

April 31, 2022 — From certainty to openness

*“Go to Jail: Thunder Justice, Releasing Captives, and Acts of Radical Familial Solidarity!”*

FORT COLLINS MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

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

Worship: 10:00 AM

Pastor: Steve Ramer

Cell: 970-412-7510



*“It's not what you go through, but how that experience affects you.” — Brian Banks*

**Theme for Easter:** 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 (Stan)**

**Call to Worship (Steve)**

Leader: Christ is risen!

**People: He is risen indeed!**

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,**

**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!**

**Opening Song (Stan 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.

**Prayer (Steve)**

**Congregational Singing (Stan)**

## 2. HEARING GOD'S WORD

### Scriptures: Matthew 25:31- 43 (Steve)

"I will return again as the Son of Adam in glory and accompanied by every heavenly messenger to occupy the throne of glory. Then all the peoples will assemble and folks will be separated into groups similar to how a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats to the left.

Then the everlasting king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who have the blessing of my Father, inherit the domain prepared for you from the beginning of time. For when I was hungry you fed me, when I was thirsty you gave me something to drink, when I was a stranger you showed me hospitality, when I was naked you gave me clothing, when I was sick you took care of me, and when I was in prison you came to see me.'

Then the virtuous will reply, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you as a stranger and extended you a hospitable welcome? Or naked and gave you clothes? When did we find you ill and take care of you, or incarcerated and visited you?'

And the king will answer, 'The truth is whatever you did to anyone, especially to the most inconspicuous members of my family, it was like you did for me.'

Then he will turn to his left and say, 'You will be condemned to the everlasting fire... because the truth is, whatever you didn't do for the most inconspicuous members of my family, it was as if you were ignoring me.' "



### Sermon: "Go to Jail: Thunder Justice, Releasing Captives, and Acts of Radical Familial Solidarity!" (Steve)

For those in the earliest Christian communities, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, welcoming the stranger, and visiting the sick and the incarcerated, was a radical act of solidarity!

Prison visitation wasn't about saving poor, lost, incarcerated souls; it was about sustaining the faithful souls who had acted out their salvation and were now incarcerated for doing so. Thunder Justice is not only about making a lot of noise, but about releasing lives and souls that for too long, have been kept captive!

***"Only free men can negotiate. A prisoner cannot enter into contracts." — Nelson Mandela***

## 3. RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

### Congregational Singing (Stan and everyone)

#### Response (everyone)

#### Joys and Concerns (everyone)

#### Offering (everyone)

**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 sunlight ranges over the universe, and at incarnation we step out of it into the twilight of the body, and see but dimly during the period of our incarceration; at death we step out of the prison again into the sunlight, and are nearer to the reality." — Annie Besant***