

April 17, 2022 — Easter: From certainty to openness

“Living in the Resurrection”

FORT COLLINS MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

300 E. Oak Street, Ft. Collins, CO 80524

Worship: 10:00 AM

Pastor: Steve Ramer

Cell: 970-412-7510



“A rebirth out of spiritual adversity causes us to become new creatures.” — James E. Faust

Season of Lent: Seeking God’s Ways

Too often we think God offers one thing (privilege), but what God really offers looks quite different (inclusion); we think the world works one way (scarcity), but really it works a different way (abundance); we think power means one thing (control), but it is really found in something else (solidarity). Lent is a time to repent—to turn from our ways and recommit ourselves to the ways of God as revealed in Jesus.

Today’s Focus: As we seek God’s way, we move from the confidence of knowing how things are to the unsettling openness of realizing God’s ways are beyond what we can imagine.

1. GATHERING

Musical Prelude (Jodi Watson)

Call to Worship (Steve)

Leader: Together we seek the way of God—

Group 1: the generous,

Group 2: compassionate,

Group 1: grace-filled,

Group 2: inclusive,

Group 1: abundant,

Group 2: powerful,

Group 1: unsettling,

Opening Song (Cathy and everyone)

Welcome and Passing of the Peace

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

All: Let us offer one another signs of peace, reconciliation, and love.

All: way of God.

Leader: On this day that God has made, may our hearts be open to the good news:

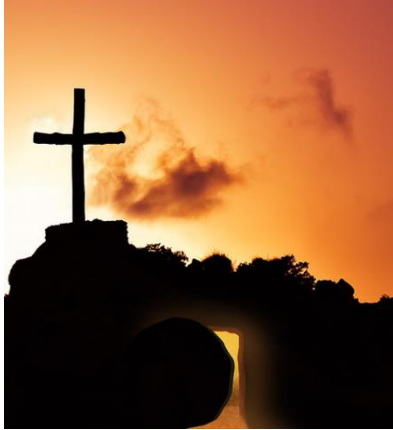
Christ is not here, for he is risen.

All: Jesus Christ is risen indeed!

All: Blessed is the One who comes in the power of God’s name.

A Prayer for Holy Week (Susie) – See last page of bulletin

Easter Prayer (Steve)



Creating God, redeeming God, sustaining God, you are always on the cusp of creating new heavens, new earth. The twists and turns of life, the resurrection from death, the power of love to find a path in the wilderness—all astound and confound us. We stand wet-eyed with open mouths before the tomb. The stone has been rolled away, and we peer into darkness as your voice calls from behind. You know our names. You are a new being, you are compassion, and you are release, urging us not to hold on to you but to join in your movement. May we move so that our lives become new, the circle of our care expands and connects, our openness clearly declares, “We have seen the Lord!” On this day of resurrection, we praise you for your renewing promise and power. Amen.

“No matter how devastating our struggles, disappointments, and troubles are, they are only temporary. No matter what happens to you, no matter the depth of tragedy or pain you face, no matter how death stalks you and your loved ones, the Resurrection promises you a future of immeasurable good.” — Josh McDowell

Congregational Singing (Cathy and everyone)

2. HEARING GOD’S WORD



**Scriptures: John 20:1-18;
1 Corinthians 15:19-26**

Sermon: “Living in the Resurrection” (Susie)

No matter how hard we search, followers of Jesus may never know exactly what happened in the Garden or on the road to Emmaus. However, we do know something happened that changed the lives of the disciples forever, and does the same for us. That is the hope of the Resurrection.

“The symbolic language of the crucifixion is the death of the old paradigm; resurrection is a leap into a whole new way of thinking.” Deepak Chopra

3. RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD

Congregational Singing (Cathy and everyone)

Response (everyone)

Joys and Concerns (everyone)

Offering (song by Jodi Watson)

Sending (Steve): From this time and place into whatever awaits, may you follow God’s way of openness. May you have the courage to step beyond certainty into the unsettling miracle of the resurrection. As you go, give thanks that the Resurrected One leads you toward God’s way. Alleluia!

“The authors of the New Testament . . . see [Jesus’s execution] as the domination system’s “no” to Jesus (and God), as the defeat of the powers that rule this world by disclosing their moral bankruptcy, as revelation of the path of transformation [dying and rising], and as disclosure of the depth of God’s love for us.” —Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan

A PRAYER FOR HOLY WEEK (ADAM RUSSELL TAYLOR)

Jesus, we remember the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday: You shared the sacrament of Holy Communion with your disciples; you prayed at Gethsemane; you were betrayed, arrested, denied three times by Peter, and put on trial.

As we remember this dark day, we lament the things in our world that test our faith as the disciples' faith was tested on that fearful night: the extreme polarization in our politics and churches; the pervasiveness of systemic racism; the continued impasse on critical measures to safeguard democracy and the right to vote in the United States; our lack of progress on averting the most calamitous impacts of climate change.

We know that there is no burden you cannot carry, Jesus; help us surrender our cynicism, our doubts, our fears, and even our feelings of hopelessness and despair.

Lord, we remember the way you were maliciously mistreated on Good Friday: falsely tried and convicted for the crime of sedition and then brutally tortured and crucified.

As we remember this day, we lament the suffering, oppression, and death we see all around us, including the continued racial injustice in our nation, particularly in our legal system. We repent for our part in a system that has falsely accused and wrongfully imprisoned so many. Help us to resist a punitive spirit, remembering that you hold every person as beloved.

We mourn for more than 6 million of your children around the world whose lives were claimed by COVID-19. We lament the inequality that this pandemic has revealed, in the United States and around the world. We fight against the despair we feel with the rise of new variants and disinformation.

We lament the extreme suffering, death, and destruction caused by armed conflict in nations around the world: Ukraine, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and far too many more. We ask you to intercede and create pathways to peace. Form a hedge of protection around civilians in imminent danger and all those working to deliver humanitarian aid. We lament the hunger crisis the war in Ukraine is creating, both in that country and in many nations in Africa and the Middle East who depend on crops grown in Ukraine and Russia to feed their people.

Jesus, our redeemer and deliverer, we remember Holy Saturday: Your disciples sheltered in fear, sorrow, dread, and doubt.

As we remember this day, we lament everything that makes us feel as they did. Help us live into the liminal space between the trauma and brokenness of what is and the hopeful promise of what will be. Strengthen our resilience without hardening our hearts. Keep those who are most vulnerable at the forefront of our thoughts, prayers, and actions.

Lord, we rejoice on Easter morning: The stone has been rolled away and resurrection is real!

As we rejoice this day, we give thanks for the glimpses of resurrection hope that we see all around us: the coming of spring, growing movements protecting our democracy precinct by precinct, the fervor of young people who resist the inevitability of our current climate catastrophe.

We give thanks for recent labor union victories won by employees of powerful corporations like Starbucks and Amazon, and the confirmation of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, who will be the first Black woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court.

With this hope of Easter in our hearts, let us experience rebirth and renewal, believing that you can make all things new. Let us move forward empowered by your Holy Spirit to cocreate communities, a nation, and a world defined by shalom, steadfast love, and justice. With thanksgiving, determination, and joy let us proclaim: "Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!"