



An Affirming Congregation of the United Church of

2018 April 29

Easter 5



### Welcome and Inclusion

We open our hearts and our church family to all people in our community regardless of sexual orientation, age, gender, differing abilities, ethnicity, or economic circumstance. 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.

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## Friends in Christ

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Prelude: *Cleansing Fountain*, David Paxton

Tammy-Jo Mortensen

Embracing Our Spirit: *Alleluia*

**More Voices 54**

Call to Worship:

Bold lives roll stones of resistance away, and the vision receives  
breath.

**Rejoice in the courage that sets us free!**

Spirited lives part seas of rigid ways, and justice dances away from  
slavery.

**Rejoice in the courage that sets us free!**

Daring lives break shackles of intimidation, and truth speaks with no  
constraint.

**Rejoice in the courage that sets us free!**

Perservering lives tear down walls of greed and life in abundance is  
no longer a dream.

**Rejoice in the courage that sets us free!**

Processional Hymn: *We Are One in the Spirit*

**Insert**

Coming Into God's Presence

Tammy-Jo Mortensen

Handbells: *For as the Rain Comes Down (Isaiah 55:10)*, Lee J. Afhdahl

Kids' Church; R-W Ringers; Melanie Yakimishyn,  
Byrnn Bellingham & Linda Stockl, percussion

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## God's Holy Word

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Introit: *Make Me to Know Thy Ways, O Lord*, Fred Gramann

Choir of Robertson-Wesley; Nova Bells

Scripture:

Jessica Blake

Acts 17: 16-31 • Paul in Athens is distressed

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and also in the marketplace everyday with those who happened to be there. Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, "What does this babblers want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities." (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.) So they took and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means." Now all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new. Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The

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<sup>1</sup> Keri K. Wehlander, *Circles of Grace; Worship and Prayer in the Everyday*, (Etobicoke: United Church Publishing House, 1998), p. 61.

God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him – though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For ‘in him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’ Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

This is the witness of the Church.

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

Anthem: *Down to the River to Pray*, Traditional arr. Marc Hafso

Soloists: Claire Rolheiser and Julie Golosky; Choir of Robertson-Wesley

Sermon: *How will they know we are Christian?*

Rev. Karen Bridges

Hymn: *When a Poor One*

***Voices United 702***

Pastoral Prayers

Lord’s Prayer

***Voices United 921***

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## **Grateful Response**

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Offering: *Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven*, arr. Cynthia Dobrinski

Robertson-Wesley Ringers

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: *Make Me a Channel of Your Peace*

***Voices United 684***

Commissioning:

What we say reveals what we think is important.

What we do shows others how we live our faith.

**In our lives may we share acts of kindness, and live our beliefs  
through signs of faith made real.**

Let us go forth to live our faith in this world. Amen.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Written by Bill Steadman, **Gathering**, Lent/Easter 2015, p. 45. Used with permission.

Postlude: *Dance of Praise (Lore of the Loom)*, arr. Kevin McChesney  
Robertson-Wesley Ringers; Nova Bells, chimes; Linda Stockl, bell tree;  
Matthew McGuigan, flute; Nathan McCavana, bodhrán

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

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## Music Notes

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In “For as the Rain Comes Down” we have the kids and Linda playing rainsticks! Based on Isaiah 55:10, it is a good verse for spring! “For as the rain and snow come down from heaven, do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater...”

Over the next several weeks the musicians at R-W will share repertoire about water and the earth. This will culminate with a choral concert production of Canadian Scott Macmillan and Jennyfer Brickenden’s “Celtic Mass for the Sea” on June 8. This is to raise awareness and draw attention to local and global water issues. I thought “Down in the River to Pray” was complimentary to the 3 Billboards movie. While the exact origin of this piece is not known, this traditional American song is described as a Christian folk hymn, a Spiritual, an Appalachian song, or a gospel song. If it was a slave song, there may be some text symbolism. “Going down in the river” can refer to baptism, but can also be code for an escape route – as tracking dogs can’t get a scent in the water. The “starry crown” might be representing an escape at night, and “Good Lord, show me the way” could be a prayer for guidance along the Underground Railroad.

Thanks to guest Nathan McCavana who is playing the bodhrán drum. The bodhrán is an Irish frame drum, with a goatskin head and an open back, which allows the hand inside the drum to create pitch and timbre. Most bodhráns are played with a double-ended lathe-turned piece of wood called a bone, tipper, beater or cipín. “Lore of the Loom” or “Dance of Praise” is an arrangement of a piece by the Irish/Norwegian duo “Secret Garden”. Along with the bodhrán it also features bell tree, where several bells are hung up on a stand and flute.

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## Cover Image

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Cover image was created from a free image on Google and added to by Rev. Karen Bridges, April 25, 2018.

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