



SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 9, 2021

9:00am

“I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.”
–Martin Luther King, Jr.

Prior to the service you are invited to prepare yourself for worship. Some people prefer to meditate or pray, while others may chat quietly with their fellow-worshippers as a way to connect and focus. As the prelude begins, please prepare for worship in quiet attentiveness.

Prelude

Transformation
Kevin McChesney

Welcome

We are called to worship, drawing our attention forward and upward.

*Call to Worship Psalm 98:2-3

The Lord has made victory known;
God’s vindication is revealed in the sight of the nations.

**The Holy One has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.
All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God!**

We focus our attention on God’s glory and offer our praise in word and song.

*Opening Prayer

Bless us, Loving Lord, with your presence this day
as we gather for worship and to celebrate your love.

Prod us with your presence as we consider your unimaginable grace.

You are beyond anything that we can imagine or express.

**Your goodness may be glimpsed in our human relations,
but pales in comparison to the love we have experienced in Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*Hymn # 14 (*You are invited to hum the melody*)

For the Beauty of the Earth

Reflecting on God’s Glory makes us aware of our common sinfulness and need for forgiveness.

*This honesty before God and each other opens our hearts
to receive God's forgiveness, which we celebrate with word and song.*

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Forgiveness

We confess our sins before you today, All-Seeing God, knowing that your forgiveness surrounds us.

We acknowledge that all have sinned and suffer the short-sightedness and shortcomings of humanity. When we hurt those closest to us, help us to admit our wrongs and seek forgiveness. When we become comfortable and complacent with our position, enliven us. When we become cowardly and cautious, stiffen our resolve. Help us all, with your Holy Spirit, to use this time together to gather energy and encouragement, so we will be the kind of people that will heal the world's wounds and express your love in personal, positive ways. Amen.

We all have sinned and require forgiveness.

God has heard our anguished pleas and, instead of condemnation, provides loving care.

As we express our appreciation, let us claim God's good news:

In Jesus Christ, we all are forgiven. Alleluia! Amen!

Response

Meineke

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. Amen.**

Ministry Updates

(Tithes and Offerings may be placed in offering basket in narthex before or after service)

Welcoming Our New Members

Mandy McClure and Anne Morris

Prayers of the People 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.**

The Scriptures hold a central place in our worship and so are read early and often.

*We ask God to inspire the reading and the hearing of these words
and listen for what may be revealed in their reading.*

*The music and messages are designed to help interpret the Scriptures
and help us to apply them to our daily living.*

Prayer for Illumination

Ancient words ever true, changing me and changing you.

We have come with open hearts. Oh, let the ancient words impart. Amen.

Scripture Reading

John 15:9-17

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

Children's Message

*Following the children's message, kids are invited to meet Ms. Sara for story time in Fellowship Hall.
They will return to their families after the sermon.*

Response

God of Great and God of Small

Special music

Dorian Dance by Michael Joy

Sermon

“Abiding in Love”

*Once we hear God's Word, we wish to respond in word and in deed,
so we say and sing what we believe.*

*Affirmation of Faith

Confession of Belhar

We believe that this unity of the people of God must be manifested and be active in a variety of ways; in that we love one another; that we experience, practice and pursue community with one another; that we are obligated to give ourselves willingly and joyfully to be of benefit and blessing to one another; that we share one faith, have one calling, are of one soul and one mind; have one God and Father, are filled with one Spirit, are baptized with one baptism, eat of one bread and drink of one cup, confess one name, are obedient to one Lord, work for one cause, and share one hope; together come to know the height and the breadth and the depth of the love of Christ. (10.3)

*Hymn # 703 (You are invited to hum the melody)

Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me

*We are sent into the world to bear witness to God's glory and love,
knowing that God has gone ahead of us to prepare the way.
Worship ends on this hopeful note and continues in all we do and become.*

*Blessing and Response

Postlude

Recorded in April 2021

Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho
arr. Lennie Niehaus

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FIRST PRES

Leading us in worship today are Rev. Bob Sheldon, Interim Pastor; Rev. Caroline Cupp, Executive Pastor; Sandor Kadar, Director of Music; Kira Boros, Choir Accompanist; The JuBellation Ringers; The Miner Street Brass.

About Today's Service: Of all the amazing gifts God has chosen to share with humanity, love is both the most needed and most powerful. As we experience God's love through Jesus Christ, we are empowered to help others experience God's love through us.

2021 Graduates – If you have someone graduating from high school, college or grad school, please send Karen Goldstein (kgoldstein@firstpreswc.com) their name and the school they are graduating from by Monday, May 10. We are going to acknowledge them in the summer newsletter, which will be mailed out May 17 as well as in the June 6 bulletin. Congratulations and God Bless you all. We wish you much success in the future.

New Members Class - We'll be having a New Members Class over Zoom next Sunday, May 16 at 11:30 a.m. If you or someone you know would like to find out more about becoming a member of First Pres, please sign up with Elizabeth Hess (ehess@firstpreswc.com). All are welcome!

Prayer Walk in West Chester - During the week of May 23, we're asking church members and friends to take a prayer walk around town. You can pair up with a friend or go on your own, you choose the time and day, and you can walk it, run it, drive it or bike it! Before that week, we'll share a list of 15 locations in town (non-profits, nursing homes, fire stations, etc.). We're asking that you say a brief prayer for each of the organizations and its people (a sample will be provided) as you do the walk. The church will reach out to each of those groups to let them know that we are praying for them. No need to sign up; although photos of your walk or a quick note to say that you did it are welcome! (Send to Elizabeth at ehess@firstpreswc.com.) Not a walker? A "virtual" prayer walk at home would be great!

May Anti-Racism Conversation: Now that the group has spent nearly a year reading, listening to speakers, watching videos, and discussing, we're going to use our last session (May 18 at noon) to think about WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE. We'll consider how we use what we've learned and put it into action. We'll be joined by Dr. Brenda Brown Wright who will help facilitate our discussion. She is recently retired as a Professor from Wilmington University's MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program, and currently has her own private counseling practice in Newark, DE. She developed a course called "Diverse Populations" which helped students not only understand and interact best with different cultures, but also lead them to understand their own beliefs and difficulties when interacting with other cultures.

2021 Contributions - Current contributions as of 5/05/21 are \$391,619 out of \$1,047,133 budgeted.