

March 24, 2024

*Palm Sunday: "Being Truly Alive: When Everything Gives Joy!"*

FORT COLLINS MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

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

Worship: 10:00 AM

Pastor: Steve Ramer

Cell: 970-412-7510



SEASON OF LENT

Stones come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. Some are given great monetary value and some are very useful to sculpt statues or build structures that can stand a thousand years. However, most just lie there, often getting in the way. Yet God calls us to become "living stones!" What does this mean? How can this transformation happen? Who are these living stones in our midst and which ones, yet unearthed, will also spring to life?

**1. GATHERING**

**Musical Prelude**

**Call to Worship (based on Joel 2:1-2, 12-17)**

**Leader:** Get up and blow your horn; sound the alarm from Horsetooth Rock! Let everyone know that the day of the LORD's salvation is near!

**People:** For some it will be a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness!

**L:** But the LORD holds out hope for us saying, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. Tear open your hearts, not merely your clothes and return to the LORD, your God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in steadfast love."

**P:** Our God desires to bless us and not punish us. So blow the trumpet loud and we shall return to true holy worship.

**L:** Gather everyone together; the elderly and the children, the strong and the weak of all races and genders for God waits for us just like a giddy bridegroom awaits a bride.

**ALL:** So let us not delay but arise and follow the only true God who can save us!

**Opening Prayer (based on Psalm 51:1-17)**

God, you always show mercy because your love is steady like a mountain! Please forget all my failures and scrub me from head to toe with soap and hot water to wash off all the stains. My faults are many and you would be justified in punishing me harshly. But instead, you desire what is truly true in me — that which I hold deep within my heart. Create a heart that is true and fill me with your spirit. Restore my joy and sustain me when I'm weak. God, open my lips and I will sing your praises.

*"Sometimes when we are generous in small, barely detectable ways it can change someone else's life forever."  
— Margaret Cho*

## Congregational Singing

### 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.

*“For happiness one needs security, but joy can spring like a flower even from the cliffs of despair.”*

— Anne Morrow Lindbergh

## 2. HEARING GOD’S WORD

### Scriptures: Luke 19:36-42 (Santana and Steve version)

As they became more and more hospitable to those without homes, folks began spreading their blankets, coats, tarpaulins, and entire contents of shopping carts onto their property, and they were visible from every approach along Matthews and Oak streets.

According to some, entire multitudes of “those kind of folks” began to gather, shouting obscenities both day and night! Others said they heard only the sweet praises of God for all the deeds that they had seen home cooked meals, hot showers, a safe place to rest, listening ears, helpful advice, and maybe even a ride to the ER, court, probation, or rehab.

Many in their fine city sang their praises, “Bless them for doing the work of God’s kin-dom.” But a few housed neighbors and city leaders complained, saying, “Preacher, we order your church to stop! Those who gather on your property are not only

disturbing the peace but creating an eyesore. Not only are you endangering the safety of the entire neighborhood but the very folks who sleep inside your building because it is not up to residential code!”

But he responded, “I tell you, far too long we have ignored and marginalized those who are without homes, due to economic misfortune, mental illness and drug abuse. They can no longer remain silent. Just like stones, they too have a history and a story to tell — something the rest of us need to hear.

Let us instead weep for our city, that has enough resources, intelligence, and capacity to create what People magazine lists as the “most livable small city in America” for each one of us! Come on, we all know what builds true peace! But instead we act as if we are suddenly unable to comprehend any of it.”

### SERMON: “Being Truly Alive: When Everything Gives Joy!”



Here at FCMF we have witnessed some huge transformations in the lives of many folks. But many of these now “living stones” went unnoticed by us and by society. However, some did poke out from the ground where they obstinately kept getting in the way and refused to budge. But “a stone that has come to life” can be one that fills each day with joy — a life that is now too valuable to return to those old destructive ways. This morning we will hear from Santana.

## 3. RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD

### Congregational Singing

### Response

### Joys and Concerns

### Offering & Music

*“Each day holds a surprise. But only if we expect it can we see, hear, or feel it when it comes to us. Let’s not be afraid to receive each day’s surprise, whether it comes to us as sorrow or as joy. It will open a new place in our hearts, a place where we can welcome new friends and celebrate more fully our shared humanity.” — Henri Nouwen*

### Sending (based on Matthew 6:11-6, 16-21)

If you practice your piety only so others will see it, God will ignore it. If you make a big deal out giving money to the poor, God will make a little deal about it. When you pray, don’t be like those hypocrites who love to stand in church and pray loudly; God prefers to sit and talk with you alone. If you take on a spiritual discipline, don’t look sad, like hypocrites do, who disfigure their faces and try to look obviously miserable. When you do deny yourself anything to spread God’s Kin-dom, do it with joy. And above all keep this in mind, “Don’t store up for yourselves treasures here on earth, but store up treasures in God’s domain. After all, where you keep your treasures, that is where your heart is going to be.