

Grace United Methodist Church



April 7, 2024 – 10AM

Order of Worship

Second Sunday of Easter - Communion Sunday

**Grace United Methodist Church is a Family of Faith
striving to share God's love with all.**

*** Please Stand If You Are Able**

Opening Voluntary – Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing
R. Robinson, Arr. B. Wolaver

Choral Introit

Welcome and Greetings

*** Call to Worship**

L: We gather in the name of the risen Lord.

P: Christ is risen! Alleluia!

L: We gather as sisters and brothers of the resurrected one.

P: Christ is risen! Alleluia!

L: We gather to share our faith and to worship God.

P: Christ is risen! Alleluia!

L: We gather to proclaim the good news of Easter!

P: Christ is risen! Alleluia!

*** Opening Hymn #206 – “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”** HOUSTON

***Opening Prayer**

God of the resurrection, we gather this morning as a community of believers. We come with joy to greet one another and to tell again and again the amazing news: Christ is risen! Love is victorious over death! You have given us new life in the name of your Son! May our singing, praying, listening, and proclaiming be a testimony to the power of your love to make us a new creation as a community of faith. We pray in the name of the risen Christ. Amen.

Scriptures

Epistle – 1 John 1:1-2:2

1 We announce to you what existed from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have seen and our hands handled, about the word of life. 2 The life was revealed, and we have seen, and we testify and announce to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us. 3 What we have seen and heard, we also announce it to you so that you can have fellowship with us. Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We are writing these things so that our joy can be complete. 5 This is the message that we have heard from him and announce to you: “God is light and there is no darkness in him at all.” 6 If we claim, “We have fellowship with him,” and live in the darkness, we are lying and do not act truthfully. 7 But if we live in the light in the same way as he is in the light, we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from every sin. 8 If we claim, “We don’t have any sin,” we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from everything we’ve done wrong. 10 If we claim, “We have never sinned,” we make him a liar and his word is not in us. **2** My little children, I’m writing these things to you so that you don’t sin. But if you do sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one. **2** He is God’s way of dealing with our sins, not only ours but the sins of the whole world.

L: The Word of God, For the People of God. P: Thanks be to God.

*** Gospel – John 20:19-31** (*Please stand if you are able*)

¹⁹ It was still the first day of the week. That evening, while the disciples were behind closed doors because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities, Jesus came and stood among them. He said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. When the disciples saw the Lord, they were filled with joy. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I am sending you.” ²² Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven; if you don’t forgive them, they aren’t forgiven.”

²⁴ Thomas, the one called Didymus, one of the Twelve, wasn’t with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ The other disciples told him, “We’ve seen the Lord!” But he replied, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, put my finger in the wounds left by the nails, and put my hand into his side, I won’t believe.” ²⁶ After eight days his disciples were again in a house and Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus entered and stood among them. He said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here. Look at my hands. Put your hand into my side. No more disbelief. Believe!” ²⁸ Thomas responded to Jesus, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹ Jesus replied, “Do you believe because you see me? Happy are those who don’t see and yet believe.” ³⁰ Then Jesus did many other miraculous signs in his disciples’ presence, signs that aren’t recorded in this scroll. ³¹ But these things are written so that you will believe that Jesus is the Christ, God’s Son, and that believing, you will have life in his name.

L: The Word of God, For the People of God. P: **Thanks be to God.**

*** Hymn before Message #420** – “Breathe on Me, Breath of God” *TRENTHAM*

Message – “Beyond Belief”

Rev. Dr. Jeffrey L. Hooker, Pastor

Pastoral Prayer

Invitation

How often have we heard the good news of forgiveness and restoration? Yet, we are still reluctant to believe. God offers us new life, yet we are afraid to let go of the old. Let us confess our doubts and fears to the One who waits to make us whole.

Prayer of Confession

God of mercy, we come celebrating our unity, but we confess the many ways that we are divided. Our nationality, ethnic origin, economic status, gender, age, and musical preferences all too often obscure the common calling we share in Christ's name. May our common identity as your children and our communal witness to Christ bind us together in your name. Forgive our tendency toward separation and division, and remind us that we are your Easter people. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

When we walk in the light of Christ, we have fellowship with one another. When we confess our sins, the One who is faithful and just forgives our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. For in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has showered mercy upon the entire world. Amen.

Passing of the Peace of Christ

L: Peace be with you.

P: And also with you.

L: Receive the Holy Spirit and share the love of the risen Christ with one another.

Invitation to Tithes and Offering

All that we have belongs to God. As we celebrate our unity as a community of faith and focus our hearts on the risen Christ, we joyfully lay our possessions at the altar. Through the grace of God and the bounty of this church, we have the ability to share our gifts so that all may have what they need to live. We thank God for the opportunity to truly be in fellowship with one another and with the world through our offerings today.

Choral Selection – Don't Cry, *K. Franklin, Arr. J. Raney*

*** Presentation of the Offering and Doxology Hymn #95**

***Prayer of Dedication**

Generous and surprising God, when we thought that death had claimed your only Son, you amazed us with the resurrection. Surprise us again with your ability to turn these humble offerings into gifts that will transform the world through our witness to your love. We lay our very lives at your feet, O God, knowing that you will use us to proclaim and embody the gospel. Amen.

Thanksgiving and Communion

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty (almighty God), creator of heaven and earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey, and set before us the way of life.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. By your great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of your Son from the dead to a living hope through the resurrection of your Son from the dead and to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. Once we were no people, but now we are your people, declaring your wonderful deeds in Christ, who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always, in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to the disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

On the day you raised him from the dead he was recognized by his disciples in the breaking of the bread, and in the power of your Holy Spirit your Church has continued in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup.

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER AND CHORAL RESPONSE

BREAKING THE BREAD

GIVING THE BREAD AND CUP

**** PRAYER AFTER RECEIVING COMMUNION***

Almighty God, who givest the true Bread which cometh down from heaven, even thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord: Grant, we beseech thee, that we who have received the Sacrament of his Body and Blood may abide in him, and he in us, that we may be filled with the power of his endless life; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

*** Closing Hymn #557 – "Blest Be the Tie That Binds"**

DENNIS

Dismissal with Blessing

Closing Voluntary – Welcome, Happy Morning, *R. R. Peery*

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jeffrey L. Hooker Liturgist and Reader: Bob DiSalvo	Ushers: Everett Fitch, Carol Provenzano, Michael Provenzano
Director of Music: Kenneth Richardson	Audio-Tech: Brandon Gauntlett Counting Team: Marisa Pershad (Team 1)

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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