

**United Church of Christ, First Congregational
Norwich, New York
April 11, 2021 – Second Sunday of Easter**

PRELUDE *Chorale*
Bob Oehme, organ

Joseph Jungen

WELCOME (Pastor John)

PRAYER OF THE DAY (Rita Giangarra)

Breathe in this place, O Lord,
by the power of your Holy Spirit,
to open our minds,
unlock our hearts,
and enliven our faith
so that we may welcome
the risen one among us. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Linda Oehme)

CALL TO WORSHIP (Jay and Neil Conant)

Peace be with you.

**How good and pleasant it is
when we live together in unity.**

Receive the Holy Spirit.

**It is like precious oil on the head,
the blessing of the Lord.**

CHILDREN'S TIME (Linda Oehme)

The Lord's Prayer

CONGREGATIONAL GREETING OF PEACE

ONE: May the peace of the risen Christ be with you.

ALL: **And also with you.**

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

SCRIPTURE (Jay Conant)

Acts 4:32 -35

³² Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. ³³ With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴ There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. ³⁵ They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

SCRIPTURE (Rita Giangarra)

John 20: 19-31

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."

²⁴ But Thomas (who was called the Twin^[a]), 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." ²⁷ 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." ²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ 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."

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

ANTHEM Let It Breathe on Me
(Tune: BREATHE ON ME)

Magnolia Lewis-Butts, 1941

SERMON (Pastor John)

INTERLUDE Meditation on the Hymn Tune Evan
(I Heard the Voice of Jesus)
Bob Oehme, organ

by David Paxton
Tune by Francis R. Havergal

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Living God, giver of life,
hear us as we pray, saying,
Pour out your blessing, O Lord;
send us your Spirit of peace.

We pray for the church. . . .
Let your church be a living sign
of the woundedness and healing of Christ,
sharing the gift of forgiveness
and the gospel of reconciliation.
Pour out your blessing, O Lord;
send us your Spirit of peace.

We pray for the earth. . . .
Help us to see the scars of death
that mark your good creation,

and to seek the blessing of life
that you offer to all creatures.
Pour out your blessing, O Lord;
send us your Spirit of peace.
We pray for all nations. . . .

Show us how good and pleasant it is
when people live together in unity,
and anoint us with your wisdom
so that we may seek the ways of life.
Pour out your blessing, O Lord;
send us your Spirit of peace.

We pray for this community. . . .
Give us a vision of the common good:
not clinging to our own possessions
but seeking the fullness of life for all
as a testimony to Christ's resurrection.
Pour out your blessing, O Lord;
send us your Spirit of peace.

We pray for loved ones. . . .
Be near to those who walk in darkness
and lead us all into Christ's light
so that our fellowship may be true
and our joy may be complete.
Pour out your blessing, O Lord;
send us your Spirit of peace.

By the blessing of your Spirit,
help us to live as we pray
so that the world may come to know
the gift of life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

This is the blessing of the Lord:
life forevermore. **Alleluia!**

POSTLUDE *Postlude on Lift High the Cross*
Bob Oehme, organ

Janet Linker

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At the end of the Worship Video:

COMMUNION LITURGY

INVITATION

In Luke's Gospel we read that Jesus, at the table with two of the disciples, took bread and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them, and their eyes were opened, and they recognized the risen Christ in the breaking of the bread.

In the Acts of the Apostles we read that as the church was gathered, often in the homes of the believers, Christians devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and community, to the breaking of bread, and to prayers.

Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, we gather at your table to know you in the breaking of the bread.

COMMUNION PRAYER:

Holy God, we praise and bless you for creation and the gift of life and for your abiding love which brings us close to you, the source of all blessing. We thank you for revealing your will for us in the giving of the law and in the preaching of the prophets.

We thank you especially that in the fullness of time you sent Jesus, born of Mary, to live in our midst, to share in our suffering, and to accept the pain of death at the hands of those whom Jesus loved.

We rejoice that in a perfect victory over the grave you raised Christ with power to become sovereign in your realm.

We celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit to gather your church by which your work may be done in the world and through which we share the gift of eternal life.

With the faithful in every place and time, we praise with joy your holy name: Holy, holy, holy, God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High.

We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, Jesus also took the cup, after supper, saying: "This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Consecrate, therefore, by your Holy Spirit, these gifts of bread and wine, and bless us that as we receive them at this table, we may offer you our faith and praise, we may be united with Christ and with one another, and we may continue faithful in all things.

In the strength Christ gives us, we offer ourselves to you, eternal God, and give thanks that you have called us to serve you. Amen.

BREAKING BREAD AND POURING WINE

Through the broken bread we participate in the body of Christ.

Through the cup of blessing we participate in the new life Christ gives.

SHARING THE ELEMENTS

Eat this, for it is the body of Christ, broken for you.

Drink this, for it is the blood of Christ, shed for you.

UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:

We thank you, God, for inviting us to this table where we have known the presence of Christ and have received all Christ's gifts. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and let us show forth your praise in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

