

First Baptist Church in Needham

Meditations for Sunday, April 26, 2020
(or whenever you are so led to pause, reflect,
and pray)

Third Sunday of Eastertide

Edition 6

Christ is risen—risen, indeed! Alleluia!



Lighting the Candle of Life

You may wish to light a candle or use the candle photo as a focus.

ALL: We light the Candle of Life — a candle that represents community, spirit, and the fullness of all of life — birth and death and all of the transitions in between and beyond.

Hymn 706

I Come with Joy

DOVE OF PEACE

Christ finds us in the most unexpected places. British hymnist, Brian Wren (b.1936) speaks to Christ's presence as it breeches all our barriers and divisions in this hymn. As we worship together in Spirit while separate in person, sing or speak these words with confident assurance, or

choose three verses to sing along with Holy Trinity Lutheran Church's hand bell ringers, from Hickory, NC, found online here: <https://youtu.be/zDgmubN1KDM> .

I come with joy, a child of God,
forgiven, loved, and free,
the life of Jesus to recall,
in love laid down for me.

I come with Christians far and near
to find, as all are fed,
the new community of love
in Christ's communion bread.

As Christ breaks bread and bids us share,
each proud division ends.

The love that made us makes us one,
and strangers now are friends.

The Spirit of the risen Christ,
unseen, but ever near,
is in such friendship better known:
alive and among us here.

Together met, together bound,
by all that God has done,
we'll go with joy, to give the world,
the love that makes us one.

¹ "I Come with Joy" Holy Trinity Chapel Ringers from "All Praise to Thee, vol. 3" arranged by Jason W. Krug copyright 2019 Choristers Guild. Uploaded April 21, 2020.

A Reading from Luke 24:13-35 (NRSV)

(Read the text aloud. Pause and notice what image or phrase stands out or "shimmers" as you tell the story.)

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad.

Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him."

Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"

That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

ALL: The word of our Lord. Thanks be to God.

Eastertide Alleluia Hymn 736 Celtic Alleluia arr. Fintan O'Carroll & Christopher Walker

This Alleluia response to the scripture reading will follow us through the season of Eastertide. Alleluia means "God be praised!" You may choose to recite it as a prayer of thanksgiving, sing it to your own tune, or sing along with this online version: https://youtu.be/kSS_TanMwWE².

(Refrain) Alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia, alleluia.

The word of the Lord lasts forever. What is the word that is living?

It is brought to us through God's son, Jesus Christ. *(Refrain)*

² Spirit & Song: Disc B © 2013 OCP. All Rights Reserved All Selections BMI Released on: 2013-11-15 Music Publisher: OCP

Time of Reflection

Choose one or more of the following notes to reflect upon the scripture text. Perhaps write your thoughts, call a friend or family member to discuss it, or allow the story to seep into your imagination.

- What image, word, or phrase stood out or “shimmered” to me? Reflect on its significance today. Consider holding the image or phrase as a focus of prayer this week.
- Cleopas and his companion share their current condition with a stranger who accompanies them along the road. The stranger, Jesus, offers them new perspective and insight. How would I describe my current condition and the state of my communities to a stranger? What of Jesus’s life and teachings speak to my heart during this Eastertide and COVID19 season?
- Hospitality is one of the most ancient spiritual practices. Offering food and shelter to a wayfarer was a sacred act across human cultures with many religions teaching that when doing so, the host may well welcome a divine being into their home. Luke’s text indicates the travelers offer this welcome to Jesus who then assumes the role of the host by ritually blessing and breaking the bread at the beginning of the meal. If I cannot welcome other folk physically into my home and life this week, how may I do so through my thoughtful actions, prayer, and kindnesses? How may I live so that I see Christ in each person and situation this week?
- What Christian rituals and patterns of prayer and worship at FBC Needham do I cherish? How does enacting these behaviors center my life, inform my faith, or offer me peace and hope? As some parts of these practices have to be altered for now, how does my faithfulness to maintaining them while being flexible nurture my connection to God and to all life?



Hymn 391

Will You Let Me Be Your Servant

THE SERVANT SONG

This thoughtful hymn by English-born, New Zealand hymnist, Richard Gillard (b.1953), invites us into the fullness of relationships in light of Christ. To what person or group of people would I sing or speak these words—to whom may I offer Christ's presence? Find it online entitled The Servant Song and sung by Father Cyprian Consiglio and Brother James Makil at <https://youtu.be/K-vgGu5Sye0>³.

Will you let me be your servant,
let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I might have the grace
to let you be my servant too

We are pilgrims on the journey,
we are travelers on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load

I will hold the Christ light for you,
in the night time of your fear;

I will hold my hand out to you
speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping,
when you laugh, I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
till we've seen this journey through

When we sing to God and heaven,
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

Prayers of the People

If you have been attending Sunday worship, you know our sung prayer that brings us into the time of Prayers of the People. Enter into this time in song. If you don't know the tune, let the words be the doorway to your prayer.

Sung Prayer

Hear My Prayer, O Lord

BENZENHAFFER
arr. Holly C. Benzenhafer

Hear my prayer, O Lord. Hear my prayer, O Lord.
I am asking, hear my prayer, O Lord.

Prayerful Meditation

"We don't need to pretend that our lives are perfect, we don't need to hide our sickness or suffering; we can bring our disappointments, our sadness, our anger, our outrage to God. In the same breath...we can also turn to God with our good feelings, triumphs, and joys. When things are going well, when we feel strong and optimistic about life, God welcomes us in prayer then too. We can come to God at any time and in any way with our whole selves."⁴

--April Yamasaki in "Praying Like It Is"

³ *The Servant Song* performed at New Camaldoli Hermitage. Benedictine Junior Institute 2015. Hosted by St. Benedict's Abbey in Atchinson, KS. Filmed and edited by Devin Kumar. <http://www.devinkumar.com>.

⁴ April Yamasaki, *Sacred Pauses: Spiritual Practices for Personal Renewal* (Waterloo, Ontario: Herald Press, 2013), 57.

We Hold in Prayer...

Many of this week's prayers are requests from members of our congregation in the past week. If you have general or specific prayer requests—joys as well as concerns—to share please contact Holly or Daryn to pass them along.

As a community of faith gathered in Spirit when we cannot be in person, we offer our hearts and voices in prayer where we are, as we are, entrusting the Spirit's moving among us and responding far beyond our individual reach and influence...

We grieve with our neighbors in Portapique, Nova Scotia, who mourn the 22+ lives lost and homes destroyed by fire due to the mass shooting last week. For their loved ones and community forever changed...for souls suffering and dying from violence in all forms... and for souls whose names we speak aloud...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Liz, Pastor Holly, and Pastor Daryn, we hold persons continuing to test positive and living with COVID19, especially Liz's friend Norman Crump at Tremont Temple; Pastor Holly's colleague Rev. Lindsay Popperson, an assisted living chaplain in Boston; and two of the Korean congregation's pastor's sons. We also continue to hold Pat Day's sister and daughter to God's healing as they recover from COVID19. May they find easement from their symptoms and a thorough return to full health...and for souls living with this virus whose names we speak aloud...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Louise, Ernie, Nancy, we are thankful for the brilliance and beauty of spring, especially forsythia bushes, walks around neighborhoods and reservoirs, and gardening...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With our Office Manager, Robin Bevilacqua, we hold Deacon Carole LaBonte, who serves Greater Framingham Community Church, to God's watchcare as she is hospitalized and in coma after suffering a stroke. We lift her and hold the medical staff, family, and faith community who keep vigil in prayer.... We continue to hold Marty's niece, Linda, to Spirit's moving as she undergoes cancer treatment...With Clif and Anthony, we hold souls most vulnerable to mental and physical illness or injury; who must delay testing, diagnosis, or treatment; who must enter hospital and be cut off from loved ones; who live with chronic anxiety and stress; who linger between life and death...and whose names we speak aloud...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Nancy, we hold souls who are working long hours in make-shift environments or are short-staffed for whom this time does not allow rest or respite, the millions of workers furloughed and unemployed, persons working for low wages with little benefits...and for souls in these groups we know personally whose names we speak aloud...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Louise, Liz, Marty, Ernie, Clif, and Anthony, we rejoice in the continued health and wellbeing of loved ones. We delight in small kindnesses from neighbors, grandchildren, colleagues, and friends. ... *Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With Clif, Anthony, and Ernie, we are grateful for the diversions technologies offer for long hours of isolation, especially computer games, television, and streaming *The Great British Baking Show*. For the benefits and blessings we are all receiving through the imagination, creativity, innovation, and skill of people who have devoted themselves to the arts, theatre, music, writing, story-telling, dance, gaming development, and technologies that convey these efforts to a global audience...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

With Pastor Holly, we continue to hold souls in south-central Mississippi who have endured two Sundays in a row of deadly and devastating tornadoes. For families grieving deaths of loved ones; homes, businesses, and church buildings destroyed; the complications for recovering while COVID19 distancing...and for souls in pain from natural disasters and human-made chaos whose names we speak aloud... *Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

With Ernie and Clif we give thanks for the centering nature of scripture, especially Psalm 91 and the Gospels and entrust ourselves to God, our refuge. With Andrew, we are grateful for the ability to speak and write our prayerful responses in our own words before God...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*



For the lives lost to COVID19, all persons who have entered God's nearer presence since last we entered prayer together, souls who grieve this day...and souls whose names we speak aloud...*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer....*

In celebration, we honor FBC Needham's founding anniversary (April 27, 1856). We offer thanks for the vision, hope, and trust in God's providence of the original 33 subscribers who formed the Needham Plain Baptist Church. As their inheritors, may we be faithful servants of Christ today...*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow....*

And for the prayers of our hearts that you, Holy One, know even when words cannot hold them...*Hear my prayer, O Lord.*

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory forever. Amen.

Hymn 447

Because He Lives

RESURRECTION

Sing or read the familiar words of this hymn by Gloria and William J. Gaither—and let it prepare you for the week ahead. Or, sing along with the Covenant Christian High School Chamber Choir's beautiful harmonies online: <https://youtu.be/d8ns80vNzCE>⁵ .)

God sent his son, they called him, Jesus;
he came to love, heal and forgive;
he lived and died to buy my pardon,
an empty grave is there to prove my Savior
lives!

How sweet to hold a newborn baby,
And feel the pride and joy he brings;
But greater still the calm assurance:
This child can face uncertain days because he
lives!

(Refrain)

*Because he lives, I can face tomorrow,
Because he lives, all fear is gone,
Because I know he holds the future,
And life is worth the living,
Just because he lives!*

And then one day, I'll cross the river,
I'll fight life's final war with pain;
And then, as death gives way to victory,
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know he lives!

Offering

For online giving, go to <https://www.fbcneedham.org> or continue to support the ongoing ministry of the church by sending a check to the church office via mail to: First Baptist Church in Needham, 858 Great Plain Avenue, Needham MA 02492. Please indicate it is your offering or pledge on the check.

Doxology

OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures here below.
Praise God above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

⁵ Performed at Fourth Presbyterian Cathedral, Chicago, IL (2013).

Benediction

(Speak these words of benediction knowing that you are part of a loving community of faith. If you lit a candle at the beginning, you may wish to blow it out now.)

One: Our blessing to one another is that we are here for one another, that we are with one another, that we celebrate and remember one another along the journey.

ALL: We extinguish the Candle of Life, but the Light continues to shine within us. As we pass the peace we carry the Light of the Candle of Life from this hour into this world and beyond, offering peace, hope and light wherever the journey leads.

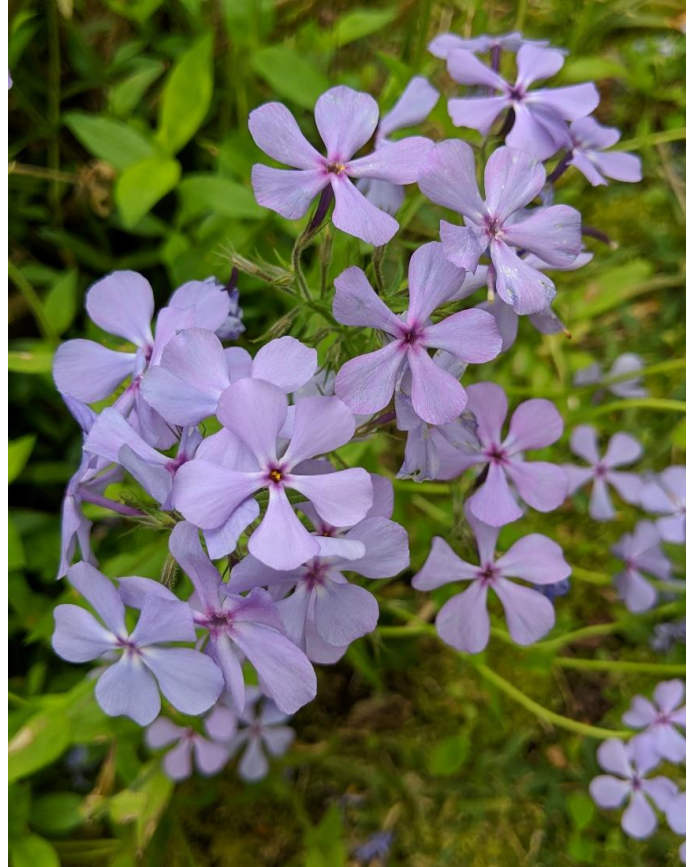
Passing of the Peace

(Picture in your mind's eye the faces of beloved souls with whom you would share the peace of Christ in person if you could, and offer each one your blessing of peace.)

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

ALL: **And also with you.**

One: Let us greet one another in peace as we prepare for the journey ahead.



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Announcements

While the Church Office and Building are currently closed, our ministry continues! Pastoral and office staff are working from home. Office voicemail and email are being checked regularly. If you have a pastoral concern, contact Pastor Daryn or Pastor Holly by email, phone, or text.

Needham Interfaith Clergy Association is offering a weekly collection of online meditations from our different traditions. Both Pastor Daryn and Pastor Holly are contributing. You can access episodes on YouTube by searching "Needham Interfaith Clergy." Or, go to their Facebook page, and Like and Follow them for updates.

Livestreaming Services: Many congregations are offering their services online both in real time or recorded to watch or listen as you are able. Here are a few you may wish to virtually “visit”:

Harvard Memorial Chapel – Available live on Sundays 11:00-noon on WHRB (95.3 FM radio or on online at <https://memorialchurch.harvard.edu/sunday-services-0> and then click “Listen Live” on the current Sunday). Recorded services are available on the same link under “Listen to Sunday Sermons” along with daily Morning Prayers under “Listen to Morning Prayers.”

First Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. – Available online on Sundays 11:00-noon at <https://www.firstbaptistdc.org/upcoming-worship> and then follow links to Facebook Live. Prior recorded sermons are at <https://www.firstbaptistdc.org/listen-to-sermons>.

Boston University’s Marsh Chapel – Available live on Sundays 11:00-noon on WBUR (90.9 FM radio or on online at <https://www.wbur.org/> and then click “Listen Live”). Recorded services are available as a podcast on iTunes or other RSS feeders (search: Marsh Chapel).

Northminster Baptist Church, Jackson, MS – Available livestreaming online on Sundays 11:30-12:30 Eastern at <https://www.northminsterbaptist.live> . Prior recorded services are at <https://www.northminsterbaptist.live/on-demand> and then click on “Playlist” to select a date.



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