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside." When the angel who spoke to him had left, he called two of his slaves and a devout soldier from the ranks of those who served him, and after telling them everything he sent them to Joppa.

Reader 2: About noon the next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while it was being prepared he fell into a trance. He saw the heaven opened and something like a large sheet coming down, being lowered to the ground by its four corners. In it were all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds of the air. Then he heard a voice saying, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat." But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean." The voice said to him again, a second time, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane." This happened three times, and the thing was suddenly taken up to heaven.

Reader 1: Now while Peter was greatly puzzled about what to make of the vision that he had seen, suddenly the men sent by Cornelius appeared. They were asking for Simon's house and were standing by the gate.

Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every people anyone who fears him and practices righteousness is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Reader 2: While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

L: For the Word of God in scripture, for the Word of God among us, for the Word of God within us,

P: Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

Rev. Lori Wunder

HYMN #710 We Lift Our Voices (We Are an Offering)

We lift our voices; we lift our hands; we lift our lives up to you: we are an offering.

Lord, use our voices; Lord, use our hands; Lord, use our lives; they are yours: we are an offering.

All that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be, we give to you, we give to you.

We lift our voices; we lift our hands; we lift our lives up to you: we are an offering; we are an offering.

A MOMENT FOR PRAYER

Pray the Day - PRESENCE

SHARING OF JOYS & CONCERNS AND THE 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.

CALL FOR THE OFFERING

Leader: There are many ways to offer ourselves, our resources, our lives to God and the way of God. We do so in response to God's abundant love and provision.

OFFERTORY

~ Offerings may be placed in the basket located at the back of church or given online at www.firstpresmv.com

*HYMN OF THANKSGIVING #607 Doxology

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ, all people here below;
praise Holy Spirit evermore; praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.*

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Leader: Let us pray together:

ALL: Lord God, you have given us much from the stores of your love.

Your pockets are deep and you keep giving;

time after time we experience your gracious hand as it provides us with blessing after blessing.

In comparison we have little to give—or so we think.

When we make our offering,

we do so recognizing the immense cost of love revealed by the cross and empty tomb,

and we come with thankfulness for your gift to us.

May we be extravagantly generous in the commitments we make,

as we live our lives faithfully as your servants in the world. Amen.

*HYMN #765 May the God of Hope Go with Us

*May the God of hope go with us every day,
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.*

*May the God of justice speed us on our way,
bringing light and hope to every land and race.*

*Refrain: Praying, let us work for peace;
singing, share our joy with all;*

*working for a world that's new,
faithful when we hear Christ's call.*

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

All are welcome in the Social Hall (lower level) to enjoy coffee, juice, treats and conversation.

Thank you to the following people for helping with our service this morning:

Elizabeth Riechers, Liturgist
Jim and Teddy Bonewald, AV Crew

First Pres Mount Vernon Staff:

Lori Wunder, Pastor
Jonathan Walsh, Director of Christian Education
Julia Andrews, Director of Music
Donna Warhover, Office Manager
Trent Bowman, Custodian