

OPEQUON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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The Fourth Sunday of Easter

SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

April 25, 2021

11:00 am

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

WE GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

PRELUDE *Christ Is Risen! Allelulia!*

Arr. Balcombe

Please use this time to prepare your inward spirit for the worship of God.

ENTRANCE OF THE WORD AND THE LIGHT

THE CHURCH BELL RINGS

GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING SONG (v. 1) *Into My Heart*

CCLI#1622560

**Into my heart, into my heart,
come into my heart, Lord Jesus;
come in today, come in to stay;
come in to my heart, Lord Jesus.**

CALL TO WORSHIP

We look into the eyes of our sons and daughters,
nephews and nieces and we are filled with a sense
of hopes and dreams for their lives.

**We long to see them grow in faith,
to be people of strength and courage.**

**We long for their lives to be filled
with a deep sense of meaning and purpose.**

But what of God? Does God have dreams for us?
The Bible says that God's hopes and dreams for us
are as real as our hopes and dreams for those we love.

**Let us worship this day the God who longs for us
to know his peace, his joy, and his love
and let us honor the one who said,
"I have come that they might have life,
and have it more abundantly."**

**"I was there to hear your borning cry;
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized to see your life unfold.
I was there when you were but a child
with a faith to suit you well;
in a blaze of light you wandered off to find where demons dwell."**

**"When you heard the wonder of the Word,
I was there to cheer you on.
You were raised to praise the living Lord
to whom you now belong.
If you find someone to share your time
and you join your hearts as one,
I'll be there to make your verses rhyme from dusk till rising sun."**

**"In the middle ages of your life, not too old, no longer young,
I'll be there to guide you through the night,
complete what I've begun.
When the evening gently closes in and you shut your weary eyes,
I'll be there as I have always been with just one more surprise."**

**"I was there to hear your borning cry;
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized to see your life unfold."**

CALL TO CONFESSION

God was there when we drew our very first breath and God will be there when we draw our last. And through it all, God, our Heavenly Father, wants only the best for us and the best for His creation. But sometimes we live as if we have been orphaned by God—growing anxious, fearful, and controlling. At other times, we act like petulant children, greedy and self-centered, impatient and demanding, obstinate and defiant. The Bible says that we are like sheep that have gone astray—sheep who need to learn again to hear the Shepherd's voice and trust His loving care.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, we know that we have wandered off on our own. Individually and collectively, we have become angry, exhausted, anxious, and dismayed. We feel lost and confused, tied up in knots, making one poor choice after another. That's not your fault, it's ours. But our decisions have had consequences—for ourselves, our families, our communities, and our planet—and we have begun to reap what we have sown. Having allowed ourselves to become the children of fear, jealousy, and suspicion, we have become lonely, isolated, and anxious. We have turned on one another, fractured our sense of community, and locked ourselves into unhealthy forms of tribalism. Like Nicodemus, we need a new eyes, a new heart, and a new birth. Having been children of darkness, we need for you to make us children of light. We need this not just for our sake, or our family's sake, or our community's, but for the sake of all creation. Amen.

MOMENTS OF SILENT PRAYER

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Christ forgives the most impossible sins, overcomes the greatest fears, comforts the loudest cries, and breaks down the strongest barriers to his love and peace. Through the resurrection, Christ's power in the Holy Spirit lives and works here and now. Friends, we are the body of Christ for this time and this place; know that we are forgiven and be at peace.

LITANY OF PARDON

Friends, believe the Good News of the Gospel

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

THE RESPONSE OF PRAISE *Because He Lives*

Bill & Gloria Gaither, CCLI#1622560

**God sent His Son—they call him Jesus;
he came to love, heal, and forgive.
He lived and died to buy my pardon;
an empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives.
Because he lives I can face tomorrow.
Because he lives, all fear is gone.
Because I know he holds the future
and life is worth the living just because he lives.**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

May the peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

THE READING OF GOD'S WORD

GOSPEL LESSON: John 3:1-9

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION.....From a Hymn by *William W. How*

O Word of God incarnate,
O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging,
O Light of our dark sky:

**we praise you for the radiance
that from the hallowed page,
a lantern to our footsteps,
shines on from age to age.**

CONVERSATION WITH ALL AGES

HYMN NO. 451.....*Open My Eyes*

CCLI#1622560

**Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!**

**Open my ears, that I may hear
voices of truth thou sendest clear;
and while the wavenotes fall on my ear,
everything false will disappear.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.**

**Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!
Open my mouth, and let me bear
gladly the warm truth everywhere;
open my heart and let me prepare
love with thy children thus to share.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!**

SERMON:

“What If Being 'Born Again' or 'Born from Above' Is Deeper, More Radical,
More Comprehensive, and More Nuanced Than Anything We Imagined?”

Reverend Gary Robbins

WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD

SPECIAL MUSIC..... The Potter’s Hand
Darlene Zschech, Lloyd Larson

Beautiful Lord, wonderful Savior, I know for sure all of my days are held in your hand,
Crafted into your perfect plan. You gently call me into your presence, guiding me by your Holy
Spirit. Teach me, dear Lord, to live all of my life through your eyes. I’m captured by your Holy
calling.

Set me apart, I know you’re drawing me to yourself. Lead me, Lord, I pray. Take me, mold
me, use me. Fill me. I give my life to the Potter’s hand. Call me, guide me, lead me, walk
beside me. I give my life to the Potter’s hand, the Potter’s hand.

You gently call me and guide me by your Holy Spirit. Teach me, dear Lord, to live all of my life
through your eyes. I’m captured by your Holy calling.

OFFERING OF TITHES AND GIFTS

OFFERTORY *He Lives! Sing Praises!*
Smith

THE DOXOLOGY Ar Hyd Y Nos

***For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God;
for the good we all inherit, thanks be to God;
for the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all, that love has found us,
thanks be to God.***

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (with sung response HYMN NO. 473)

***Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants,
beyond my fears, from death into life.***

THE LORD'S PRAYER

(We say "debts" and "debtors" in the prayer)

WE GO OUT IN GOD'S NAME

HYMN OF DEDICATION *Nicodemus Sought Out Jesus*

Nettleton
CCLI#1622560

Nicodemus sought out Jesus at a lonely, quiet hour.

**He said, "Teacher, God is with you! For in you we see God's power."
Jesus turned and gave an answer filled with challenge and with love:
"You can never see God's kingdom till you're born from heav'n above."**

**"Born again!" said Nicodemus. "Is that something one can do?"
Jesus said, "Don't be surprised now that you must be born anew.
And it's not by your own doing; wind and Spirit will blow free!
They are not for your controlling; trust in God for what will be."**

**God, your Spirit still surprises like an ever-changing wind,
Bringing life and love and justice where despair and death have been.
May we see your Spirit working as a gift from heav'n above.
Blest, may we then be a blessing to this world that you so love.**

CHARGE AND BLESSING

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (v. 2) *Into My Heart*

Harry D. Clarke
CCLI#1622560

**Out of my heart, out of my heart,
shine out of my heart, Lord Jesus;
shine out today, shine out always;
shine out of my heart, Lord Jesus.**

POSTLUDE *Epilogue*

Martin

ANNOUNCEMENTS

April 25- May 2, 2021

TODAY

The Fourth Sunday of Easter 4-Cents-A-Meal Offering

8:30 AM In-Person Worship (With Reservations & Restrictions)
9:45 AM G.I.F.T. Event via ZOOM
11:00 AM: Live Stream Worship

THIS WEEK

Tuesday: 5:30 AM – Highland Food Pantry
Wednesday: 12:00 NOON -- "Snackin & Chattin" via ZOOM
Thursday: 10:00 AM – Tai Chi @ the Picnic Shelter

NEXT SUNDAY

The Fifth Sunday of Easter

Communion, CCAP Offering
Worship led by Reverend Tracie Martin
In-Person Worship – 8:30 AM
Faith Formation via ZOOM – 9:45 AM
Live Stream Worship—11:00 AM

Today, the flowers are given to the Glory of God by the Worship Committee.

ABOUT THE CLOSING HYMN:

Our closing hymn for today is one of the 400+ hymns written by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. Born in Harrisonburg, Virginia, Carolyn grew up in a United Methodist home, but later attended Princeton Theological Seminary and became a Presbyterian pastor. Carolyn began writing hymn texts in 1998 and has written hymns on a wide range of biblical themes and stories. She now serves as the Associate Pastor at the First Presbyterian Union Church in Owego, New York.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

OPC Family/Staff
Laurel Look
Paula & Mac McNichols
Carol Tubbs
Pam Bayliss
Lance Weeks
Ann & Edgar Tufts
Jack Grubbs
Laurel Hathaway & Family
Sandy Haney
Nancy & Curt Budny
June Windle
Carlene Lemasters
Atlanta Shootings
Boulder Shootings
E.F. "Shorty" Green
Tammy Workman
Jarett Cestaro
Gary Seabright
Peggy Gruenther
Nathan Windle
Jeff & Kim Barbour
Sylvia Wingfield
Grace & Sid Eadie
Paula McNichols

Dr. Michael Albig
Cindy Corell (missionary)
Doug Dicks (missionary)
Jose Lamont Jones
(missionary)
Mary Lou Thomas
Donna Schmidt
Ben & Theresa Montgomery
Katie Teets
Unity of Our Nation
Ethiopia
Erin Richman
Jay Beach
Wildfires
Nancy Kerns
David Trickle
Dianne Fleming
Racial Injustice
Reconciliation
Local Schools
Firefighters
Police Officers
First Responders
Jim & Cheryl Friend
Tom Schmidt

Al "Pop" Owens Sr
Food Banks
Homeless
Underemployed &
Unemployed
Mike Shade
Associate Pastor Nominating
Committee (APNC)
Casey Carr
TK Tandy III
Brad Treece
Patricia Ferguson
Women & Children of
Domestic Violence
Families of Children, Youth &
Young Adults with Special
Needs
Disaster Relief Agencies
Kes Mersha
Jane Lewis
Doug Koch
Illubabor Bethel Synod of
Church Mekane Yesus

PRAY FOR THOSE IN THE MILITARY SERVICE

Joshua Blake, Max Crane, Andrew Crane, Thomas Crane, Edison Gomez, Taylor McMurdo, Samuel & Julia Phillips, Brandon Michael, Jared Snawder, Greg Sousa, Katherine Tufts, Michael White, and their families.

A "GIFT" EVENT- TODAY APRIL 25, 9:45AM VIA ZOOM

GIFT stands for "Generations in Faith Together" and it truly is a gift to have all ages and stages together during the Sunday morning educational hour (known as FAITH FORMATION) at 9:45am via ZOOM. The theme of our time together today will be "**THE GIVING TREE!**" This is a story for all ages that offers glimpses into the gift of giving and the acceptance of another's capacity to love in return. Join in this GIFT event ZOOM time to enjoy activities centered around this story. It will be well worth your time. The zoom link was sent out from the church office.

BEGONIAS FOR PENTECOST

Begonias will be ordered to decorate the Sanctuary on Pentecost Sunday. If you would like to place an order the cost is \$8 per pot. You may purchase them in honor/in memory/to the Glory of God – please be specific. A form will be going out via email or is available in the church office.

ROOTS & SHOOTS GARDEN NEEDS

The Opequon Presbyterian Church Roots & Shoots Garden is in need of **1 or 2 full-sized rounded blade shovels**. A member stepped up and has donated two! Thank you!!!

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT VBS?

There WILL BE Vacation Bible School this summer in an exciting new way! The dates are **June 21-23 (Monday-Wednesday), open 5-7pm each evening**. The focus will be on Serving our own families, serving our friends, and serving our neighbors; with loads of fun in 'God's Big Backyard'! There will be indoor and outdoor stations for families to roam around to, each with a different activity each night. Dinner meals can be reserved for pick-up while you are here. Families are invited to come ANY and ALL nights that work for you. Watch and listen for more details to come.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL CLASS (FOR ADULTS) COMING IN JUNE!

Stay tuned for details regarding VBS for Adults in June, the evenings of June 27-30. We look forward to an engaging book study.

OPEQUON ON SOCIAL MEDIA

You may already visit the Opequon YouTube channel regularly, but did you know that Opequon is on other social media sites?! Search for Opequon Church on Facebook and Instagram to see pictures, announcements, and other happenings!

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

The One Great Hour of Sharing offering is one of the four church-wide special offerings sponsored by the Presbyterian Church (USA). It is highlighted during Lent, received and dedicated on Easter. This year marks the 72nd anniversary of the first OGHS, begun as American Christians recognized the need to respond to the worldwide devastation caused by World War II. In March 1949, a national broadcast on a Saturday evening asked Americans to give generously the next morning in their churches; a remarkable assembly of national leaders and celebrities gave their efforts to the broadcast, and more than 75,000 churches responded the next day.

Contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing are divided equally among the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and Self-Development of People. A special envelope for you was enclosed with the April newsletter or you may give on-line. If you haven't given yet, we invite your contribution.

ABOUT THE PAINTING ON THE COVER:

The painting on the cover, "Nicodemus and Jesus on a Rooftop," is by Henry Ossawa Tanner (June 21, 1859 – May 25, 1937), one of the first African-American artists to achieve international prominence. Having grown up in Philadelphia, Tanner was drawn to the scene because of conversations in which his father, an African Methodist Episcopal Church bishop, had talked about the ways their enslaved forebears had often had to worship in secret and at night. Painted during the artist's second trip to the Holy Land, Tanner remarked that the six months he spent in Jerusalem lent an air of authenticity to this work and that he had used local people as sitters.

WORSHIP NOTES AND REFLECTIONS

Notes on Today's Music

Notes on Today's Children of All Ages Sermon

Notes on Today's Prayers

Notes on Today's Scripture and Sermon