

## **First Church, Congregational UCC**



**April 11, 2021**



**CCLI # 2929798 and #20547245**

### **Spiritual Quote of the week –**

‘Doubt is not the opposite of faith; it is one element of faith.’ Paul Tillich

### **Welcome**

**Prelude** Chorale & Variation on *Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense*

J. S. Bach & J. G. Walther (1685-1750 & 1684-1748)

### **Lighting of the Candles**

#### **Lighting of the Community and Christ Candle**

*For gathering today in this sacred space, we light the Christ Candle*

## **Call to Worship:**

Leader: At the beginning of the day, at the beginning of the week, the faithful yet fearful people gathered together. It was then that the Spirit of God came among them and whispered:

**ALL: Peace be with you.**

Leader: Their hearts skipped a beat as they double checked that the lock on the front door was still latched. So the Presence of God spoke a little louder:

**ALL: Peace be with you.**

Leader: They looked around at each other, puzzled, amazed, befuddled, and bewildered. Some smiled. Some doubted. Some wondered if it were just too magical sounding or too good to be true. So the Christ showed them that his own scars were not the end of the story and that is when the words of God began to feel joyous:

**ALL: Peace be with you.**

Leader: From that day on, the people of God repeated the words to one another when they gathered. From one generation to the next, they exchanged the words as a greeting to one another to remember that Holy interruption to fear:

**ALL: (in expression of joyful community)**  
**Peace be with you!**

**Choir Introit**      *Chorus of Lord of the Dance*

**Hymn (Insert) #307 Christ is Risen ! Shout Hosanna!**

**Prayer of Confession Pastor Gerry and Rev. John Hogue**

Pastor John :      Holy One, our confession won't be news to you, but maybe if we allow it to be spoken aloud, You can help us find a way forward.

Pastor Gerry:      Holy One, we have doubts. We're not talking about doubts like Thomas—his were perfectly reasonable—after all we too long to see You, touch You, and truly know You.

Pastor John :      Our doubts feel different. We doubt that the peace you offer is really possible because our own minds are a mess of thoughts.

Pastor Gerry:      We doubt that new life is possible because the wounds we bear are still overwhelming.

Pastor John: We doubt that You really intended to call us when You called the disciples to be of service in creating a new way of being in the world.

Pastor Gerry: We hear the age-old stories, but we are filled with doubts about ourselves, and if we are honest, doubts about your Holy possibilities. Holy One, in these moments of stillness, hear our doubts and settle our hearts, souls, and minds...

***Silence; leave space for people to examine their hearts,***

## **DAZZLING BOUQUET -Time for Children-**

Message: **‘Seeing is Believing’**

*1. Come here, all you six-foot gladiolas.  
Come all you purple lilacs shining bright.  
Come let us all bloom together in one garden:  
A carnival of fragrance and delight. (Refrain)*

*Mine is the church where everybody’s welcome.  
I know it’s true ’cause I got through the door.*

*We are a dazzling bouquet of every kind of flower.  
Jump in the vase, 'cause we've got space for more.*

**UCC / DOC Missionary Partner this week –  
Open this week pray for the region of**

**eSwatini - Kahala Cannon  Pastor Gerry**

**Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Choir ANTHEM**    *Lord of the Dance*    19th  
Century Shaker Tune    (Arr. by A. Pote)

## **Scripture Reading - John 20:19-31**

### ***Jesus Appears to the Disciples***

*19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." 22 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."*

### ***Jesus and Thomas***

*24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin<sup>[a]</sup>), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."*

*26 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors*

were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." <sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

### ***The Purpose of This Book***

<sup>30</sup> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written so that you may come to believe<sup>[b]</sup> that Jesus is the Messiah,<sup>[c]</sup> the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

### **Hymn # 63 'Holy Spirit, Truth Divine'**

*1 Holy Spirit, Truth divine,  
dawn upon this soul of mine.  
Voice of God, and inward Light,  
wake my spirit, clear my sight.*

*2 Holy Spirit, Love divine,  
glow within this heart of mine.*

*Kindle ev'ry high desire,  
purify me with your fire.*

*3 Holy Spirit, Pow'r divine,  
fill and nerve this will of mine.  
Boldly may I always live,  
bravely serve and gladly give.*

*4 Holy Spirit, Law divine,  
reign within this soul of mine.  
Be my law and I shall be  
firmly bound, forever free.*

## **Prayer of Illumination**

**No Sermon – ‘Ask Pastor John Your  
Theological Questions’      Rev. John Hogue**

## **Invitation to the Offering**

## **OFFERTORY**

**Doxology #17 Tune- Lasst Uns Erfereun**  
**Prayer of Dedication**

**Hymn-#256 'We Live By Faith and Not By Sight'**

*#1 We live by faith and not by sight;  
 no gracious words we hear  
 From Christ who spoke as none e'er spoke,  
 who still we know is near.*

*2 We may not touch Christ's hands and side,  
 nor follow where Christ trod;  
 but in confessing we rejoice:  
 our Savior and our God!*

*3 Help then, O Christ, our unbelief;  
 and may our faith abound  
 To call on you when you are near  
 and seek where you are found:*

*4 That, when our life of faith is done,  
 in realms of clearer light  
 We may behold you as you are,  
 with full and endless sight.*

**Benediction**

## **Benediction Response**

**May God's Blessings Twine around you,  
perfect love, and healing calm;**

**May God's radiance shine upon you; may it  
guide you, stay beside you -watch and keep  
you, safe from harm. By Paul Burtis**

**POSTLUDE**      *Allegro in Bb Major*      From  
the "American Church Organ Voluntaries", 1856

### Announcements:

After this class we will have a book study on "How to Be an Antiracist" by Ibram X. Kendi. This book is scheduled to be released April 20th. Please share with those who may be interested in diving into this resource.