



An Affirming Congregation of the United Church of

2018 April 22

Stewardship Sunday

Easter 4



Welcome and Inclusion

We open our hearts and our church family to all people in our community regardless of age, gender, differing abilities, ethnicity, economic circumstance, or sexual orientation. Many people's lives continue to be devastated by hatred, prejudice, and inequality, therefore we stand with those who are adversely affected by injustice, alienation and oppression.

Friends in Christ

Prelude: *The First Morning*, Nancy Telfer

Tammy-Jo Mortensen, organ

Embracing Our Spirit *Alleluia*

(three times) *More Voices 54*

Opening Prayer:

A new day, a new week is upon us.

We dedicate it to God.

A new hour of worship is upon us.

We dedicate it to God.

A new opportunity is here: to become new people in Christ.

We dedicate it to God.

Come, now is the time to worship. With hearts and minds, bodies and spirits, let us give our best to God.

All honour, glory, and praise be to God!¹

Processional Hymn: *Stand, O Stand Firm*

More Voices 99

Coming Into God's Presence

Stewardship Committee

God's Holy Word

Introit: *See the Land, Her Easter Keeping*, Alice Jordan

Choir of Robertson-Wesley

Scripture:

Marilee Stephens

Acts 16: 16-34 • Paul and Silas in Prison

One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation." She kept doing this for many days. But Paul very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour. But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, "These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe." The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted in a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down

¹ Written by Rob Fennell, **Gathering**, Lent/Easter/Pentecost 2006, p. 39. Used with Permission.

trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them outside and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They answered, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

This is the witness of the Church.

Thanks be to God for the power of the Holy Spirit.

Anthem: *Earth Song*, Frank Ticheli

Choir of Robertson-Wesley

Sermon: *Stick to your convictions and see what arises!* Rev. Karen Bridges

Hymn: *O for a World*

Voices United 697

Pastoral Prayers

Stewardship Committee & Rev. Karen Bridges

Lord’s Prayer

Voices United 921

Grateful Response

Seconds for Stewardship

When we get in the habit -

we get more out than we put in, and for this we give God thanks.

Stewardship Response: *Rise Up Rise Up*

More Voices 130

Offering: *Air (Water Music)*, G. F. Handel

Offertory Hymn *When at This Table*

More Voices 199 v 4

If at this table I make dedication

to give my life in serving what is good,

then let my centre be where God invites me,

and show the words of Jesus understood.

Prayer of Gratitude

Recessional Hymn: *Lord, You Give the Great Commission*

Voices United 512 vs. 1, 2, 4, 5

Commissioning:

Rise up, O people of God, and take up the cross of justice.

We will walk with God until all people are free.

Rise up, O people of God, and take up the cross of peace.

We will sing in the Spirit until all people are blessed.

Rise up, O people of God, and take up the cross of grace.

We will dance with our God until all people are loved.

Freedom, blessing, and love are yours

As we minister in the name of the Risen and Eternal One.

Amen.²

Postlude: *Earth*, Alan Ridout

² Written by Robin Wardlaw, **Gathering**, Lent/Easter 2005, p. 41. Used with permission.

*Following worship, all are invited to the Memorial Hall
for fellowship, and refreshments.*

Music Notes

Today is Earth Day, as well as a stewardship focus for R-W, and the choir has a couple of pieces to share that speak about environmental stewardship of the earth. Alice Jordan (1916-2012) was born and raised in Iowa and was a very prolific composer with a composition list of over 250 pieces for organ or choir. This anthem is particularly good for Eastertide, as she refers to the land as “rising as her Maker rose”, seeds sleeping and bursting from winter snows, and the earth hailing the spring. We long in hope for the spring to come, in our yards, but also in our lives and hearts, so that we may too sing “Alleluia”.

Ticheli is also an American composer (b. 1958) and is professor of composition at the University of Southern California. I knew him first as a composer for wind band, but for this composition he wrote not only the music, but also the text. It speaks of hope even in the midst of loss of the earth’s resources, and it also laments the pain of war. It ends with how we can take refuge in music (and other arts), and ends with the singers desire for light, to sing alleluia and a victory of peace.

Cover Image

Cover image is a picture taken by Albert deVos. Sept 2013 at the Stewardship Carnival. How will we stand together and commit ourselves to Christ?

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