

First Congregational United Church of Christ
“Where No One Is a Stranger”
Fourth Sunday of Easter
April 30, 2023

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

GREETINGS, GOOD NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JESUS ENCOUNTERS

*CALL TO WORSHIP (read responsively)

One: In the laughter of children, we hear the voice of the Gate of the Way, and find our way home.

Many: In the lap of a parent, God's compassion cradles us in the still waters of love.

One: The Shepherd of our lives leads us through that door into life with him forever.

One: We are baptized with living waters which refresh us, restoring us to follow Jesus all our days.

One: The Holy Spirit, Keeper of truth, is the Light which guides us through every shadowed moment.

Many: The Breath of life stills our worries and fears, as we are lead to that peaceful place of God's heart.

One: Let's worship God!

*OPENING SONG “God of Grace and God of Glory” #569

*OPENING PRAYER (prayed together)

Risen Savior, Reliable Shepherd, we hear your voice calling us to follow. We remember our ancient brothers, sisters, and siblings who gathered in prayer and praise. Today, we too gather in prayer and praise. Enliven us with your resurrection power—a power that frees us from despair. Enliven us with your abundant life. May your living power flow through us in all we are and do! Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (prayed together)

The wrong paths to foolish lives and repeated mistakes? We know all too well where they are, Gate of our lives. We confess that stirring up the waters with trouble comes all too easy to us. And locking the doors of our hearts so we don't have to love others is second nature to us.

Forgive us, our Goodness and Mercy. May our hearts overflow with hope for others, as you anoint us with healing oil. May we share from our abundance with all who hunger

for life. May we follow Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, to the places of service and life with you forever. Amen.

A MOMENT FOR SILENT REFECTION AND CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

One: Our Comforter leads us to that place where God's Table is spread with forgiveness and overflowing with grace. Here, we are called to life and love.

Many: We will live as God's people: forgiven to serve, blessed to share, loved so we might care. Thanks be to God. Amen.

SHARING THE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING John 10:1-10

*AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (read together)

We belong to God, creator of all that is and all that is to come, abundant provider of the gifts in this life and the gifts in our own hearts. It is God alone who gives life, who is generous beyond measure with grace and blessing.

We follow Christ, whom God sent to teach and heal, to show us a new way of living, with love and trust and courage, with joy and generosity. In this faith Jesus gave of himself, even his very life. He was crucified and buried; yet God raised him from death, and he lives among us, and grants his spirit to us.

We live by that Holy Spirit, and entrust ourselves to its guidance and empowerment. As members of the church, the Body of Christ, we devote ourselves to lives of love, rejoicing in the power of forgiveness, the reality of resurrection, and the mystery of eternal life. Amen.

*GLORIA PATRI #734

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 with-out end. A-men, A-men.

FOCUS SCRIPTURE Acts 2:42-47 read from the *Common English Bible*

MESSAGE “All Together Now” Pastor Chris

EASTER SEASON SONG “Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ” #698

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/THE LORD'S PRAYER (with debts/debtors)

PRESENTING OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY

***DOXOLOGY**

Words #44

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

(prayed together)

God of Abundant Life, we devote ourselves and these gifts to your vision of a community that meets the needs of any and all. Bless our offering, that it may meet the needs, both small and large, of your great and generous blessings. Amen.

***CLOSING SONG**

“They’ll Know We Are Christians”

#595

GOING FORTH WITH THE PEACE OF CHRIST

POSTLUDE

The Call to Worship (adapted), Call to Confession, Prayer of Confession (adapted), and Words of Assurance, are from *Lectionary Liturgies* by Thom M. Shuman. The Opening Prayer and Offering Prayer of Dedication (adapted), are by Rebecca J. Kruger Gaudino from the *Abingdon Worship Annual* edited by Mary Scifres and B.J. Beu. The Affirmation of Faith is by Steve Garnaas-Holmes.

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Worship Leader: Pastor Chris Burtnett
Lector: David Burrow
Organist: Vicki Merchlewitz
April Radio Sponsor: Scott & Sandy Buchanan

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Today, April 30: 10 am.- Worship
Sunday School
Coffee

Tuesday, May 2: 9:30-11:30am. – Pastor Chris at Feed Mill
7pm.-ASK Discernment Team meets via Zoom with Interim minister Phil Hart

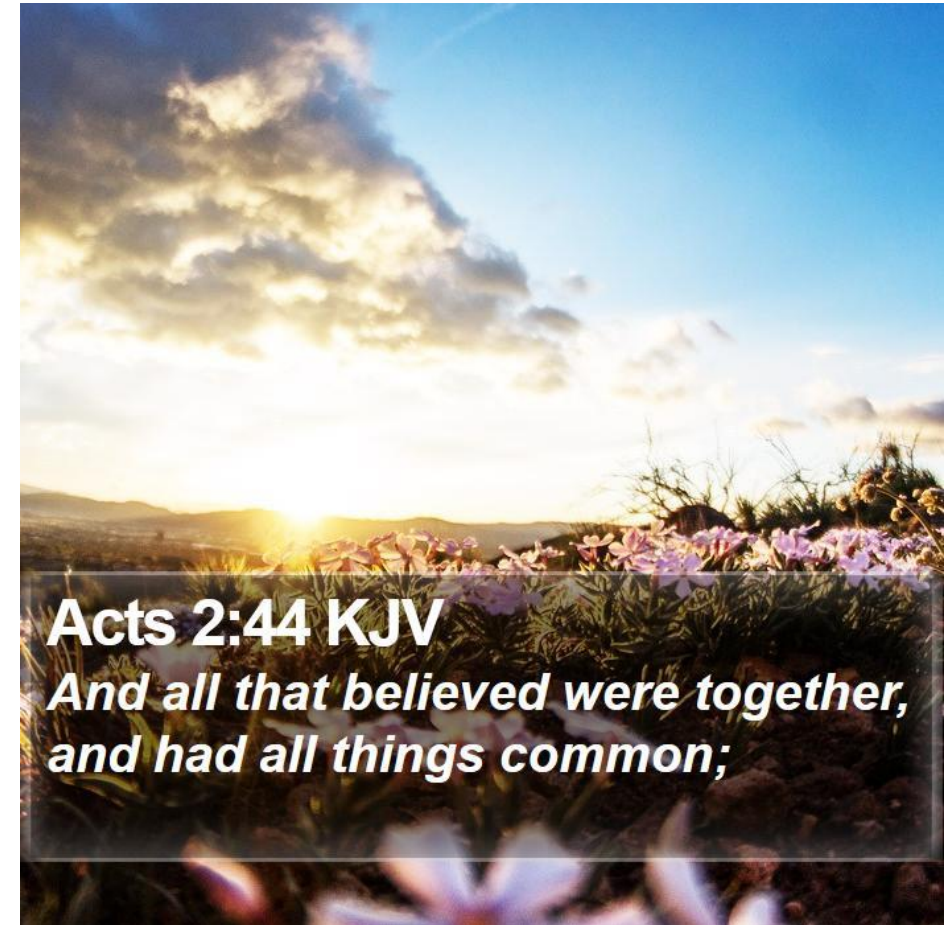
Thursday, May 4: 6:45am.- Mayor’s Prayer Breakfast at Trinity Life Center

Sunday, May 7: 10:00 am. – Worship with Sacrament of Communion
Sunday School
Coffee
Food Pantry
Mission Memorial Meeting after Worship

The *Our Daily Bread* special Easter devotional “Easter The Promise of Forgiveness-10 Reflections from Our Daily Bread” is available on the cart in the entry way to the Education/Office/Fellowship Hall building.

Pilgrim Heights Summer Camp flyer is on the bulletin board.

Carter Center Report to donors is on the table in the parlor.



Acts 2:44 KJV
***And all that believed were together,
and had all things common;***

***First Congregational
United Church of Christ***

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